

**My Story of Richard Jenkins Poole King -  
By Victoria Hawkey (nee King). Autumn 1990.**

The Kings came from Wiltshire, from a Manor called Samways at Alvediston near Broadchalke. One of the sons, John, had a great wish to go to sea and, as he had elder brothers, there was no need for him to stay in Wiltshire to help with their lands. So, at an early age, he came to Bristol and was responsible for starting what became a family firm of Ship Owners. John King was Sheriff of Bristol in 1719 and Mayor in 1732. He was buried at St. John's in the Park and his grave can be seen there in the Church Yard.

Through marriage, the King family eventually established themselves in a very charming Manor farm house called The Lodge – I think – at Iron Acton in Gloucestershire. In the 1960s I remember it had a wonderful avenue of Elm trees, but sadly since then all these have succumbed to the elm disease. But I have seen it recently and it still looks a delightful house and farm. Since about 1770 most Kings not buried at St. Mary Redcliffe have been buried at Iron Acton, the last as late as 1958. There is a tablet in the Church commemorating members of the family.

John's grandson, Thomas King (1759-1841) sold Iron Acton and moved into No. 2 Redcliffe Parade where he developed the business and turned it towards trading with West Africa. Thomas married Sarah Poole of Netherstowey and they were the parents of R.J.P. King.

It is always said that Richard was born within the sound of Redcliffe bells – a lovely phrase – so I conclude that his birth in 1799 must have taken place in the house on Redcliffe Parade, as it is certainly the only house owned by the Kings from which these lovely bells could have been easily heard.

The more I read about my great Uncle Richard, the more I like him. From his portrait he was a distinguished looking man and he was a much respected citizen. He took a full part in the life of Bristol, was President of the Chamber of Commerce, a Councillor, Justice of the Peace, President of the Colston Parent Society, first Chairman of the Docks Committee, and Mayor of Bristol in 1844. He was a partner with his brother William Kerstamen King of the Family Shipping Firm which, by this time, was called R. and W. King. It can be seen that Richard was certainly a hard worker and his interests were wide. Through his Mother and her family living in the Netherstowey area of Somerset, he came in contact with many interesting people.

Thomas Poole, his uncle, was the friend of many well known contemporaries such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Josiah Wedgwood and Humphrey Davy. This uncle also undertook the first Census of England for the Government. His remuneration for this was £600 out of which he paid 30 clerks! He also established rural Benefit Clubs in Somerset.

But to return to Richard Jenkins Poole King and his home and his life at Kensington House, Brislington which he bought in about 1847.

He first married Penelope Anstice by whom he had 1 daughter, Alice May. Penelope died young and she is buried in St. Mary Redcliffe.

He married, as his second wife, Annie Liddon by whom he had 4 daughters and 1 son.

Annie was the daughter of a brilliant and immensely brave Naval man, Captain Matthews Liddon – He was frequently mentioned in Naval dispatches and much has been written of his exploits and gallantry. In January 1819 he was appointed to command “The Gripen” and in this vessel he sailed to the Arctic regions with Sir Edward ....., another outstandingly brave man, their aim being to discover a North West passage. These two must have become good friends and I believe were already known to each other as the name Parry figures in more than one generation of the Liddon family. So again Richard, through his second marriage came to know .... interesting people. For instance his eldest brother-in-law, Henry Parry Liddon, was a leading figure in the Church, a Canon of St Paul’s Cathedral and a very popular preacher. Every Sunday St. Paul’s was full to the doors with people flocking to hear his hour long sermons. He was something of a stormy petrel and for a time the Church of England was on tenterhooks fearing that he would be following his great friend, Cardinal Newman and secede to Rome. His life has been fully recorded in various books and there is a Memorial to him in St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Another of Annie’s brothers, Edward Liddon, became renowned as a Doctor in Taunton. He was concerned by the plague of some ague which was rife among those who lived in the Sedgemoor and Curry Moor areas of Somerset. He noticed, when travelling in France in the same sort of low-lying country, that there were many withy trees planted along the streams and ditches and no-one there suffered from this ague. So he introduced Withy trees into Somerset and lived to see the ague become a thing of the past. This was several years before the discovery was made that mosquitoes were responsible for malaria. Undoubtedly the withies made the water unpalatable to the mosquitoes and the ague (malaria) declined dramatically.

One of Annie King’s sisters married a Colonel Ambrose and I include this as it may lead to the burial place of Richard Jenkins Poole King. Not much was known about Colonel Ambrose by the younger generation of our family until the 1960s when a Mr. Darwent from Lancashire bought an antique revolver at an auction and engraved on it he found, “Mayor Ambrose 3<sup>rd</sup> Regt”. Mr. Darwent took endless trouble to discover something about the original owner of this weapon. As a result he wrote and had published in the “Guns Review” of August 1965, an account from which we learnt that George James Ambrose was born in 1824, the son of John Falconer Ambrose, Gentleman. He joined the 62<sup>nd</sup> (Wiltshire) Regt. as Ensign in April 1845. Lieutenant – 1847 when he transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot (Bufs). In May 1855, as a Captain, he disembarked with his Regiment at Balaclava. There he took part in the siege of Sebastopol and the assault on the Great Redan. He was mentioned in Lord Raglan’s dispatches and received British, French and Turkish Medals. He was promoted Lt. Colonel in December 1857 and sailed

in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion from India, thence to China where he took part in the capture of the Taku Forts and the occupation of Peking.

In 1861 he returned to England and was invested with the order of C.B. In 1862 he married Richard King's sister-in-law, Louisa Liddon, in Clifton Parish Church. While staying in Kensington House with his sister and brother-in-law, Colonel Ambrose was taken ill. After a very short illness he died on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1862. He was so young and had been married less than a year. Poor Louisa, how hard.

In a short time Col. Ambrose had obviously made himself loved and respected by the King family. Ambrose has always been a familiar name to us and my own father, son of William King, Richard's brother and partner, was Edmund Ambrose King.

Colonel Ambrose was buried in Arno's Vale Cemetery where a tall stone standing on a pedestal records – On the top step, Lt. Colonel George James Ambrose, C.B., died July 18<sup>th</sup> 1862 aged 38. On the bottom step, Richard Poole King, Esq. of Kensington House, Brislington. Died on his birthday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1874 aged 75. (It would be interesting to know if this cross and pedestal survived the bombs of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Also I find it difficult to understand the order of the names; they seem to conflict with the dates, but this is what my family papers record).

It can be seen that through his antecedents and in-laws, Richard Jenkins Poole King had a wide range of contacts and those people must have helped to make him the man he was. As in most families, his character and qualities came through and his children, most of whom I knew. They were born and brought up at Kensington House and it became a very popular place for family gatherings – situated on the outskirts of Bristol. It was a beautiful property where Richard's family could pursue their love of horses and ride in the surrounding countryside.

The daughter of his first marriage, Alice, married Alderman Francis Fox, whose family in the 1920s, when I started to take an interest in these things, owned Oil and Paint Works near Temple Meads Station. Francis and Alice Fox lived at Yate House, Yate where there was a most beautiful garden and conservatory and he collected a large and very good library. At Yate House they brought up four children. Laura was the only one to marry, she died young, and I do not remember her. Richard's three other grandchildren at Yate were Willie, who I remember as a quiet person, and Richard (always called Dick) and Fanny. These last two were strong, amusing and very eccentric characters and were known by my generation as "Dickie Dammit" and "Fanny Forrit". Dick had a habit of talking to himself and if anything untoward occurred, one could hear him cursing loudly, "damn this and damn that". He was an enterprising person and in 1899 he bought a Daimler motor car. That summer he set out from Gloucestershire with one passenger to drive the 80 miles to the Daimler Works at Coventry. They left at 5am on a Sunday morning to avoid the traffic (horse-drawn vehicles, riders, shepherds and sheep no doubt!) and reached Coventry in good order before nightfall. A Daimler success story of the 1890s.

Fanny was short and the broadest lady I have ever seen. She had certainly not inherited her grandfather's physique. She was kind and a great talker and, when stumped for anything to say, she paused, and while considering the next subject she would continue her chat by saying, "forrit" every three or four seconds.

Richard had five children by his second marriage to Annie, one son and four daughters.

A few years after Richard's death, Annie felt that city life was encroaching more and more on Brislington and a change had to be made. She sold Kensington House and their tenure there is commemorated by Kings Road which passes near the land where the house stood. Annie moved to Standish House in Gloucestershire, which she rented from Lord Sherborne. Here there was stabling for 30 horses and Richard's family could carry on their great love of country pursuits. After ten or more happy years at Standish Annie, who was a good business woman, felt that the time had come to move to a smaller place. Finances were not quite so easy as the Family Firm was uncle's p..... from the South African War, so she found and rented Newark Park, a most beautifully situated house high on the hills above Wotton-under-Edge. It had been built in the early 16C as a hunting lodge for the Poyntz family. In 1769 it was sold to St. James Clutterbuck and that family owned it until about 1950 when it was left to the National Trust. It is now one of their smaller and most attractive properties in Gloucestershire, Annie rented Newark Park from Mrs. Power Clutterbuck and the Richard Kings lived there for over 50 years in great contentment. When they went economies had to be made but they were not very apparent; small rooms were made into bathrooms, a wing was added for the staff, and near the stables a cottage was built for the coachman. There were loose boxes for 25 horses, 500 acres of land with some good rough shooting, a trout stream running through a lake, and the family continued to enjoy their way of life.

Sarah, the eldest daughter, was the only one to marry, her husband being Edward Cornelius Cartwright who came from Aynho House in Northamptonshire. Mary, the next daughter, was a brilliant gardener and an indefatigable worker for the Red Cross and she returned to Standish House in the 1914-18 War and ran it as a hospital for the wounded.

Alice Annie, the third daughter, was one of the most intelligent and delightful people it has been my good fortune to know. For some reason she was nicknamed "Dottie", but if ever there was a misnomer it was that. She loved life in the country, was a very good horse woman, was well read and could talk to anyone of any age about anything. Louisa, the fourth daughter was not very strong and lived a quiet life, but Tom, Richard's only son, was a very different kettle of fish. His world revolved around racing and hunting, he travelled widely, was very generous, and spent his money freely, giving himself and his friends a good time. Everyone was always welcome at Newark Park and Dottie, who I knew well, was a great one for keeping the family and endless friends in touch with one another.

The relationship between servant and master or mistress was always very good. Jennings was the coachman for many years and his daughter, Lizzie, cooked for the family until

her retirement late in life. I remember her with slight fear, but great respect and she kept me in order until her death when I was well into middle age.

Harry Cole was the garden boy at Kensington House, went onto Standish, and for years was the much loved gardener at Newark. We also remember his daughter, Lizzie Cole, with the greatest of affection. She joined the household at about the age of 12, the time they left school in those days, and rose through the ranks to be the friend, confidante to all, and housekeeper at Newark Park. After the last of the family there died, Lizzie, through a generous Trust which Richard King had provided, bought a small house on the outskirts of Bath which she called Newark. She died in an Old People's Home nearby, still supported by the Trust, in 1990 just after her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Richard Jenkins Poole King was certainly a man of many excellent qualities – a good Christian.