**NOTES ON DICK MORTEN AND HIS HOUSE THE SAVOY (SAVVY)**

A picture of The Savoy, Denham is on a postcard in NLI MS 49154/5/3.

Only one letter from Dick Morten to Casement survives.

Morten seems to have lived with few records and thus little internet trace, bar a couple of mentions of him being on the Denham parish council. He was rich and political, and owned a Metallurgique Car, as Casement records, but that is about all one can ascertain. He dates back with Casement to at least 1893 which suggests an African connection. It is likely Casement got to know Morten through Herbert Ward.

Dick (Richard Henry) Morten b. 1859, farmer, died on 3 July 1930 leaving a widow Edith Alice Morten. His estate was gross £8,373 and net £4,603, all left to his wife. He must have remarried after the death of his first wife Frances Mary (May) Morten née Hicks born c. 1869 married c. March 1889. No children apparently.

May his first wife died on 10 April 1924. Her address was Hill House, Denham as was Dick’s at death. (This was later the house of Sir John Mills, the actor.) Her gross estate was £15,528 (net £15,434). Most was left in trust to her five nephews. They were Dennis and Humphrey Morten, children of her sister Florence Catherine Harriet of Red Hill, Denham who must have married Dick’s brother James Edward Morten, and three Hicks boys from Cornwall, sons of Grace Winifred Hicks her sister-in-law. The income went to Dick during his lifetime. £500 went to two Roman Catholic churches, one in Uxbridge the other in Cornwall. One Hicks stationed in Fermoy gets a mention in the Black Diaries. Casement was godson to his son born around 1910.

Dick Morten’s second wife was born Edith Alice (Peter) Green she was married to him on 17 October 1928 in London by the Bishop of Monmouth. She was the daughter of Rev Alfred John Morgan Green. Rev Kenneth Green (brother?) assisted. She died aged 73 on 17 February 1949 at Dickfield House, Denham, “an attractive Georgian style 1930s house designed by Herbert Ward (who donated the green to the village in 1952 – must be Herbert’s son) and built by Lovells.”

This confirms a connection between the 2nd Mrs Morten and the Wards. Sarita Ward (as Lady Vansittart) later lived and died at Dickfield House.

**THE SAVOY (alt. SAVEHAY), DENHAM, BUCKS**

The Savoy, also on the banks of the Colne, but nearly a mile further north, has a moat which is partly natural and fed by the river. The building is remarkable as incorporating remains of the aisled hall of a 14th-century house, which may have been built by Thomas Durdent, lord of the manor of Denham Durdent in this parish (q.v.). The solar wing on the south seems to be of a later date in the same century, while the eastern extension, now the entrance hall, must have been added about 1500. The western portion of the south wing, including the kitchen and offices, has been rebuilt, but the remaining part, now occupied by the study, is of late 14th or early 15th-century date. At some period in the 16th century the floor and central chimney-stack were inserted in the hall, and the north wing appears to have been altered at the same time, the staircase on this side of the house being of the same period. The principal staircase at the south-east of the hall was added early in the succeeding century. The exterior, though retaining a good many original features, has been considerably restored. The interior still retains a large portion of the original timber construction, two posts, with an arch of the arcade, remaining in the east wall of the curtailed hall; another post also remains in the west wall, and the original open-timber roof can be seen in the southern of the two rooms on the inserted upper floor. There are numerous and well-preserved remains of mural paintings, including some biblical subjects dated 1606.

In 1250 a charter for a weekly market and an annual fair was granted to the Lord of the Manor. The annual fair continues to this day and every year we enjoy stalls, bands, Punch and Judy shows, bouncy castles and roundabouts on the Village Green, presented to the inhabitants of Denham by Herbert Ward in 1952, and refresh ourselves at the three excellent old pubs grouped around the Green.

A quarter of an hour's stroll from the village green, back along the Pyghtle, takes a visitor to the oldest building in Denham - Savay Farm. Built on the site of the original Manor House, the farm was fortified and once surrounded by a moat.

Originally a great hall built on Sarsen stones with many very ancient timbers, Savay Farm has been added to over the centuries. At one time Savay Farm was a common lodging house, charging 4d. a night without supper and 6d. a night with supper, and the present owner possesses a notice board requesting lodgers not to wear their boots in bed. During his Black shirt days, Savay Farm was owned by Sir Oswald Mosley.]

**THE SAVOY AND SIR OSWALD MOSLEY**

Sir Oswald Ernald Mosley 6th Bt. of Ancoats from 1926 ‎(Age 27)‎ of Savehay Farm, Denham, Buckinghamshire, a Tudor manor ‎(extended by Edwin Lutyens)‎.

Another effect of his wife's death was Mosley’s attitude to their three children. He was determined that, apart from their terrible loss, there was to be no change in their lives. The same nanny, aunts and grandmother surrounded them and they lived in an old house, Savehay Farm at Denham, which their mother had arranged to her taste and remained unchanged until it was requisitioned by the army in 1940. The three children were rich from their mother's American money, and they helped to finance this separate establishment themselves.

**LADY MOSLEY ARRESTED**

Capt. Pitt-Rivers

(A.A.P. and Our Own Correspondent) 1 July 1940

LONDON, Sunday.

Acting under the National Defence regulations, police yesterday arrested Lady Mosley, wife of Sir Oswald Mosley, British Fascist leader (who has been in custody for several weeks), Captain G. H. L. F. Pitt-Rivers, formerly A.D.C. to the late Lord Forster when he was Governor-General of Australia, and the Rev. H. E. B. Nye and the Rev. J. V. Thomas, both of Lincolnshire.

The windows of Nye's rectory were stoned in 1937 after he had contributed a pro-German article to the British Fascist newspaper "Action."

Lady Mosley was arrested at her home at Savehay Farm, Denham (Buckinghamshire), after a short interview. Scotland Yard officials, including a woman, visited her farm.

After she had refused an offer to be allowed to take her 10-weeks old son with her, she stepped into a car with the detectives.

She was formerly Mrs. Bryan Guinness, is a daughter of Lord Redesdale, and a sister of Miss Unity Freeman-Mitford, one of Hitler's closest English friends.

Goering once called her a perfect specimen of Aryan womanhood, because of her golden hair and blue eyes.

Her marriage to Mosley was one of the most mysterious episodes in his life. It was reported from Berlin in 1938 that the marriage had taken place at Munich in 1937 in Hitler's private office, with Hitler as best man.

Mrs. Goodlake, who owns the estate formerly of St. Thomas's Hospital, resides at the Fisheries.

[Dick Morten was probably born in the house or at least locally.]

**Casement book extracts:**

‘Dined with Mrs Hicks & Mr Hicks at Les Lauriers. Home and out Carlo Zioni 12/6’. **[**F.R Hicks, writing on 22 February 1911, the next year, was joshing Casement about his endless travelling. He said “I hope your godson won’t want to follow.” The godson was little Roger Hicks whose photograph is to be found in the 1911 Cash Ledger. In the very letter which may have enclosed that photo, his father added “Ever since I married, Providence has made everything smile for me. I hope you’ll do the same one day.” Casement was then aged forty-six.[[1]](#endnote-1) From prison on 14 July 1916, he asked that a copy of the poem *Easter Week* be sent to “a little godson of mine”, and “another in France named fully after me”, happily unaware of Herbert Ward’s desperate efforts to have his son, that particular godson, renamed.[[2]](#endnote-2)]

In the flyleaf, Casement stuck a photograph of a standing toddler on which he inscribed “My godson ‘Roger’ Hicks.” Baby Roger had been christened on 15 February 1910, in Casement’s absence. The baby’s father Lt. Col. F.R. Hicks was an officer at Fermoy, Co. Cork and Dick Morten’s brother-in-law. It is this sort of private, human detail, as Roger Sawyer notes, that precludes the likelihood of forgery.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Hicks wrote him the following letter:

**NLI 13073/8/2**

**22 February 1911**

Casement note: “R. 25 Feb in Dublin” [Confirms Ledger entry of him being in Dublin on this date]

Springfield,

Fermoy

Co. Cork

22.2.11

My dear Roger

Glad to hear from you, although you say little about yourself or your plans. I hope you're fairly fit & certainly you are wandering more than ever; I am here will be no out of the way spot on the globe where your footsteps have not trod. I hope your godson wont want to follow them all, or his parents will see little of him. At present he is quite a pattern of virtue & has not given us a minute's anxiety since his birth: he is a picture of health, ??? as big as John was - that is a young giant - & not bad looking as babies go. And of course we're very proud of him & all of them.

My wife is splendid, up & alert now, & very pleased with herself, much more so than if she'd added another superfluous woman - & the ??? is quite a success, i re ugly age still but clean & long limbed. We've been having a quiet happy time here in Ireland & very content with the world as we find it; in fact there's no doubt we've had more than our fair share of good things. Ever since I married Providence has made everything smile for me; I hope you'll do the same one day.

Yours sincerely

F.R. Hicks.

**[8-31 March:]** To Denham Bill at Norfolk Hotel 7.7…Ticket to Denham 3.0…**[Casement was now setting off to Dick Morten’s house where he stayed for a month, allowing himself only half a dozen day trips to London. The task in hand was the writing of the final version of his report. March was therefore a cheap month with next to no lodging charges and sexual costs of only a guinea. The expenditure total of £41 compared favourably to January’s £90 and February’s £70.]** Got letters from F.O. and very nice ones too…Telegram Lady Charlotte **[another Norbury** **daughter]** …Began my report on Putumayo…Very weary work – in pencil all. Eyes giving out…Heard from Millar.Private letters posted by Parry at his expense…Ended it practically to-day **[15 March]** about 28,000-30,000 words in six days, not badwork…Patrick’s Day **[17 March]** Mrs Green refunded the £2 on her books. It is good ofher.I sent it to the Irish boys in Dublin. **[i.e. to Patrick Pearse’s school, St. Enda’s]** …Miss E.M. Stear, Typist…Very cheap good typist. 10d. per 1000 words…Washing clothes at Savoy…Motored with Dick to Cricklewood through Willesden Green etc to Metallurgique Car Coy. **[Dick Morten indeed had such a Metallurgique car which is pictured on page 104 of the privately printed memoir of Herbert Ward written by his eponymous son.[[4]](#endnote-4)]**

…“Dick Morten was the first of the crew that Gavan Duffy had to come down hard upon. He had seen Casement with their mutual friend Jackie Morgan. Writing to Duffy on 9 June, Morgan apologised: “I am sorry indeed that Dick Morten talked as he did…Had I known he was going to talk thus I should not have left him behind.” His letter quoted Dick as having asked “What about the other things Roddie?” to which Casement made no reply, except to say “Dick you’ve upset me.” Morgan was relieved that “Morten said not a word about it being common talk” reporting that Casement talked to Dick (his friend for twenty-six years) “as he would talk to no one else not even Miss Bannister.” She reported separately that a sleepless and emotional Roger, in his distress had clasped Dick’s hand for several minutes. What worried Professor Morgan most, he said, was that Dick’s tactlessness revealed to Casement that he knew of the stories. He felt Dick was “probably the last man he would wish to hear of them.”[[5]](#endnote-5) Casement was later to write to his friend pleading opaquely, “Don’t mind what anyone says about me, Dick – It is easy to pelt the man who can’t reply or who is gone.”[[6]](#endnote-6)

The capacity of these stressed people at least to get used to the notion of Casement being homosexual is quite illustrative and significant. They did, and were in most instances the better for it. Duffy immediately wrote to Dick, to the Savoy Hotel rather than his house of the same name! Nervous of the harm arising from indiscreet talk, he warned “Dear Mr Morten, my client begs me to impress upon you the great importance of talking to nobody under any circumstances about any of the matters you discussed yesterday.”[[7]](#endnote-7) However Gertrude, reporting later to Nina, wrote that once Morten had “blurted out it out we could discuss it more or less – for there were always warders present.”[[8]](#endnote-8) Some weeks after the execution, Duffy felt able to complain “Morten has not paid anything! Though he originally promised a lot.” In reply, defending his friend, Professor Morgan pointed out that he was the “very soul of honour” but hard hit by the war as he and his wife’s money was largely in Belgian companies and they were getting no dividend.[[9]](#endnote-9)

Sidney Parry turned out to be a worse problem than Dick Morten. Professor Morgan in his letter of 9 June explained that Parry “is going next week…and has been talking a great deal in my presence about the other charge. I have thought it wise to write today to him and request him if he does visit Roger Casement to avoid all references to those charges and such matters.” Gertrude too was seriously worried about Sidney whom she said “has expressed a desire to go with me and thank Goodness I say, for then he cannot make any faux pas in that direction.”[[10]](#endnote-10) On 4 July 1916 he gaily advised “I am having a book sent to Roddie by Benson which seems fine and helpful: *The Friendship of Christ*. H.B. clearly was of the same nature as our friend and their spirits will understand each other.” In hasty reply, Duffy realising he had to continue bailing out a very leaky ship wrote “Thanks for yours of yesterday. I shall be very glad of an early opportunity of meeting you as one cannot write about things but you will be very glad to hear that on the main issue everything is going splendidly.”

**HERBERT WARD’S FAMILY AND LIFE**

[**http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/memoir/mrpoilu/ward1.htm**](http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/memoir/mrpoilu/ward1.htm)

Herbert Fitz-Edwin Ward (Edwin Ward1) was born 11 JAN 1863 in London, Middlesex, England, and died 5 AUG 1919 in Rolleboise on the Seine, France. He married Sarita Sanford 21 APR 1890 in New York, daughter of Charles Henry Sanford and Sarah Frances "Sallie" Miller. She was born 8 JUN 1861 in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and died 11 NOV 1944 in Dickfield House, Denham, Buckinghamshire, England.

**POW son** - A marriage has been arranged, and will shortly take place, between Captain HERBERT SANFORD WARD, R.F.C., elder son of Herbert Ward, of 105, Avenue de Malakoff, Paris, and JOYCE, younger daughter of Sir Charles Norris NICHOLSON, Bt., M.P., of 35, Harrington Gardens, S.W.

At St. Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate, on November 15th 1917, Captain HERBERT SANDFORD WARD, R.F.C., elder son of Mr. Herbert Ward, was married to Miss JOYCE NICHOLSON, daughter of Sir Charles and Lady Nicholson. Captain Ward, who has not yet reached his majority, was shot down over the German lines two years ago, and escaped after five months as a prisoner. Captain Haughton, R.F.C., was best man.

Got two pages from Roger Sawyer of Rev. Herbert Ward’s memoir. He has a copy of Ward's book, *An Erratic Odyssey*, published privately in 1988 from 8 Redcliffe Gardens SW10 9EU by his great nephew James Barclay. It has a picture of Dick Morten in his Metallurgique 1917. Ward says “Morten “was an old friend of my father, and his family had lived for centuries at the Savoy Farm (always known as ‘The Savvy’) an ancient house containing some delightful Elizabethan frescoes…Dick had recently sold ‘The Savvy’ to the Mosleys and had moved to Hill’s House in the village.” Morten was offering Herbert and Joyce the adjacent Bowyer that he had also bought. They moved in.

He was Rev Herbert Ward junior, son of the sculptor and possibly one himself. The father's work or some of it is in the Smithsonian. 02073520736. borneobill@aol.com

Daughters of Herbert Fitz-Edwin Ward and Sarita Sanford:

Sarita Enriqueta Ward was born 30 JAN 1891 in London, England, and died 22 June 1985 in Denham, Buckinghamshire, England. She married Colville Adrian de Rune Barclay 10 April 1912 in Paris, France, son of Colville Arthur Durell Barclay and Louise Melanie de Belzim. He was born 17 September 1869 in Paris, France, and died 2 June 1929 in Paris, France. She married secondly Robert Gilbert Vansittart 29 July 1931 [Lord Vansittart]. He was born 25 June 1881 in Farnham, Surrey, England, and died 14 February 1957 in Denham, Buckinghamshire, England. Child of Sarita Enriqueta Ward and Colville Adrian de Rune Barclay: Robert Charles Sanford Barclay was born 14 February 1918 in Washington, District of Columbia, and died 24 January 2001 in Woodbridge, Suffolk, England.

Frances Georgiana Ward was born 1893 in Harefield, Middlesex, England. She married Eric Clare Edmund Phipps [Sir Eric Phipps, Ambassador in Berlin] 29 April 1911, son of Constance Edmund Henry Phipps [Brussels Ambassador] and Maria Jane Munday. He was born 27 October 1875 in Marlborough, Wiltshire, England, and died 13 August 1945 (six children inc. William).

Hugh

Are you still paid up for Ancestry? If so, could you look up this marriage please and go further back if possible? I was checking out RDC's friend Dick Morten who was always a bit of a mystery especially as to how he was first met. Graham Townsley was very interested in him. He and his wife lived in Denham, Bucks. Their house, the Savvy, Savehay or Savoy, was eventually bought by Sir Oswald Mosley.  
  
I discovered from Dick Morten's will that he remarried after his first wife's death in 1924 someone with the Christian names Edith Alice. As he died in 1930 the marriage was between 1924 and 1930. She died in 1949.  
  
Checking on the internet I noticed after a while that Herbert Ward's son owned and gave away property in Denham (the village green) and that Ward's daughter Sarita lived there with her second husband Lord Vansittart. So Ward may be the link. But who was Edith Alice Morten before marriage?

Jeff.

Jeff - These announcements in The Times will answer some of your questions. The marriage between Richard H. Morten and Edith A. Green was registered in Chelsea 1928 iv. Her death was registered in Eton 1949 age 73. Assuming that age is correct, she was b. between Feb. 1875 and Feb. 1876. In view of the Welsh connections, I think she was the one whose birth was registered at Pembroke 1875. You may be able to look up her father in a clerical directory.  
   
I can't explain why she was known as Peter, but my great-uncle Charlie's wife Kathleen was also always called Peter (and not Peta, either).

best from Hugh

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| --- | --- |
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Postal Searches and Copies Department   
York Probate Sub-Registry  
1st Floor, Castle Chambers  
Clifford Street  
York

YO1 9RG

10 November 2010

Please may I have copies of the probated wills of:

Richard Morten who died in 1867.

Frances Mary Morten who died in 1924 (b. 1869).

Richard Henry Morten who died in 1930 (b. 1859).

They all lived at one time at The Savoy, Denham, Bucks and may have lived there at their deaths.

I enclose a cheque for £15.

Jeffrey Dudgeon

MORTEN FRANCES MARY F 1869 42 Eton Buckinghamshire (d. 1924)

MORTEN RICHARD HENRY M 1859 52 Eton Buckinghamshire (d. 1930)

Name: Richard Morten Death: 1867

**1901 CENSUS**

Richard H Morten 42 born Denham Bucks Buckinghamshire Denham Farmer

Francis M Morten 32 born Plymouth Devon Buckinghamshire Denham

Helen Janet Morten 25 born Denham Bucks Buckinghamshire Denham

Gertrude M Morten 22 born Denham Bucks Buckinghamshire Denham [**Sisters??]**

**1911 CENSUS**

MORTEN FRANCES MARY F 1869 42 Eton Buckinghamshire (d. 1924)

MORTEN RICHARD HENRY M 1859 52 Eton Buckinghamshire (d. 1930)

**Casement letter to Dick Morten of 26 November 1900.**

**Baptist can hardly have been more than a child if Mrs. Morten was born in 1869. The Mortens married around 1889.**

I have often thought of you and poor Baptist - and of the sorrow it has brought into your lives - his early death. But do you know, Dick, I am more and more coming to the opinion that an early death is best. To die when you are young, strong - with beauty in your mind and face - before the sadness of lost youth has robbed life of its worth - is after all the best. I wish I had died some years ago - life is for some of us a poor thing, and as I grow older the prospect grows blanker. Baptist is perhaps the best off - at any rate he has been saved perhaps many years of suffering - the sadness is for those who remain for those who long for the dear face they will never see again. You said I remember in my rooms it did not seem worth while to be born to die so young as he is. Well, I often think, and of late more than ever, it does not indeed seem worthwhile to have been born to live the life marked out for us - or, if you will, that we mark out for ourselves. The mystery is inscrutable. Why so much love was poured into the human heart at birth, to be poured out again on unworthy objects. Why indeed ere we crested capable of perceiving, of longing for the highest, and incapable of attaining it, incapable of anything, it seems but failure; repeated ignominious failure.

**William Phipps (grandson of Herbert Ward and of Casement’s other enemy Constantine Phipps))**

Daily Telegraph obituary 18 October 2009



[Comments](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/military-obituaries/naval-obituaries/6366615/William-Phipps.html#dsq-content)

His family history, with which he did not engage, sat oddly with the character that he forged. William Anthony Dominic Phipps was born in Berlin on April 21 1936, the sixth and much the youngest child of Sir Eric Phipps, the British ambassador in Germany, who had early discerned the threat from the Nazis.

Still, William liked to recall that Hitler had presented a rose tree in celebration of his birth; indeed, when in especially good spirits, he would venture that he had been dandled on the Führer's knee. His German nanny, meanwhile, expressed disappointment that he had not been christened Adolf.

The diplomatic streak was firmly embedded in the Phipps family. William's grandfather, a friend of King Leopold II, had been ambassador to Belgium; and his great-great-grandfather, the 1st Earl of Mulgrave, had been appointed foreign secretary by William Pitt the Younger.

William's mother Frances was the daughter of the African explorer and artist Herbert Ward, author of such works as *Five Years with the Congo Cannibals* and *My Life with Stanley's Rear Guard*. More cannily, Ward married into an Argentine railway fortune.

From 1937 to 1939 Eric Phipps served as ambassador in Paris, and William retained vague memories of the grand embassy in the Faubourg St Honoré. During the Second World War he lived with his parents in Wiltshire. His father died in 1945.

His mother being a Catholic convert, William was sent to school at Gilling, and then to Ampleforth. At 14, however, he succeeded in releasing the brakes of a steamroller that had been unwisely parked at the top of a hill near the school. The careering leviathan plunged into a pub, and William was required to leave Ampleforth. This he did in some style, in an aeroplane which his mother diverted for the purpose.

William resumed his education at the Nautical College at Pangbourne. He served with the Royal Marines from 1954 to 1956, and brushed briefly with biology at the University of San Francisco. Then, after a drunken spree in Victoria, British Columbia, he discovered that he had joined the Royal Canadian Navy.

He became a deep-sea diver – not, he insisted, "the pansy James Bond coral reef stuff", but rather creeping about the dark floors of filthy harbours, searching for mines. At first he would scream from claustrophobia, "the clammy death", but, as he explained, no one heard.

He came to love both the work and the rough, tough comradeship. Eventually, though, eager to return home and marry, he looked for ways of breaking his contract. Hauled up on a charge of inebriating his fellow ratings with champagne at Christmas, he threw a cork at an officer and jumped overboard into the freezing waters off Newfoundland.

Rescued just before perishing, Phipps was court-martialled and placed in solitary confinement. Shortly afterwards he and his fellow prisoners were paraded on deck and ordered to call out the names of trees. "Oak tree", "ash tree", "lime tree" went the cries. "Lava-tree", shouted Phipps.

Nevertheless, in 1960 he obtained an honourable discharge. His experiences had developed a wholly innocent personality. Moreover, he had mastered the rare art of being extremely funny without ever injuring anyone else's feelings or reputation.

Outrageous party tricks, often requiring great skill, were his stock-in-trade. He could play tunes on a bicycle pump as though it were a Swanee whistle, or simulate a rhythm section with a pair of spoons. Children loved him.

Most characteristic was his voice, closer in tone to the East End than to the chancelleries of Europe, but with its swoops, emphases and repetitions perfectly adapted to expressing his amusement and wonder at the strange ways of the world, and his delight in friendship.

In 1960 Phipps married Henrietta, daughter of the artist Henry Lamb; typically, he claimed that he had been obliged to advertise for a best man. The marriage proved exceptionally happy, with each taking immense and undisguisable pride in the other. After his tempest-tossed youth, William had reached port.

At Pangbourne, he had played the fife in a marching band. Now he concentrated on the flute and piccolo, and arranged to work with Rudall Carte, a firm which made these instruments by hand in Islington. The business, however, collapsed before he joined it, so he undertook an apprenticeship with the ecclesiastical silversmith Michael Murray, in Clerkenwell.

Wholly unprepared for this exacting craft, he was fortunate to find such a patient mentor, who in 1963 recommended him to the Art Workers' Guild. He became fascinated with the forging of spoons, and began to experiment with their manufacture. At first he worked in his garage, before acquiring a workshop in the Clerkenwell Road.

Phipps specialised in hand-forged silver, now a rare technique, under which the hot material is beaten into shape with a heavy hammer. Soon he was adding knives and forks to his repertoire, and then branching out into tea and coffee pots, chalices and goblets, tumblers, and boxes in the shape of apples and pears.

As he developed his craft, his work gained a sculptural elegance unmatched by any contemporary. Press attention led to a multiplication of commissions, including dinner sets for up to 12 places.

After he exhibited at Cameo Corner, near the British Museum, in 1970 and 1971, there was a great demand for his engraved, decorative eggs. In 1999 a solo show at Egg, in Kinnerton Street, further boosted the sale of his spoons, knives and forks.

Over the years the Victoria & Albert Museum, Goldsmiths' Hall, the Design Centre, Sotheby's, the Barbican Centre, Leighton House, and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge all displayed Phipps's work, along with many other galleries. One of his specialities was making large paddle spoons; and in 2002 he was asked to create some with the Queen's Jubilee hallmark, to be sold by the Friends of the Victoria and Albert.

Away from his work, Phipps was friendly with his parish priest, Michael Hollings, and actively involved in the feeding of down-and-outs in his area. After Father Hollings died, William claimed to feel a tap on his shoulder every time he was inclined to slack off in this work. Behind the clown there was always a deep-reflecting double, capable of reciting reams of poetry, and firm in the principles of his faith.

He was a member of the Serpentine Swimming club, and devoted to the odd mix of his fellow swimmers, with whom he took the plunge in all weathers. To these friends, as to many in the silversmith trade, he was "Bill" Phipps.

Last Christmas, though, he found himself short of breath in the water. When mesothelioma, a form of lung cancer, was diagnosed, he submitted to treatment with more amusement than hope, and greatly enjoyed sharing macabre jokes with a former boxer in his ward. His doctor described him as a "heart-lifting" patient, as opposed to the more common "heart-sinking" variety.

William and Henrietta Phipps had three sons and a daughter.

1. NLI 13073/8/ii [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. NYPL Maloney Papers, Box 3 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Sawyer 1997 pp. 21 & 59 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Copy of page supplied to author by Roger Sawyer [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. NLI 10763/8 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. NLI Acc 4902, Folder 3, 8 July 1916 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. NLI 10763/8 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. NLI 14100 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. NLI 10763/24 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. NLI 10763/9 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)