

## **THE GUSH FAMILY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Lillie Gush was on the right track, as usual, about her relative who had gone out to South Africa and behaved heroically when threatened by some Africans. He was Richard Gush (1798-1858), a carpenter, the son of Thomas Gush (1755-1812) and Mary Mitchell (born about 1759). Thomas and Mary were married at Seaton in 1778 and lived in Beer, but it seems likely that Thomas was a son of a Thomas Gush who was baptised in Branscombe in 1731 but may have moved to Beer.

Richard, born in Beer and apprenticed to a carpenter, left for London when he was 21, where he became a Wesleyan and a Sunday School teacher and married Margaret Evans (1790-1881) in 1812. They joined 'Sephton's party' of 66 Wesleyan families emigrating to South Africa, and sailed on the 'Brilliant' from Gravesend in February 1820, arriving at Algoa Bay in May. They were accompanied by three young children, Mary Hannah Gush (1813-1860), Richard Gush (1817-1833) and Joseph Evans Gush, who was born in 1819 but died on the voyage. They had six more children in South Africa, of whom five survived into adulthood.

The family settled at Salem in the Eastern Cape, where Richard did much of his carpentry under a tree near his front door. He was a teetotaler and temperance campaigner, a Methodist lay preacher, and helped to build the church at Salem. In London he had become a believer in non-violence under the influence of Richard Barrett, a Quaker minister. So when Salem was threatened by a large band of Africans during a frontier war in 1834, Richard rode out unarmed with one other person to persuade them not to attack, which they agreed to in exchange for two loaves weighing 15lbs, a 10lb roll of tobacco and some pocket knives. He is buried at Salem.