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Hertfordshire People

The Journal of Hertfordshire Family History Society

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2024



RIPE JUICY PLUMS!

These particular "Plums" (a trade name in the Drapery for extra special Bargains), are indeed "ripe" in the sense that **Warm Blankets and Down Quilts, Cosy Woollen Materials, Cold Defying Winter Coats, Overcoats, and Underwear** are essentially necessary and "ripe" for the present cold spell.

Also these "Plums" are decidedly "juicy" in value, in fact, they are "chock full" of value for all who recognise true worth in Drapery and similar goods.

One has only to glance at the big reductions shown on the window tickets to appreciate the great saving which can only be secured this month in the winter season.

We think, therefore, it is not inappropriate to name these real Bargains

RIPE JUICY PLUMS!

A cordial invitation is offered to view many more "Plums" in our departments.

HARRADENCE'S 65-73 HIGH ST
WARE.

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Your letters, comments and contributions for publication are welcome and should be sent to the Editor. Please quote your membership number, and enclose a SAE if postal acknowledgement is required. Articles should not have been published elsewhere, and where necessary copyright clearance must have been obtained for pictures, quotations from books etc. The Editor reserves the right to edit contributions.

The views expressed in these pages are those of the author, and not necessarily those of the Society.

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Journal deadlines: 31 December for March edition; 31 March for June edition; 30 June for September edition; 30 September for December edition.

Front Cover: James Oliver (1836-1910) see article on p. 19

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From the Editor.....



I do hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Hertfordshire People*.

Your journal also has a new look front cover introduced as part of our rebranding of Hertfordshire FHS. We hope you like it and welcome your feedback.

Spring has finally sprung and my garden is showing signs of new life with grape hyacinths, tulips, bluebells and daffodils appearing to brighten up the view. I always love it when I can get out into the garden and do some weeding, digging and smell the earth.

We have our Zoom and in person / hybrid lectures to look forward to in 2024 - see the back page of the journal. Some speakers will be joining us by Zoom with a WiFi link to the group at Woolmer Green whilst others are in person at Woolmer Green with the Zoom audience joining us via WiFi link. Both are challenging to get right and are reliant on the Woolmer Green WiFi working.

There are also more Zoom Query sessions planned throughout the year, see page 5. These are increasingly popular and it is good to meet our members from the UK and abroad, albeit virtually, and try to help them with their brick walls.

I am always happy to receive your articles, snippets, research queries or photographs for inclusion, especially photographs of 'Hertfordshire People' for the front cover. It is *your* contributions that make *Hertfordshire People* the great journal that it is.

Jane

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Don't forget that Subscriptions are due at the beginning of March 2024.

The renewal form can be found as a yellow insert in the middle of the Winter issue of *Hertfordshire People*.

If you haven't done so yet, please send your remittance to me, the Membership Secretary at:

50 Chelwood Avenue
Hatfield
Hertfordshire AL10 0RE

Or, if you prefer, you can pay online. The instructions on how to do this are below.

Renewing Membership by Internet Banking

If you have signed up with your bank for internet banking, please consider using it to renew your membership. To set up the Society as a payee three items are essential:

The Sort Code is 40-40-01

The Account Number is 72239752 (Business Account)

Name of Payee: Hertfordshire Family History Society

And you will need to quote a reference so that we know who has paid us. The reference should be of the form NNNN SURNAME, where NNNN is your membership number (to be found in the address label of your copy of Hertfordshire People) and SURNAME is as much of your surname as your bank's system will accept.

There is one trap for the unwary. Some banks allow you a one off payment without quoting a reference. Please do not let this happen to you.

And one reminder. If you have changed your postal address or your e-mail address, then let us know by e-mail to registrar@hertsfhs.org.uk.



Hertfordshire
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting Notice

Saturday 25 May 2024

2.00pm

Followed by a talk by Alistair Hodgson on the
De Havilland Aircraft Company: Hertfordshire's Contribution to the Aircraft Industry

This talk looks at the history and achievements of the De Havilland Aircraft Company and its founder, Geoffrey de Havilland. The talk will cover the work of this remarkable company until the Hatfield site was closed by British Aerospace in 1994, and up to the present day when 60 years of aviation history are being commemorated in the company's old Headquarters building, now Hatfield Police Station.

There are two modes of attendance:

In Person

Doors Open at 1.30pm
AGM starts at 2.00pm
Talk starts at 2.45pm

Woolmer Green Village Hall
Hall Lane, Woolmer Green,
Hertfordshire, SG3 6XA

Online (Zoom)

Zoom opens at 1.45pm
AGM starts at 2.00pm

AGM Zoom Link: <http://tinyurl.com/HertsFHSAGM>

Zoom Talk starts at 2.45pm
<http://tinyurl.com/HertsFHSMayTalk>

HFHS Online Query sessions

These hour long sessions are designed to help with brick walls, give you an opportunity to share your research stories and interesting sources you have found with other members and for members to get to know each other and the committee.

Our helpful members will be on hand to help you with any family history queries. The sessions are inclusive and welcoming and are offered to members, and sometimes non-members.

Information about joining will be sent out by the Registrar and we will also publicise on social media. UK Meetings will start at 14.30pm and last for about an hour.

Dates for 2024

9 March - 14:30 - 15:30

Zoom for members

15 June - 14:30 - 15:30

Zoom for members and non-members

17 August - 14:00 - 17:00

In person at HALS for members

31 August—09:00– 10:00

Zoom for members in the Antipodes

12 October - 14:30 - 15:30

Zoom for members and non-members

Chair's Notes

Help by Zoom with family history queries started in 2023. Only a few people have attended but the outcome has been useful for everyone. Those seeking advice have emailed or returned in later sessions to tell us about their progress. Advisors suggest a wide range of places to seek information, some of which may be unknown to other advisors, so everyone benefits. One enquiry asked about a small village called Westmill and I gained a new 6th cousin once removed!



In January, help was offered at 9am to suit Australia and New Zealand. Perhaps everyone was on the beach, but there was one very happy customer. Help sessions will continue in 2024 on alternate months, mainly by zoom, but also in person at Hertfordshire Archives on 17th August.

2024 has started with the launch of our new logo. We are delighted with Julie's design and hope you like our new branding.



Future proofing the society is the next target. This requires spreading the load of running the society across a larger group of people so it is less time consuming and more fun for everybody.

Perhaps you are far too busy with your research to help but know someone who has some spare time? A major interest in family history is not essential – our Zoom administrator is not a genealogist! Help is required with anything from ideas to admin.

but we would also appreciate specific help with IT, sales, advertising, social media and various other aspects.

Brewing tea for meetings at Woolmer Green or recording Monumental Inscriptions would be difficult if nobody lives in Hertfordshire.

But society business is mainly by via email and the 4 annual committee meetings are by Zoom. There is no need for everyone to live locally as our latest committee member in Wales has proved.

Our logo designer has shown that anyone can offer to help, without being a committee member, or even residing in the UK!

Felicity Brimblecombe
chairhertsfhs@gmail.com

New Publications

Do keep an eye on our website for the announcement of any new publications and refer to the pink publications list (in September issue of *HP*) for full list of publications available.

M.I. Vol 27 - Aston - St Mary - a new rewrite and reprint - price £6

M.I. Vol 114 - Woolmer Green - St Michael & All Angels - price £6

M.I. Vol No 115 - Hockerill - All Saints - price £6

Ruston, Alan *Nonconformity in Hertfordshire* - revised edition - price £7

For online orders please visit our GenFair page

[Hertfordshire Family History Society | Supplier | GenFair](#)

Secretary's Jottings

Welcome to Spring for those in the northern hemisphere, or autumn for those of you in the southern hemisphere. We've been experimenting with online research sessions aimed particularly at those of you in Australia and New Zealand for whom our Zoom talks are not well-timed. It has been lovely to use technology to chat to members we otherwise wouldn't meet, and we have sometimes found that the person we are helping and chatting to has a common link with one of the committee's own research. So, do pop into one of the research sessions, and you may not only get help with your research, but also find a distant relative!



I am now back in my Secretary role having had to step back for a while at the end of last year due to a perfect sequential storm of catching Covid for the first (known) time, and then my husband being involved in a road traffic accident. Thankfully he is now on the mend, but it will be a long road to recovery to get his full mobility back. This has caused me to ponder again about how my ancestors handled illness and disability in the past. Often the only way we find out that an ancestor had a life-long or life-limiting illness or disability is through death certificates, the census, or records such as military service when they were discharged as a result of the illness or disability, or circumstances such as being institutionalised in an asylum.

A really good resource to use to explore illness and disability is the Wellcome Collection in London. They hold exhibitions and events and importantly have an excellent library, which includes many online resources. You can apply for a library readers ticket, and if you do visit, they have a great café and a shop full of useful books and souvenirs. You can find more details on their website

www.wellcomecollection.org. The Wellcome Collection is on Euston Road in London, next door to the headquarters of the Quakers at Friends House www.friendshouse.co.uk. You could therefore usefully combine a visit to both resources if your research requires it.

Hot news is that Herts FHS is joining with other East Anglian societies who are members of the Family History Federation in a live “Really Useful Show” at the Burgess Hall in St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 6WE on **Saturday 20 April 2024** from 10am to 4pm. Parking and admission are free, and there will be lots of research help and advice available from East Anglian societies, plus other suppliers of family history books and materials. A help desk is also available for general genealogy queries and advice on DNA testing and genetic genealogy. The show also features a variety of expert speakers in person such as Nick Barratt, Ian Waller and Gill Blanchard. There is a small charge for talk sessions and a programme. More details will be available from <https://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/2024-live>. Herts FHS will be in attendance, together with our own bookstall and lots of second-hand family

LIVE in St. Ives Saturday 20th April 2024 : 10am - 4pm

FREE HELP & RESEARCH ADVICE from:

Association of Genealogists & Researchers in Archives (AGRA);
Bedfordshire FHS; Buckinghamshire FHS;
Cambridge & Huntingdonshire FHS;
Essex Society for Family History;
Families in British India Society (FIBIS)
Fenland FHS; Family History Federation;
Hertfordshire FHS; Lincolnshire FHS
Huntingdonshire Local History Society;
London Westminster & Middlesex FHS;
Mid-Norfolk FHS; Northamptonshire FHS;
Peterborough & District FHS; Ramsey Rural Museum;
Romany & Traveller FHS; Suffolk FHS

PLUS SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS:

Family History Books & DNA Testing
Quality Maps & More;
R A Longley Publications;
This Way Books & Cassini Historical Maps

PLUS EXPERT TALKS from knowledgeable speakers:

11:00 - 11:50 Ian Waller 'Bread Gruel & Suet Dumplings - Workhouse Life'
13:15 - 14:00 Nick Barratt 'The Future of Family History'
13:00 - 15:50 Gill Blanchard 'Tithe Enclosure Maps & Records for Genealogists'



Parking FREE
Admission FREE
Programme £1.00
Talk Sessions £2.00

DNA advice

BURGESS HALL, Westwood Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 6WE

history books for purchase. If you do visit, please come and chat – it will be lovely to meet more of our members in person again.

A reminder now about a money-saving tip that I've mentioned before but which can add up to a massive saving on annual magazine subscriptions. It is worth checking with your public library about access to magazines. Many use the "Libby" app and through this you can read family history and other history magazines completely free of charge. There are lots of other lifestyle and special interest magazines available too. You could easily pay for several society memberships each year by savings made through using "Libby" and not paying for magazine subscriptions. The Hertfordshire library service for example offers *Who Do You Think You Are* magazine and *Family Tree Magazine*. If you click on 'subscribe' you will be reminded each month when the next issue becomes available.

Reading these on a phone is very challenging so I bought an Amazon Fire Tablet in the Black Friday sale which was cheap and the perfect size to read electronic library books and electronic magazines. It is not complicated to set up and operate, but most libraries have a digital champion who will help you set these up if you visit them and make a request, or you might ask younger members of your family to help you if you find the instructions initially too complex.

Finally, please do write or email us to tell us about your research successes or brick walls, or to alert us to anything you have found useful to help your research.

You can drop us a line in a letter or email, it doesn't have to be an article. Family history societies are nothing without member involvement, so we really do want you to share your stories with us.

You can email me at secretary@hertsfhs.org.uk or the editor of the Journal, Jane Tunesi, at editor@hertsfhs.org.uk

Tracy Turner
Hon Secretary

Do not allow original wills to be destroyed after 25 years

Dominating the family history world at the moment is the Ministry of Justice proposal to digitise and then destroy the majority of post 1858 Wills after 25 years.

There has been much coverage of this worrying issue in family history magazines and on social media. This proposal has sounded alarm bells and many family history and other bodies have sent letters / views prior to the consultation.

We as historians cannot allow this destruction, Wills are historical documents and primary sources for research.

Please sign the petition - Do not allow original wills to be destroyed after 25 years - if you have not done so already.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/654081/signatures/new>

Although there have been lots of signatures already, please add even more!

It is to be noted that The National Archives will not comment as it too is a Government body.

Here for the Beer; Brewers, Maltsters and Publicans – my family connections - Thomas (Henry) Cordell 1835 – 1900

By Sue Cavill

My first foray into finding more solid facts of my Great Great Grandfather came about as I wondered why, if he was living in Ware, his death was recorded at St Albans.

My Cousin Brian sent me a copy of his death certificate. Seeing it say that he died in an Asylum, brought forth many images of a man in a straitjacket curled in a corner, kept in a padded cell.

Death from a compound fracture? Really, he died of a broken leg, did he fall from the maltings, in an accident at work. I was full of notions about a hero home from sea, dying in tragic circumstances.

Of course, I looked into it properly and discovered how horrific it was in 1900 to actually have a compound fracture.

I knew I had to know more.

Thomas, was born before the Registration act and so the first record we see of him is his baptism, he was baptised on 25th October 1835 in Ware, Hertfordshire. His Father is Benjamin (bc1795) and his Mother Jane (bc1802).

He was the youngest of four siblings, that I have identified.

1840, his mother died when he was just 5 years old.

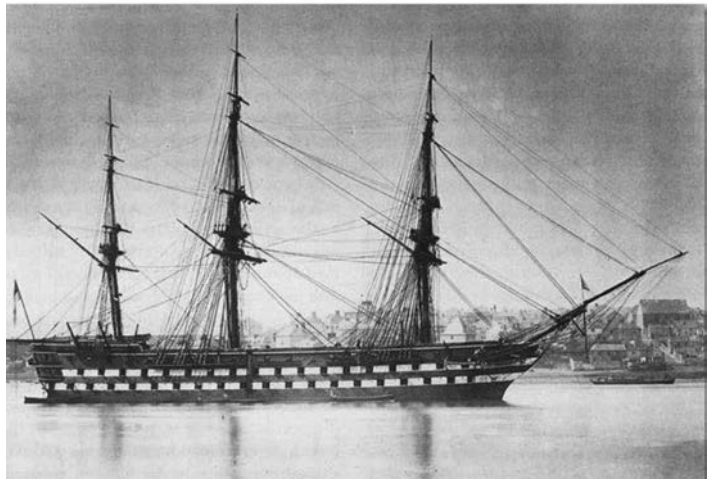
1841, he is living with his father (who is noted as a maltmaker) and his three older sisters, the surname has been mis-transcribed. He is probably being cared for by his older sister who at the time is 15.

1851, he is living with his married sister and her two daughters, and he is noted as a general labourer.

17th July, 1851, he is apprenticed to the Merchant Navy

1861, he is noted as being a Private in the Royal Navy and stationed in Port Royal Jamaica on a ship called *St George*. A Google search brought up many vessels by this name but one, in particular, jumps out. If this is the correct ship, she very nearly never set sail, as a fire at Chatham docks threatened to destroy her.

HMS St. George, 1840



1871, he is stationed at the Royal Marine Barracks, Chatham, Kent, marked as a Private.

1876, his marriage took place, in Ware, Hertfordshire, he is now a bargeman and his father is still a maltmaker. His new father-in-law is a bargeman. Sarah was 19 and he was 41.

1881 he is a lockkeeper in Lock Cottage on the Regent Canal, Bethnal Green with his wife and my Great Grandfather who is a small child.

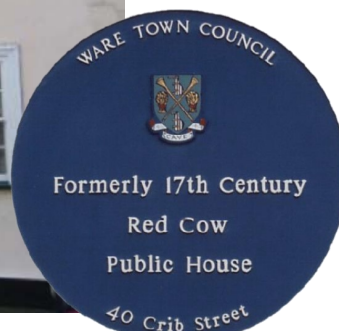
1891 10 years on and he is still a lockkeeper in the same place, living with his wife and two children.

1894 his only daughter was born, she died two years later of pneumonia



1894 and 1895 he is recorded as being in residence at the *Red Cow*, 38 Crib Street, Ware.

4th August, 1900 He was admitted to St Albans Asylum.



I followed this up with a trip to Herts Archives and checked the Asylum records for myself.

He was admitted with dementia. Oh! how sad, still, I am hanging onto the notion of a naval hero.

My Cousin Peggy told me that at one point he owned *The Red Cow* in Ware and one night he was involved in a fight in his pub and he suffered a head injury. He was a bit of a drunkard. I allowed him that, he was a naval hero, wasn't he?

On a trip to Greenwich, a tour guide mentioned something about sailors and dementia. I explained my family link and he elaborated further. There is a possibility that his dementia was caused during his time at sea, being so close to the cannons as they were fired would have vibrated his brain. If you have ever been in The Mall when they fire the cannons in Green Park, you may have felt the vibrations. Imagine being next to that as it went off.

23rd October, 1900 1:15 pm he suffered a compound fracture of the leg

3rd November, 1900 he passed away.

7th November, 1900 at 2:30 pm he was buried in the grounds of St Albans Asylum.

But something kept bugging me, I had all the facts, didn't I?

So, I ran a check on the *British Newspaper Archive*, I am after all a family historian so why didn't I think of this earlier?,

The Herts Advertiser—10th November, 1900

"Accident at the Asylum - PATIENTS DEATH - A BLOW THAT MISSED. An inquest was held at the Hill End asylum on Monday evening, on the body of Thomas **Cordell**, an inmate of the asylum, who died after meeting with an accident on October 28.

Mr. C. **Winbury** was chosen, foreman of the jury.

The first witness called was George **Goodchild**, clerk at the asylum, who said Thomas Cordell was 64 years of age and was admitted on August 4.

Henry **Bailey**, an attendant, said that the deceased was under his charge. On October 28th he was in Ward A1 at about 1:15 pm with the deceased who became very excited. He asked him to sit down and not make so much noise. He did so, and witness went away from him a short distance. Cordell then commenced again, and witness again requested him to desist. He then sprang from his chair and asked witness who he thought he was talking to. He aimed a violent blow at witness, but missed, and fell to the ground. He then complained that his leg was broken. Before witness had spoken to the deceased he had had to speak to another patient, who was evidently a friend of the deceased named **Chiesa**, who was a restless old man. He, however, sat down quietly when asked. Deceased, was a man who the least thing would put out. There was no kind of struggle at the time of the accident.

The Foreman: Were you the only attendant in the ward?- No, sir; there was another in the ward.

Did he see the accident take place? - Yes, sir.

I suppose we can call him? The Coroner: - Oh yes.

How far were you from him at the time he struck at you? - About two yards.

Did he fall against anything? - No, sir.

Simply fell on the floor? - Yes, sir. He turned round as he did so. Had he hit me? He must have broken my jaw.

What kind of floor was it? A polished one.

Albert **Tanner**, another attending at the asylum said that on October 28th he was in A1 ward at 1.15. There were always two attendants in the ward. In this ward there were 25 patients. A row commenced between **Chiesa** and **Bailey** about some tobacco. Bailey took it away from him because he was making a mess with it. He had been chewing it. Deceased, then became excited over it, as also did Chiesa and to shout. Bailey told him to be quiet, and he was quiet.

Bailey went away, and he began to be noisy again. He was told again to be quiet, and to sit down. Deceased then jumped up, and aimed a severe punch

at Bailey, but missed him and fell to the ground, breaking his leg.

The Foreman: I suppose there was no struggle of any kind? - No, sir, not at all. Simply, aimed the blow at him missed and fell. - The deceased fell.

He didn't fall against anything? - He fell on the floor.

A juryman asked what kind of slippers the deceased was wearing at the time, and the attendant explained that they were ordinary brown slippers, leather soles.

A juryman: - Are patients allowed to have tobacco on them? - Oh yes, certainly, but when they began making a mess with it, it is time to take it away from them. Joseph **Norwood**, an inmate said that he was in the ward at the time of the accident. There was a disturbance between Cordell and another patient who were wrangling together. He did not see whether Cordell struck the attendant or not. The attendant and Cordell both fell down.

Dr. J. **McConnaghen** assistant medical officer at the Asylum, said that passing down the corridor at 1:15 on the date in question, the attendant Bailey called him and told him that Cordell had broken his leg. On examining it he found it a compound fracture. Witness saw nothing to doubt that what the attendant had said, did take place. He saw Cordell within a few minutes of the struggle. Cordell was an irritable old man, who would quickly lose his temper and strike at a patient or an attendant. He had previously struck attendants. Deceased had a very bad memory, and could not remember anything for long. When witness went into the ward, Cordell said it was Bailey's fault, but that he had sustained the injury years ago, when he was on board ship in the Marines. Witness found he had broken the bones of the left ankle joint, and there was a gaping wound through which the bones were protruding. He stitched up the wound and set the leg. Cordell went on all right for two days and he was then moved into another ward. When witness went to dress the wound again, he found the bones again protruding just below the original wound. He died on November 3rd. In his opinion, death was due to the compound fracture of the tibia which led to congestion of the lungs. Deceased was in a very bad condition of health, and congestion might have come on even if the accident had not happened.

The Foreman: Do you think if you fell on the floor it would cause a compound fracture? - It is quite possible.

He is a big man? - Yes, he weighed over 15 stones.

The Coroner: I believe lunatics are liable to fracture their bones through very slight falls? - Yes, sometimes.

I mean it is not an uncommon thing? - No, it is not.

Is it the fact that lunatics' bones are more brittle and more liable to be broken? - You hear more of them.

The Coroner said he did not think the jury would have any difficulty in finding a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence. As the fall, they had to consider whether it was accidentally caused. He thought they would have no difficulty as to that.

A verdict in accordance with the medical evidence was returned.

A jurymen asked whether it was the rule to have polished floors.

The coroner said the question of the flooring of such institutions had for the last 10 or 12 years been a matter of great consideration. It was generally considered that the best flooring was such as had been put down in that Asylum. The same kind was used nearly everywhere now. Falls such as Cordell had incurred, were not infrequent in the streets."

And so, Thomas Cordell, knew life. Sailor, lock keeper, pub keeper, maltmaker, husband and father and a sad and tragic end.

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Cousin Peggy has lots of other family goodies, a bible, a set of plates owned by my Great Great Grandmother, and Photographic portraits (Thanks to them taking in a child called Tiddler **Wilkinson** - There was a shop in Ware High Street called Wilkinson's it was a Photographers) and most importantly I can trust her recollections.

I have personal stories of my Cordell line and can see them as real people and not just certificates and census.

The sources I used to find my information are: Cousin Peggy, Parish, Marriage, Death and Census records, Asylum records from Hertfordshire Archives, a very helpful tour guide at Greenwich Naval Hall, the British newspaper Archives and PubWiki.

From *The Gentleman's Magazine*.....

15 March 1800.

CHAPMAN. In Charles Street, Berkeley Square, Dame Sarah Chapman, second wife (and relict) of Sir John Chapman, Bart. She has left her manor of Cokenach, in Barkway, which she inherited from the Chesters, and her house in Charles Street, with her plate and jewels to Lady Mills, wife of Sir Francis Mills, of Chesterfield, an intimate friend, but not related; £7000 to relations of her son, Sir John Chapman, £3000 to a natural child of a near relation; £1000 to her own maid, who lived with her 24 years; and £100 to her coachman who lived with her 22 years. She was buried at Barkway.

A Memorial in Barkway church carries the following inscription:

Near this place lie interred the remains of Dame Sarah Chapman, widow of Sir John Chapman, Bart., of Cokenach in this county. She deceased the XV day of March MDCCC aged LXV years. This lady was endued with many virtues and god qualities. She was an affectionate wife, a sincere friend ad a much loved acquaintance.

Sir Francis and Lady Willes of Hampstead, Middlesex, and now of Cokenach, erected this monument to her memory as a small tribute of their gratitude.

Cussans describes this monument as 'a large and unsightly monument of black and white marble, reaching from the floor to the cornice' and adds that prior to her marriage Lady Chapman was Housekeeper to Sir John.

Intriguing. Who was Sarah Chapman?

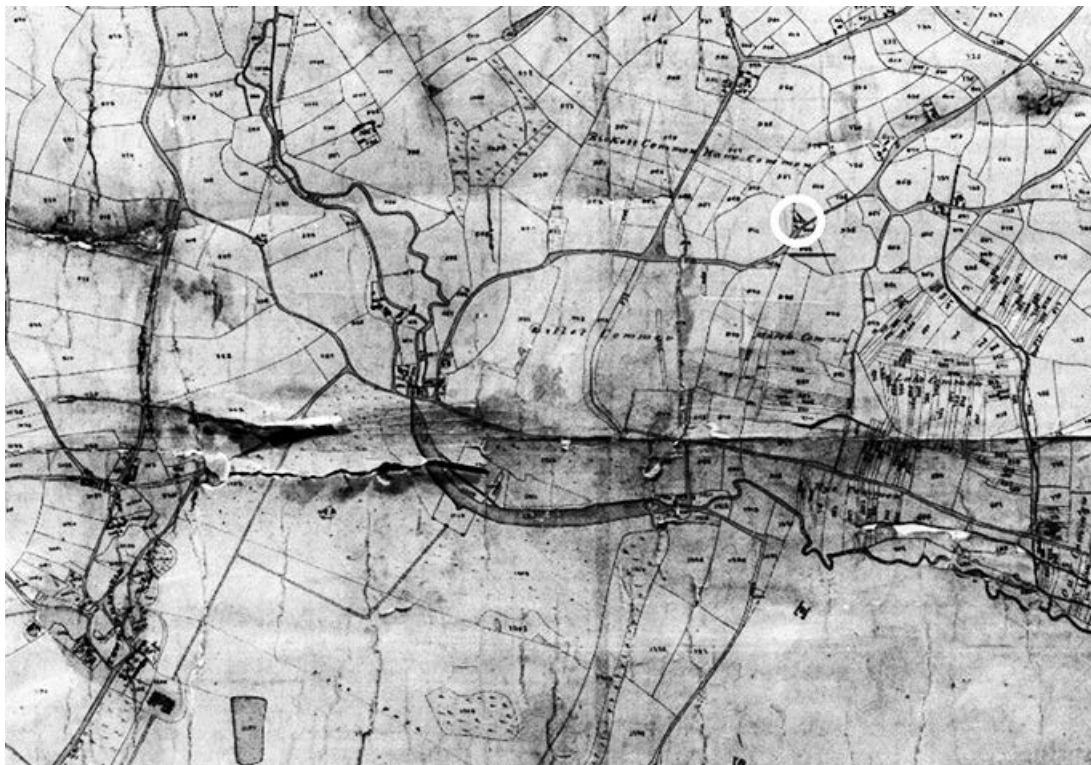
Olivers Business and Family History

A family firm which specialises in agricultural machinery was started by **THOMAS Oliver** in 1823. With roots in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, the company celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2023 and is still run by his descendants.



The history of the business and who was THOMAS Oliver?

In 1823 **THOMAS Oliver** started offering agricultural contract services providing labour and horse drawn equipment such as ploughs and harrows to local farmers.¹ In 1841 he was a farmer aged about 40 in Hatfield Hyde to the northeast of Hatfield. In the next two decades he was in the same area at Ludwick Hall: a farmer of 200 acres with 8 men in 1851 and a farmer and implement proprietor in 1861. Earlier tithe records, in 1838, confirm him farming 97 acres belonging to the Trustees of Legg's Charity with a homestead marked with a white circle on the tithe map.^{2,3}



Rudimentary static steam engines were developed at the end of the 18th century and applications were slowly developed in agriculture. In the 1840s and 1850s significant developments of horse guided, steam traction engines were made in the UK. The complexity of early steam machinery opened up a market for contractors to supply small individual farmers with services such as contract threshing and ploughing.

THE PLOUGHING.
[Chandler] and [Oliver's] Steam Plough was at work in a field on Hertingfordbury Park Farm, adjoining the high road, and in view of the fields where the teams of the ploughmen were at work. The steam plough is one of the simplest of modern inventions, and one can scarcely observe it at work without wondering why it was not thought of long years ago. It is yet far from being so efficient an implement as it is certainly destined to become; and yet nothing is more obvious than there is no agricultural operation which steam can be brought with more facility to aid than ploughing. When the steam plough was first talked of, the idea suggested to one's mind was that of a ten-horse steam-engine dragging its huge weight over an extemporised iron tramway, laid down upon a barley stubble, and driving before, or dragging after it, some gigantic digging apparatus. But it is nothing of the kind. The engine and the plough have no other connection than is established between them by means of a steel rope, in appearance like the Atlantic telegraph cable, which is wound round two drums attached to a stationary engine, from which it passes to what are called "anchors," wheels lying upon an iron plate, round which the rope passes to the plough, which impels in any direction desired, according to the position of the "anchors." The ploughs in operation on Wed-

In 1858 THOMAS Oliver made several suggestions for 'Improvements in agriculture apparatuses for ploughing and otherwise operating upon land'. These were 'in the names of Robert Wilson Chandler of Bow, Middlesex - engineer and Thomas Oliver of Hatfield, Herts - farmer'.⁴⁵

Details of the new engine were demonstrated at several agricultural show such as at the Hertfordshire Agricultural Show in 1858.⁶

be desired. The inventor states that his three furrow plough will turn up ten acres in a day, with the labour of four men and a boy, viz., a man to superintend the engine, a man to each anchor, a ploughman, and a boy to assist him. It appeared to us that this was rather an under estimate of the labour employed on Wednesday; but that was a show day. The engine employed by Messrs [Chandler] and [Oliver] was of 7 horse power, so constructed as to be applicable to general farming purposes, and capable of being drawn from place to place by four horses. The engine was, however, hardly of sufficient power for the three furrow plough; and if one of 10 horse power had been used, the work would have been done with greater speed, and some doubts which appeared to be entertained about the relative cost of ploughing by steam and in the ordinary way, might have been removed. In passing, we mention that the coil of steel rope was of the length of nearly 1,000 yards, and the quantity used on Wednesday was 600 yards. The cost of a 10 horse engine is about 280l.; of the rope, 100l. The inventor of the plough is Mr. Robert [Chandler], of Bow, who is associated with Mr. [Oliver], farmer, of [Hatfield] Hyde, as joint patentee.

In 1865, aged about 64, **THOMAS Oliver** was winding down his business at Ludwick Hall Farm and selling his machinery.⁷



THOMAS Oliver died in 1870, aged about 70.

By 1876 his son, Thomas Oliver was selling the farming stock at Ludwick.⁸

HATFIELD HYDE, HERTS.
To **ENGINEERS, AGRICULTURISTS, and Others.**

FOUR Valuable **STEAM ENGINES** and **THRASHING MACHINES**, manufactured by Hornsby, Wedlake, &c., with their Straps, Tilt, Cloths, Tools, and Gear complete; a capital **REAPING MACHINE** by Burgess and Key; Patent Haymaker, 2 Chaff-Cutters, 2 Seed Drawing Machines; Corn and Seed Drills; 6 Four-horse-Powers; Horse Hoe; capital Sawing Table with 3 Circular Saws; Pair of Bellows; iron Anvil, Vice, Turning Lathe; quantity of New and Old **IRON**, and numerous other Effects;
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY Messrs. MEDCALF.

On the Premises, at Ludwick Hall Farm, on **WEDNESDAY, October 25th, 1865**, at **Twelve o'clock precisely**, by order of Mr Thomas Oliver, who is declining the business of a machinist.
May be viewed three days previous to the sale, and catalogues had at the usual inns in the neighbourhood; place of sale; and of the auctioneers, Fore-street, Hertford.

Development of the Oliver business into the 20th & 21st century?

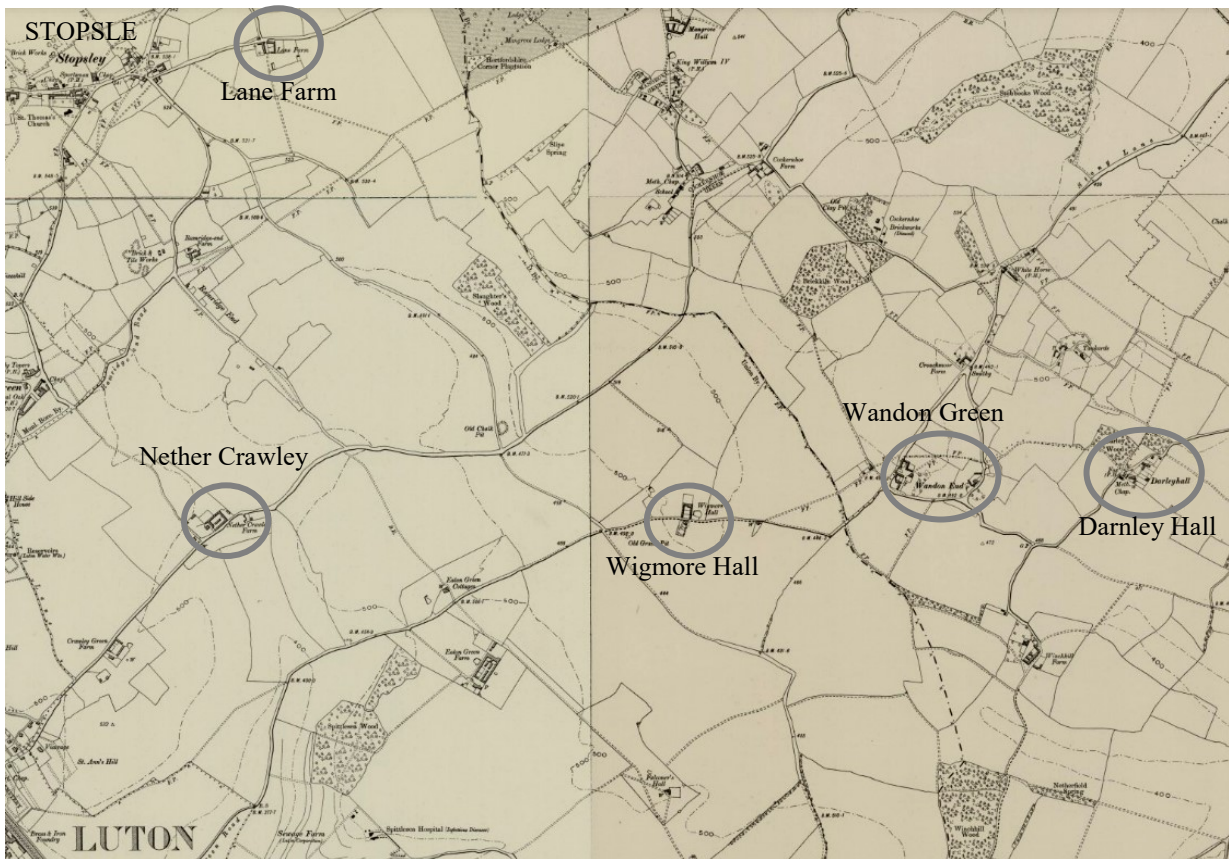
THOMAS Oliver's three sons, Thomas, **James**⁹ and Richard, and many of their male descendants, continued to work with agricultural machinery.

But **James, THOMAS' middle son**, and his descendants developed the subsequent major business. Briefly the activities of other sons:

THOMAS' youngest son, Richard (1844-1916) initially continued farming in the same area as his father.¹⁰ From 1891 to 1911 he lived in Harpenden Hertfordshire where his occupation was an agricultural machinist/engineer.¹¹ By 1901 the occupation of all his 3 boys was 'worker with agricultural machines'.

THOMAS' eldest son, also called Thomas (1834-1903), was working with his father in 1861. But by 1866 he was listed as an agricultural implement manufacturer in the Hertfordshire Post Office Directory for Wheathampstead which abuts Harpenden. He was living there in 1871 (machinist and farmer of 218 acres) with his wife Mary and four daughters. Presumably the absence of any sons resulted in an agricultural machinery business continued only by descendants of his brother **James**.

By 1881 Thomas had relocated to Lane Farm at Stopsley to the north of Luton and his brother **James** was at Wigmore Hall. This began the occupation of various farms in that area by the Oliver family which continues today.



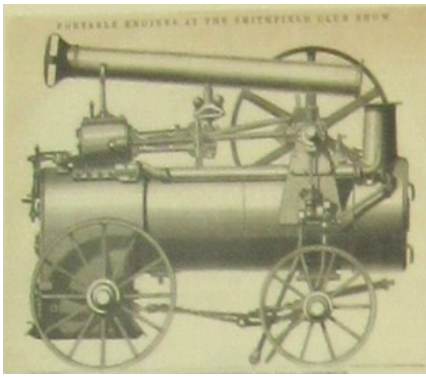
How did James Oliver (1836-1910), THOMAS' second son, start and develop, his own business?



He began by supplying agricultural machinery in 1853, initially located at 72 Park Street Luton.¹²

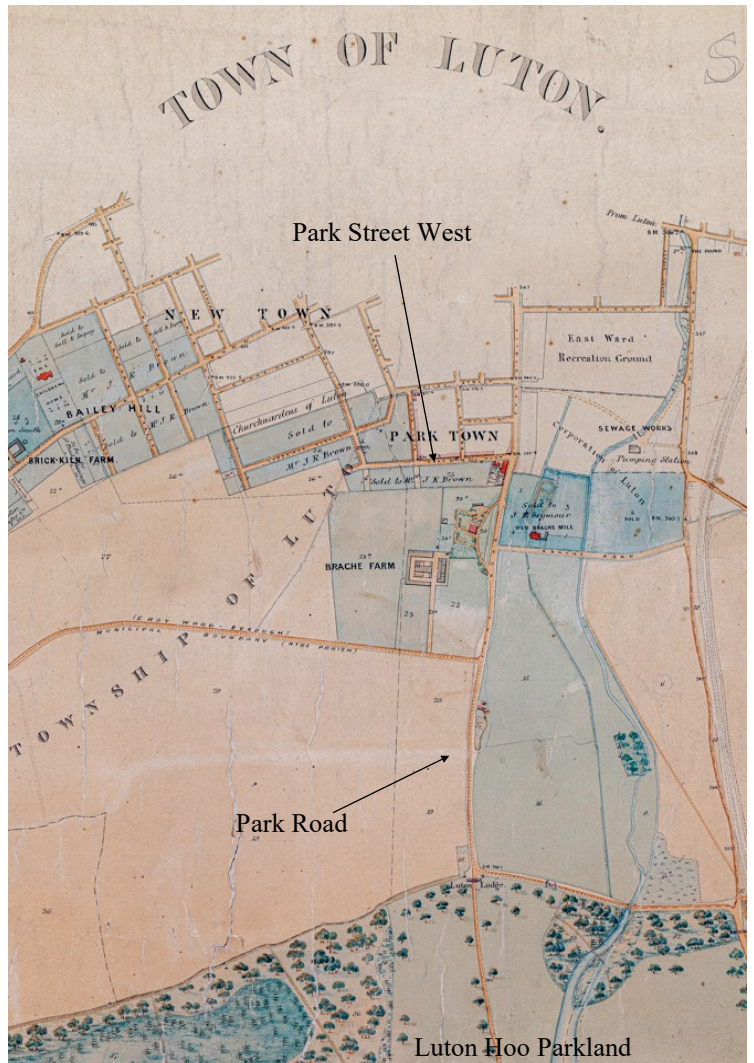
He married his second cousin, Fanny Oliver, in 1858. In the 1861 census he was recorded, aged 26, at 10 Park Street West in Luton as an Agricultural Machine Proprietor and employer. He also had premises at Bower Heath in Harpenden for machinery and repairs.¹³

His family developed with the addition of two boys: Walter James Oliver in 1859 and **Archibald Thomas Oliver** in 1861.



The business gained an important franchise for Marshall stationary engines¹⁴ in 1866. **James** subsequently patented attachments for this engine such as a Chaff Bagger.

Perhaps **James** Oliver liaised with his agricultural neighbour. Park Road was the northern entrance to the Luton Hoo Estate which was bought by John Shaw Leigh in 1847. He was an agricultural entrepreneur¹⁵ and on the council of the Royal Agricultural Society. In the 1860s he built a state-of-the-art home farm on the centre of the estate.



The estate map, from 1869, is useful in that it shows that the estate extended into the township of Luton (in blue) and shows the location of Park Street West.¹⁶

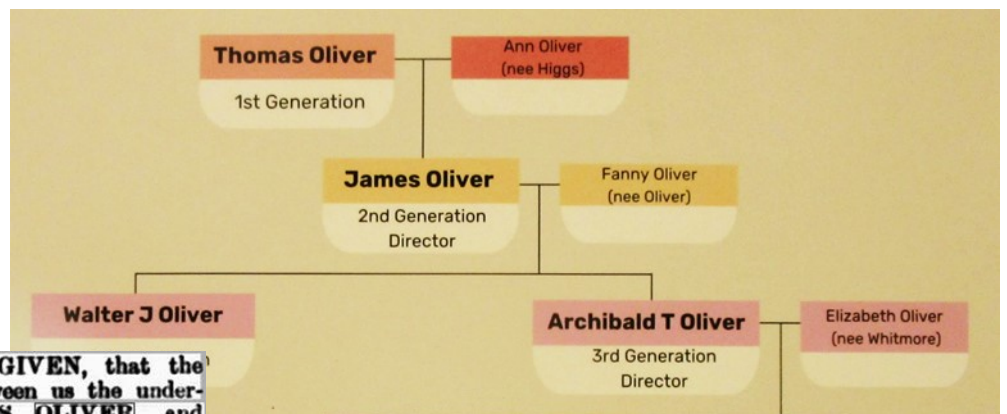
James retained premises in Luton, but by 1871 the census said he was based at Darley Hall and then indicated that he had made a permanent move by 1881 to Wigmore Hall farm, to the east of Luton (435 acres). Listed with the occupations of both farmer and machinist he remained there until his death in 1910.



By 1901 **James'** oldest son Walter James Oliver (1859-1945), on the right of the picture,¹⁷ was a farmer and employer at the neighbouring Nether Crawley farm where **James'** uncle, Thomas Oliver, 56, (the brother of James' mother), was a milk purveyor.¹⁸

Walter James Oliver was a 'Thrashing Machine Proprietor' and employer in 1911 at Dunstable, to the west of Luton. He was still there in 1921 as a retired agricultural engineer. Neither of Walter's sons followed their father's occupation as an agricultural engineer. By 1921 both were poultry farmers: Harold (1891-1970) in Dunstable and Henry Leslie (1898-1986) in Dunstable and then in Kent.

Archibald Thomas Oliver (1861-1951), **James'** second son, developed his father's agricultural machinery business. By 1891 he had moved both his growing family and the agricultural business to Wandon End from where its headquarters continues to operate.



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the PARTNERSHIP between us the undersigned WALTER. JAMES OLIVER and ARCHIBALD THOMAS OLIVER trading as "W. J. and A. T. Oliver" as Engineers, Machinists, and Implement Agents at Wandon End, in the County of Hertford, near Luton, in the County of Bedford, was this day DISSOLVED by mutual consent. All debts due and owing to or by the late firm will be received and paid by the said ARCHIBALD THOMAS OLIVER, who will in future carry on the business in his own name, and on his separate account. As witness our hands this 30th day of December, 1891.
WALTER JAMES OLIVER
ARCHIBALD THOMAS OLIVER

At the start of 1892 the brothers formally agreed to cease trading together.¹⁹



A T Oliver and Sons was set up with **Archibald Thomas Oliver** and his two sons, **Percy James** and **Archibald Ralph**. The business was mainly hiring out men and machines for steam ploughing, harvesting and threshing.

Members of the extended family and employees manned as many as 32 threshing sets which operated simultaneously from the 1890s onwards. Each set, comprising a mobile steam powered traction engine, threshing drum, chaff cutter and bagger, toured the local counties for months. Ploughing teams of 7 men also operated with the traction engine pulling a van providing living quarters from farm to farm.

By 1921, **Archibald Thomas** and his wife (company secretary) were at Wandon End aged 60. By then their sons had their own homes, so only two of his wife's relations were living with them: Ethel Francis King,²⁰ age 29, an assistant clerk for the company and Alice Hide Whitmore,²¹ age 72, a home help.

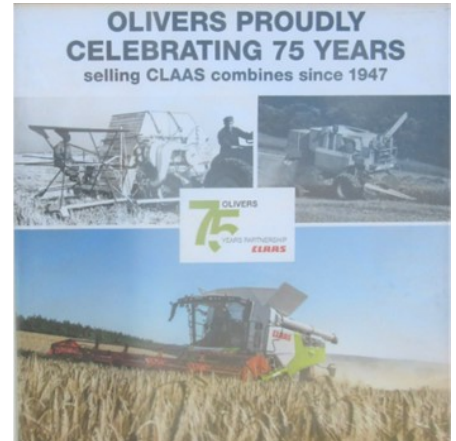
First name(s)	Last name	Relationship to head	Sex	Birth year	Age in years	Birth place	Occupation	Employer
Archibald Thomas	Oliver	Head	Male	1861	60	Luton, Bedfordshire, England	Thrashing Machine Owner & Agricultural Engineer	Employer
Elizabeth	Oliver	Wife	Female	1860	60	Bedfordshire, England	Secretary	A T Oliver Engineer
Ethel Frances	King	Cousin	Female	1892	29	Keysoe, Bedfordshire, England	Assistant Clerk	A T Oliver Engineer
Alice Hide	Whitmore	Cousin	Female	1849	72	Stratford, Bedfordshire, England	Help	Private
Bertha Eliza	Spicer	Servant	Female	1879	41	Breachwood Green, Hertfordshire, England	General Domestic	Private

Premises in Luton were retained to at least 1934 when electoral registers still recorded **A T Oliver**, of Wandon End, with a shop at 35 Park Street. At the Park Street location his brother-in-law Benjamin Whitmore (1848-1935) and Benjamin's son were both recorded as saddlers. Luton Harness Stores advertised 'All kinds of Harness made on the Premises'.

A T Oliver retired in 1926 and his two sons, the 4th generation of the family firm, continued an expanding business offering contract services with up to 40 sets on the road. At this point Tankards Farm at Tea Green was leased to increase the farming activities.

Archibald Thomas Oliver died in 1941 having seen his grandsons join the business during the 1930s.

After WWII the two-stage reaping and threshing process was being replaced rapidly by combines that did both processes together in the field. In 1947 Olivers became an agent for Claas a relationship that has just celebrated 75 years. The fleet of 90 steam engines was gradually dispersed and the company moved from contract services and returned to selling and servicing agricultural machinery and supplying parts. Horses were replaced by tractors and the company continues to add to the franchises that had begun in 1921.



A T Oliver and Sons Ltd was formed in 1951.



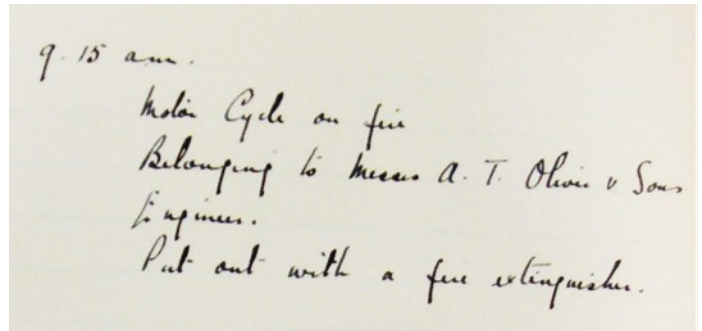
5th, 6th and 7th generations in the family business

Percy James Oliver 1888-1950 married in 1912. Their son, Frederick Ralph, became a 5th generation director of the company. Fred's son joined the company in 1961 becoming a 6th generation

director in 1970. In the 1960s, over 100 staff were employed at Wandon End and the Shefford branch.

Archibald Ralph 1892-1964 married in 1918 and lived for several years in New Mill End Farmhouse at East Hyde on the Luton Hoo Estate. Their son, John Archibald Ralph, was born first and his sister Joan Elizabeth in 1922.

The Luton Hoo estate fire brigade log recorded putting out a motorcycle fire in 1925.²²



John Archibald Ralph Oliver became a 5th generation director and Joan's son is currently a 6th generation director having joined the board in 1975.

Joan Oliver was the first female member of the family whose descendants have become directors of the Oliver family firm. Her granddaughter became a 7th generation director in 2014 of ATO Holdings.

The company continues to expand, diversify and thrive. It marked its 200th birthday in 2023 with a series of events on the Hertfordshire Show Ground. An apt location for a company that would have showcased its services and equipment over the centuries at various show grounds around the county.²³

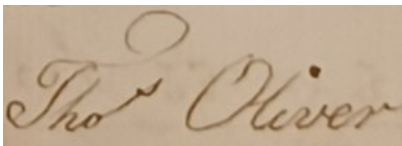
Still a family firm, they hosted a day for all their staff and their families.



APPENDIX: THOMAS Oliver's origins.

Family history records for the founder, **THOMAS** Oliver born about 1800, have been slowly pieced together. Despite beginning his contracting business in 1823 while farming in Hertfordshire the family's early connections seem to be linked to farming in Bedfordshire.

All **THOMAS** Oliver's children (Ann, Thomas, **James**, Sophia, Elizabeth, Richard, Mary and Agnes²⁴) can be confirmed from census returns and their wills in which they mention their siblings. But **THOMAS** Oliver's own baptism and the baptisms of most of his children have not been found. This may suggest a non-Conformist family for whom records may not have survived.



The signature of a Thomas Oliver, on an application, in 1813, to register a place of public worship in the parish of Westoning in Bedfordshire (south of Flitwick) for the use of protestant dissenters, seems to provide confirmation.

Further evidence comes from the births of James and Richard Oliver recorded in 1784 and 1786 at the independent chapel at Maulden in Bedfordshire and were said to be of Milton Briant.

Date of Births	Date of Burials	Person's Names	What Place?
Oct 31 1784		James Oliver son of Tho ^s & Eliz ^a Oliver	Milton Briant Bedfordshire
Jan 29 1786		Richard Oliver son of Tho ^s & Eliz ^a Oliver	Milton Briant Bedfordshire

Their parents were stated as Thomas and Elizabeth which fits with a marriage bond²⁶ of £100 made in 1784 when Thomas Oliver and Elizabeth Cook of Steppingley applied for a licence to marry.²⁷

No other birth information about their children has been found, but birth dates from later census returns place their births in the order: James 1784, Richard 1786, Elizabeth 1798, Sophia 1799, **THOMAS** 1801-70, and Mary 1806.

More details about these children (**THOMAS**' siblings) were:

- James a farmer in Bedfordshire at Wooton and later at Keysoe Park Farm before his death in 1864.
- Elizabeth and Sophia never married and lived with Richard, a farmer in Westoning at Wood End until he died in 1853 and then together until their deaths in 1871.
- Mary married Joseph Aldridge.

Back another generation:

Sometimes the wills of men who had no children can provide the much-needed information about families when they name their siblings, nephews and nieces. James Oliver, a farmer of Flitwick, wrote his long will in 1844 and mentioned all his relations in great detail.²⁸ He outlived his brothers and sisters but named them and their surviving children:

- late brother William Oliver and his 3 children
- late sister Sarah Coster and her 3 sons
- his married half-sisters Elizabeth Morris and Ann Hobbs²⁹
- his late brother Thomas Oliver and his children James, Richard, Elizabeth, Sophia, **THOMAS** and Mary Aldridge.

James' will provided **THOMAS** with aunts and uncles and a father called Thomas who died before James made his will in 1844.

A possible Thomas Oliver (1723-1805) was buried in Steppingley, Bedfordshire in 1805 aged 82. His will³⁰, written in 1799, stated that he was a farmer of Warren Farm Flitwick and the children match perfectly: James (executor), William, Sarah Coster, Thomas, Elizabeth and mentioning the children of his late daughter Ann Hobbs.

The family's earlier origins need further research³¹ but the Oliver family's agricultural business, which has existed from 1823 to 2023, seems to have an agricultural pedigree in Bedfordshire back going back at least to 1723.

Felicity Brimblecombe
Chair Herts Family History Society
Secretary and Editor Beds Gardens Trust

Notes

1. Olivers 200 years history, early business records are in [Oliver & Sons Ltd. Archive - The MERL \(reading.ac.uk\)](#)
2. The Genealogist, Piece 15 Hertfordshire, Sub-Piece 023 Hatfield, Sub-image 001
3. Hatfield and Hatfield House are bottom left and the river Lea meanders diagonally across the map. It can be located on a modern map at about AL7 4PH which is the post code of the Co-op at Ludwick in the suburbs of Welwyn Garden City.
4. [TR-FOW-section-2-from-A2A.pdf \(reading.ac.uk\)](#) p.8. 3 sheets of drawings. Specification no. 1591. TR FOW/CO5/31/iv 1858(14 Jul) and Pp.8. 3 sheets of drawings. Specification no. 1591. TR FOW/CO5/31/iv 1858(14 Jul) Pp.11. 5 sheets of drawings. Specification no.2458. TR FOW/CO5/31/ix 1858(3 Nov)

5. Robert Wilson Chandler was an engineer born about 1818 Bow died 1902.
6. *Hertfordshire Mercury & Reformer*, 2 October 1858; also, at the Sleaford Agricultural Society and other places.
7. Hertfordshire Express 21 Oct 1865
8. Hertfordshire Mercury and Reformer 22 July 1876
9. Names in bold indicate the members of the family who ran the early business.
10. Farm Bailiff at Hatfield Hyde in 1871, farmer at Legg's Charity Farm in 1881.
11. 1891 in Upper Cravells Road (wife and 9 children), 1901 an Agricultural Machinist (own account) living at The Heath, East Common at the end of Cravells Road (sons, Herbert, James, George, at home all working with agricultural machines, 1911 in Vaughan Road engineer (agricultural).
12. [Oliver & Sons Ltd. Archive - The MERL \(reading.ac.uk\)](#)
13. On the edge of Harpenden & Wheathampstead may have been the location of his brother Thomas' business.
14. [Marshall, Sons and Co - Graces Guide](#)
15. History of Luton and its Hamlets, William Austin, 1928, p158
16. Luton Hoo Estate map 1869
17. Walter is standing on the far right, Archibald is standing on the far left, James Oliver and his wife Fanny are seated in the centre.
18. James' mother, Fanny Oliver had several siblings with links to farming and the firm: her brothers, James and Richard, ran farms in Bedfordshire; the daughter of her sister Ann, Ethel Frances King, was an assistant clerk to the firm; her youngest brother became a draper.
19. *Luton Times and Advertiser* 1 January 1892.
20. Daughter of Ann Oliver who was the sister of James Oliver's wife.
21. Daughter of Benjamin Whitmore who was the uncle of James Oliver's wife
22. Beds Archives LHE 487

23. Such as Herts Show at Cross Farm Childwickbury in 1954 and 1956
24. The births of the last five were registered after 1837 with their mother's maiden name Higgs General Register Office - Online Ordering Service - Login (gro.gov.uk)
25. Bedfordshire Archives ABN2/156
26. [5marriagebonds.pdf \(york.ac.uk\)](#)
27. Bedfordshire Archives ABM1784/15a and 15b
28. Will PCC PROB 11/2000/285
29. James, William, Sarah and Thomas were the children of Thomas Oliver 1723-1805 and Sarah Cook (died 1762). Thomas remarried Martha Lee and had 2 further children Ann 1764-98 and Elizabeth 1772-1854.
30. Bedfordshire Archives ABP/W1805/6
31. Perhaps investigation of another Oliver family with a long pedigree in Bedfordshire might provide some clues. Samuel Oliver (1805-92) was a linen draper recorded in Luton from 1841 to 1891 in the same streets (Park Street and Park Street West) where James Oliver began his business and lived with his wife Fanny née Oliver. It might also explain why one of Fanny's younger brothers, William Oliver (1855-1911) became a draper.

Research Queries

Are you stuck with your research? Don't forget you can still call on the help of fellow HFHS members.

Send your research questions to: The Editor, 53 Hitchin Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 6AQ.
editor@hertsfhs.org.uk



What's new at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies?

By Sheila White

Herts Memories – some new pages

Almshouses at Ware and Stanstead Abbots

Listed buildings - did your ancestor live in what is now a listed building? New pages added about grade II listed buildings in the Cheshunt and Hoddesdon area.

Some postcards and photos recently deposited at HALS

Standon: a mix of colour and black and white photographs of Standon 1954 – 1989 (Acc 6478)

Watford: albums of postcards, mainly relating to Watford and the surrounding area c1900s – 1970s (Acc 6473)

Events at HALS

Getting started at HALS - a guide to researching resources at HALS

Thursday, 7 March, 11:00am – 12:00pm

Tuesday, 9 April, 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Wednesday, 8 May, 11:00am – 12:00pm

Free; booking essential (see contact details below).

Family Tree Detectives

£7; booking essential (see contact details below).

Making Sense of the Census, 1801 – 1921 – find out more about this essential resource which can reveal so much about our towns and villages and the people who lived in them.

Tuesday 19 March, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Online Tips and Tricks - how to get the best from Ancestry and Find My Past, two popular family history websites. There will be an opportunity to get some practical experience.

Tuesday 16 April, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Finding Dead People – Deaths are often overlooked in family history research, but they can unlock the secrets of their lives - hints and tips for locating deceased ancestors.

Thursday 20 June, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Researching Women in Your Family Tree

Tuesday 17 September, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Family history one-to-one advice

Are you stuck with your family history? Book a session with an expert for some one-to-one advice. You can have the session over the phone, online (via MS Teams) or in person at HALS (cost £14). See contact details below.

1921 census free to view

The 1921 Census is now free to view at HALS and Hertfordshire Libraries through Findmypast.

Contact details for HALS

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS)

Register Office Block, CHR 002, County Hall, Pegs Lane,
Hertford SG13 8EJ

Tel: 0300 123 4049 (as for Local Studies)

Email: hals.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hals

You can also follow HALS on X (Twitter) @HertsArchives

HALS opening hours

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	9am – 5.00pm First Tuesday evening of the month only, 5pm -7:30pm, and only by appointment
Wednesday	9am – 5.00pm
Thursday	9am – 5.00pm
Friday	9am – 12.30pm
Saturday	10am – 2pm First and third Saturdays of the month only and only by appointment
Sunday	Closed

Useful links

www.findmypast.co.uk Hertfordshire parish registers, school logbooks, historic newspapers & the 1939 National Register searchable online (subscription site, normally free to use at HALS and Hertfordshire libraries)

www.thegenealogist.co.uk Hertfordshire tithe maps and apportionments searchable online (subscription site)

www.workhouses.org.uk the story of the workhouse with information about workhouses in Hertfordshire and across the country

www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk Genealogy in Hertfordshire

www.hertsmemories.org.uk history, memories and photos of Hertfordshire

www.halh.org.uk Hertfordshire Association for Local History, with links to local history societies' websites. Details of free online local history talks can be found on the home page.

www.hertspastpolicing.org.uk Herts Past Policing: crime and policing in Hertfordshire through the ages

www.hertsatwar.co.uk Community led project to commemorate the diverse experiences of Hertfordshire during WW1

www.prisonhistory.org Database of prisons, prison records and lock-ups in England, searchable by county

maps.nls.uk/os Historic Ordnance Survey maps, including of Hertfordshire, at the National Library of Scotland

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk The National Archives (TNA)
The National Archives at Kew re-opened on 27 April by appointment only; more on their website. Downloadable files are still being available at no charge (usually £3.50). These include PCC wills, navy and marine records, New Poor Law correspondence (Bishops Stortford Poor Law Union only for Herts) and title deeds.

Social Media



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Society Talks

November 2023

Forgotten Staff - Victorian and Edwardian Railwaywomen presented by Dr David Turner

Making a welcome return as our speaker was Dr David Turner (davidturnerrailway@gmail.com). During his research into railway employment our speaker has discovered that a significant number of women also worked in the railway industry. In the 1851 Census there were 54 women identified as working in this industry, by 1901 there were c. 1633 in the wages grades of employment which rose by c. 1914 to 13,046 in a II grades of employment. The staff records of 4 companies have been looked at with the main areas of female employment being in clerical positions, refreshment rooms, waiting rooms, gatekeepers and some in management roles.

Women's roles in the railway industry did not violate the accepted norms of working women, 90% of all married women were not in employment, so these women were mostly single or widows. Many were the wives and daughters of existing railway employees. Employment for all in the railway industry was a three tier system, the clerical tier where career prospects were good as was the pay; the Stable tier which included such jobs as engine drivers, porters, signallers and firemen to the more precarious tier of the temporary staff where workers could be let go at short notice. Women workers were mostly in the temporary staff category.

Clerical jobs included Telegraph, admin and booking clerks. Employing females at the beginning was an experiment. Women's pay was the same as men up to 8 years service when it remained the same whilst men's wages went up. Refreshment room employment includes such roles as Matron, waitresses, scullery maids, stillroom maid and housemaids. The work was hard as the railways were operating 24 hours a day. Other more specialised work came under workshop workers where you could find upholsterers, seamstresses, machinists and French polishers.

Our speaker used case studies to illustrate his points, using railway company records at The National Archives, staff magazines and newspaper reports of railway accidents, staff events and activities. There is also an archive at the Railway Museum in York. It was noted that during the First and Second World Wars women were found to perform men's jobs effectively.

December 2023

The Long Paper Trail presented by Sue Paul

Our speaker, Sue Paul, gave a very interesting talk about the 1913 discovery of a seventeenth century wooden leather bound chest in the attic at Cleeve Prior Manor House in Worcestershire.

The chest had some marks of ownership on it, 'EB 1649', and contained thousands of documents some of which were damaged by seawater. Understanding the provenance and custodianship of the papers over the years opened up the story of Captain Thomas Bowrey, Merchant Adventurer.

The papers from the chest included business papers, travel accounts, shipping papers and business accounts dating from 1669 to 1713 and an English Malay dictionary and notes of trading in the East Indies. There were also useful letters from friends, family and business associates. Selections of these papers, edited by Sir Richard Carnac Temple, were published in two works, *The Papers of Thomas Bowrey* (1927)¹ and *New Light on the Mysterious Tragedy of the Worcester* (1930).

The custodianship of the chest can be traced from Thomas Bowrey to his wife, Mary nee Gardiner, her mother Frances Gardiner, to her nephew, Thomas Bushell who moved from Cleeve Prior to Swinbrook but left the chest at Cleeve Prior to Henry Howard who inherited the chest with the house. The movement and splitting up of the manuscripts over the years has to some extent ruined their integrity. Parts are now in LMA, Essex Record Office, The British Library / India Office records. They have now been catalogued with the finding aid improving accessibility.

Bowrey was born in 1659 in Wapping and lost his father in 1665 during the Plague in London. After the Great Fire of London in 1666, at the age of 7, he

left for the East Indies and arrived in Madras in 1669. His experiences during the next decade were recorded in a manuscript passed down the Eliot/Howard family and published as *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal* in 1905. It included the first written account of the recreational use of cannabis in the English language. Bowrey returned to Wapping in 1689 and then married Mary Gardiner in 1691. He acted as a consultant to independent East Indies venture and published the first Malay-English dictionary in 1701. Between 1698 and 1707, Bowrey invested in numerous East Indies ventures but suffered many losses. The most notable was the *Prosperous* taken by pirates in Madagascar and the *Worcester* seized by the Scots in Edinburgh, an incident that hastened the union of England and Scotland. Subsequently, Bowrey turned his energies to a number of varied projects, including his collaboration with Daniel Defoe in the founding of the infamous South Sea Company. Having survived 19 years in the East Indies, a feat in itself, Bowrey died in 1713 at the age of 53 and was buried at Lee, Kent, on 14 March. Bowrey, despite setbacks and losses, amassed sufficient fortune for almshouses to be built in his name.³

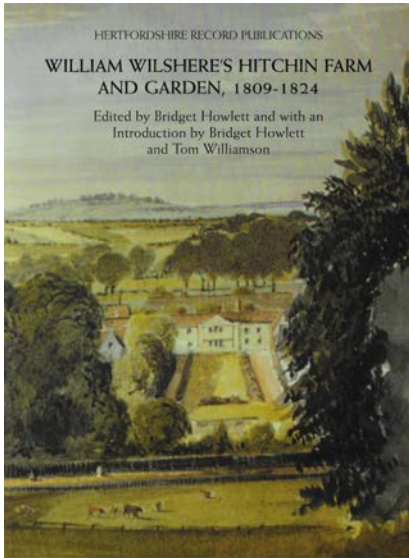
Our speaker has written a biography of Capt. Thomas Bowrey that will elaborate on the above.

Paul, Sue (2020). *Jeopardy of Every Wind: The Biography of Captain Thomas Bowrey*. Melton Mowbray: Dollarbird. ISBN 9781912049622.

Notes

1. S. E. W. (September 1927). "The Papers of Thomas Bowrey, 1669-1713 by Richard Carnac Temple". *The Geographical Journal*. 70
2. *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669 to 1679*. Cambridge, Printed for the Hakluyt Society. 1895. (Editor, originally by Thomas Bowrey)
3. [Thomas Bowrey - Wikipedia](#)

Book Reviews.....



Howlett, Bridget (ed) *William Wilshere's Hitchin Farm and Garden, 1809-1824*. Hertfordshire Record Society, Vol XXXIX, 2023. ISBN 978-0-9501741-6-7

This is the 39th volume published by the Hertfordshire Record Society. At first sight it might just seem to be lists of farm stock and equipment with notes on crops grown. It is, however, much more than this. There are nearly 100 pages of introduction by Bridget Howlett and Tom Williamson.

This introduces us to William **Wilshere**, his life in Hitchin and his contacts there. He was instrumental in setting up the Hitchin Boys' School. He also contributed to funds to buy coal for the use of the poor of Hitchin in the winter, as well as various other charitable foundations.

He was left a house in Bancroft by his business partner Richard **Tristram** in 1785. That was the year he married and moved in. His wife Martha died less than a year later and he never remarried. He added more land around the house, this was the basis for his farm, garden and orchards.

We also learn, in Appendix 1, that Joshua **Ransom** was asked to build 6 cottages in 1820. They were to be 16½ feet by 11½ feet. His estimate was £84.00 each in lathe and plaster, slated or £68.5s. In wattle and daub, thatched.

Wilshere notes that he paid Joshua Ransom about the same time to build three cottages and a shop in Hitchin. These were 43 x 18 feet, with a privy and cost £340.00.

Appendix 2 details plants bought from various nurserymen.

Appendix 3 is a list of fields acquired by William Wilshere, their owner in 1770 and subsequent records of owner. For example: Gray's garden of just over 1 acre was owned in 1770 by Mrs. Ann **Newman**, this was sold in 1791 by

Samuel Newman, trustee of [her] will, to William **Mowbray**, gardener. In 1812 William Mowbray sold it to William Wilshere. By 1816 it was occupied by John **Gray** but still owned by William Wilshere.

Names like these occur all the time and will give anyone with ancestors from Hitchin a valuable insight into life in the town 200 years ago.

Appendix 4 consists of biographical notes. One example is John **Fells**, gardener, then gentleman's servant. He married at St. Mary's Hitchin to Elizabeth **Picking** in 1780. From 1790 he was employed by Wilshere to take charge of his garden, where he remained until 1806. He is also listed in a trade directory of 1794 as a grocer (perhaps this was his wife to earn a bit of extra cash). His son William was also employed in the garden and another son Abraham became a nurseryman. In his will of 1824 William Wilshere left £10.00 to John Fells 'an old servant'.

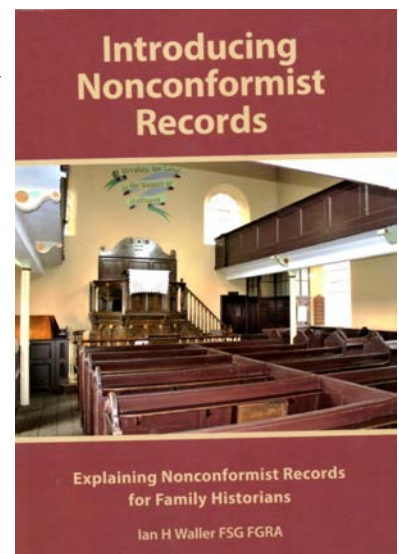
The index of names runs to 7½ pages with double columns. This works out to over 300 people mentioned in this volume.

In reviewing this I have concentrated more on the people rather than varieties of apples and pears and assorted vegetables. You might also like to know he gives the names of his horses and cows.

Janet Pearson

Waller, Ian H. *Introducing Nonconformist Records, Explaining Nonconformist Records for Family Historians*. Family History Books, ISBN 978-1-916599-01-7, 291 pages, £14.95.

I've often asked myself why I felt myself almost alone in talking about Nonconformists, and the significance of their records in researching family history. After all, in 1800 it's estimated that upwards of 10% of the population in England had some form of connection with those who 'dissented' from the Church of England. Why have nonconformist records been ignored? Most kept some form of record of those who attended their chapels



and meeting houses. The probable reason why they've been ignored is because their BMD records all seem different, with each chapel having its own complications to reflect their varying beliefs and organisation.

Thus, nonconformist records in all their variety have tended to be ignored as a resource by family historians. Apart from those denominations included in the *My Ancestor was...* series published by the Society of Genealogists, there has been few guides into this area of research. I'm pleased to say the situation has now in large measure changed with the appearance of two publications.

The first is *Tracing Your Nonconformist Ancestors, A guide for Family and Local Historians* by Stuart Raymond, Pen and Sword, ISBN 978 1 47388 345 1, 240 pages, 2017, £14 99. This is an authoritative and comprehensive book in its coverage, and by far the best work on the subject. It is weighty, and for those not used to the subject something more introductory is likely to be appreciated. Ian Waller, for some years editor of *Hertfordshire People* and a regular speaker at our meetings, has supplied the deficiency. *Introducing Nonconformist Records* assumes limited knowledge of the subject and tackles the complexity in a different way. It has its strengths: Chapter 14 on the Quakers is among the best descriptions of Quakers and their records that I've seen. The book has numerous appendices, that in a few words using bullet points, imparts the information found in registers of even very small denominations. I particularly like the reproductions of actual page entries contained in different types of register. For example, seeing the handwritten entries that appear on a page of a Moravian Baptismal register is entirely new to me, as is the explanation of the abbreviations used in Huguenot registers.

If you're starting out on the task of finding out more about your nonconformist ancestors, then this is the book for you. However, Stuart Raymond's book expands on parts of Ian Waller's book to give more information on some obscure areas. My advice is to buy both books, and in this way to provide a more complete account of the different terminology usage amongst the denominations. I see it as £30 well spent to rectify which has hitherto been a mystery area amongst family historians.

Alan Ruston

A Hertfordshire Heraldic Miscellany

65) The Marital Arms of Denny and Collingwood

Found within the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Aldenham near Watford in the County of Hertfordshire is a mural monument to the memory of The Honourable Mary Patience Denny (born 13th August 1793 died 18th September 1823), the wife of Anthony Denny (born circa 1787 died 18th/19th October 1843 at Florence, Italy), of Borehamwood in the

aforsaid county as well as to their youngest daughter, Mary Patience Denny (baptised 10th November 1821 died 2nd May 1839).

Anthony was the third son of The Reverend Maynard Denny, of Churchill in the County of Kerry and his wife, Penelope Stoughton, whilst Mary was the second daughter of Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, the 1st and last Baron Collingwood, of Coldburne and Hethpool in the



The Arms of Denny, Baronet of Castle Moyle, Co. Kerry

County of Northumberland and his wife, Sarah **Blackett**.

Anthony and Mary were married at the Parish Church of St Marylebone, Marylebone in the County of Middlesex on the 16th June 1817. He was a member of a cadet branch of the Denny family who were created Baronets within the Baronetage of Ireland on the 12th January 1782, styled 'of Castle Moyle in the County of Kerry'.

Arms: *Gules a saltire argent between twelve cross crosslets or (for Denny) upon an escutcheon of pretence Argent a chevron between three stags' heads erased sable and for an augmentation on a chief wavy gules a lion passant guardant navally crowned or with the word 'Trafalgar' over the lion of the last (for Collingwood)*

Crest: *A cubit arm vested azure turned up argent holding five wheatears or (for Denny).*



Here is should be noted that unfortunately the crest is not complete on the memorial as it appears to have damaged at some time over the two hundred years.

The Denny family stem from Sir Robert Denny (died 1420) who served as the Lieutenant to John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford (the third son of King Henry IV and his first wife, Mary de Bohun) at the Seige of Rouen in 1418 - 19.

The family were settled at Cheshunt at least since the reign of King Henry VII if not before, whilst the Collingwoods appear to be of gentry stock hailing from Eslington in the

County of Northumberland according to the pedigree recorded in the Heralds' Visitation of that county that took place in 1615. At that time, their arms were blazoned as '*Argent a chevron azure between three stags' heads erased sable in their mouths a leaf vert*'. In later versions of these arms the stags' head are no longer holding leaves in their mouths.

The version of the Collingwood arms depicted upon this memorial is the version of the admiral's arms with the honourable augmentation granted to him in recognition of naval service Britain's enemies at sea. Notably at the Battle of Trafalgar on the 21st October 1805 where after Nelson's death, Admiral Collingwood flying his flag aboard *HMS Royal Sovereign* succeeded to the command of the British fleet.

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MARRIAGES solemnized in the Parish of **ST. MARY-LE-BONE**, in the County of **MIDDLESEX**, in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventeen.

Anthony Denny Esquire of this Parish
Bachelor

and *The Honorable Mary Patience Collingwood* of this Parish
Spinster

were married in this Church by *Licence*
 this *Sixteenth* Day of
June in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventeen

By me *John Stoughton* Vicar of *St Mary le Bone*

This Marriage was solemnized between us { *Anthony Denny*
Mary Patience Collingwood

In the Presence of { *John Stoughton*
Joseph Stoughton

No. *379*

George Cochrane of this Parish

The Marriage Entry of Anthony Denny and The Honourable Mary Patience Collingwood in the Register of the Parish Church of St Marylebone, Marylebone, Co. Middlesex 16th June 1817.

Members Interests

Please note the changed manner in which the Society lists members' interests. This is to comply with the general data protection rules (GDPR) in force after the 25th May 2018 whereby personal details of all members remain secure.

If interested in any of the names listed here, advise the Registrar who will liaise with the submitter so that contact may be made. Quote the full line of the submitted interest. The contact addresses are listed below. Apart from the new listings in *Hertfordshire People*, a free search facility is available to members only on family names that they may be researching using our members' interests database. This database is kept up to date at all times. Email correspondence is preferred but, if communicating by post, enclose a sae.

For all enquiries, the Registrar will liaise with the submitter so that contact may be made. The contact points are:

By post: The Registrar, 134 Beechwood Avenue, St. Albans, AL1 4XY
By email: registrar@hertsfhs.org.uk

Name	Period	Parish	County	M/No
Kyrkeby	1300-1400	Standon	Hrt	4651

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Number	Name	County / Country
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4650	Mr. Andrew Tilley	Wiltshire
4651	Mrs. Marie Mays	Ohio, U.S.A.
4652	Mrs. Linda Chapman	Leicestershire

Hertfordshire Family History Society

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES: *note two rates i.e. Printed / digital PDF*
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UK Families receive one journal per household. Subscriptions only accepted in **Sterling**. Overseas members may pay by credit card online using the website www.genfair.co.uk.

Subscriptions run from 1 March to 28 February each year. **Subscriptions by post are payable to 'Hertfordshire Family History Society' and sent to The Membership Secretary, 50 Chelwood Avenue, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10.** All correspondence by post regarding membership of the Society should be addressed to the **Membership Secretary**. Otherwise, email all queries and changes of personal details to the Registrar at registrar@hertsfhs.org.uk.

SOCIETY PROJECTS : Projects are ongoing and volunteers for transcribing, checking etc are always welcome. If you would like to know more, contact the **Projects Co-ordinator: Mr John Pearson - johnwelburn@talktalk.net**

PUBLICATIONS: A full list of Society publications is issued with the September journal each year, and is always available on our website: www.hertsfhs.org.uk. For a booklist, you can also contact the Secretary at any time. You can buy Society publications online using a secure credit card facility at www.genfair.co.uk

- **MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS:** over 100 volumes now published with transcriptions of memorials in over 120 churches and churchyards.
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MEMBERS' INTERESTS: Apart from the new listings in each issue of *Hertfordshire People*, a free search facility is available, to members only, on family names that they may be researching, from our database of Members Interests. The names searched for will be completely up to date with the membership details held. Email correspondence preferred, but if by post enclose a s.a.e. For all enquiries, the Registrar will liaise with the submitter

JOURNAL DISTRIBUTION: if there is any problem with the delivery of your copy of *Hertfordshire People*, please contact - registrar@hertsfhs.org.uk

UNWANTED GRO CERTIFICATES: Can be donated to the Society, making them available to other members. **MEMBERS' FAMILY TREES** or family histories are also welcome additions to the library. Please make clear what surname they relate to, what location in Hertfordshire the family comes from, and keep them compact! Contact the Secretary.

OTHER MEMBERS WITH SOCIETY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Reference Box: Would you like to take responsibility for bringing our reference books to meetings? If so, please contact the Secretary.

HOUSE GROUPS: At present, one House Group is active.

Hoddesdon Area Group - Organiser: Mrs Janet Pearson - johndanjanet@ntlworld.com Meets on the first Tuesday of the month at the Methodist Church Hall, Middlefield Road, Hoddesdon. 2 - 4pm. New members welcome.

The Society would be pleased to help set up further House Groups - contact the Secretary if you would like to help to start one near where you live.

HFHS SEARCH SERVICES

Our Society is always looking for ways to help members with their research. We use income from our search services to provide further research material and in this way we hope to expand our services in the future.

The Hertfordshire Burial Index 1800-1851

Please request searches through 'Genfair' at www.genfair.co.uk.

POSTAL BOOK SALES

Malcolm Wallace is our new officer for dealing with orders by post
Hertfordshire FHS Book Sales
30, Anthony Close, Watford, Herts. WD19 4NA United Kingdom
Email: pub-orders@hertsfhs.org.uk



Hertfordshire

FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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Information is also available on the Society's website:

www.hertsfhs.org.uk

Hertfordshire Family History Society

Meetings Programme 2024

at Woolmer Green Hybrid / Zoom

Speaker 2.30pm (UK time)

Please check our website News & Events page and our social media platforms for the latest changes to the programme.

- Mar 23** **The Mourning Brooch** - Author Jean Renwick's illustrated talk reveals years of research behind the first two books in her family saga, *The Mourning Brooch*, based upon the lives of real Yorkshire people who lived in the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th. *If you have a piece of mourning jewellery, bring it to the 'waiting room' and share its story before the talk begins. Jean Renwick.*
Hybrid / Zoom
- Apr 27** **Wills for Family History** - From ancient to modern, Local or House, rich and poor, Wills are an all embracing resource not restricted to just family history. A detailed probate record can be full of names, personal information and interests as well as who did, or didn't, get what. *Jackie Depelle.*
Hybrid / Zoom
- May 25** **AGM followed by The de Havilland Aircraft Company: Hertfordshire's Contribution to the Aircraft Industry.** The history and achievements of the de Havilland Aircraft Company with reference to its founder, Geoffrey de Havilland. *Alistair Hodgson.*
Hybrid / Zoom