**Henry Edward Spernon Tozer, 1864–1955 (and Henry Edwin Tozer, 1838–1913)**

**[Draft 2]**

Born on 5 December 1864, in Sheerness, Kent, ‘H.S. Tozer’ (as he generally signed) was elder son of London-born Henry Edwin Tozer (1838–1913) and his wife Louisa Jane (née Griffin, 1835–1904). Henry Edwin was son of a tinplate worker and though he also became an artist, his stated profession on marriage at St Martin’s in the Fields on 18 May 1861 was ‘Civil Engineer’: Louisa’s father was a hairdresser. After Henry Edward in 1864, their second child was Marianne Alice (1866–1958), and the third Eustace Arthur Tozer, also an artist, born in 1869 at Milton, near Gravesend. By April 1888 the family had moved to Newlyn, Cornwall, possibly drawn by the artistic colony there.

In the 1891 census Henry Edwin, his wife, daughter, and son Eustace were all at 1 Cape Cornwall (or Cape Cornwall House), Boswedden, St Just, Penzance. Henry was listed in as ‘Artist Marine’ and Eustace as ‘Artist Landscape’, both working in oil and watercolour. Henry Edwin showed one coastal piece of ‘Surf and rocks at the mouth of the cove’ at the RA (1892). Eustace also showed one work at the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1892 as from ‘Cape Cornwall House’. In July that year all three men also shared an exhibition of Cornish pictures with Bessie Boyns (1855–1947), which they mounted themselves at the St Just Institute (advert in *The Cornishman*, 21 July). Bessie, who had independent means that may have helped the enterprise, was reportedly a painting pupil of Henry Edwin’s, as well as being a sculptor, and his friendship with her and her photographer sister Gertrude (d. 1928) appears to have soon affected his marriage. Johnson & Greutzner attribute two works shown at the Birmingham Society of Artists (1889–92) to Henry Edwin but the Cornish Artists Index claims these as Henry Edward’s as well as one exhibited at the opening of the Newlyn Art Gallery in 1895. Possible confusions of father and son up to that point remain to be clarified.

Henry Edward painted scenes of country life in oil and watercolour, mostly the latter, and is best known for detailed cottage interiors including one or two figures, often elderly. Reports of him being notable for Cornish subjects around St Just seem overstated given how generic many of his works are and how briefly he lived there. At the 1891 census, which lists him as an ‘Artist, Figure Painter’ he was already boarding at ‘The Clump’, Thursley, near Godalming in Surrey, though what took him there is unknown. The Clump – or nos. 1 and 2 The Street – seems to have been two adjoined large houses, of which no. 1 was also a grocery shop run by Mary Fosberry (b. *c.*1839), widow of William Fosberry, a builder. Her builder son William (also widowed by 1891) and his three sons lived next door. In practice, it appears to have been a joint family unit with one of Mary’s grandson’s then helping in the shop and two granddaughters – apparently son William’s girls – also listed as with her and her unmarried daughter, Mary Ann.

On 9 January 1894, aged 29, Tozer and Mary Ann (28) married at Thursley and themselves had three sons and two daughters, all born there between 1895 and 1905. Tozer continued links with his family in the West Country: in August 1894 he and his father were among artists represented in an exhibition at Eland’s Gallery in Exeter, one of his pictures being ‘An Old Interior at Thursley’ (*Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 30 August). While he was formally head of household at The Clump in 1901 and described both as an artist and by then also the Thursley sub-postmaster, his 77-year-old mother-in-law was also still there running the grocery shop. She appears to have died by 1911, when he and his wife had taken over. Mary Ann is noted as ‘assisting’ his sub-postmaster duties, so was probably running the grocery business. Tozer was still listed as ‘Artist and Shopkeeper’ in the 1939 Register, when their youngest child, Doris, a ‘knitwear maker’ was the last living with them. Mary Ann’s retired brother William, and others of his family, were then still next door.

Tozer’s sister Marianne married Osborne Percy Windsor (1857–1904), a Kingston-upon-Thames ironmonger, in 1896. In the 1901 census her mother Louisa is shown living with them there claiming to be a ‘widow’ – which she was not– to her death in September 1904. It appears that she and Henry Edwin had separated in the late 1890s and that he moved to live with Bessie Boyns and her sister Gertrude at Galmpton, near Kingsbridge in Devon. He had his last joint exhibition with Bessie at Kingsbridge in 1912, died at Galmpton in 1913 and is buried there under a granite headstone carved with an artist’s palette by Bessie. First Gertrude (in 1928) and then Bessie were buried beside him.

Eustace Tozer also lived in Devon from at least 1910, served in the Rifle Brigade in the First World War and died in or near Exeter early in 1931, where this was registered in March. His brother Henry died aged 90, still at The Clump, Thursley, on 15 November 1955. Their sister Marianne, widowed in 1904, was 91 when she died at Kingston in 1958.

*Summarized from web sources and Art UK discussion of Tozer’s ‘Wheelwright’ in Bradford Museums and Galleries.*

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