

## **The Martins of The Brand**

**By Robert Martin**

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the Martin family had been living in Anstey for about 400 years, when Robert Frewen Martin (RFM) began to experience health problems, and realized that the ever expanding Leicester would soon engulf their home Anstey Pastures, which was located on the ridge above Gynsill Lane and near the current County Hall. At much the same time, the Ellis family who had built The Brand Woodhouse Eaves, decided that they were not cut out for life in the country and moved back into Leicester. Looking for somewhere a little further from Leicester, RFM rented The Brand from the Ellis' in 1888, loved it, and in 1892 acquired it from them for £11,000 including 7 cottages for the indoor and outdoor staff. So began the family association with both Woodhouse Eaves and St Paul's Church.



*Anstey Pastures*

RFM died in 1912 aged 70, and was buried in the family plot at St Paul's. His wife Henrietta and his eldest son Robert Edmund Martin (REM), dob 1 Dec 1874, continued to live at The Brand, until his marriage in 1925. REM was educated at Aysgarth in Yorkshire, gaining a scholarship from there to Eton College, and then King's College Cambridge where he gained a BA in Mechanical Engineering, there being nowhere locally in Leicestershire to gain such a qualification. WFM to avoid too close a sibling rivalry, was sent to Harrow where he boarded in the same house as the young Winston Churchill. WFM also went to Cambridge and both were in the University shooting team competing successfully at Bisley.



*The Brand, 1887*

With his younger brother William Francis Martin (WFM), dob 5 Feb 1876, and cousin Charles Hamilton Martin (CHM), they ran the Mountsorrel Granite Company which had been formed by their father in 1875, from an existing company in which the family had a majority share holding since its formation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The family employed 154 quarrymen from Mountsorrel. REM was managing Director, WFM Director and Company Secretary, and CHM the Chairman.

In 1899 WFM went to South Africa with the Leicestershire Yeomanry as part of the Imperial Yeomanry returning in late 1900. The quarry thrived due to excellent industrial relations with the workforce of quarrymen, who were well paid in comparison to many others in the county. A photograph taken in 1918 showed 97 men who had worked in the quarry for more than 40 years. Their total service came to 4,522 years. In that year they were given a 20% pay rise, with the oldest having more than 75 years service.

In 1914, with the outbreak of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, REM, WFM and CHM, who were all volunteer Territorial soldiers, accompanied by many of the quarrymen who were also volunteers, were called up. Serving with the Leicestershire Yeomanry WFM and CHM, serving as C (Loughborough) Squadron Leader and Adjutant respectively, were with the Yeomanry at the Battle of Frezenberg on 13 May 1915. 15 officers and 267 other ranks lost their lives in battle, and 12 officers and 179 other ranks were casualties.



*Major William Francis Martin*

WFM was killed and CHM wounded. WFM 's memorial plate is on the wall of St Paul's behind the lectern. An identical one is on the wall of St Peter's in Mountsorrel where he was church warden. WFM's body was not recovered until some years after the end of WW1 so his name appears on the Menin Gate in Ypres. The body was recovered in the 1920s and is now buried some 5 miles south in the Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery at Oosttaverne Wood Cemetery, Belgium. WFM had only married in 1912, but at the time he was killed left behind a widow, a daughter, Diana (NAN) aged three and a son Robert Andrew St George) aged one, neither of whom he really knew. CHM was badly injured but survived and in 1916 was medically discharged. He returned to Mountsorrel to run the Granite Company, the product of which was vital to the war effort.

REM meanwhile was second in command of the 5<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, having joined the Soar Valley Company in 1900. Due to the ill health of the Commanding Officer of 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion REM was cross-posted to command the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 22 May 1915. Five months to the day after the death of his younger brother, on 13 Oct 1915, he led the battalion over the top to attack the strongly held Hohenzollern Redoubt. Shot in the knee helping one of the machine gun teams out of the trenches, REM was unable to walk. He remained commanding his men for 22 hours while wounded, before he would allow himself to be taken for treatment. REM nearly lost his left leg. After hospitalization for 5 months in France, during which he had 4 operations and met The Prince of Wales, he was repatriated in March 1916. After 8 more months hospitalization and convalescence, during which he learned to walk again, and met the King and Queen, he was allowed home to The Brand in November 1916, to resume work with the Mountsorrel Granite Company.





***Charles (with dog!) and Robert, to his right, at Mountsorrel Quarry with their men, 1917.***

In 1925 REM married Ethel Peel, whose first husband had been killed in action in France in October 1914. She was the eldest daughter of Lord Crawshaw of Whatton House whose family name was Brooks. Their wedding present from REM's mother was 'The Brand and all its contents'. Their only daughter Susan sadly died aged 18 and is buried at St Paul's.

REM became Chairman of Leicestershire County Council in 1924, an appointment he held until 1960. Passionate about education he was on the governing body of Loughborough College from 1922, and Chairman from 1940-1960. Alongside Dr Herbert Schofield and Mr Brockington, he oversaw the expansion of the Technical School to a College and, shortly after his death, to the current University. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant in 1916, temporary Vice Lieutenant of Leicestershire in 1948, and finally permanent Vice Lieutenant in 1953 to first Lord Hazlerigg and then Lord Cromwell.

In 1939 REM was knighted by King George VI for services to Leicestershire and the Church of England. In addition to his degree from Cambridge, in 1961 he was awarded an honorary degree by Leicester University for his work in and around Charnwood. He was Chairman of the Bradgate Park Trustees from 1929-1961, and was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. REM died in 1961, and there is a memorial plaque for him on the right hand side of the nave in St Paul's. He is also buried, alongside his wife Ethel, in the family plot at St Paul's.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about Robert, see also E. Turner, *Robert Martin of the Brand* (Leicester: 1985).



*Sir Robert Edmund Martin*

Soon after the death of WFM, his widow Victoria (nee Wynter) had moved into Long Close, on High Street, Woodhouse Eaves, moving from her parents house, The Holt in Woodhouse, where both their children Diana and Robert Andrew St George Martin (RAStGM) had been born. Having no surviving children, REM who had closely followed his nephew's life and achievements, bequeathed the Brand to him.

RAStGM was born on 23 Apr 1914 just 4 months before his father was deployed to France. He was educated at Eton College and the Royal Military College Sandhurst, being commissioned into the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in 1934. He served as ADC to the Governor General of South Africa 1938-40, when he returned to UK to rejoin his battalion for WW2. During the war he served as well with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and was Second in Command of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry at Arnhem. He served in the Far East from 1945 – 1949.

In 1949 RASTGM returned to UK where he met and married Margaret (Peggy) Grace Buchanan. In 1952 he was with his regiment in Germany when Peggy had to return to

England to have their only son Robert Cecil John Martin (RCJM). They lived in Germany until 1955. When RASTGM was posted to Australia to be Military Secretary to the Governor General, Field Marshal Lord Slim, the family moved to Canberra. After two years RASTGM was selected to command his battalion on operations against General Grievas' EOKA terrorists in Cyprus from 1957-1959, after which he returned to England. Following jobs in Winchester and Chester he retired to Leicestershire in 1965.

Just before leaving the Army he received a letter from the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, asking if he minded being recommended to HM The Queen to be appointed Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, a post he held for 25 years. RASTGM was knighted by HM The Queen in 1985.



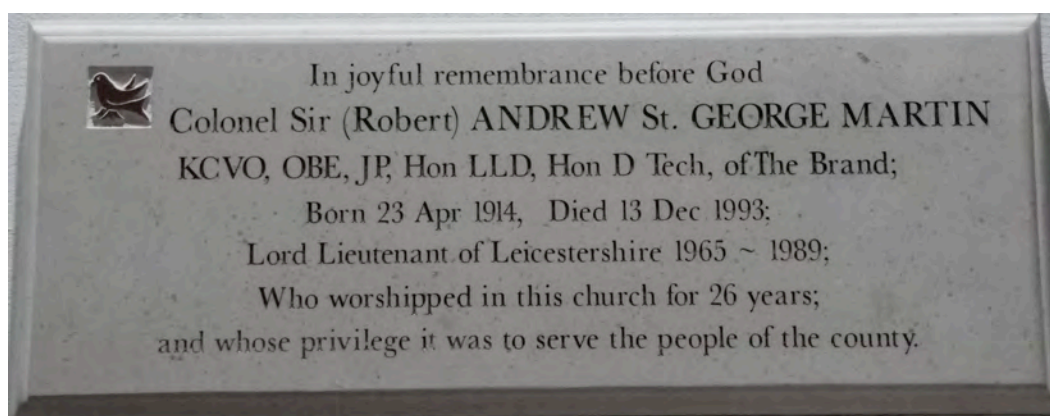
*Colonel Sir Robert Andrew St George Martin*



A keen countryman he loved nothing more than pottering around The Brand trying to keep the 50+ acres of wild garden under some form of control. He remained a keen horseman and game shot until the day he died. Many recall him exercising around Charnwood Forest and Woodhouse Eaves on his grey horse 'Huntsman', always doffing his hat and chatting to anyone he came across. A follower of the Quorn Hunt, he was still hunting only two days before he died, four months before his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Like REM he served as Chairman of the Bradgate Park Trust for many years, doing all he could to preserve Charnwood Forest as an area of natural beauty to be enjoyed by all.

RASTGM was awarded honorary doctorates by both Leicester and Loughborough Universities. He was appointed an MBE in 1949 and OBE in 1959. He was a real enthusiast for promoting progress for youth, being involved in scouting, youth clubs, and fundraising for improving facilities and opportunities for young people from the county.



*Memorial to Robert Andrew St George Martin in St Paul's*

A memorial plaque to him is located on the right hand side of the nave next to the one for his uncle, REM. He is buried in the family plot at St Paul's alongside his wife, great uncle and aunt, great grandfather and great grandmother.

RASTGM was succeeded by his only son RCJM who is currently living at The Brand. Married to Janie, they have two daughters (Charlotte Elizabeth and Sophie Margaret), and one son Robert Edward Andrew Martin (REAM).

## Outline Martin Family Tree

John Martyn (early 12<sup>th</sup> Century)  
[  
Walter Martyn  
[  
Martyn Martyn (Entered Merchant Gild. 1212)  
[  
Richard Martyn (Entered Merchants Gild 1221)  
[  
John de Martyn (Entered Merchants Gild 1310)  
[  
John Martyn (Merchants Gild 1314, Mayor of Leicester 1334, 1338, & 1343  
Member of Parliament 1337)  
[  
John Martyn (Entered Gild 1357, Mayor of Leicester 1364)  
[  
John Martyn of Anstey (Freeholder in Anstey 1447)  
[  
Thomas Martyn (Acquired the Brereyard Anstey from Henry VII 1489)  
[  
Thomas Martyn (Leased Anstey Pastures from Elizabeth I 1584, d 1594)  
[  
Robert Martyn (Purchased Anstey land from the Crown 1606, d 1617)  
[  
Thomas Martyn (b. 1591 d. 1658)  
[  
Thomas Martyn (b. 1620 d. 1658)  
[  
Thomas Martyn (b.1650 d. 1687)  
[  
Robert Martin (First to change spelling. b 1685 d. 1769. Son Robert was Chaplain  
Trinity College Cambridge, Vicar of Ratby & Breedon on the Hill, Anstey, Newtown  
Linford & Groby)  
[  
William Martin b. 1777 d. 1850 inherited Anstey on death of his brother Robert  
above, 7 children. Steward of Bradgate Park)  
[  
The Rev Robert Martin (b.1809 d. 1871 Vicar of Anstey, Newtown Linford, Ratby  
cum Groby, & Breedon on the Hill. Steward of Bradgate Park)  
[  
Robert Frewen Martin (b. 1842 d. 1912 Moved from Anstey Pastures to The Brand  
1888 see Article for details)  
[  
Robert Edmund Martin (b. 1874 d. 1961 Brother of WF Martin b 1876 kia 1915 See  
Article for details)  
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Robert Andrew St George Martin (b.1914 d. 1993 Son of WF Martin. See article for  
details)



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Robert Cecil John Martin (b. 1952)  
[  
Robert Edward Andrew Martin (b. 1983)

### **Notes**

1. The last named is the 23<sup>rd</sup> consecutive generation of the family to live in Leicestershire. Edward was born in Leicester in 1983 two months before his father was posted for a 6-month tour of duty in the Falkland Islands.
2. Since the formation of the Merchants Guild in Leicester the Martin family have been hereditary Freemen of the City of Leicester.
3. In 900+ years the family base has moved from Leicester, (11<sup>th</sup> Century – 14<sup>th</sup> Century, to Anstey (14<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> Century) to Woodhouse Eaves (19<sup>th</sup> Century to the present day) some 5 miles.