

## HENRY COMER TEEK

1. Henry Comer Teek was born in 2q.1874 in Axbridge district as the only child to Henry Tabor Teek and Betsy (nee Cock) Teek who lived at Rock House, Compton Bishop, Axbridge, Somerset and farmed 58 acres there.

*His grandfather Matthew Jnr. Teek was born in 1790 in Wells, married Ann Tabor Comer in 1815 and went to live in nearby Chapel Allerton, Axbridge where they had seven children (three boys and four girls) and farmed 130 acres. That farm was inherited by their youngest son John Tabor Teek when they died in the mid 1860s. The oldest son, Francis Tabor Teek, and his family went on to farm 56 acres around Wells. The eldest daughter Ann Tabor Teek married James Bethall and the 1881 census shows her to be living on her own in Wells. The next eldest daughter Caroline Tabor Teek never married and lived in Wells until her death in 1868. The next two daughters, Eliza Tabor Teek and Ellen Tabor Teek, never married and went to live at The Lawn, Compton Bishop. Interestingly, Francis and John employed farm workers, the four daughters were all living off their own means and all children had servants. A distant relative, Joseph Teek, and later his son Albert and family also farmed around Wells. Another distant relative, Harry Teek, and his family also farmed 113 acres at Compton Bishop. In summary the Wells and Axbridge areas figured in many generations of the Teek family. The area was known for sheep and cattle farming.*

2. One of Henry Comer Teek's two servants in 1881 was Welsh. Elizabeth Norris (19) had been born in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, and was employed as a domestic servant. Is it possible that she told the 6/7 year old Henry a bit about Wales, its language, and sang some Welsh songs, such as Sospan Fach, to him?

3. The fact that Henry Comer Teek later became a solicitor was an indication that he had a good school education. That would undoubtedly have been in Wells, 10 miles away from his home. The two options would have been Wells Cathedral or Wells Blue Schools. The probability was Wells Cathedral as that did weekday boarding, has a long history of teaching rugby and was known to be strong on drawing/art and model making. He would have travelled from Axbridge to Wells on the Cheddar Valley Railway line, a journey taking no more than 30 minutes.

4. Henry Comer Teek undoubtedly went on to either university or law school where he would have had the opportunity to continue with his rugby interest. He then went on to become a trainee solicitor in nearby Bridgewater, just 12 miles from his home and accessible easily by train on the Cheddar Valley Railway line to Yatton Junction and then the main line railway to Bridgewater (and the South West). In 2q.1898 he married the 20 year old Gertrude Beatrice Sincock in Bridgewater and their first child, Reginald Henry Sincock Teek, was born there in 2q.1899.

5. In late 1899/early 1900 Henry and his family must have moved back to the general area as daughter Dorothy Mary Gertrude Teek was born in the Axbridge district in

3q.1900. The 1901 census/other records show them to be living at The Cross, Church Street, Cheddar, he having set up a solicitor's business in the High Street, Axbridge (and employing staff). His father had died in 1q.1890 aged 67 and his mother Betsy must have sold up as she is also living with them in 1901. They had three servants - a nurse (presumably for his ailing mother who died in 3q.1903 aged 69 and also his baby daughter), a general domestic and pageboy. Meanwhile, his 50 year old mother-in-law, Gertrude Sincock, who originated from Redruth, had moved to Weston Super Mare and was shown to be living on her own means in 1901.

*Cheddar was a mining and dairy farming village that grew with the arrival of the railway in the Victorian era. Axbridge had been a centre for cloth manufacture since the Tudor period,*

6. Daughter Olive Eileen Teek was born in 4q.1907 in Axbridge district. The 1911 census shows only Henry Comer Teek in Axbridge.

7. Henry and Gertrude had two further children; Philip Henry Comer Teek in 2q.1914 in Axbridge and Betty R. Teek in 2q.1916 in Newton Abbot, Devon (on holiday?)

8. The family continued to live at Cheddar and he continued with his solicitor's business in Axbridge. By 1922 when Henry Comer Teek would have started coming to the home Gloucester rugby matches and doing the cartoons for the Gloucester Citizen his youngest child would have been 6 and becoming less demanding/more independent, i.e., the visits to Gloucester might have been a first opportunity for a short break away from business and the family.

9. Henry's home in Cheddar was a few hundred yards away from Cheddar railway station. Travel to Gloucester would have been via the Cheddar Valley Railway line to Yatton Junction and then the direct train from the SW to Yatton Junction, Bristol and Gloucester. If he had chosen to support the Bristol or Bath Rugby Clubs then he would have had to change again at Bristol for either Ashley Down/Horfield or Bath stations. My guess is that he started his drawings during the match and then finished them on the journey home before posting them to the Gloucester Citizen in time for publishing in the Sports Edition of the newspaper. The Gloucester Citizen might have paid his train fare and got him free entry to the games in exchange for the cartoons.

*It would appear that he liked/was used to train travel and did not own a car in the 1920s. The self portrait done in 1926 would have been when he was 51/52 years old. Being a supporter of Gloucester Rugby club and living/working in the Axbridge area of Somerset it is clear that he would not have been able to get to their away matches without considerable difficulty and expense.*

10. Henry Comer Teek would have been too old to have been conscripted for service during WWI. However, his son Reginald could well have served. If so, he survived as he married a Miss Simpkins in 4q.1925 in Fareham and they had a daughter Anne P. Teek in 2q.1929 in Portsmouth. His daughter Dorothy married a Robert Dummett in 1q.1927 in

the Axbridge district and their first child, Robert, was born in 1q.1929 in Bristol (three daughters Susan, Elizabeth and Mary followed in 1930, 1934 and 1942 in Kingsbridge, Devon). Daughter Olive didn't marry. Son Philip married a Joan Price in 1q.1944 in the Wirral, Cheshire. Daughter Betty married an Avalon St. G. Bulleid in 1q.1936 in Axbridge district and they went to live in Weston where daughter Rosemary was born in 1941. It would have been the birth of the first three grandchildren in 1929 and 1930 that could have curtailed Henry's visits to Gloucester rugby after the 1928/29 season – no doubt his free weekends would then have involved train visits to Bristol, Portsmouth and Kingsbridge to visit his growing family.

11. Kelly's Directory said that Henry Comer Teek was still running his solicitor business in Axbridge in 1935. However, he died in Weston in the 2q.1938 aged 64. His wife Gertrude would appear to have outlived him by many years.

12. Both Margaret Jordan, the local historian for Compton Bishop and Cross near Axbridge and the Local History department of the North Somerset library in Weston Super Mare were unaware of Henry Comer Teek producing non-rugby cartoons in the area. It would appear that he was an amateur cartoonist who just came to life every other weekend at Gloucester Rugby club matches. There would be virtually no chance of any of his children being alive today to tell us otherwise or show any family photographs/cartoons. Furthermore, it would be very difficult to track down the four grandchildren that met him, even if they were alive today.