

## Updates

### No 1

A 44 page booklet by the Shanklin History Society is to appear December 2020. It is about the Smith's of Languard. Here is some background.

An Island folk world of 200 years ago.

We arrived in August 1975 and the new Isle of Wight folk scene was in full swing by then. My only link is that I was alive when the last of the Smith family of Languard, Shanklin, died in 1953! Amelia Frances Smith (1870-1953) was the daughter of John and Kate Smith. Her great uncles were Henry and Charles Smith of "Isle of Wight Words" and Superstitions 1881 fame. She was also married to Percy Stone of "Legends and Lays of Wight" fame, it is thought he drew on stories from his wife's family.

From her there is a family line back through Henry Smith to some other important characters, Amelia (Roach) Smith (-1853) and John Smith (1758-1812). There were in fact three important Amelias so it is a bit confusing. The other one married into the Pittis family. It seems it was a musical and story telling family. The most famous story of course is the "The Three Little Pigs" of Languard, Shanklin that was sent to Halliwell and published by him. It mentions several places in the Shanklin area. There are many more tales.

John Smith (1758-1812) sang what were called old songs such as "The old man dressed in leather" and drinking songs such the "The Wine Vault". Others probably included the Exciseman and many more of that time found in the 1800 singing books. In the Shanklin / Arreton area were sung the Home Harvest songs.

There is so much more to this story and I will try and update it.

### No 2

#### Crossing the Bar

This is considered the most famous of Tennyson's short poems. It was written on the ferry between Lymington and Yarmouth when he was journeying to his home at Farringford on the Isle of Wight. It took him 20 minutes and was written on the back of an envelope so biographers say. He wrote it in 1889 shortly before his death in 1892. It was almost immediately put to music by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford in 1890 and as a 4 parter by Sir Hubert Parry published in 1893. It was sung at Tennyson's funeral. I possibly heard the Parry version but I also put it to music in the late 1970s. A Freshwater vicar did write to me about various local hymns.

The rhythm of the poem is supposed to depict the sound of waves. We thought about using a verse as a chorus, writing a chorus or repeating certain lines to make it more interesting to a listener of the song. It can be sung in a funeral style or more with the pulse of the sea. Over time all the songs we originally recorded as scratch copies have been altered and hopefully upgraded. It is of course not a shanty or sea song but it is sung alongside songs such as the Farewell Shanty and Final Trawl.

I will try and add some more detail to some of the other songs.