

FRANCES ELIZABETH TRIPP (1832-1890)

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This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>

Botanical career

Fanny Tripp wrote *British Mosses, their homes, aspects, structure and uses* (1868; 2nd edition 1874; 3rd edition 1888). It was a popular book of two volumes, delightfully illustrated, and which deservedly fetches high prices when bought and sold nowadays. Fanny etched each of the 108 illustrations on copper, drawing from living specimens, the plates then being coloured by hand at Benjamin Fawcett's, the printer.

Family background and biography

Fanny Tripp was born on August 1st 1832, and christened at St. Sidwell, near Exeter in Devon, the eldest child of eight born to the Reverend Robert Henry Tripp (1801-1880) and his first cousin Elizabeth Ann (*née* Tripp, 1803-1868).

Robert Tripp was the second child of six born to the Reverend Robert Henry Tripp (died 1825), rector of Rewe, Devon and of Kentisbere from 1791, and Mary (*née* Leigh, 1772-1829). Mary Leigh was apparently descended from Jonas Thompson, Esquire of Kilham, who was Lord Mayor of York in 1731.

Elizabeth Ann Tripp was a daughter of George Tripp (1752-1830) and Elizabeth (*née* Deacon, 1765-1836). Elizabeth was a daughter of William Deacon (1733-1792) and Elizabeth (*née* Judson); William Deacon's parents were James Deacon (1691-1749), alderman of Portsmouth, and Elizabeth (*née* Antram, 1697-1782).

George Tripp was an elder brother of Robert Henry senior, and they were sons of John Tripp (1719-1766), barrister and sometime mayor of Taunton, and Ann (*née* Upton, died 1800). Ann Upton was a daughter of the eminent classicist and schoolmaster Reverend James Upton (1671-1749, see *Dictionary of National Biography*) and his wife Mary (*née* Proctor).

George Tripp became a post captain in the navy, but left the service under a cloud in 1799-1800 after his nephew (who was serving on his ship) died while Tripp was

apparently drunk in command. George retired to Staveley, Yorkshire, where his elder brother John (1745-1814) was rector, and became a prosperous farmer.

Fanny Tripp's younger siblings were Emma Mary (1834-1835), Reverend Robert Henry (1835-1904), Reverend George (1837-1896), John Chilcott (1838-1839), Charles Upton (1841-1912), William Blomefield (1843-1919, who became a civil engineer) and Emma Mary (the second, 1845-1902). William Blomefield Tripp's son, Noel Francis (1888-1975) became a vicar with an interest in natural history, including bryophytes. He ended his clerical career at Diddlebury in south Shropshire (1945-58), after which he retired to Ludlow, and joined the BBS in 1967. Ludlow Museum has about 500 microscope slides of bryophytes that he prepared.

Fanny did not marry, and lived with her parents as a girl and young woman. In 1841, 1851, 1861 and 1871 they were at Altarnun, eight miles south-west of Launcester in Cornwall.

Apart from her popular book on mosses, Fanny Tripp also wrote books for children, and contributed to and raised funds for benevolent causes.

Her father having died in 1880, Fanny was at 3, Ovington Square, London at the time of the 1881 Census Return, not far from where Margaret Plues (who also wrote popular natural history books) lived. She died on December 26th 1890 at 152 Oakley Street, Chelsea.

Acknowledgement

I thank Reverend William Price for information received.