

WILLIAM FOLLIOTT - ARTIST, DESIGNER, MASTER WEAVER

Born 25th March 1835 - Died 22nd December 1925
by Elfrida Sellick

What's in a Name?

From the time that Man elevated himself from the status of cave-dweller to live in organised communities he has had the urge to set himself apart from his fellows by giving himself a distinctive name. In this respect two main classifications of name spring to mind; vocational and tribal or clan.

In the first case the Bakers, Butchers and Smiths need no explanation but the tribal or clan name is more complex. Suffice it to say that Clans like the McDonalds, Gordons and Campbells are so numerous as to dominate the areas of Scotland in which they live. The name Folliott falls into this second category. Although rare in the British Isles it is very common in France in the province of Normandy. Spelt in various ways it is an old and honoured name; there was a Foliot (spelt that way) numbered amongst William the Conqueror's knights at the Battle of Hastings. His name is on the Roll of Battle Abbey A.D.1066. Another Folliott was Bishop of Hereford c.1300 and his tomb may be seen in Hereford Cathedral. Other Folliotts were of the Huguenot faith and it is with these that this chronicle is concerned.

The Huguenot Connection

The sixteenth century in Europe saw a breakaway movement from the Holy Roman Catholic Church; led by Martin Luther in Germany it spread to France and Northern Italy. In France these Protestants were called Huguenots, a nickname thought possibly to have come from the German 'Eidgenosse' (confederate).

They were subjected to almost incessant religious persecution from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The Massacre of Saint Bartholomew which began in Paris without warning on the Saint's feast day 24th August 1572 spread through the country and resulted in the killing of some 13,000 Huguenots. The massacre was ordered by Charles IX at the instigation of his mother Catherine de Medicis, fanatical leader of the Catholic League.

This continuous persecution was temporarily brought to a halt in 1589 by the death of Charles IX and the succession to the throne of Henri III of Navarre as Henry IV of France. The kingdom of Navarre was situated on the borders of Spain and S.W. France and the people including Henry were of the Protestant faith. Although on ascending the throne of France, Henry had for State reasons to embrace the Catholic faith he remained the champion of the Huguenots and by instigating the Edict of Nantes in 1589, guaranteed them freedom from persecution.

However on his death in 1610 the persecution was resumed and in 1685 Louis XIV brought this harassment to its climax when he revoked the Edict of Nantes. The result was that some 200,000 Huguenots left their homeland, some to settle in the Netherlands, others in England mostly in London and the South to join several thousand earlier refugees.

The Huguenots infused Britain with new vitality. Some were very rich merchants. Many were the top masters of their crafts; most were astonishingly industrious. The Huguenot impact on British life and industry was beyond measure. London's largest Huguenot community, the weavers of Spitalfields, helped revitalise the textile industry. It was into this community that William Folliott was born in 1835. It is probable that the Huguenot Folliotts came to England in the mass flight from France after the revoking of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

The Life of William Folliott

Early Days

William Folliott was born on the 25th March 1835 in the Bethnal Green area of Spitalfields, London. He was the son of William Folliott the Younger who in turn was the son of William Folliott the Shoemaker. (The terms 'Younger' and 'Shoemaker' are used to differentiate between the three Williams). His father William the Younger was indentured on the 9th October 1821 to one John Louvel to serve as an apprentice weaver for a period of seven years. It is interesting to note that William the Shoemaker also indentured him to the same John Louvel as an apprentice blacksmith on the 1st November 1821.

It would therefore appear that there was some doubt in William the Shoemaker's mind as to where his son's talents really lay, particularly as he was at that time only sixteen years of age, having been born in 1805, the year of the Battle of Trafalgar. Fortunately for the Folliott family, William the Younger chose to become a weaver, no doubt influenced by the evidence of the weaver's art all around him in Spitalfields. So it was we might surmise that he passed the art on to his son William Folliott whose life we are here portraying. Before we move on to subsequent events, we would recommend a study of the copies of the Apprentices Indentures in your possession. They provide an illuminating insight into the customs and moralities of 19th century Georgian Britain.

The Formative Years

From a cutting of 'The House Furnisher and Decorator' of June 1872, it appears that William Folliott in his earlier years worked for Messrs. Norris and Company in Spitalfields. They were silk weavers descended from the original Huguenot refugees and had over the years acquired a first class reputation for the weaving of silk damasks, brocatelles, poplins, etc. for curtains and other upholstery purposes. They had been awarded First Class Medals in the London 1851 and Paris 1855 Exhibitions. Their brocades and brocatelles were being extensively used for various Foreign Courts as well as for Windsor Castle.

It was in this environment that William Folliott's talent for design was encouraged and in 1862 his design for a chair seat upholstery of gold roses on a scarlet background won the Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Arts at an International Exhibition. He was then aged only 27.

Branching Out

Shortly after this success he decided to go into business on his own account. A self colour floral silk pattern in ivory in our possession is stamped 'W. Folliott - Designer for fabrics - 457 Bethnal Green Road'. From then on it appears his talent for design grew and his work became more and more prolific until in 1872 we find he was in touch with the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert) with a view to contributing some specimens of his work in silk to the branch Museum at Bethnal Green (still in existence as an offshoot of the V. & A.).

In September 1872 his offer was accepted; a letter dated 10th September from G.F. Dunscombe, Director of the South Kensington Museum stated: 'I am directed to inform you that the authorities of the South Kensington Museum have pleasure in accepting your kind offer to contribute a collection of specimens illustrative of the silk manufacture for exhibition at the Branch Museum at Bethnal Green.' In December 1872 the offer was made un fait accompli.

A letter dated December 21st from F. Coles, Director of the Bethnal Green Museum states, 'Dear Sir, I have exhibited six frames of your silks and shall hope to have the remaining two in their places by Tuesday.'
(Authors' note:- These samples are probably still in existence at the Bethnal Green Museum.)

In 1885 there occurred an event of great significance to the Weavers of Spitalfields; the Huguenot Bicentenary. This was the commemoration by the descendants of the Huguenots in England of the Bicentenary of the revoking of the Edict of Nantes on the 22nd October 1685. The celebrations continued for a whole week and we are indebted to the 'London Standard' of October 23rd 1885 for a very full description of the events.

To celebrate the Huguenots' peaceful 200 years of co-existence in England, they included a special service at the parish church of St. Matthew, Bethnal Green and a luncheon at the French Protestant Hospital given by the Governors to a large number of guests representing the principal Huguenot families. After luncheon the guests were invited to see an exhibition of the work of the Huguenot Weavers over the years. We are told in the report that, 'a series of large volumes lent by Mr. Folliott, containing patterns of all varieties of silks woven by the descendants of the Huguenots in Bethnal-green and Spitalfields, from 1790 to the present time, were constantly surrounded by visitors.' From this we may deduce that by now William was a person of consequence in the Spitalfields community and a leading authority on the weaving industry.

Triumph and Disaster

At some time between 1885 and 1892 William Folliott took a very important step in his career; he became a partner in the firm of Messrs. Daniel Walters and Company of Braintree, Essex. Since 1825 the weaving industry in Spitalfields, faced with the intense opposition always present from France and Italy, had been going into steady decline. It was to keep pace with the times and update their machinery and working conditions that many of the leading London manufacturers started up looms and factories at Sudbury, Braintree and other places in Essex. No doubt it was this growing trend that influenced William in his decision and at the same time he moved house from Bethnal Green to Bocking near Braintree.

Messrs. Daniel Walters and Company were a very successful firm of silk weavers, particularly in the field of furniture brocades of which they were exporting an immense quantity annually to America and the Colonies. Under William Folliott's design influence they went from strength to strength.

From the 'Art Journal' of that period we learn from an article 'Silks and Satins' by Lucie H. Armstrong, that they received the contract for a brocade backdrop for the torchlight scene of Henry Irving's production of Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre as well as receiving much Royal Patronage.' This included a thousand yard run of brocades for the Prince of Wales's residence, Marlborough House; the crimson Dining Room of Windsor Castle (picture postcards of which may be currently purchased at the Castle) and the ball-room at Buckingham Palace. It is also probable that brocades decorating St. James's Palace came from Messrs. Walters and Company. All the designs for these commissions are attributable to William Folliott, who at the same time was receiving direct orders from Queen Victoria.

These and other commissions by various manufacturers undoubtedly had the effect of focussing interest on the silk weaving industry in England. The Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), gave the industry a tremendous fillip by extending his Royal Patronage. We are told in a newspaper cutting of indeterminate source that 'the Prince is setting the fashion for evening dress waistcoats figured and coloured, thus turning the clock back to the days of the Prince Regent and Beau Brummel.' Many of William Folliott's designs with their smaller and more intricate patterns and rich colourways were obviously intended for this purpose as well as for cravats and ladies dresses.

His success in this field of silk design was by now very marked, attracting the attention of the ladies of the county. In 1892 the 'Essex County Chronicle' and the 'East Anglian' both of December 19th, record the visit to the Braintree factory of Lady Brooke accompanied by Miss Tufnell. We are not certain of the status of Lady Brooke in Society but in the light of after events we may surmise that she was prominent in the Royal Court of the day. The newspapers record that: 'Her Ladyship was received by Mr. William Folliott, talented chief designer, manager and partner of the firm and was extremely interested in everything she saw. Mr. Folliott explained to his visitors the whole of the silk manufacture, from the cocoon to the finished pieces of brocaded silk for which the firm is celebrated.

Beautiful damasks, brocatelles and other furniture and dress materials were shown to the ladies in various stages of manufacture.

Lady Brooke was so charmed with everything she saw that she prolonged her stay nearly three hours, and before leaving she placed several orders for materials in Mr. Folliott's hands.

In expressing to him her thanks for the pleasure she had derived from the visit, she said she extremely regretted that the English silk trade had become so slack.'

At this point we have to take up the story as told to Elfrida Helen Sellick (nee Folliott) as a young girl by her Aunts who were William Folliott's daughters. It appears that due to a combination of slackness in the industry and lack of financial acumen on the part of William's partner, Messrs. Walters and Company fell on bad days. The situation worsened until

facing bankruptcy the firm was taken over by another prominent Braintree company, Messrs. Warner and Sons in 1895. This company also had warehouses at 9 Newgate Street, London.

It is doubtful if William Folliott, absorbed as he was in the creative side of the business ever saw the disaster coming, but whilst it meant the total ruin of his partner. For him the day was partly saved by being offered the post of Chief Designer for Messrs. Warner and Sons. Having no other alternative, he accepted and so Messrs. Warner not only gained valuable premises and machinery from the collapse of Messrs. Walters and Company, but also the services of one of the most talented designers in England.

The Road Back

The amalgamation of the two firms meant that Warner and Sons, under the guidance of Mr. Frank Warner now had a virtual monopoly of the cream of the orders in the silk trade. He appointed William Folliott as Manager and chief designer and in 1901 the firm was given the task of weaving the coronation robes for the crowning of Edward VII.

The following extracts from the magazine 'The Queen' of the 8th March 1901 give us an excellent picture of the scope of the work undertaken. 'Seeing is believing, and the late lamented Duchess of Teck, who took so much interest in the silk manufacturers of Great Britain, was wont to say that she never realised what admirable work British looms could produce till she saw the weaving at Braintree and the east of London. Now we have an excellent opportunity of testing the merits of our home productions. Messrs. Warner and Sons, of Braintree, in Essex and 9 Newgate Street, London are busily employed weaving the splendid cloth of gold for the mantle which our King will wear at the Coronation, and they have also a fine show of brocades suitable for Royalty and the peeresses.

(Authors' note:- In the same article there appears a photograph of William Folliott at the Loom weaving the cloth of gold mantle for the King's Coronation).

The article continues: 'The same firm is busy with the Coronation velvets in the purest possible silk; imperial purple for Royalty and a lovely soft crimson for the subjects of the King. It was a wise decision that in every case the petticoats should be either white or cream, for this throws up the colour as nothing else could: nothing better is issued from the looms. But with the thousands of grooved wires and silk threads and the number of times it is necessary for the shuttle to pass to and fro, the production is naturally slow, and only a very few yards can be made in a week by the most hard working craftsman. As far as the beauty of design, there can be no doubt that England is proving herself equal to any demand put upon her; and, furthermore, our native silks are perfectly pure, entirely unweighted, and most lustrous in their sheen.'

(Authors' note:- The opinion expressed in this article as to the beauty and quality of the finished silk products has been amply substantiated in modern times by the people to whom we have shown our collection of William Folliott's designs. In particular a post-graduate student of textiles at the West Surrey School of Art and Design here in Farnham was much impressed by the beauty and intricacy of his designs, as well as the lustrous sheen of the silks with which he worked. She estimated that in some cases the number of threads to the inch was more than 600 and expressed the opinion that it would be virtually impossible to reproduce these effects using modern materials and looms.)

The Ultimate Fulfilment

As a result of these commissions with their attendant favourable publicity, Messrs. Warner and Sons were poised to take on and compete on level terms with the best weavers of France and Italy. It would appear that Mr. Frank Warner with his flair for showmanship was ideally suited for this enterprise and with the creative backing of William Folliott's designs the firm was awarded Two Grand Prix Gold Medals at the Brussels Exhibition in 1910. With the medals went the felicitations of the International Jury.

With all this activity at home and abroad it was not surprising that on the death of Edward VII in 1910 and the subsequent Coronation of George V in 1911, the firm was once again commissioned to design and weave the cloth for the Coronation Robes and also for Queen Mary's dresses. Once again William Folliott was in the forefront in the designing for these commissions.

The 'London Gazette' of March 30th 1911, reports: 'On Thursday the Editor of the 'Gazette' was one of a privileged party of Pressmen who received an invitation to inspect the work and fabrics for the Coronation Robes of King George and Queen Mary, which are being manufactured at Messrs. Warner and Sons silk factory at Braintree. It had been announced by His Majesty a good time ago that every item of the Coronation robes was to be British made, and Messrs. Warner and Sons were honoured, as on the last occasion (Edward VII's Coronation), with commands for the most important of the fabrics required. Mr. Frank Warner the present head of the firm, who is regarded as one of the leading authorities in the manufacture of silk in this country, and also on the Continent, accompanied by Mrs. Warner, received the party at the factory in South Street, and escorted them over the works.

In the principal weaving room the visitors were shown the cloth of gold being woven on the loom by the firm's most capable craftsman, Mr. Thomas Wheeler. He is not pressed for time, and executes about nine or ten inches a day of the cloth. The end result in threads of gold and silver is a surface of most beautiful radiance, and almost satin like smoothness.

Another feature of great interest was the brocades for Queen Mary's dresses. These attracted great attention and admiration, and are regarded as superb specimens of the silk weavers' art, and in each and every case at the direction of the Queen, English materials are being woven in English patterns.

Of the Queen's dresses, there were plain satin, pink and silver, Chinese hawthorn pattern, ivory white silk, into which is woven five different shades of metals in gold and silver to produce chaste designs.

(Authors' note:- By a fortunate coincidence there is living here in Farnham a Mrs. Lilian Manley who as a girl worked on Queen Mary's Coronation dresses for the firm of Ravel and Rossiter, Royal Couturiers of Hanover Square, London, W.1. As far as she remembers, the ivory white silk material described was similar in pattern to a specimen we have in our William Folliott collection.)

The 'London Gazette' goes on to report:- 'In the office Mr. Warner showed the visitors the Royal purple velvet, now being woven at Messrs. Warner's hand looms in nearby Sudbury, from which will be made the flowing robes to be worn by King George and Queen Mary when they are crowned.

Mr. Frank Warner was greatly assisted in the exhibition of the silken wares by Mr. W. Foliott, the manager and chief designer of the Braintree Silk Works, who himself received orders direct from the late Queen Victoria.'

Once again as at the weaving of the Coronation robes of Edward VII, Braintree became a place of pilgrimage for the ladies of the county and one such visitor was Evangeline Bradhurst of Rivenhall Place, Essex.

Rivenhall is a small village some 8 miles South-East of Braintree and this lady was probably the wife of the Lord of the Manor. In her letter of thanks she says:- 'Dear Mr. Foliott, please accept the little Coronation Spoon for your tea cup from me as a Souvenir of all your kindness in showing my party the weaving of the Coronation robes today.

Yours truly, Evangeline Bradhurst.'

In this year 1911 William Foliott was undoubtedly at the peak of his career, for in addition to all this activity he was engaged in the assembling of what was to be a most ambitious collection of designs in various materials to be displayed at the Textile Exhibition of Turin 1911. The result was complete triumph in fierce international competition, particularly from the Italians in their own environment. The result is recorded on a postcard sent by Mr. Frank Warner to William. Addressed to Mr. Foliott, Messrs. Warner and Sons, New Mills, Braintree, Essex, Ingliterra, it reads:- 'The awards are as follows Cotton - Grand Prix, Wool - Grand Prix, Linen & Ramie - Grand Prix, Silk Grand Prix. "felicitations" - I am quite satisfied. F. Warner.'

Four Golds, a complete success for the firm at this prestigious Exhibition! It must be assumed that by now Mr. Warner was completely blase at the continued triumphs of his chief designer to express himself as merely 'quite satisfied'. What on earth would have been his opinion if William had not produced a clean sweep of the board? It is to be hoped that since the Exhibition was sponsored by the famous French champagne firm of Moet & Chandon, that he at least had the grace on his return home to join with William Foliott in a celebratory glass of that firm's bubbly. It is also salutary to realise that all this has been achieved by a man who by now was 76 years of age.

But with all this success a threat was still posed to the British Silk Industry. An article in the 'London Times' of February 26th 1912 was devoted to the possibilities of revival of the industry in which the names of the manufacturers Messrs. Warners of Braintree,

Messrs. Lister of Bradford and Messrs. Morris of Merton Abbey were to the forefront.

However the clouds of war were gathering over Europe and in 1914 Britain joined with France in declaring war on Germany and the First World War put a stop to any enterprise in the silk industry.

The Retirement Years

William Foliott was by now 79 years of age and so the combination of events made it both necessary and fitting for him to retire. Never a rich man he was helped in this by his youngest son Harry Foliott who bought him a cottage at Quendon, Essex, some 20 miles North-West of Braintree. His two elder sons, William and Thomas, finding no openings in England, had emigrated to Canada some years before to join their uncle Charles Flexon in Winnipeg. Thus it fell to Harry to do what he could for his father. Harry Foliott was well on his way to becoming a successful Company Secretary and it is ironical to note that had his father possessed his financial acumen as well as his own creative genius he would have been better placed to enjoy his retirement.

As it was William Foliott lived out the rest of his life peacefully at Quendon with his wife Jane (nee Flexon). He died on the 22nd December 1925 and lies buried side by side with his wife in Quendon churchyard.

Sadly, as is the case with many churchyards in England today, the site is now very much neglected and it is difficult but not impossible to find the position of his grave.

William Foliott - the Artist

Throughout his life William Foliott sketched and painted prodigiously. He worked in oils, crayons and black and white and from the examples of his work in our possession, it is evident that he was a very talented artist. In other circumstances he would no doubt have made his mark in the artistic world; as it was this inborn gift was undoubtedly the springboard to his success in textile design.

His oil paintings were mainly devoted to still life and are notable whilst his seascapes finger-painted in crayons are quite delightful. For these he appears to have drawn largely for his subjects on the creeks and inlets of his native Essex coastline and he quite obviously had a deep love of the sea and all things nautical.

As to his black and white sketches, his most prolific work, these reveal other facets of his character. He was deeply aware of the injustices of the Victorian age towards the poor and with other likeminded gentlemen including Lord Shaftesbury, was prepared to do something about it.

Accordingly he joined forces with Mr. John Groom to help establish the John Groom's Homes for the Disabled and also with Dr. Spurgeon for his Home for Orphans. (Authors' note:- These two charities are still in existence and the Foliott family have subscribed to them continuously through Harry Foliott, youngest son of William and currently through Elfrida Helen Sellick (nee Foliott), Harry's daughter).

His concern for the poor and needy of the time surely shows through in his sketch 'St. Giles's Workhouse'. The dejected attitude of the top-hatted gentleman who has obviously seen better days and the abject despair of the old lady huddled on the steps tell a startlingly poignant story, Dickensian in its character.

But as befits a man of his creativeness, there was also a warm and humorous side to him. His love of life is surely epitomised in his study of 'The three Dancers'. The high-kicking ballerina and the antics of her two male partners are drawn with a clarity of line which illustrates to the full the breath-taking exuberance of the act. No doubt this was sketched in the first place on the back of his programme during a visit to a Victorian Music Hall.

Finally, an unfinished sketch which notes the colours to be used in various areas, gives a good insight into the way in which he set about his textile designs.

Some of this talent rubbed off on his children. His daughters Connie, Daisy and Lilla were all proficient painters in oils and watercolours whilst his youngest son Harry, took to wood-carving as a hobby. How he ever found the time to produce the many carvings that he did is a mystery. He used his father's floral designs as his subjects and we have in our possession some fine examples of his work; in particular a large oval wall mirror surround in Honduras mahogany is quite outstanding. It is a distinct possibility that William Folliot's full talents will one day re-emerge in the person of a descendant, male or female.

The Aftermath

William Folliot is long dead, but his work lives on. In 1970 in the centenary year of Messrs. Warner and Son an exhibition of their designs was arranged by the Victoria and Albert Museum and soon afterwards it was decided to close the Braintree Factory.

Accordingly, in 1972 the world-famous antique dealers and auctioneers, Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods, were commissioned by the Successor to Messrs. Warners of Braintree Limited, to auction off the designs and pattern books of the firm.

Amongst them were items by W. Folliot as follows:

Victorian Pattern Books - Lot 89 - Pattern Book No. 66, small figured silks including Prince of Wales feathers, folio, half calf, 1842; and another, No. 67 silks, wools and velvets, stamped 'W. Folliot, 457 Bethnal Green Road, designer for fabrics, folio, half morocco, n.d., Sold to Messrs. Liberty's of London and New York for 190 guineas.

Lot. 109 - Pattern Book No. 6, figured silks, inlaid chines and borders. folio, boards (broken); another, No. 15, from the collection of William Folliot; two others Nos. 9 and 11, all mid-19th century; and another, French, late 19th century. Sold to Deryck Healey Associates Ltd., Kensal House, London, for 160 guineas.

Sketch Books - Lot 119 - An album of draft point papers and sketches, mainly late 19th century including a design by Folliot and a point paper after Herbert Woodman, folio, vellum. Sold to Deryck Healey Associates Ltd., for 50 guineas.

Designs for Woven Silks, etc. - Lot 121 - Rose and Thistle, design for a silk, woven for Buckingham Palace by Daniel Walters and Co., 1859 26Ya in. (674mm) x 10Y2 in. (495mm). There is a piece of the finished silk in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Sold to an unspecified buyer for 85 guineas. It is probable that this was the work of William Folliot.

Lot 123 - Twenty-two designs, stamped W. Folliot, designer for fabrics. Sold to John Folliot (grandson of W. Folliot) for 75 guineas.

EPILOGUE

This completes the story of William Folliot's life and achievements. We have deliberately refrained from tracing the family tree in this biography, considering it to have more impact by concentrating on him alone. We hope that you, his descendants in England, Australia and Canada will find pleasure, satisfaction and pride in reading this chronicle.

Also that it will be handed on to your successors so that they too may know something of their gifted ancestor. Who knows but what with the power of hereditary influence the reading of this account may well re-kindle the spark of creativity in some future descendant and so William Folliot's genius will be born again.

Elfrida Helen Sellick (nee Folliot)
W.A. (Jim) Sellick

30th January 1986
15 Longley Road,
Farnham, Surrey,
England.

APPENDIX

To expand on the facts given in this biography we have included for the benefit of the family the following copies of documents in our possession:

1. Articles of Indenture of William Foliott's father. One as an Apprentice Weaver, one as an Apprentice Blacksmith. Although at first sight the crafts of blacksmith and weaver are poles apart, in practise this was not so. The blacksmith was in great demand in Spitalfields to produce castings for and repairs to the looms of the weaving community. In some cases a man would augment his income by combining the two crafts.
2. A Broadsheet - 11½ ins. x 16½ ins. - Headed 'Press Cuttings', containing cuttings from 'The Queen', 'The House Furnisher and Decorator' and 'The Essex County Chronicle'. These cuttings being the basis for various extracts in the biography and also including a photograph of William Foliott at the Loom weaving the Cloth of Gold for the King's Coronation (Edward VII).
3. A broadsheet - 11½ ins. x 16½ ins. - Headed 'William Foliott, Artist, Designer & Weaver'; containing:- Another photograph of William Foliott at the Loom - a Sketch 'St. Gile's Workhouse' An unfinished sketch for a textile design - a Sketch 'Three Dancers' - a Postcard from F. Warner re Exposition de Turin 1911.

APPENDIX - B

Since the compilation of W. Foliott's biography further information relating to his career has come to light. These facts are contained in a paper read by Alec B. Hunter to the Textile Institute, London Section on the 16th December 1949 entitled 'A History of Warner & Sons Limited'. They are as set out below.

1. Branching Out - P2. - After he left Messrs. Norris & Company in the period 1862-70 William Foliott became the partner of Benjamin Warner, founder of the firm of weavers later run by his son Frank Warner. In 1870 Benjamin Warner went into the business of manufacturing furnishing silks, joining forces with two partners, Messrs. Sillett and Ramm. William Foliott then branched out entirely on his own as a jacquard machinist and designer, taking as an apprentice Frederick Toye, son of a well-known Huguenot family, who later started his own business and became well known in his own right.

2. Triumph - P2 - In the period 1870-1890 with the coming of the Jacquard looms two firms sprung to the fore, Daniel Walters and Messrs. Warners. With the jacquard machine the design was cut into a card which was then mounted on to the loom and this then greatly speeded up the production of the pattern. Unfortunately in the initial period of this new method there were too many indifferent designers at work and this was the reason why these two firms, having good designers, became pre-eminent.

There was a certain amount of coming and going between the firms on the part of the designers. We are told in the paper that 'Benjamin Warner's late partner, Foliott, did card cutting, designing and mounting building for Walters and, in about 1887, came to Braintree as Walters' partner and manager. He had a thorough knowledge of the Spitalfields industries, and was a fine draughtsman and designer.'

Unfortunately as already detailed in the biography William Foliott's partner was a bad business man and the firm collapsed in 1894. This paper gives us an insight into why this happened to a firm with so much success behind it in the following description. 'Daniel Howard Walters, son of the original Daniel was a kindly man and much liked by the men. When he died in 1886 he was succeeded by his son Lindsey Walters, whose interests were not so much in the works. He was a keen huntsman and, one Saturday, he went hunting and forgot to leave the wages cheque. He was waylaid by the men on Rifle Hill who threatened to throw him into the Hoppit River.' Thus it would appear that the pleasures of the hunting field acted against the interests of the firm in a highly competitive industry

3. The Road Back

P3 - As we already know, in 1895 Messrs. Warner took over the firm of Daniel Walters and William Foliott, who some 25 years earlier had been Benjamin Warner's partner, remained as his manager.

In 1901-02 when he was heavily involved in the designing of the robes for Edward VII's Coronation the paper quotes from an article in the

Essex County Chronicle' March 1902 as follows:- 'During the few weeks that the cloth of gold and royal purple have been in the course of manufacture at Braintree, many hundreds of visitors from all parts of the country, and not a few of them connoisseurs of high-class work, have visited Messrs. Warner's factory and admired these valuable fabrics as they have been produced on quaint old-fashioned looms. Mr. Foliott, the works manager, has gained the good feelings of many people by the kind hospitality he has displayed.'