

# My Other Grandmother

Sarah Ann Matthews was born in 1866 in Bigg's Cave in Dinton and she married Thomas James Bateman on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1890 in Dinton church. They were both 24 years old. They eventually had seven children, Eva, Elsie, Ethel, Leonard, Doris, Emma and Thomas.



These are the only photos that I have of them.



When I was born in Dinton in 1935 in the cottage now known as 'Whychert' cottage, Thomas and Sarah Bateman lived next door in what is known today as 'Valentine' cottage. In 1935 the two cottages had been made into three but have now been restored back to two. By this time my own Grandmothers were both dead. Sarah Ann was then only known to our family as Mrs. Bateman and to me, as I grew up, Granny Bateman. She was 69 years old when I was born and I have only recently found out that her name was in fact Sarah Ann (nee Matthews)! She was always 'Granny Bateman' to me. She named me and looked after me whenever my mother needed someone and she was certainly was a 'real' Grandmother to me. She treated me just like her own grandchildren. I never knew her husband (Thomas) as he died in 1937 and soon after that Granny Bateman moved to Plumtree cottage in Westlington.

Each Sunday morning I was carried by my father to visit her. I do have very faint recollections of these early visits to Plumtree Cottage. In the late 1930s or very early 1940s she and her family moved into a new council house in Upton. This is where I remember her and her family most. (After she left Plumtree cottage the new tenant completely gutted the cottage by trying to smoke out a wasp's nest in the thatched roof!!!)

By this time she had a new real grandson, Ronald born in 1941 and lived in Upton with his mother Emma and father Bertram not far from the Bateman household. I know that Granny Bateman gave Ronald the kind of love that she had given me over the years as she had plenty of love for all. As Upton was quite a fair distance from our house in Dinton my visits were now monthly but I was still always made very welcome. Living with her at that time was her son Leonard and two of her daughters Eva and Elsie. I would always address them as Uncle Len, Aunt Eva or Aunt Elsie and Ronald's mother Aunt Emma because they treated me as one of their family and I felt like one! The house was kept spotless and highly polished. They were always so interested in what I was doing at school or work etc. As the time came for me to take my leave Granny Bateman would call to one of her daughters to bring 'Gordon' a sweet and a sixpence. This happened every time without fail. They were always so kind to me and I assumed that their kindness was also for everyone.

Life was not without its problems for the Bateman family. In 1947 her daughter Ethel died and in 1948 when Ronald was just 7 years old his father Bertram Small died leaving his mother Emma a widow to bring up a young son on her own which she did so very successfully.

As I got older, left school, started work, joined the Royal Air Force, my visits became fewer but they were always pleased to see me and I still had to have a sweet and the sixpence grew to half a crown! In 1956 I was married and as Granny Bateman was too frail to come our wedding my wife and I went to see her straight after the ceremony so that she could see Dorothy in her wedding dress. Later when our own daughters were born we took them to see her and she would hold them just as she had held me 25 years before. Each year I would go to Upton to prune her roses and she would not let anyone else do that job! She always spoke so kindly and wisely and I never heard her grumble.

On one occasion Uncle Len showed us a picture of himself in army uniform on horseback. He looked a handsome young man. Dorothy asked him why he hadn't got married. His reply was, "None of the girls I knew would have me and I certainly wasn't going to marry a stranger." !! That was Uncle Leonard, a good dry country wit. After leaving the army he worked for many years at Blenheim farm in Dinton. The same farm that John Farmborough had once held the tenancy in 1831. On leaving the farm Leonard worked for the council as the local roadman before retirement, and was much loved and respected by all who knew him.



Elsie



Leonard



Emma

On Granny Bateman's death in 1962 aged 96, the family invited my wife and me to attend her funeral as part of her family which we did. She had been a much loved 'Grandma' by my family as well as her own. I could not have wished for a better 'Grandma' than Granny Bateman.

On researching my own family tree I found that one set of my great-great-grandparents was a man called Abel Matthews and his wife Ann Munday who lived in Dinton in 1822. A few months ago whilst researching Granny Bateman's family tree I found that one set of her grandparents was that same couple!! I'm not really sure what relationship that makes me to her but in 1935 I don't think that Granny Bateman knew either... or did she?

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