

Bod-Kin

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BRADFORD FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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Many others help the Society from time to time. Without their help, we would not function so well.

Please include your membership number in all correspondence and a SAE if you require a reply unless you are purchasing items that include postage.

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Journal of the Bradford Family History Society

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The Editor writes

Happy New Year to you all. Another packed Bod-Kin, with all the information you need for the upcoming AGM and some great stories.

After almost a decade, I have decided that it is time to let somebody else throw their editorial hat into the ring. It has been a pleasure and is not an onerous task, so please get in touch with either me or Sue Steel, if you think you can help.

Deadline for the June **SPORTS** edition is Monday 8th May.

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From T'Chair

Sue Steel

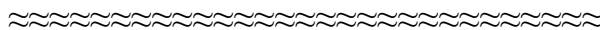
Well, I hope 2023 has started for everyone better than 2022. My year started being busy with transcription projects. We started just before Christmas 2022 transcribing our Queensbury CD into a format for use by Find My Past. I had a lot of members volunteering to help and set on a few transcribing a few pages each. It was a learning experience for me, not having set up a project before but we managed between us all. Queries from transcribers meant I could change instructions to be clearer and include bits I missed or not thought about. The next time will be slicker.

The transcriptions will be send onto the Family History Federation who collate these and in turn send them onto Find My Past on our behalf. Once uploaded onto the subscription site we will earn a little in royalties for every record viewed.



Also, in December 2022 I submitted an application for a heritage grant from Bradford Council. This is a small amount that we hope will fund changes to our website. Many Societies are now adding lots of information into a database that only their members can access and which cannot be found anywhere else, such as school or occupation records. The changes to our website funded by the grant, would allow us to link with the Name & Place website (also run by our website provider Beachshore). We can then transcribe all sorts of documents and add them to the Name & Place site. The basic data will be searchable by Name & Place members, but the details will only be accessible by our members through our website, at no cost to members. Not only will members find out new information about people (and their ancestors) in Bradford but it will hopefully encourage others to become members of our Society. So watch this space for details and let me know if you want to get involved as we will need photographers and transcribers. At the time of writing, we are waiting to see if our application was successful.

The website for Time & Place is <https://www.nameandplace.com/> if you want a look.



Sally Robinson, our wonderful Bod-Kin editor would like to step down after several years of hard work. The quarterly magazine is one of our high-lights so we do not want to miss an edition. Anyone interested in editing the magazine for us, please can they get in touch. A full hand over will be given and you do not need to be in Bradford or on the committee. Contact Sally or myself for details.

On a similar subject, it is that time of year again when we need nominations for the Committee. The Committee meet around 5 times a year for approximately an hour. The meetings are usually held at the Mechanics Institute and via Zoom after a Thursday morning meeting from noon. We need more volunteers on the Committee bringing new ideas and suggestions. Please do think seriously whether you can be on our committee and help run the Society in 2023/2024 and get in touch. You do not have to be in Bradford, two of our current committee members help enormously from ‘down south’.



Please do get in touch by email, phone or letter if you have questions or need further information. I always love hearing from and talking to members whatever the reason. (4097)



Relatively Speaking - Explained

Ken Kenzie

It was said that.

“Billy Mutton, named after his grandad William, had a sister called Miriam, whose friend Alice Sutton, had an older brother Charlie who was a mate of Nathan[iel] Lutton . The strange thing is that they were all ginger haired.”

Which ‘One-name’ society should they all join?

The answer is to be found between the lines.

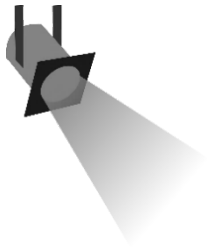
When read aloud the sound of the last letter of the forename obscures an unaspirated first letter of the surname.

Which makes them all ‘uttons

The ‘ss’ sound at the end of Alice gives ‘S’utton. The ‘M’ of William [Billy’s grandfather] gives Mutton. Etc. -

Some other forenames, Horace, and Lawrence like Alice have the ‘S’ sound. If coupled with a surname like Anderson could be misheard as Sanderson.

The Clue – not Redhead, but - How useful to them or not - is the above? If read between the lines, the first letter of each word spells ‘Hutton. (1082)



SPOTLIGHT ON..... BOUNDARIES

Sue Steel

In order to understand records and where to find them, it is often the case you need to know a bit about the different boundary lines – manorial (for medieval records); parish (for church records) and political (for poor law, registration and electoral registers).

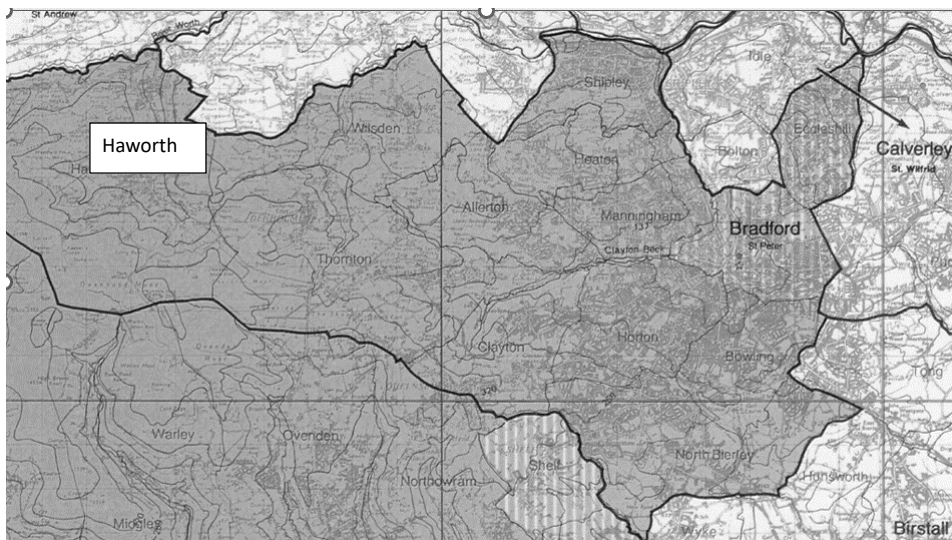
Manorial Records

The Parish of Bradford was served by several manors – Crossley, Leventhorpe, Haworth, Denholme, Oxenhope, Heaton, Horton, Allerton Cum Wilsden, Thornton, Eccleshill, Clayton, Bradford, Bowling, Shipley, Manningham and North Bierley. Crossley and Leventhorpe were between Bradford and Thornton.

These manors would have held the Manor Courts (Leet & Baron) and depicted life in Bradford and its surrounds from the medieval period onwards. The best way to see what records are available is via National Archives Manorial Documents Register - <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search>. For instance, Bradford Manor has 52 documents from 1294 to 1934 held at the National Archives, Kew; West Yorkshire Archives, Bradford; West Yorkshire Archives, Leeds; West Yorkshire Archives, Calderdale and also held privately.

Parish Records

Before 1832 Bradford Parish was huge and bounded by Halifax, Birstall, Calverley to the south and east, with Keighley, Bingley, Otley and Guiseley in the north. Bradford was in the Wapentake of Morley whilst the parishes to the north were in the Wapentake of Skyrack. The Parish once extended all the way out to Haworth in the North-West and occupied a small corridor between Idle and Calverley to the North-East.



As the population of Bradford grew and more churches were built the actual Parish of Bradford reduced in size. The Parish of St Peter's Church (the Cathedral) now occupies an area to the east of the City and includes Little Germany, the area around Bradford Interchange, Forster Square, part of Canal Road and Wapping. There will be more on Parish Boundaries in a later edition of the Bod-Kin.

Poor Law Records

Bradford Poor Law Union was formed 10th February 1837 and included 20 parishes – Allerton, Bolton, Bowling, Bradford, Calverley with Farsley, Clayton, Cleckheaton, Drighlington, Heaton, Horton, Hunsworth, Idle, Manningham, North Bierley, Pudsey, Shipley, Thornton, Tong, Wilsden, Wyke. A total of around 94.5 thousand people. One Poor Law Union for the whole of this area was not popular resulting in campaigns and riots. Cutting a long story short, the 16 more rural parishes surrounding Bradford, Horton, Manningham and Bowling did not like having to pay for the poor in the centre, which is where most of the poor law rates were spent. Plus, the new rule of indoor relief only (the workhouse) was not suitable for a rural community where relief was mainly needed during the winter months only.

Eventually in 1848 the North Bierley Union was formed for the 16 rural parishes. Be aware that there is no such actual place as North Bierley. It is rather an area made up of Buttershaw, Odsal, Wibsey and Low Moor. The name of the new poor law union and registration district was taken from this area and given to all the outlying districts of Bradford.

Thus, the Poor Law Unions of the Bradford area looks like a doughnut shape with Bradford Union in the middle and North Bierley Union the doughnut. Bradford Workhouse was originally on Leeds Road and moved to what is now St Luke's Hospital in Little Horton, whereas the workhouse for North Bierley was in Clayton.

Further details and Poor law union boundaries maps can be found in www.workhouses.org.

Civil Registration

Now the Poor Law Unions are important not only for looking into Poor Records for your ancestors but for civil registration records (births, marriages and deaths). The Civil Registration Districts in the main took the name of the Poor Law Unions. So, if your ancestor lived in Allerton you may need to look for a birth or death certificate in the North Bierley District. Registration districts actually changed over the years and can be really confusing. For instance, for Shipley, the Registration District was Bradford until 1891; North Bierley until

1938; Keighley until 1946 and then Worth Valley until 1974. There is a list of Registration Districts on www.UKBMD.org.uk which I found invaluable, especially for places I wasn't familiar with.

Borough Records

The other boundaries you will need are those of the electoral districts and administration districts of the area. In 1847 Bradford Borough Council was established, with its first Mayor being Robert Milligan. The Borough was made up Bradford Centre, Manningham, Bowling and Horton. By 1851 the population was 103,778 and the 9th largest town in England. Further districts were added to the Borough making it even larger – Bolton in 1881; Allerton, Heaton, Thornbury and part of Tyersal by 1891; North Bierley, Tong, Thornton, Eccleshill and Idle by 1901. Bradford became a city in 1898 after 50 years of being a Borough. All the minutes from the various Borough and Council meetings are kept by Bradford Local Studies Library and are available to the public. They make interesting reading.

Electoral Registers

Electoral Registers and Burgess Rolls etc can be useful when trying to find where your Ancestors lived, provided they were eligible to vote. But finding them in the registers can be difficult. The first books were sorted by ward and then name in alphabetical order, so relatively easy. But just after the First World War the books were produced in street name order, so you need to know at least what ward your family lived in to have a chance of finding them. Of course, you could look through all books page by page but they are rather large volumes. Most of the records mentioned at found in West Yorkshire Archives (Bradford) or Bradford Local Studies Library. Parish Records and some Electoral Registers are also on-line at www.ancestry.co.uk. It is worthwhile getting familiar with the boundaries and where they lie. But a word of caution, a place will not necessarily be within one boundary. For instance, Windhill (now an area of Shipley) was once in the Manor of Idle; Parish of Calverley; Registration District of North Bierley; Poor Law Union of North Bierley and electoral district of Northern West Riding of York, Shipley Division!

Good luck, you may need it!

(4097)

Chair's 2022 Report for AGM

Sue Steel

Firstly, I would like to thank all the committee members for their continued hard work, commitment and support in 2022. January is an especially busy time for Andrea Brown with membership renewals and Gill Overend providing our accounts submission. Their hard work is gratefully appreciated. Others who make such a difference are Sally Robinson producing our wonderful Bod-Kin magazine each quarter and Bill Boldy helping me with the technical issues each meeting. Without everyone on the committee my job as Chair would be incredibly hard – a huge thanks to you all. My continued thanks also go to each and every member of the Society just for being part of our group.

2022 was a great year for our Society with the celebration of our 40th Anniversary. The special edition of the Bod-Kin, the bookmarks and the weekend in October were all such an enormous success. Without the support of committee members, their friends and of course our members from far and wide, the enjoyment and fun we all had in October would not have happened. My special thanks go out to Mary and Geoff Twentyman who put in such hard work to make the weekend a roaring success. Plus, thanks to all at Aldersgate Methodist Church, Low Moor which turned out to be an amazing venue.

During the Anniversary weekend attendees became more than friends with each other. We even had two members realise they had family connections that were previously unknown. Fantastic! That weekend I felt that we became a 'family'.

Onto other things. Our membership continues to fall slowly, mainly as members grow older or stop their research. If you know of any way we can attract younger members (and I mean the newly retired really) please do let me know. It will be a focus of ours in 2023.

Our meetings attendances were not as great as 2021, with an average of 25 people at the morning meetings and 32 in the evening meetings. The numbers include those who attended via Zoom. The numbers in 2021 were 36 and 42 respectively. Again, if anyone has any suggestions how we can increase attendance please let me know. We had a good selection of talks covering family and local history topics, due to Shirley Sura's hard work finding speakers. Not forgetting the special Zoom meeting, we had in February 2022 with Myko Clelland on the new 1921 Census on Find My Past. There were 86 attendees for that meeting.

The Society didn't carry out any project work again in 2022 due to work on the Anniversary celebrations. Something we now hope to change in 2023, as we start to transcribe some of our CDs to place onto Find My Past. Volunteers for these are always welcome.

During the year we attended a couple of Family History Fairs, the first since the Pandemic started in 2019. There was the York fair in June and Huddersfield Fair in October. We enjoyed getting back to these face to face

exhibitions but the York Fair was a little disappointing (there was a train strike that Saturday). Numbers attending Fairs are still not as they once were. But our goals to get the Society's name known and talking to as many people as possible were once again met with flying colours.

I am looking forward to 2023 with starting new projects and attending our meetings, both face to face and via. Zoom. But more importantly, I look forward to speaking with our members and sharing our love of Family History Research.
(4097)

BRADFORD FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To be held via Zoom MONDAY 17th April 2023
at 7.30 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Confirmation of the minutes of the last AGM held on 25th April 2022
3. Matters arising
4. Chair's report
5. Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's report
7. Election of Officers and Committee, including Bod-Kin Editor
8. Any other relevant business

* * * * *

To be followed by a talk Spot Light on ...

Details to be announced on the website

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 25th April 2022
At the Mechanics Institute, Kirkgate Bradford and via Zoom**

The Chair, Sue Steel, opened the meeting at 7.30 p.m.

1. Apologies

Carol Duckworth, 45 members attended.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 19th April 2021 were confirmed as a true record, proposed by Shirley Sura, seconded by Derek Dyson, passed unanimously.

3. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

4. Chair's Report

Printed in Bod-Kin March 2022.

5. Secretary's Report

Printed in Bod-Kin March 2022.

6. Treasurer's Report

Printed in Bod-Kin March 2022. The accounts have been audited and processed by the accountants. The accountant's version will be signed off by Gill Overend after this meeting.

A proposal to accept the accounts was made by Mary Twentyman, seconded by Anne Robinson and passed unanimously.

7. Election of Officers and Committee

Single nominations for the following Officers were received:

Chair: Sue Steel

Treasurer: Gill Overend

Secretary: Bobbie Hipshon

A proposal to accept the nominations for officer posts was made by Lorraine Birch, seconded by Shirley Beaumont and passed unanimously.

There were eight nominations for the vacancies on the Committee.

The nominations were: Anne Attfield, Bill Boldy, Andrea Brown, Derek Dyson, Maureen Logan, Shirley Sura, Sally Tetlow and Pat Whitford-Bartle.

A proposal to accept the nominations for committee posts was made by Anne Robinson, seconded by John Parker and passed unanimously.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Secretary's 2022 Report for AGM

Bobbie Hipshon

Well, here we are, at the 'other side' of the pandemic.

Before it all began we were a fairly insular society with world-wide members who were little more than names on paper. Now it seems we have grown into an all embracing society with friends all around the world who join us regularly for meetings. Whilst these meetings are by Zoom, it nevertheless means that we can see and interact with our members at the other end of the globe, so I would like to say a big thank you to our overseas members, some of whom get out of bed at ridiculous times of the day to join our morning meetings, for gracing our screens with your beautiful faces and becoming not just members, but friends.

Of course, the highlight of 2022 was our 40th Anniversary weekend. It was just a bit too soon after Covid to be the all-encompassing event which we had originally planned, but, thanks to Sue, and a small but effective 40th Anniversary committee, it turned out to be a wonderful weekend. Some overseas/further afield members had still managed to travel and seeing them in person was a treat.

Face to face meetings have been a struggle over the past couple of years, but they are slowly beginning to increase in numbers once again, and our venue at the Mechanic's Institute in the heart of Bradford is beginning to feel more like home. Most of our face to face meetings are hybrid meetings and, thanks to Sue, and Bill Boldy, the technology continues to improve. We hope to get to the point where our Zoom members can join in the meeting in the same way as the face to face members, but that depends mostly on a) our equipment and b) the Mechanic's Institute wi fi!

We also still have the odd speaker who will not use Zoom at all, as it does not suit the interactive nature of their talk, but these are now becoming few and far between. Thank you to our committee member, Shirley Sura, who has done such a wonderful job of finding and booking speakers again this year. There are some interesting meetings to look forward to ... keep a look out and don't miss them, and if anyone has a talk they can share, or knows anyone who does, I'm sure Shirley would love to hear from you.

As usual, thank you to Sue, as she continues to work tirelessly to keep BFHS (and mostly me) on track, and the rest of the committee and members who put so much work into making the society what it is.

Finally, if you have relatives abroad (or in far flung corners of the UK) who wish to connect with their Bradford ancestors, they might find an internet membership to be a nice gift, now that we have Zoom meetings and can interact via Facebook and Twitter?

That just leaves me wishing you all a very happy (and hopefully healthy) 2023. (4606)

Treasurer's 2022 Report for AGM

Gill Overend

I must report a deficit of £74. Our fixed assets have depreciated to nothing. Membership numbers have fallen slightly but we continue to welcome new members throughout the year. Speaker fees are gradually increasing. In the current financial climate other expenses increase, especially postage for distributing the Bod-Kin. Interest received on our deposit account has risen. It was good to attend two family history fairs and see familiar places, and familiar and new faces. Unfortunately, the costs and travel expenses always exceed any money taken. Honoraria were not claimed in 2022.

The anniversary weekend was a wonderful occasion. Many thanks to Sue and to Mary and Geoff for all their hard work.

<u>Income</u>		<u>Costs</u>	
		Venue	£880
Booking fees	£2730.28	Speakers	£175
Donation	£200	Catering	£1563.70
		Tote bags	£30
		Value of CD's given away	£82.60
<u>Total</u>	£2930.28	<u>Total</u>	£2731.30

There was a surplus for the weekend of £199, due entirely to the extremely generous donation we received.

Publication sales are mainly pdf downloads with a small number of CD's, at half price. The stock value has decreased more because a free CD was included for those attending the anniversary weekend. If any CD sells out, we will not be getting replacements, but the stock is not being written off at this time. In 2022 we also received £206 via the Federation for data previously submitted to Find My Past. If we can prepare and submit more data, this will generate extra income each time it is accessed.

As always, I am grateful to my colleagues, Sue, Bobbie, Andrea our membership secretary, Sally our publications officer, and to all our members who contribute so much to the society. The accounts will have been audited by our accountant before the AGM. (2220)

Bradford Family History Society Ltd 2023

Profit and Loss

	<u>Change since 2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Sales		
Subs - this year	5690.12	5690.12
Sales - Publications		
Resaleables	737.71	737.71
Sales - Bookstall	38.50	38.50
Sales - Meetings	3533.49	3533.49
Misc. Receipts	349.41	349.41
	10349.23	10349.23
Purchases		
Publications Resaleables	180.06	180.06
Bodkin	3656.82	3656.82
Meetings	3769.58	3769.58
	7606.46	7606.46
Gross Profit/(Loss):	2742.77	2742.77
Overheads		
Printing & Stationery	104.46	104.46
FFHS	554.58	554.58
Computer expenses	454.99	454.99
Advertising & Publicity, Fairs, Travel	584.60	584.60
Website Expenses	504.00	504.00
Donations made	30.00	30.00
Audit Fee	480.00	480.00
Sundry General Expenses	104.40	104.40
	2817.03	2817.03
Net Profit/(Loss):	-74.26	-74.26

Balance Sheet

	Change since 2021	2022	
Fixed Assets			
		0.00	0.00
Current Assets			
Stocks	-165.20	743.15	
Debtors & Prepayments	-495.00	0.00	
Bank Current a/cs	-6.16	606.16	
Bank Deposit a/cs	302.40	15305.14	
		-363.96	16654.45
Current Liabilities			
Honoraria - re this year, payable next	0.00	600.00	
Audit Fee accrual	0.00	480.00	
Subs - in advance	-149.70	487.71	
Anniversary Payment in advance	-200.00	0.00	
Meeting fees accrual	60.00	60.00	
		-289.70	1627.71
Current Assets less Current Liabilities:		-74.26	15026.74
Total Assets less Current Liabilities:		-74.26	15026.74
Capital & Reserves			
Accumulated Fund	0.00	15101.00	
P & L Account	-74.26	-74.26	
		-74.26	15026.74

Not yet audited. Gill Overend January 2023

Divorce and the sad consequences for women in the 19th Century

Gwen Wilson

I have just put the finishing touches to a historical novel largely based on the life of my great-grandmother, Louisa Whitley. The next step is for the manuscript to go my agent for assessment. If she likes it, she'll pitch it to publishers. If she doesn't, well, then I go it alone. Either way, it's a waiting game. My agent won't give me her opinion until late January 2023. So while Louisa is fresh in my mind, I will tap out an article for Bod-kin.

Louisa Whitley left her Bradford home sometime between her father's death in 1872 and her marriage in Sydney in 1885. I have never been able to find her on a vessel passenger list, and in my frustrated moments, swear that she swam to Australia. A few years back, Bod-kin published a piece of mine on that subject.

Louisa, born 9th November 1854, was the second eldest of ten children: seven girls and three boys, with one of the sons an infant death. She was the daughter of Squire Whitley, a cordwainer and anatomical bootmaker of Westgate Shipley, and Mary Louisa Hughes.

Louisa's maternal grandfather was the Reverend Samuel Hughes (of Cragg Baptist Church, Rawdon) who took his young family, including eleven year old Mary Louisa, to America in 1841, probably for missionary reasons. Although he later returned with his family, others of his relatives remained and became pioneers of the Kalamazoo area of Michigan. Many current residents with the surname Newell can trace their roots back to this tree.

In my novel I've invented the reason Louisa came to Australia alone, but what is certain is that on 14th April 1885 she married the English widower George Edgar Staples in St John's Anglican Church, Darlinghurst, an inner Sydney suburb.

...”**divorce was a scandalous,
shameful rarity**” ...

Louisa was five years and two children into that marriage when he came home and found her in bed with another man. Edgar, as he was known, wasted little time in filing for divorce. His affidavit, presented in March 1891 reads:

“That on the twenty eighth day of October One thousand eight hundred and ninety I left home early in the morning as was my usual habit on my business but being compelled through a break down of my van to return earlier than usual which I did at about 10.30 A.M. I found my bedroom door closed and entering it seeking the said respondent discovered her lying on my bed in my bedroom with one Thomas Bremner now of Randwick Jockey in an act of Adultery.”

Phew! *Awkward.*

As everyone in the Society would be aware, newspapers were the Facebook of the day. Little escaped their attention, privacy was unheard of, and

something as unusual as divorce deserved a decent write up. Way back in 1992, well before the internet, I was drowsily scrolling through a microfilm when I found this gem in Sydney's Daily Telegraph of Tuesday 9th August 1892. You can imagine this woke me up quick smart!

“STAPLES V. STAPLES

Mr. Passmore was for the petitioner, Edgar Staples. The respondent, Louisa Staples, and the co-respondent were not represented. This was a petition for divorce on the ground of adultery. Petitioner and his wife were married at St. John's, Darlinghurst, on 14th April 1885, and they lived happily together at Waverley until October, 1890, the issue of the marriage being two children. There was no disturbance until that month, when one day petitioner unexpectedly returned home and found his wife and the co-respondent in equivocal circumstances. Testimony was adduced to show that both guilty parties had admitted their misconduct. Decree nisi granted.”

Since then, I have found several other newspaper items. The wheels of the Divorce Court ground slowly. It was more than a year after the original petition before the matter was first aired in May 1892, at which time it was decided there was no need for Thomas Bremner to have any part in it. Other articles show that Louisa not only lost custody of her two children, but the court costs were awarded against her as well.

...” **came into sudden money**

and promptly scarpered”...

In a cruel twist of fate, Justice William Charles Windeyer was in charge of the Divorce Court and heard Edgar's petition. The Windeyers were prominent citizens of Darlinghurst and had a permanent pew at St John's – the church in which Louisa had married – which backs on to Victoria Street, Darlinghurst. According to her marriage certificate, Louisa was a domestic servant of number 223 Victoria Street. The Windeyers lived two doors away at number 219. In real life Louisa, Edgar and the Windeyers must have known each other, if only by sight. In my novel, I add insult to injury by theorising Louisa was employed in the Windeyer household prior to her marriage.

Having found the tell-all newspaper article, I wrote to the New South Wales Supreme Court for the divorce file.

“*Only the parties to the divorce, or their solicitors, can have access,*” they responded.

I wrote again, pointing out it was an 1892 divorce, not 1992, but they would not be swayed. “We noted that,” they said, somewhat testily. “*Only the parties to the divorce, or their solicitors, can have access,*” they repeated.

I had to wait eleven long years, until 2004, before the divorce papers were transferred to the NSW State Archives and I could piece together the story. Not that the newspapers had left much out.

In the nineteenth century, and well into the twentieth, divorce was a scandalous, shameful rarity, which was seen as challenging the sanctity of marriage. Generally, divorce was for the well-to-do, desertion for the working class. Until 1873, anyone in New South Wales wishing to divorce had to apply to the English courts. Eighteen years later it was still incredibly rare, and Edgar's petition was only number 639 in the register. Divorce was expensive and Edgar, a carpenter, was bankrupt, prevented from running a business for profit on account of it. (By the way, I wouldn't describe a marriage that had endured bankruptcy as having "no disturbance").

So where did the money come from? And where did Edgar go when he stomped off? That would be to his mistress of independent means.

Sometimes I can be a slow study, but it gradually dawned on me that I had other research clues that fit into this jigsaw. Edgar's financial woes had begun two years into the marriage, and in the insolvency papers, month after month; the same debtor appeared first – M. J. Hudson of Moore Park. Significant amounts of money were outstanding – ten and twenty pounds each month.

When Edgar filed his divorce petition he gave his address as 160 Botany Street, Moore Park. Where did M. J. Hudson live? – 160 Botany Street. And who was this person who had contracted so much building work? Not a Mr Hudson as I first assumed. Rather, it was a Martha Jane Hudson. The building was a three-level accommodation hotel with a refreshment room on the ground floor. When Edgar headed straight there after finding Louisa *in flagrante delicto*, it was a mere few weeks later that he had the audacity to apply to operate a wine licence. It was a *flagrant* violation of his bankruptcy caveat, but he was granted it!

Number 160 is towards the end of Botany Street, with Moore Park a few hundred yards away. And what is on the other side of Moore Park? – That would be Randwick racecourse.

My conclusion? For most of Louisa's married life, Martha and Edgar knew each other and often met, at least several times a month when Edgar was billing the carpentry work, which went unpaid. Perhaps no such work was ever done, at least that is, any work having to do with hammer and nails. So, did there come a point in that marriage when Louisa became an inconvenience?

Exactly how the jockey Thomas Bremner was put into Louisa's path I do not know, but you can be sure I had fun inventing a story.

But – what about that jockey? Looking closer into his life story, it seems he was nearing the end of his racing career when he had the fling with Louisa. There are no prizes for guessing that after Edgar 'discovered' the affair, the jockey came into sudden money and promptly scarpered to Queensland to join his brother in a horse-training business, leaving Louisa in the lurch. Justice for Louisa came ten years later when this jockey was killed in a street brawl – the equivalent of a "coward's punch" or "one-punch attack" today.

The Decree Absolute was made on 15th March 1893, and Edgar skipped off to marry Martha thirty days later, on 13th April, one day short of his marriage to Louisa eight years before. At the time, most churches considered a second

marriage by a divorced person to be adulterous. Edgar told them he was a widower. This deceit carried on to Louisa's children, who were told she was dead.

Not all divorce petitions were successful. Of the 638 preceding Edgar's, only about sixty percent were granted. To bolster their case, petitioners often added fuel to the fire. During his proceedings, Edgar told the Matrimonial Court that Louisa had given birth to an illegitimate daughter – my grandmother-to-be Florence. He failed to mention his mistress was pregnant with *their* illegitimate daughter and about to give birth any day. *Funny that.*

Edgar and Martha's daughter was nineteen-years-old before Edgar added his name to her birth certificate, thus finally obliterating the *illegitimate* condition of her birth.

In a humorous aside, my grandmother Florence was *not* born illegitimate. As she was still married to Edgar, Louisa registered that baby girl as his. *That* was a red herring that sent my research down the wrong rabbit hole for many years.

As part of my research I read Hilary Golder's *Divorce in 19th century New South Wales*, written in 1985 for her PHD¹. It supported my suspicion that everything about the Staples' divorce was too "neat", and benefited Edgar enormously. In follow up emails with the author, Golder advised:

"Despite what the politicians who debated divorce legislation thought, it was highly unusual for a husband to petition for divorce on the basis of one act of adultery. This comment applies particularly to working-class men. It was partly that divorce, while not as expensive as it was in the UK, for example, was an expense. And the respondent wife could ask for maintenance during the suit, even if the 'guilty wife' could not expect alimony once the decree was made. Men who came from households that were financially precarious had to think seriously about disrupting those households for a single infidelity or even an affair. A minority of male petitioners actually admitted that they had forgiven a previous act of adultery. Many male petitioners tell a story of a marriage that broke down over time: sometimes they accuse their wives of drunkenness, of bad temper, neglecting the children and perhaps even of deserting the home. In other words they and their solicitors felt the need to paint the wife as a thoroughly 'bad woman'. None of this was strictly necessary in legal terms: proving a single act of adultery was all that the law required. But the Divorce Court was a theatre in which melodramatic scripts were played out. So it helped to pad out the affidavit with damning detail." (As we have seen from Edgar).

It is worth noting that this was a time when a man could divorce his wife solely on a charge of adultery but a woman could not. She had to prove additional reasons for the divorce. An 1892 amendment "improved" the

¹ Kensington, NSW, Australia : NSWU Press, ©1985 ISBN 0868402656

woman's lot. She could now apply for divorce if she could prove three years of continual desertion without support, or three years of habitual drunkenness *combined* with cruelty or desertion, or three years in jail.

In a special concession, if her husband had tried to kill her, then she only had to wait one year before petitioning.

Divorce shattered Louisa's reputation. Even if the court was inclined to give custody of children to a woman who had committed adultery – which they most certainly weren't – there was the fundamental matter that in the 1800s children were the *property* of their father.

Yet Edgar and Martha only raised Louisa's son, Arthur. Despite keeping their own daughter, they put Louisa's infant daughter, Laura, into a Catholic orphanage. Denied participation in religious events and social activities on account of being Protestant, she grew up a sad and lonely girl. When she reached the working age of fourteen, Edgar and Martha removed Laura from the home and baptised her as their daughter. Both Arthur and Laura had been raised believing Louisa had died. I learned all this from Laura's last surviving daughter, who I tracked down in Oregon USA. As our Skype call came into focus, she burst out with, 'Edgar was a raaaaat!' The word had a burr to it, a long drawl, born of her years of living in America. Her vehemence and expression confirmed the conclusion I had already come to.

Edgar and Martha remained married until her death in 1922. Edgar lived on until 1934. They had no further children. Together, their lives and businesses went from strength to strength. The refreshment room with wine licence continued for many years. Edgar and Arthur were both carpenters and Masons. Edgar was a Tyler and had a Masonic funeral with full regalia. His will endowed 250 pounds to the Masonic School for Orphans to provide an annual prize to be known as "The Martha Staples Prize" to be competed for among the girls at the school.

Louisa never remarried. She had another daughter, Lucy. The man I deduce as the father of both Florence and Lucy died in 1907. Louisa was left penniless, and died in the Asylum for Destitute Women on Armistice Day, 1918.

Lucy died in a mental asylum in 1926, aged 31. Only my grandmother, Florence, rose above the circumstances of her birth, although she too struggled with poverty. For the first half of the 1920s she was forced to put my mother and aunt into an orphanage. However, this enabled her to turn her hand to enterprise, and she established a small business called "Nu-Robes" manufacturing high quality dressing gowns and smoking jackets for men and women. The business ultimately folded with her death in 1956.

I would have liked to have Zoomed in on Claire Moores' May talk about 'Researching Divorce Records' but it was not possible due to our time differences. I would have loved to hear how much my experience tied in with what she had to say. In the meantime, I hope you have enjoyed reading this little piece of meat on the bones of research.

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A Murder in the Family

Anne Luciw

People talk about finding “skeletons in cupboards” but they usually mean extra-marital affairs and minor misdemeanours. It is rare to have a murder in the family, and this murder is particularly shocking as the victim was a young child.

I should warn readers at this point that people of a sensitive disposition should read no further.

Some of you will remember Doreen Luciw (nee Bentley). She was a member of the Bradford Family History Society forty years ago when it was first established. Doreen, my mother-in-law, coached me in family history research, and when she developed Alzheimer’s Disease, I continued with her work on the Bentley family. Sadly, she passed away in January 2020.

Doreen often talked about her grandmother, “Grandma Grunt” as she called her, otherwise known as Mary Elizabeth Bentley (nee Perkins). Doreen mentioned that her grandmother, who was notorious for her drunken antics, had killed a child, she said, by falling on it while in a drunken stupor. Now, Doreen was a tenacious researcher and delved into the newspaper archives to research the lives of even distant cousins. I believe that Doreen knew much more than she admitted, but the story was so shocking to her that she could never tell it in full. I have agonised over whether to tell this story given Doreen’s obvious reticence, but, as Mary’s children and grandchildren have now all passed on, I think BFHS members would find it interesting.

...”Mary came home

with some flowers”...

I had some information about Mary’s trial for murder, including the trial date and place. I first contacted the National Archive to get a transcript of the trial but they wanted several hundred pounds to search out the documents. Many of you will probably be saying, “You should have searched the newspaper archive first!”, and that is what I did next. I went along to the Local Studies Library in Bradford where I happened to bump into Mary Twentymen and she immediately offered her assistance. With Mary’s help I was able to navigate the newspaper archive to discover a surfeit of information about the murder of Edith Ratcliffe Partington by Mary Elizabeth Bentley on 10 May 1913. The crime had been notorious at the time and stories about Mary’s arrest, trial and appeal made it into the national and international press. Based on the information gathered from Ancestry and the various newspaper reports I have been able to build up a picture of Mary’s life, the events surrounding the murder of Edith and the subsequent trial.

Mary Elizabeth Perkins was born on 5 February 1871 in Bradford. Her mother died when Mary was nine and, as the oldest daughter (she had one older brother), Mary probably had to care for her three younger siblings. As an adult, Mary was a slight woman at 4’ 11.4” in height. She had light brown hair, a fair

complexion and hazel eyes. By 1891, at the age of twenty, Mary was working as a Worsted Spinner. She was living at 8 Cragg Lane in Horton, Bradford as a boarder along with five male boarders, including her first cousin Charles Arthur William Perkins. Mary was seduced by her cousin and became pregnant. Mary and Charles had set up home by 1893 and their first child, Emily, was born shortly afterwards. They never married. It was not illegal for first cousins to marry, but it was frowned upon and they may have feared being ostracised had their relationship become known. They went on to have another two children, Jane in 1894 and Ann in 1895. On 30 July 1894, when Jane was one month old, Mary was sentenced to 10 days in Wakefield Prison for being drunk and disorderly. She had the option of paying a fine of 18/9 (18 shillings and 9 pence, equivalent to 94p). which was not taken up, possibly because she was too poor. Mary's daughter Ann was conceived soon after her mother's spell in prison, but the baby died at 4 months of age in October 1895. At some point after September 1895 Charles left the family home to join the army and had disappeared from Mary's life by 1898, leaving her with two daughters under five years of age.

Mary must have got to know John Bentley (Doreen's grandfather) while she was living in Cragg Lane as his family were her neighbours. She married John in the first quarter of 1898 in Bradford and the first of their three sons, William (Doreen's father) was born in December that year. They had two more sons, John in 1901 and Ernest in 1903. Mary's husband was violent towards her during their marriage, and she got a protection order against him on several occasions. Mary finally got a separation order under which John had to pay her nine shillings (about 45p) a week, although he never complied with the order. Mary was living at 15 Berwick Street in Bradford with her daughter Jane and her three sons by 2 April 1911. However, by Christmas 1911 Mary had moved in with Thomas Ratcliffe, a Woolcomber, at 146 Newby Street in Bradford. The house was scantily furnished and badly neglected.

Mary's sons went to live with their father in Back Spinkwell Terrace, Bradford where they had a live in housekeeper, Louisa Dawson.

Thomas Ratcliffe was separated from his wife and had lived with Hanna Partington (herself separated from her husband) with whom he had a daughter, Edith Ratcliffe Partington in 1908. The child lived with her mother, her grandmother, Eliza Addy; aunt, Janey Addy and uncle, Thomas Addy. When Hannah died early in 1913, Edith went to live with her father and Mary Bentley, against the wishes of her mother's family. There was a lot of bad feeling between Mary and Edith's grandmother.

Thomas believed that Mary loved his daughter, and always took good care of her. Mary seemed to have centred all her love and affection on Edith, treating the child as if she were her own daughter. Edith called Mary "mamma" and described Mary's daughters as her sisters. Thomas and Mary got on fairly well when she was sober, but when Mary had been drinking, they would quarrel, sometimes violently. On one occasion Thomas had beaten Mary so badly that

she sustained a head injury. The injury caused recurrent headaches, violent mood swings and an inability to control her actions when intoxicated.

On the evening of Friday 9 May 1913 Mary came home with some flowers, which was quite unusual. She said she had been given them by, "Someone who thought something about me". Edith was playing with her two sisters at the time. Mary got the child ready for bed then sang to her before listening to Edith as she said her prayers. Mary then put Edith to bed.

Later that evening Mary and Thomas quarrelled over some clothes that had been bought for the Edith. Mary began drinking heavily and Thomas got very angry with her, refusing to stay in the house with her. He struck Mary, throwing her to the ground. Mary told Thomas to clear out, but he said he would take the child with him if he went. He went to waken the child and Mary shouted out, "No, Tom, be a man; don't wake up the child at this time of night. You don't think I would hurt the poor innocent thing." A neighbour reported having heard Mary threaten to do away with the child and drown herself rather than give Edith up to her grandmother. Mary told Thomas that she did not want him to sleep in the house because, if he did, she would stab him to the heart before morning. Thomas left the house and spent the night in his mother's home in Berwick Street believing that Edith would be safe with Mary.

It seems likely that Mary laid down in bed with Edith, and at some time during the night strangled the child with a piece of shirting. At her trial, Mary's council suggested that, "A woman who had spent a life like this and was in drink might have done this deed without being fully aware of the nature of her act. She must have laid herself down in her drunken state by the side of the child, and until she awoke, she was unaware of what had happened."

**... "The police were
summoned at once" ...**

The following morning, on Saturday 10 May, Mary left the house at about five o'clock in the morning, and said to a woman knocker-up, "I shall have to say good-bye. You won't be seeing me again". An hour later she had been drinking heavily when she said to a neighbour, "Tom has not been in all night and kept back his wages. Don't be surprised if you hear of me drowning myself, or of me being in the Town Hall dock on Monday morning." Another neighbour heard Mary sobbing bitterly at her door.

Mary then went to the home of her husband and sons at Back Spinkwell Terrace where she quarrelled with the housekeeper, Louisa Dawson, broke a window and threw the children's new boots on to the fire. Mary said to her eleven-year-old son John, "Come here my son." He went to her but she hit and kicked him, saying "I am a murderess, and I will do someone else before the day is out."

Mary then went to a friend's house around noon, and said, "I am a murderess. When you hear of my death, pray for me."

Late in the morning some of Mary's neighbours had become suspicious having not seen Edith that day. Looking through the window, they saw the child

lying in bed, and coming to the conclusion that something was wrong they entered the house. They found Edith's body wrapped in a bundle of clothes, with a piece of shirting round her neck.

The police were summoned at once, and arrested Mary in Jesse Street on suspicion of killing a child. Mary put her arm round the shoulder of the arresting officer and said, "You want me for murder. I have killed my love. Edith cried, 'Mamma, you are choking me.' Bless the little angel." She was too drunk to be formally charged with the crime, but subsequently she said, "I should not have done anything to the little kiddie if he did not strike me and go away and leave me." Mary was taken to the Town Hall in a hysterical condition and medical assistance was summoned.

Mary appeared at Bradford City Court on Monday 12 May, still apparently suffering from the effects of excessive drinking. As she was brought into the room, she threw a kiss to a woman sitting in the body of the court, probably one of her daughters. Mary was charged with the wilful murder of four-year-old Edith Partington in their home in Bradford whilst intoxicated. After the charge was read to her, Mary made the following statement through her solicitor: "*I should not have done it if I had been in my right mind. I loved her too much to do her any harm knowingly. I do not remember doing it. I had been so brutally ill-treated by Thomas both about the head and body.*" The Chief Constable applied for a remand for eight days. Mary's counsel raised no objection, but made an application on Mary's behalf to remain at Bradford. The Chief Constable said they preferred her to be sent to Armley, where she could receive proper care. Mary was granted legal aid and remanded to Armley in Leeds. As she left, Mary waved to the women she recognised and said, "Give my love to John, William and Ernest and tell them mammie wished them good-bye".

A further remand of two days was applied for and granted at Leeds City Court on 20 May to allow for the Coroner's inquiry.

The Inquest into Edith's death was held on 21 May. The jury returned a verdict of "Wilful murder" against Mary Elizabeth Bentley. On hearing the verdict, Mary became upset and physically and verbally aggressive. As a result, she was charged by the Coroner with assault and provoking language. Later that day, Mary appeared at the Bradford Police Court to be told that she was committed for trial at the next Leeds Assizes on the charge of murdering Edith Ratcliffe Partington, on 10 May, by strangling her with a piece of shirting.

Mary's trial was held on 16 July 1913 at Leeds Assizes where the Jury brought in a verdict of guilty of the "Wilful murder of Edith Ratcliffe Partington, whilst intoxicated", adding a strong recommendation to mercy. Asked if she had anything to say before sentence was passed, she feebly replied, "I can't recollect." It seems that by then Mary had accepted her fate. She was sentenced to be hanged as that was the only sentence that could be handed down for the crime of murder at that time. The Commissioner added that the jury's recommendation would be forwarded to the proper quarter. Mary waved a kiss

to someone in the gallery, and called out. "Good-bye all!" and she descended to the cells.

Mary's defence council sought leave to appeal against the conviction on 29 July on the grounds that the summing up had failed to make it clear to the jury that they could bring in a verdict of 'guilty of manslaughter', but the application was denied. By 1 August 2,500 signatures of Bradford residents had been collected to support Mary's appeal. This surprised me as people rarely feel sympathy for the killer of a child. It is hard to tell from newspaper reports whether the stories about Mary's harsh life were true. However, the fact that there was support for her reprieve, and the jury's recommendation for mercy suggests that Mary's suffering was genuine. The petition was sent by Sir William Priestley, MP for East Bradford, to the Home Secretary. By 5 August Mary's sentence had been commuted to life imprisonment.

Mary served only a little over ten years of the life sentence, being released from Walton Prison in Liverpool in September 1923. I could find no information about the reason for her early release.

Mary initially went to live at St Monica's Rescue and Maternity Home, 11 Belle Vue, Bradford, which was run by the Catholic church. Sixteen years later, in 1939 Mary was living next door to her son in Berwick Street in Bradford. She was employed in a local mill, this time as a Worsted Spinner.

Mary's children clearly cared for her. Doreen remembers her aunts spending time with her grandmother. William made sure that his mother was properly cared for, sending Doreen or her brothers every day to check whether Mary needed anything. Doreen always hated going to her grandmother's house. She called her "Grandma Grunt" behind her back because Mary was a very severe and serious woman and a hard task master. While Doreen was in Mary's house, she had to be very quiet and if she so much as put her fingers on the table cloth Mary would rap them with a steel ruler. Sometimes Mary would send Doreen down into the cellar to fetch coal which she hated because it was so dark and cold. Doreen was allowed to take a candle with her but had to blow the flame out as soon as she reached the top of the stairs and her grandmother told her that if she spilt any candle wax on the stairs, she would have to clean it off.

Mary was often the worse for drink which was a source of local gossip and embarrassment for Doreen. On one occasion, one of Doreen's friends came running out of the alley beside Mary's house screaming, "A ghost!". When Doreen went to investigate, (she was an inquisitive child with no fear for her own safety), she found her grandmother laying on the ground in a drunken stupor.

Despite Doreen's dislike of her grandmother, she admired Mary as a hard worker. Mary worked long hours in harsh conditions and, even though she continued to drink heavily, she was never late for work. Mary's work must have been satisfactory as she was in employment throughout Doreen's childhood. Mary lived a long life, despite her hard life and high alcohol consumption, dying on 23 December 1960 in Bierley Hall Hospital, Bradford at the age of eighty-nine.

Meeting Programme 2023

Please check the website in case meetings have been cancelled or changed.

Meetings will be held via Zoom and/or at the 2nd Floor, Mechanics Institute, 76
Kirkgate, Bradford,
BD1 1SZ

The venue is small wheelchair accessible and there will be a PA system.
Zoom Meetings may be charged at £2 and all face-face meetings at £1.50 per
member.

Morning meetings open at 10:00 am with the formal meeting from 10.30 am.
Evening meetings open at 7:00 pm with the formal meeting from 7.30 pm.

Month	Date	Time	Description	Speaker	Type of Meeting
Mar	2	AM	The Newlands Mill Disaster, Bradford 1882	Bill Boldy	Hybrid
Mar	20	PM	Crime on Record - Were your ancestors' the victims or perpetrators of crime? Learn how the legal system in England and Wales developed and where to find legal records.	Gill Blanchard	Zoom
Apr	6	AM	Almshouses – focusing on Bradford	Janet Senior	Hybrid
Apr	17	PM	AGM – Spotlight On ... TBC	Sue Steel & Others	Zoom
May	4	AM	Poverty in 19th Century England – what was the workhouse really like	Stephen Caunce	Hybrid
May	15	PM	"We Don't Want Any...Master's not in" What really happened on Census night? Claire will delve into reports of fantastical excuses given, misinformation, and what lengths some went to avoid being counted at all...	Claire Moores	Zoom

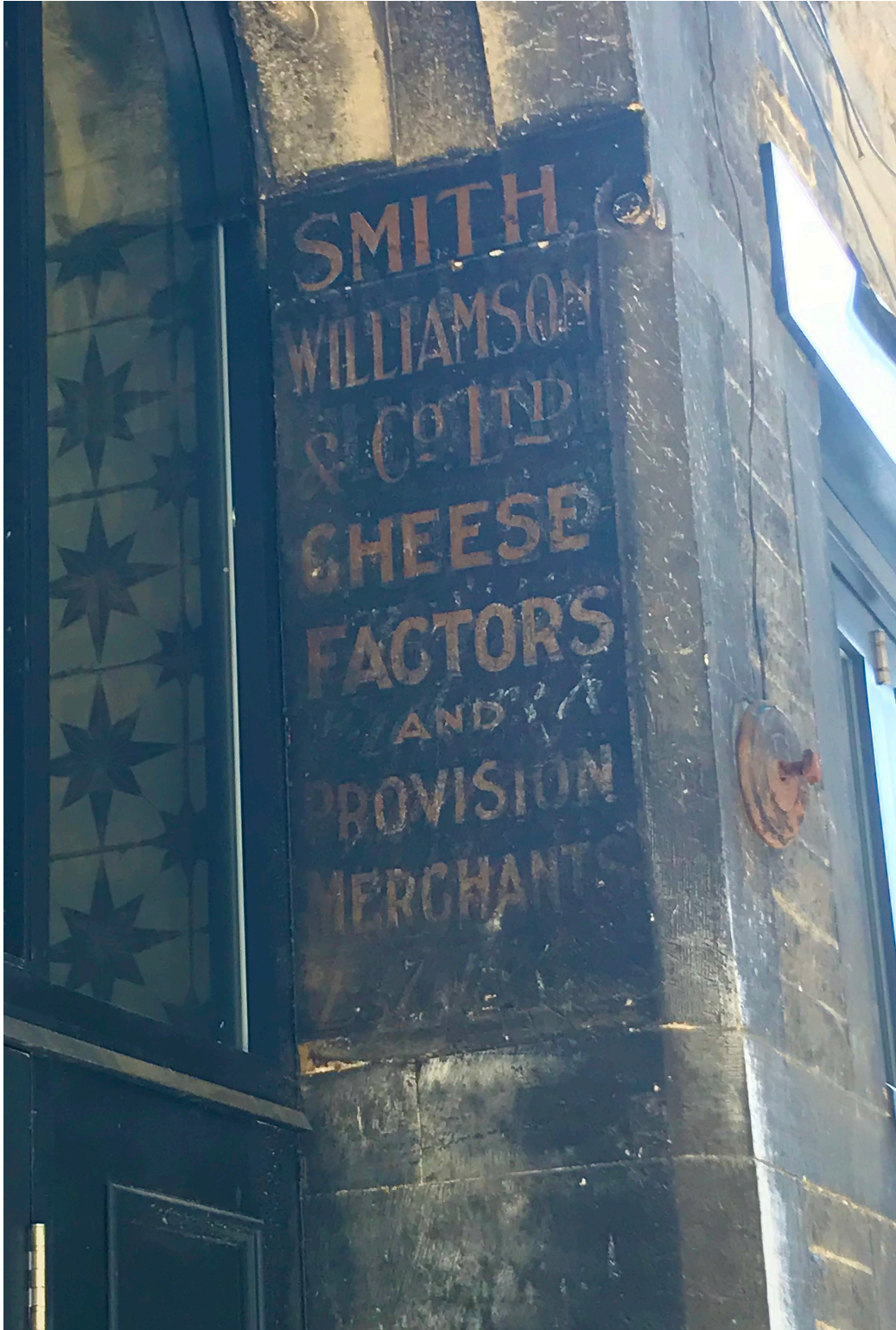
The Society does not accept responsibility for the views expressed in the articles.

Month	Date	Time	Description	Speaker	Type of Meeting
June	1	AM	Visit to Bradford Local Studies – Drop In Session	Committee	Hybrid
June	19	PM	Family Photos Past, Present & Future	Stephen Gill	Zoom
July			No Meetings		
Aug			No Meetings		
Sept	7	AM	John Wood, a worsted spinner and Bradford's Father of Factory Reform (1791-1871)	Astrid Hansen	Hybrid
Sept	18	PM	House and Home in Victorian Bradford: An Improving Picture	George Sheeran	Zoom
Oct	5	AM	Bradford Great War Roll of Honour – 36,600 names of citizens who served in the First World War from Bradford district	R a y Greenhough	Hybrid
Oct	16	PM	The Mourning Broach – What comes next – continuation of the story of Dianne's Ancestors and her amazing novels	Jean Renwick	Zoom
Nov	2	AM	Tips for Researching Your Great War Ancestors	Jane Roberts	Hybrid
Nov	20	PM	The first Railway Workers c1825-c1870 - the lives of early railway workers	David Turner	Zoom
Dec	7	AM	History of Entertainment in Bradford and the surrounding area	Tish Lawson	Hybrid
Dec	18	PM	No Meeting		

Details of Meetings were correct at the time of writing, but things do change. Please check the website for any alterations.

N.B. The Society holds liability, but not personal accident insurance. Members are therefore responsible for their own personal accident cover, and attend meetings and are involved in Society activities at their own risk.

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Old shops in Bradford
© Sally Robinson