

*This is the Fifty-Seventh of an occasional series of articles by David Stone about incidents in the history of Swanton Morley and its church*

## **THE LOMBE ESTATES PASS TO FURTHER MEMBERS OF THE EVANS-LOMBE FAMILY**

There was an error in my last article (June Issue) and only the first of three pages was printed. Here, I present the missing two pages which start with the death of the Rev. Edward Evans who had adopted the name Lombe in 1860, and who had been badly injured in a carriage accident in Sept 1862

### **On 6 Oct 1862 Rev. Armstrong's diary said**

"The town much shocked to hear that Mr Lombe is dead! Since we were there a few days ago, gout has flown to the stomach and killed him! They say that he has not made a will. Poor Madame will return to Paris. It is a sad end to a courtship of sixteen years."

*I wonder why their courtship had to last so long? Is there some suggestion that he did not marry until he had inherited the estates?*

### **His brother, Rev. Henry Evans (the Elder) then adopted the name Lombe in 1862 and inherited the estate**

#### First, some background information on Henry Evans, the Elder

He was baptised in 1792.

He was ordained priest on 12 Dec 1816.

He married Sophia Cubitt in Norwich on 15 Oct 1818. Sophia was baptised in Honing on 15 October 1785. (The Cubitt family owned Honing Hall.)

By 1819 Henry was a stipendiary curate at Smallborough and all their children were baptised there.

He was made rector of Lyng in March 1836, and by 1841 he and his family were living in the rectory. And that was where they stayed until 1862 and the death of the above Edward Lombe. Rev. Henry Evans then adopted the name Henry Lombe.

The newly named Henry Lombe then moved to Bylaugh Hall. By the time of the 1871 census Henry was aged 78 and they were living in the "New House in Bylaugh". And they were living in some style. The census return shows that, in addition to seven relatives who were living with them, they had the following servants living in the house:

Butler	Scullery maid	Two Under-gardeners
Housekeeper	Coachman	General Domestic Servant
Lady's Maid	Two Grooms	Under-gamekeeper
Three Housemaids	Footman	

And this does not include those living in the lodges and cottages.

#### This article, from *Norfolk Annals*, October 1878, shows two different sides to the character of Rev. Henry Lombe

"He was for fifty years a parochial clergyman and for 24 years rector of Lyng. At Swanton Morley in 1831, when the poor-rates were at an appalling figure and poverty excessive, he set on foot and carried on for years on his own responsibility an extensive cotton-weaving business, reduced a turbulent population to order, and saved the whole population from starvation. In the days of incendiarism he was the main instrument in hunting down to their hiding places the leaders of that infamous movement, and the means of bringing the notorious Nockolds to justice.

Before the days of rural police, he organised a voluntary system of constabulary in his desperately disturbed parish of Lyng. In company with the farmers, he patrolled the parish during the whole winter, visited every farmstead and preserved the villagers from utter ruin. Clubs, coal charities and penny banks were under his personal superintendence to the last days of his active life.

Mr Lombe was succeeded in the possession of his extensive landed estates by his son, Mr Henry Evans-Lombe, of Melton Hall.”

*I think that this is enough about the various members of the Lombe family, although I may say something about the building of Bylaugh Hall.*

An article in an earlier edition of *Norfolk Annals* (25 March 1831) gives a little more background on incendiarism, and on the gruesome end of Richard Nockholds

“At the Norfolk Lent Assizes at Norwich, Richard Nockholds was indicted for setting fire to stacks, the property of William Blake at Swanton Abbot. And Robert Hunt, Josiah Davidson and David Davidson were charged as accessories. The jury found the prisoners not guilty. On the 26<sup>th</sup> they were indicted for setting fire to a stack the property of Richard Ducker of the same place. Nockholds was found guilty and sentenced to death: Josiah Davidson was convicted of being an accessory before the fact, recommended for mercy, and afterwards respited. Hunt and David Davidson were acquitted. Nockholds was executed on the Castle Hill, Norwich, on April 9<sup>th</sup>. His body was subsequently exhibited at his cottage opposite the barrack gates, Pockthorpe, “and a considerable sum was in this way raised for the widow.”

### **Henry Evans-Lombe (Henry Evans the Younger)**

We see from the first of the above articles that his son, Henry, the Younger, who inherited the estates in Oct 1878, had opted to call himself “Evans-Lombe” rather than just “Lombe”. This seems to have come about in two stages.

At the time of the 1861 census he was still called “Evans”. He had married his cousin, Louisa Evans (of North Tuddenham) and they had two daughters. He was rector of Eriswell in Suffolk and they were living at the rectory. Then, when his uncle, Edward Lombe died in 1862 and his father (Henry Evans the Elder) adopted the name “Lombe” and moved to Bylaugh Hall, this Henry Evans (the Younger) adopted the name Henry E. “Lombe” and moved to Great Melton Hall. In the 1871 census he was still living at Great Melton Hall, and he was still called Henry E. Lombe. In fact all his family are shown as having “Evans” as a forename preceding “Lombe”. His eldest son was Edward H.E. Lombe, aged 9.

#### The name becomes hyphenated

When his father died in Oct 1878 it was as Henry Evans-Lombe that he proved the will, and at that time he was described as being “of Bylaugh Park and of Great Melton Hall.” At the time of the 1881 census he was called Henry “Evans-Lombe” and was definitely living at Bylaugh Hall. Armstrong only makes one mention of him:

**30 November 1880:** “Dined at Bylaugh Hall – a very recherché dinner – real turtle and swan & French cookery. The Lombes very cordial and kind.”

I shall note in passing that Marie, the widow of Edward Lombe (formerly Beevor), died in Monte Carlo in April 1884.

### **The death of Henry Evans-Lombe**

He was still living with his wife Louisa and some of his family at Bylaugh Hall at the time of the 1891 census: they had 16 servants living in the Hall and many more living in the lodge and cottages. But when he died on 22 Dec 1897, aged 78, he was living at Melton Lodge, Yarmouth. (This became an Auxiliary War Hospital in WW1, and it closed in January 1919.) In his will he left £53,958 to Edward Henry Evans-Lombe. Louisa died in Yarmouth, aged 82, in 1901.

**Note that this Henry Evans-Lombe was the brother of Rev. Edward Henry Lombe who became rector of Swanton Morley in 1863 and had also adopted the name of “Lombe” about this time.**

**Great Melton Hall was abandoned in 1899**

I don't know who came to live in Great Melton Hall, after Henry Evans-Lombe moved out to go to Bylaugh Hall in 1878, but apparently plans for modernisation came to nothing and it was abandoned in 1899, and slid into dereliction.