

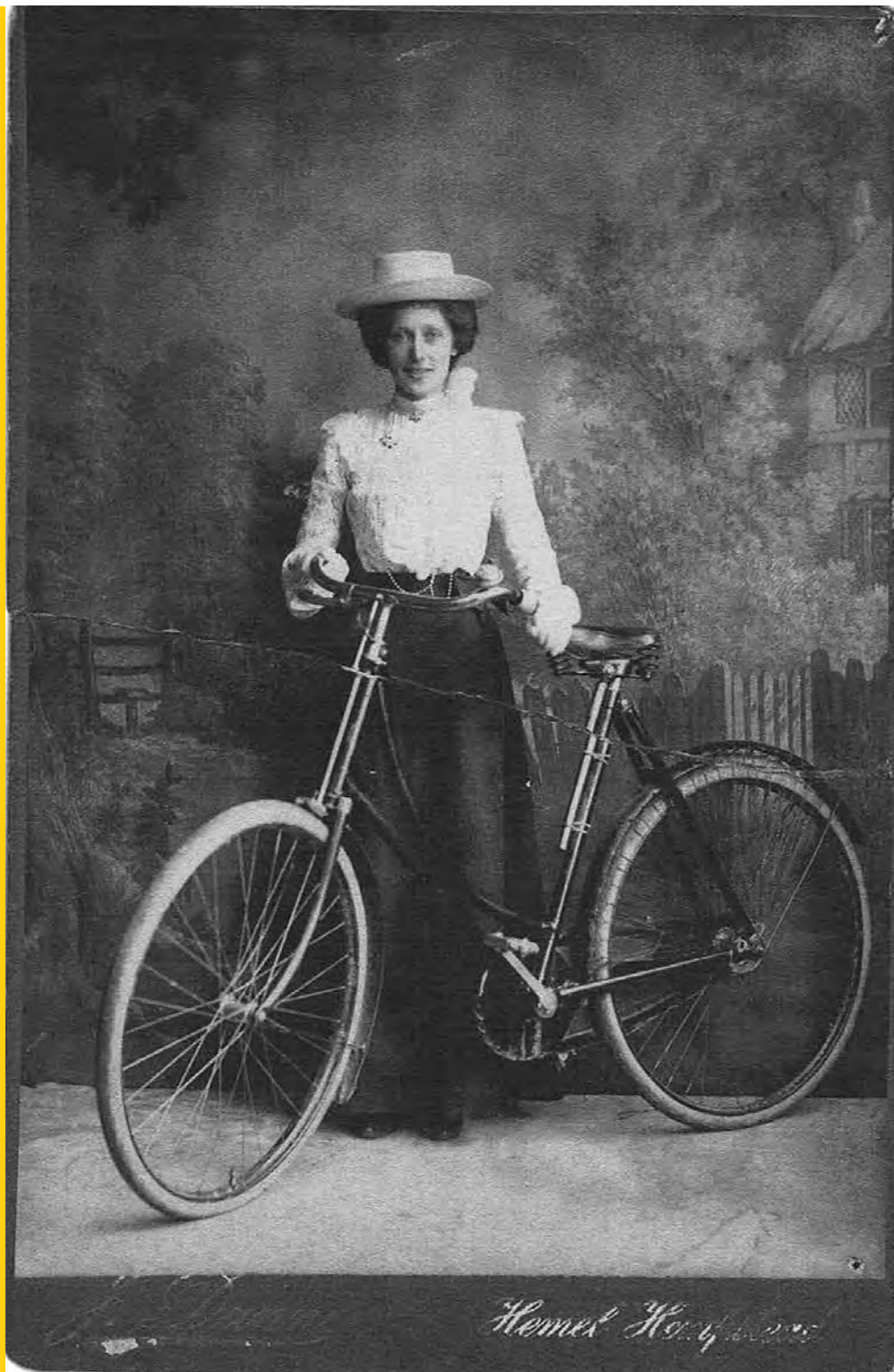
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Hertfordshire People

The Journal of Hertfordshire Family History Society

No 171
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2024



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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.

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From the Editor.....

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



I don't know about you, but the end of 2024 has come around very quickly with the darker start to the morning and earlier sunset. I often wonder how our ancestors coped with the change in the weather, how they kept warm and how they celebrated Christmas. I remember my aunt's house with a roaring fire, in one cosy room, with the rest of the house deathly cold. My grandfather was the same and well I remember sitting on a little hassock in front of his fire listening to tales of his exploits in the first world war. This was when my interest in family history was kindled and I was lucky that many of my older relations were willing to talk to me of relations long dead and what they were like, including my great grandmother who was born in 1838. Names and dates are important but it is those personal details that make our ancestors come alive, warts and all.

My Dad, born in 1916 in Letchworth, remembered his Christmas stocking consisting of an old sock, an orange and a real hens foot with the tendons attached so you could pull them make the foot move. He also remembered the huge suet pudding that his family of eight siblings enjoyed.

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 2025.

The renewal form can be found as a yellow insert in the middle of this 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 mbrsec@hertsfhs.org.uk

Date for your Diary

Monday 10 March

Researching in Hertfordshire. A collaborative online event with The Society of Genealogists, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies and Hertfordshire FHS. Speakers: Else Churchill (SoG), Janice Booker (HALS) and Felicity Brimblecombe (Hertfordshire FHS). 14:00 - 15:30.

Book your place for this FREE event

<https://members.sog.org.uk/events/674dd7072f980600086c0ef7/description>

HFHS 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. Meetings will start at 14.30pm (UK time) and last for about an hour, unless otherwise stated.

Dates for 2025

Saturday 11 January - Online

Saturday 15 March - in person at HALS

Saturday 29 March - Online

Saturday 17 May - Online

Saturday 12 July - Online

Saturday 9 or 16 August - Online

Saturday 11 October - Online

Saturday 13 December - Online

From the Chair - Visitors from America

'An Indenture dated 1622 and a coincidence!' was published in *Hertfordshire People* (No. 64, Spring 2023, page 24).

It explained how a request from Sandy Dear-Bailie to decipher an indenture dated 1622 for Marmaduke **Rawdon** of Hoddesdon resulted in extending her family tree back to our common ancestor William **Merchant** 1655-1721 of Westmill.



In September 2024 the indenture was gifted to Hertfordshire Archives. Chris **Bennett**, County Archivist, was delighted to receive the donation delivered personally by Sandy and members of her family all the way from America.



It is now catalogued as DE/X/1271/T1 with the description: '*Bargain and sale of half an acre of arable land in South Field in Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, from William **Shambrooke** of Hoddesdon, yeoman, to Marmaduke **Rawdon** of London, esq.*'.



Presumably the land was connected with the building of Rawdon House in Hoddesdon in 1622 by Marmaduke Rawdon (1583-1646). The date is emblazoned on the stairs, drainpipes etc. The front of the house can be viewed from the main road to the west. It seems likely that a prestigious house of this era would have had a large garden behind the house to the east.

That would have benefitted from the purchase of a piece of land 'abutting the new River' as stated in the Indenture.



The OS map above shows the relationship between Rawdon House and the New River (Essex Sheet XL, published 1880).

The visit to Hertfordshire included the Hoddesdon area and the locations of her **Dear** family in Hertford and Bengoe as well as **Wyman** ancestors in Little and Great Hormead, Braughing and Westmill.

HFHS Monumental Inscription books for all those parishes were very useful for locating the graves of numerous family members and providing the details of the inscriptions.

Sandy now has the task of finding the details of the exact connection between her family and Marmaduke Rawdon.

The HFHS Zoom talk in November about 'Researching Ancestors in Hertfordshire using Obvious and Obscure Sources' will help everyone including Sandy! There is a useful handout in the Members Area.

More details have been provided by Sandy on page 21 of this journal.

Felicity Brimblecombe
chairhertfhs@gmail.com

Secretary's Jottings



Season's greetings to members and all our best wishes for a healthy and successful 2025 in achieving your research goals. Personally I am hoping that in the new year the British Newspaper Library digitise more of the historical newspapers as most recent releases seem to be papers in the 1990s. I think I have made more research breakthroughs and put more 'flesh on the bones' of ancestors through Victorian newspaper reports than anything else. They are of course immensely helpful when they report on inquests or inquiries where no other report still exists. Unfortunately the one line I want to know more about seems to have been the quietest, most law-abiding people ever and so still remain a mystery today.

Although I write on another unusually mild November day, I must admit I am a little envious of those in Australia who get the opportunity to celebrate Christmas on the beach. As a child Christmas was a time of wonderment and excitement, taking part in carol concerts with school, looking forward to the holidays and spending time with parents and family. As an adult the allure of Christmas has been broken by mince pies appearing in the supermarkets in September, and constant adverts for seasonal sales and other consumerism.

Did you have any interesting seasonal traditions in your family? We always did first footing at New Year, but had no associations with Scotland, so I presume first footing isn't restricted to the other side of the border. Being (then) extremely dark haired, once old enough, I would be sent outside just before midnight, whilst purses, wallets and money boxes, etc. were placed on the doorstep, and after the midnight chimes I would be allowed back indoors having presumably bestowed magical properties on all the family's finances for the next year. I haven't followed this myself for years, so perhaps this is why I'm not a multi-millionaire by now. It's worth recording these types of family traditions with your research as this can be priceless information for your descendants. Perhaps you've got a Christmas pudding recipe handed down over the years and tweaked each generation for different tastes and methods of cooking? Alternatively, you might have a regional dish recipe always served on the table at Christmas.

If you are still looking for gift suggestions that you can share with relatives to buy for you, you might suggest to them they could pay for subscriptions for the Hertfordshire Family History Society, or other societies such as the Society of Genealogists, the Huguenot Society or Heraldry Society. All of these also have bookstalls which could produce some Christmas gift suggestions. Then there are the subscriptions to the big research companies such as Ancestry or Find My Past or a DNA test kit. Finally don't forget to investigate whether a genealogical software program would help you record your research for posterity. All enable you to print out trees, family groupings, or produce reports, and most enable you to produce a book. In addition there are also 'plug in' software products to produce more charts or trees or more elaborate books.

Finally, an update on our website. As I speak we are getting towards the final stages of the initial website structure and design and I hope that the new basic website will go live either before or just after Christmas. You will be able to renew membership and order publications a lot easier in the future, and in the next stage of development we expect to make more data available to members through the site. Do let us have your feedback on the site after its launch as we want to make it easier for members to find the information required, or carry out renewals or orders.

In the meantime, Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all members and I hope in 2025 you manage to achieve more of your research goals.

Best Wishes

Tracy

Dr Tracy Turner

Social Media



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Henrietta Weightman: The Body in the Villa

By Janet Sutton

It may sound like something from an Agatha Christie novel, but it really happened – a body was found in a partly built villa on Aldenham Road, Bushey. The story was syndicated to newspapers across the whole country, from Cornwall to Aberdeen. Why did I research this event, which has no relation to my own Bushey ancestors? I was tracing another individual, when his name cropped up in newspaper reports in connection with this young lady.

Who was Henrietta?

Henrietta Mabel **Weightman** was born 8th February 1900 at 4 Oxford Street, Watford, the second daughter of Frederick Arthur Weightman (a journeyman painter) and his wife Elizabeth (nee **Waite**). The couple had 11 children altogether, with only one dying in infancy. Four of the children were deaf and dumb (two being recorded in censuses at Deaf Institutes, in Bristol and Brighton). Frederick was born at Boxmoor, Herts. On the 1901 census Henrietta, along with her parents and two siblings, are living with her grandparents, Cephus and Sarah Weightman at 4 Oxford Street, Watford. By 1911, the family had moved to 203 Chester Road, Watford. Frederick fought in the First World War with the Army Service Corps (ASC) but had been gassed and invalided out.

Henrietta enrolled the Women's RAF on 20 May 1919 (AIR 80/253/11) and was discharged on 31st October the same year.

It describes her as aged 22, 5 feet 6 inches tall, medium build,

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Form 3677 Z (MEMBER)
WOMEN'S ROYAL AIR FORCE.

**CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE
ON DEMOBILIZATION**
(MEMBER).

No. 30623 WEIGHTMAN
Name Weightman H. M.
Rank Member
Air Force Trade Domestic
Enrolled on 20.5.19 at Hampstead
Demobilized on 31.10.19 at Brentwood

ii. DESCRIPTION.

Age 22
Height 5' 6
Build medium
Eyes Grey
Hair Brown
Ul.

Her work during the time she has been in the Force has been Very satisfactory

C. H. Jacobs
Signature of Commanding Officer
Her personal character has been Very good

U. Carter
Signature of R.A.F. Officer

Date 31.10.19

(12) W.4318/1043 1/19 894 (6) D.5c (12)

grey eyes, and brown hair. Her trade was "domestic", and her work was reported as "very satisfactory". In 1920 she began working at the Croxley Paper Mill and was an examiner of paper. The Weightman family had been living at 131 Gladstone Road, Watford since at least 1915.



131 Gladstone Road, Watford now.

On Wednesday 9th February 1921, she came home from work about 6 p.m. and had a quick meal of tea and toast and left about 6.15p.m. saying she would be back in half an hour. According to a work friend, she was meeting a young man in Bushey. She wore a light fawn costume with a fur and had money in her purse as she had recently been paid. Her father waited up for her until 10.15 p.m., but then went to bed leaving the key on the doorstep for her. Next morning, one of his other daughters said that Henrietta had not been home, so he went to her

workplace, but she had not turned up. Later that day, a friend came to the house with a newspaper, which reported about a body which had been found.

Finding the Body.

About 7.50 a.m. on Thursday 10th February, Mr William John **Wood** arrived at the partly built villa on Aldenham Road, Bushey. He was employed by Mr Frederick Price **Bliss**, a master builder. He noticed that someone had entered the building, as the wooden batten holding the door shut, had been moved. He went towards the sitting room and saw a body lying there on several sacks of cement. This was described in the newspaper in great detail. Mr **Wood** called the police. His employer turned up, followed by his employers son Cyril Price Bliss, who took a glance and said, "Oh God". He appeared not to recognise the body.



© Daily Mirror, 16 Feb 1921.

Henrietta was wearing her costume, though both the jacket and skirt had been loosened, her corset lay beside the body, her hair was loose. There was no mud on her footwear. None of the cement bags had been moved. Henrietta's body was initially taken to a shed behind the police station, and it was here that her body was later identified by her family. It was then taken to Bushey Hospital for the post mortem.

The Inquest opens on 15th February.

The inquest was due to open on 14th February, but the Coroner for Watford, Mr J J **Riggall**, was unwell, so it was postponed till the following day when the Coroner for St Albans, Mr Thomas **Ottway**, took charge. The inquest was held at the parish hall at Bushey Heath. Newspapers noted that there were two women on the jury, which seemed to be newsworthy at that time. Frederick Weightman was called. He told of what had happened on 9th February. He stated that his daughter was a happy, healthy young person, and he knew of no men friends. It was highly unusual for her to stay out all night – the only other time she had, was during an air raid. He last saw his daughter about 6.15 on the Wednesday evening, she had a little to eat. His wife Elizabeth was the next witness. She confirmed the events of the night in question but said that her daughter stayed out until 10 p.m. several times a week. She was aware of a couple of her daughters male friends, she had also seen letters from "Billie". These were passed on to the police. "Raymond" and "Cyril" were names that were also mentioned. It was also noted that Elizabeth had taken out insurance on her daughter.

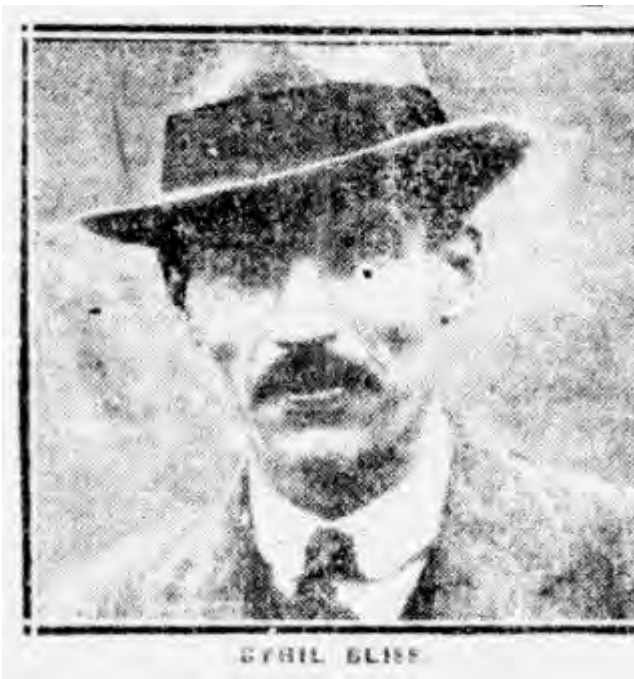
Medical Evidence

Dr **Shadbolt** then gave his medical evidence. He saw the body about 8.45 a.m. and stated that Henrietta had been dead about two hours, There was no evidence of a struggle, but that the girl was about 4 and a half months pregnant. He saw no evidence of any operation having been performed. He was unable to tell if there was any evidence of poisoning. Contents of stomach showed signs of a heavy meal about 3-4 hours before death. Her father said there was no history of heart disease, his daughter had passed the medical for the WRAF. A possibility mentioned was that Henrietta may have felt unwell, entered the house, loosened her clothing and corset, and

lay down. The result of a heavy meal and the cold could have caused heart failure.

Evidence by friends / work colleagues

Two work colleagues/friends also gave evidence. Miss Elsie May **Draycup** (age 25, of 4 Hatfield Road, Watford) gave her testimony. They had both been up to London several times and she had met a couple of Henrietta's men friends, namely Billy and Raymond. She also said that Henrietta had a man friend in Bushey, Cyril Bliss. Henrietta had confided in her about her pregnancy and that the father was a man in London who worked in the film industry, she believed his name was Raymond **Roberts**. Henrietta's mother



was unaware of her daughter's pregnancy. Henrietta had told her friend that someone had promised to introduce her to a person "who would get her out of her difficulty". She said that on Wednesday she had an appointment at 6.30pm at Bushey Hall gates. A second colleague Miss Margaret **Mulligar** stated that although Henrietta used to go to London to see a male friend, she had no plans to do so that Wednesday evening,

Cyril and his evidence

Cyril was the son of Frederick Price and Sarah Ann **Bliss**, his father was the builder of the villa. Cyril was born 24 March 1895 in Bushey. He had joined the Bedfordshire Regiment in 1914 rising to the rank of Platoon sergeant. He was wounded twice at the Somme and later returned to England, to take up a commission in the Northamptonshire Regiment. On his discharge, he joined the family firm (See Herts at War website for fuller details). He married Winifred Kate **Hedges** in 1918 and lived at Glencoe Road, Bushey. He was reported to be a tall, slim man with a slight moustache.

He was not called as a witness, but made a statement to say he knew the victim – quote from one of the newspaper reports -

“ **MEETINGS WITH A MARRIED MAN** - Cyril Price Bliss, after being warned that he need not give evidence unless he desired, stated that he had first met Henrietta Weightman on the last train from Euston after midnight. She entered into conversation with him, not he with her. The next time he saw her, he was out walking with his wife. He saw Henrietta again about ten days later, and she said she would like him to take her out to dinner. She told him she was in trouble. He took her out to dinner at the Norfolk Hotel, Paddington, when her trouble was referred to again. The next time he met her was a week last Saturday. After that, he never saw her again. He asked her who caused her trouble. She said it was a boy who worked on the films, but she did not know his full name, nor exactly where he worked. She spoke of him as “Raymond”. Witness told her of having met a man at Paddington, who said he could carry out certain operations. He talked of seeing the man again, but that was purely fictitious, to comfort her, because he could see she was very much distressed. He admitted having written to the girl that he arranged to meet this man in Bushey Hall Road. He met her alone, the man not being there, and she was angry.

The Coroner- Can you explain how, knowing this girl was in trouble, you, as a married man, were making appointments with her?

Witness – They were made with the full knowledge of my wife.

Did you take her to dinner with her knowledge? I did.

Did you tell your wife of her condition? I did not.”

A railway clerk, Mr Frank **Chester**, employed by the London North Western railway, stated he saw Cyril Bliss just after 7 on the Wednesday evening, as he proceeded towards Aldenham Road. He knew Cyril via the football club, of which he was a member. Cyril had greeted him before heading towards Bushey station Previously there had been witnesses to say Cyril had been at home.

The inquest was adjourned, as the jury wanted further analysis of the stomach contents, to rule out poisoning. Frederick Weightman pleaded for more witnesses to come forward.

Funeral

Meanwhile, Henrietta's funeral was held in Bushey on Saturday 19th February, the gate to the cemetery being closed to the general public, as a large crowd (mainly women) had gathered there. The coffin was conveyed by hearse and there were only a couple of wreaths – from family and workmates. She was buried at Vicarage Road Cemetery, Watford, but appears to have no marker.

Inquest resumed and Verdict

The Inquest resumed on the 3rd of March. There was medical evidence from John Webster, a senior pathologist at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. He found no evidence of poison in the organs and stomach contents which had been submitted to him.

The jury were absent for about 22 minutes and returned an open verdict.

The death certificate said -"insufficient evidence to show causes of death" and added that they considered the evidence of Cyril Bliss was "unsatisfactory". The Coroner said that the conduct of Bliss was not to his credit.

The Weightman & Bliss families afterwards

Henrietta's father died in 1932, her mother in 1939. Henrietta's surviving siblings were – Beatrice 1898-1985, William 1902-1957, Dorothy 1904-1990, Ethel 1906-1998, Eleanor 1910-1985, Walter 1914-1919, Charles 1917-1995 and Norah 1919-2016. All of them married.

During the Second World War, Cyril Bliss held a commission in the Bushey Home Guard. He died on 18th November 1960 at Peace Memorial Hospital, aged 70 years and was buried at Bushey on Friday 25th November. His wife Winifred died about six weeks later, on 19 January 1961 age 70 years. They had a family, which I have not traced further.

Sources - websites

Find My Past & Ancestry - including newspapers reports.

www.bedfordregiment.org.uk/index.html

Herts at War - <https://www.hertsatwar.co.uk>

My Grandmother Louisa Zambuni, née Rance

By Nick Zambuni (HFHS 4315)



Louisa Rance was born at Great Gaddesden on 19th February 1884, the fourth of ten children. Her father was Mathew **Rance**, a gardener and her mother was Emma Rance, nee **Collyer**, a straw platter.

Somehow they all lived in a 2-up, 2-down cottage part of a quadrangle known as "The Barracks" near the church of St. John the Baptist and just along from the *Cock & Bottle* Public House. The cottages were demolished years ago to make space for a playground to the school but the communal hand pump still remains.

In the 1901 Census Louisa is one of four servants at Clifton Place, Hyde Park, Paddington.

In 1904 she married my Grandfather, Emanuel **Zambuni**. This photograph is of Louisa and her husband taken in about 1906.

They ran a boarding house in Newton Road, Paddington where my Father and his brother and sister were born. Some years later they moved to a Farm that is now under the new Gatwick Airport.

The photograph on the front cover of this issue is generally thought to be Louisa, with her bicycle,

What do you think?



Hatfield College Civil Engineering

By Frances Francis

My husband spent 30 years lecturing at Hatfield College which became the current University of Hertfordshire. From 1964 until he retired in 1997 he worked in the same building teaching the same subjects and yet his salary was paid first by Herts County Council, then Hatfield Polytechnic and eventually by the University of Hertfordshire. The college was originally created to provide mainly parttime courses in aeronautics and engineering for apprentices in the local aircraft industry. The land was donated by A S Butler chairman of de Havilland Aircraft Company in 1944 to be used for educational purposes.

Although he worked in the same building his office and laboratory changed location several times. He was originally appointed to teach evening classes on a part time basis in 1964 and became fulltime in 1965 eventually becoming a Principal Lecturer. His first degree was in Mining Geology rather than an engineering discipline. This was at times a problem being classed as a scientist rather than an engineer did affect his status in the engineering departments. While working fulltime he completed a part time DIC in Soil Mechanics and then a parttime PhD through Leicester University. He graduated in 1983. His research was investigating the use of remote sensing to identify mineral deposits using a fixed wing mini drone (radio controlled model aircraft) to take infra-red images of the ground below.

The departments he was employed in also kept changing although his subjects were the same. His initial employment was as an evening geology lecturer in the Mech Aero department but after a year he was offered a fulltime post as a lecturer in the Department of Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering to teach Geology and Surveying. At that time Hatfield was a leading academic centre for Aeronautical engineering offering full and parttime sandwich courses including evening classes for people in work. Only diplomas and lower level qualifications could be awarded. In 1965 the CNAA was formed. Hatfield had 13 Honours Degree courses approved. Engineering students did a sandwich course involving work experience in relevant industries such as the local aircraft industry. When BAC closed the Hatfield site, including the airfield, the college link with aeronautics disappeared and

Mech Aero became Mechanical and Civil Engineering. Some sections of this new department formed the nucleus of the Civil Engineering Department and Chris was moved to the new department to teach geology and surveying to students studying Civil Engineering both parttime, fulltime and sandwich courses. This included some evening sessions at first. Initially the courses were diplomas and B.Techs. which were practical based vocational qualifications. As the college expanded more high level courses were introduced including initially a CNAA Degree. After the CNAA was disbanded the Polytechnic created their own degrees without having to get them approved by an established university. Developing their own syllabus and introducing non engineering subjects changed the emphasis forever. These new subjects were much cheaper to run so could readily attract funding from the science and engineering courses the college was known for. Despite the nationwide respect many of the original courses enjoyed slowly they were axed. Perhaps the biggest loss was the aeronautical courses which were considered some of the best in the UK.

The Civil Engineering Department rapidly became respected by other educational establishments and potential employers. It attracted many lucrative overseas students and developed strong links with countries trying to establish their own courses. These included Syria and Hungary. Lecturer exchanges were arranged and the benefit was certainly two way.

Chris loved his job and was popular with students and technical staff as his philosophy was that you learned far more from experience than sitting in a lecture room just listening! He was devastated when the hours allocated for laboratory and fieldwork were slowly reduced to save money culminating in him taking early retirement when the Civil Engineering department was axed in the 1990s despite it being highly rated internationally. To Chris there were similarities with the Beeching cuts in the 1960s which decimated our once extensive rail network.

During his time at Hatfield he contributed to the creation of new courses and syllabi. He took the first year civils students and second years who chose surveying as an option out each week onto the college grounds to learn how to use the various instruments in practical surveying exercises. He also introduced residential Survey Camps usually in places such as Llangollen, Peak District, Cornwall and Forest of Dean. Always hilly areas!



The mini drone about to be launched at Ecton in Derbyshire

Once again he was devastated when the University stopped funding these courses unless they were run as non-residential courses locally at places like Bayfordbury.

Technology was advancing rapidly and he argued for new equipment and computer resources for his Survey Lab. His passion for his subjects was infectious. I was always amazed that so many ex-students from all over the world greeted him with a cheery "Hello Dr Francis". One such encounter was in the small airport on American Samoa

where we were waiting for our plane to take us back to Samoa! They always mentioned how much they enjoyed the practical aspects of their courses and how their employers were impressed with the depth of knowledge they had. At the same time he was also teaching engineering geology within the department and Earth Science for the Science departments until they employed a separate geology lecturer.

To keep up to date he attended various conferences such as the Teachers of Surveying. He completed courses including soil mechanics. He was a member of several relevant societies reading and learning from their Journals. He was an early user of the new computer department using the original Elliott computer. He collaborated with the programmers and lecturers to develop software to use in his teaching and on field trips. Satellite imagery and GPS were in their infancy but he included them in his syllabus. Students analysed aerial photographs using them to plot maps on a WW2 plotter now owned by Eden Camp WW2 museum in Yorkshire.

Our holidays were often spent looking for new locations for his field trips. In the days before austerity cancelled many activities he was fortunate to be awarded a 6 month sabbatical to update himself. The whole family spent the time in Australia and New Zealand while he visited mines, aerial mapping companies and as many academic institutions as possible to compare syllabi. What a fantastic excuse to travel in the days when daily flights to Australia in Jumbo jets were very new and cost just £410 return.

He died suddenly in 2009 so I often wonder what he would make of the modern use of satellites, drones and GPS.

The college in Hatfield had a major influence on our family. Chris and I met when I was working as a Scientific and Technical Information Officer for HERTIS based in the college library when Chris was appointed as a lecturer. We were introduced by a member of the library staff because we had both studied geology at university. After our marriage in St Albans in 1968 we both continued working at the college despite the 25mile 45 minute drive from our home in Essex each day. When our first child was born I took a break from work and continued living in Chris's family home looking after our growing family as well as Chris's disabled father. After his death in 1970 Chris was awarded a paid 6 month sabbatical to update his knowledge. We spent this time in Australia and New Zealand visiting family and also exploring both countries. Chris was able to extend and update his knowledge of subjects relevant to his teaching and technical interests. On our return to Essex we felt our children needed a more settled life for a while rather than move and change schools. Our son was inspired by the aeronautics department to do an aeronautical engineering degree, our daughter graduated as a teacher and our eldest granddaughter graduated as a paramedic during the pandemic.



Reunion of some of the Civils staff in c.2000 - Chris Francis is second on the left and far right is Roger Duffell

© Frances Francis

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

Hertfordshire Family History Society Competition

A kind donation by the late Sherry Martin made it possible to fund a biennial competition open to members of the Hertfordshire Family History Society which is to write an article between 1,500 and 2,000 words long on a particular theme. There will be a £50 prize and a certificate for the winner which will be announced at the AGM in 2025. The winning article will also be published in the next available issue of *Hertfordshire People*.

Theme: Tales from the Playground - Educating our Ancestors

- Cite the family history sources that you have used
- Include illustrations, if you have them.
- It is preferable that your relative concerned has a Hertfordshire connection.
- The aim of the article is that it should be both interesting and educational to the readers of *Hertfordshire People*.

The Rules of the Competition are:

1. Each entrant is to be a member of Hertfordshire Family History Society
2. Members of the Committee are not eligible to enter
3. Only one entry per member
4. The article should not have been published before
5. The deadline for submission to the Editor is the end of February 2025
6. Entries can be handwritten or typed, hard copy or submitted electronically in MS Word format and illustrations in jpg format preferred.
7. The Judges decision is final
8. Please ensure your entry is clearly marked COMPETITION

Send your entries to the Editor, 53 Hitchin Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6AQ or by email to editor@hertsfhs.org.uk no later than 28 February 2025.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

For details of in person and online events and lectures from The Society of Genealogists and Family History Societies and groups do check out the GENEVA website which is updated regularly -
Geneva.weald.org.uk/doku.php

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](#)

Our Family's journey to The Rawdon House - 400 years of history

By Sandy Dear –Bailie

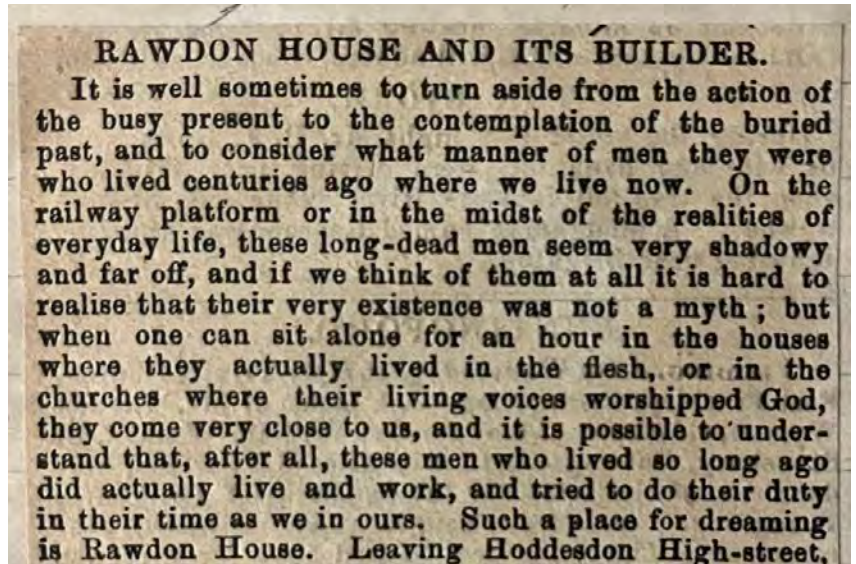
My family's connection to Sir Marmaduke Rawdon and Rawdon House has long been the stuff of family legend. My father, Rawdon Ernest Dear, was incredibly proud of his heritage and the Rawdon name.

Like his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, he passed down stories that were

often hard to keep straight - people, places, and periods blurred together over time. But one thing was certain: our roots were in Hertfordshire and the connection to the Rawdon name ran deep. My father passed away in 2008, so often I wish I could hear him explain it all again.

Dear Family History

My great-grandfather, Ernest Dear, was born in Hertford in 1866 and baptized in Little Hornead, the third of eight children born to Frederick Charles and Alice Wyman Dear who lived at Ivy Cottage. The Dear family ran a linen and woollen drapery business on Maidenhead Street throughout the 19th century, but young Ernest sought a different path. At 18, he crossed the Atlantic and settled in Ironwood, a mining town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. There, he built a life with Anna Tangye, the daughter of Cornish immigrants who came seeking work in the iron mines. Ernest was a man of many trades - tinsmith, plumber, fire chief, and even mayor of Ironwood. Together, he and Anna raised eight children, creating a home filled with love and family lore.



Herts. Mercury, August 24 1895



Despite being an ocean away, Ernest stayed connected to his family in England. We know this through about 100 personal letters from the 1890s to the 1940s, which reveal this close bond. One especially moving letter recounts his mother's passing in May, 1900.

Frederick Charles with the most graceful penmanship, served as the family historian, preserving stories, photos, and documents that have been handed down through generations. His letters often signed off with "your affectionate dad, F.C. Dear" provides a feeling of the deep love of father to son. Two of Ernest's sisters, married to two **Wyman** brothers, sent letters about their lives as they settled in New Zealand. Through these family letters, we have been able to connect and travel to meet cousins in New Zealand and Australia. The common bond of our ancestors and bringing the family together from around the world has been an incredible journey.

In 1905, Ernest returned to his home in Hertfordshire for a two-month visit with his father and family. He was entrusted with a collection of historical documents upon his return to Michigan, including a 1622 Rawdon indenture and an annotated edition of *The Life of Marmaduke Rawdon of York (Second of the Name)*, published by the Camden Society in 1863. This edition, expanded by Frederick Charles Dear, with additional notes, photos, and information about the Rawdon family, along with a handwritten list of Frederick's immediate ancestors. These items have made it possible to know those who came before us and better understand their lives and challenges. Despite all this material, we have yet to make a direct connection to Sir Marmaduke.

Returning the 1622 Rawdon Indenture

So what does one do with a 400 year old parchment? We didn't really know its significance until it was transcribed but our family agreed that it would be best preserved closer to its origin. But where? An idea turned into action and with a bit of fate, we met our cousin Felicity when I randomly made a request to the HertsFHS Facebook Group seeking information. Another cousin, Julia,

transcribed the indenture, finally giving us a clearer understanding of the ancient document. It was indeed an original 1622 deed for half an acre of land sold from W. **Shambroke** to M. **Rawdon**, near where Rawdon House now stands. Felicity was so incredibly helpful and suggested contacting the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS). Our plans began to develop and in September 2024, my husband Brad, my sister Debby, and I travelled to Hertfordshire.

After contacting Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), verifying that we had an original document that they would, indeed, be interested in adding to their collection. We were met by County Archivist Chris Bennett who accepted the donation and explained how our document would be stored and preserved. The staff made us feel so welcome and we felt their gratitude that we travelled from America to return this piece of local history. We were shown how our document fitted into the broader collection of items about Marmaduke Rawdon and Rawdon House. An unforgettable experience! I believe my dad would be proud.

According to the *Herts Mercury* article from August 1895, Marmaduke Rawdon's connection to Hoddesdon began in 1611 when he married Elizabeth **Thorowgood**, the daughter of Thomas Thorowgood. Elizabeth brought a large dowry of £10,000, and together they purchased the property where Rawdon House was built in 1622 in the Jacobean style. The couple left a lasting legacy, even commissioning the "Samaritan Woman" statue to provide a water source for the community.

In Hoddesdon, we met David **Dent**, local expert at the Lowewood Museum where the "Samaritan Woman" statue is now located. Seeing the statue in person and knowing its history provided me with a deep sense of connection and pride. The museum also had publications on the Rawdon's and the house that we were able to purchase for our personal collection.

As we walked towards Rawdon House, the excitement grew as we stood before this impressive building, now a global software company. By sheer luck, we rang the doorbell and the owner answered. After explaining the indenture's significance, he invited us inside where we were in awe of the beautiful staircase, original woodwork, and ceiling tiles.



He told of the challenges of maintaining a 400-year-old home, with its peaked rooflines and historic features like lead water pipes stamped with Marmaduke's initials and the year 1622. To be there, in that house, knowing we held a piece of that puzzle was intense and yet I had a feeling of completeness. Mission accomplished.

The second item of historical value in our collection is the book, *Life of Marmaduke Rawdon of York* that also tells the story of Marmaduke the Traveler, Sir Marmaduke's nephew, who was adopted after his father, Lawrence's death. Marmaduke, the Traveler, spent time in the Canary Islands, representing his uncle's interests as a wine merchant. The Traveler, later lived in Rawdon House with his Aunt Elizabeth Rawdon and was buried, in 1668 in the center aisle of St. Augustine Church in Broxbourne along with other family members - a small but fascinating church filled with memorials. When we are ready, this book will also be donated to HALS for preservation.

Following in Their Footsteps

My parents made a similar pilgrimage about 30 years ago, so of course, we had to recreate some of their photos. We visited family addresses and churches where our ancestors were baptized, married, or buried, including in Bengoe, Broxbourne, Westmill, Tillers End, Braughing, Little Hormead, and Great Hormead.

Felicity was invaluable, guiding us through these places with her expertise. A bit of a scavenger hunt as we tried to piece together locations to find where our people lived. Finding the location of Ivy Cottage at Port Vale & Balfour Street was of particular interest. The trip was a fantastic personal journey as we enlisted the assistance of many local experts and churchwardens. In Bengo, where the graveyard was undergoing wildflower restoration, it was a challenge to locate the graves of Frederick Charles and Alice Dear. But when we finally did, it was a moment of pure joy and connection. The Hertfordshire FHS Churchyard survey booklets were a huge help.

Upon our return to America, the voices of the past feel closer than ever. Four centuries of history —preserved through letters, documents, photos, and stories—have woven a rich tapestry of courage, resilience, and enduring bonds. My quest to connect our lineage to Sir Marmaduke continues. The artifacts we've inherited are more than just old papers; they're living echoes of the lives that shaped our family story.



We could do with some more Research Queries for
Hertfordshire People.

Don't forget to send them in!

Backnumbers of *Hertfordshire People*

Following a 'tidy up' in our storage facility the Editor is pleased to offer some spare hard copies of our journal, *Hertfordshire People*, to members. Our complete archive has been digitised and is available in our Members Area, but, some people still prefer a hard copy and we would be delighted to help fill in gaps in your HP collection. The journal has always had a great mix of articles and useful information for family history researchers.

We regularly offer these hard copies at shows and fairs as a way of promoting what Hertfordshire FHS is all about but we would be delighted to make sure these spare copies go to a good home rather than they end up in the recycling bin, with its added concern over personal data re GDPR that could be in some of the older journals.

Would a consolidated index of surnames and articles in *Hertfordshire People* be a useful finding aid?

Contact the Editor on editor@hertsfhs.org.uk to discuss.

WANTED: ENTHUSIASTIC PERSON!

Were your ancestors shopkeepers? Are you enthusiastic about maintaining good record keeping? All of these might be useful if you are interested in managing the society's virtual publication shop when our new website goes live. However the key thing is to find someone enthusiastic that would like to help the Society. It shouldn't require more than an hour a week, and you don't need to attend our quarterly Executive Zoom meetings if you would prefer not to. For more information please contact the Chair, Felicity Brimblecombe at chairhertsfhs@gmail.com

The Sound of a 'Crying Baby' – using family history skills to investigate a mystery in a house!

Researching workers on a large estate is like investigating everybody in a village. It can be very useful when asked who lived in a specific estate house. Although Luton Hoo Estate is mainly in Bedfordshire, four terraced cottages were built just before WWI in Hertfordshire, at Pepperstock, in the parish of Flamstead.

A hundred years later the houses have been sold and the current occupant of the fourth house wanted information because a baby has been heard crying.

The first known report of a 'Crying Baby' was about 40 years ago. The neighbour in the third house, was heavily pregnant and relaxing in the bath downstairs, when she heard a baby crying in the room above. There was no baby in any of the cottages. This neighbour had almost forgotten about this incident until they decided to move their youngest child into a room on his own. This arrangement did not last long as the little lad toddled into his parents' room to say that he didn't want to sleep with the baby.

A few years later, with a new neighbour next door, the 'Crying Baby' was heard again. The new neighbour said that they had heard a baby crying quite loudly a few days ago but not since. But on the day of that conversation the only baby in any of the 4 houses was a newborn arriving home from hospital late in the previous evening who had not cried at all.


There was no mention of the 'Crying Baby' until 2019 when another neighbour said that her visiting daughter, who was heavily pregnant, had heard a baby crying. There was no baby in any of the cottages.

The owner of the fourth house was curious to find out why a baby might be crying in the third one which she now owned. Data about the estate cottages was combined with information from a military expert researching Flamstead.

Percy **Field** was employed by Luton Hoo Estate as a carpenter and joiner. Aged 29 he married Ethel Margaret **Bates** in 1912 when she was 24. In May 1916 he and his family moved into the third house during WWI. They had two small children, a son born in 1913 and a daughter, born in 1915.

ORIGINAL

(5489) W. 72259/a265 500,000 7/14 C.&Co. (171) Forms/B. 2513/1.


 Army Form B. 2513.

RECORD OF SERVICE PAPER

For men deemed to be enlisted in H.M. Regular Forces for General Service with the Colours or in the Reserve for the period of the War, or Ex-Soldiers recalled for Service with the Colours, under the provisions of the Military Service Acts, 1916.

No. 289324 Christian Names Percy Surname Field
 Corps RD. T. 10

Questions to be put to the Reservist on Joining.

1. What is your Name? ...	1. Christian Names <u>Percy</u>
	Surname <u>Field</u>
2. What is your full Address? ...	2. <u>115 New Cott:</u>
	<u>Pepperstock Rd Luton</u>
3. Are you a British Subject? ...	3. <u>Yes</u>
4. What is your Age? ...	4. <u>33</u> Years <u>10</u> Months
5. What is your Trade or Calling? ...	5. <u>Carpenter & Joiner</u>
6. Are you Married? ...	6. <u>Yes</u>

Six months after moving into their cottage Percy joined the Royal Army Medical Corps on 18 November 1916. This was the last day that he saw Ethel alive.

Ethel was left alone to cope with their two small children aged 3 and 1. She was not used to a life of solitude coming from a large family

and having been a schoolteacher. That Christmas and New Year, with her husband away, her parents invited her to stay with them. She was cheerful and bright during these festive weeks surrounded by her family. At the end of January, Ethel and her children returned to the tiny hamlet of Pepperstock.

An old back injury sustained in childhood had begun to cause her considerable pain and she asked the doctor to visit. Letters written at the time to her parents and husband showed that she was in low spirits and not feeling well. Her neighbour, Ada **Devis**, said Ethel had complained about her back pain, saying that she wished she could go and lie down, but household duties would not allow her to do so. Finding life increasingly difficult and struggling to cope, Ethel had reached breaking point.

On Sunday morning, 18th February 1917 (exactly 3 months after her husband's departure) the neighbours were alerted by the sound of children crying. Ada Devis went to investigate and finding Ethel's door locked, she hurried to fetch her neighbour Walter **Brooks**, who broke a kitchen window to gain access to the cottage. Ethel was found dead in her kitchen lying next to her son. Her baby daughter was crying upstairs.

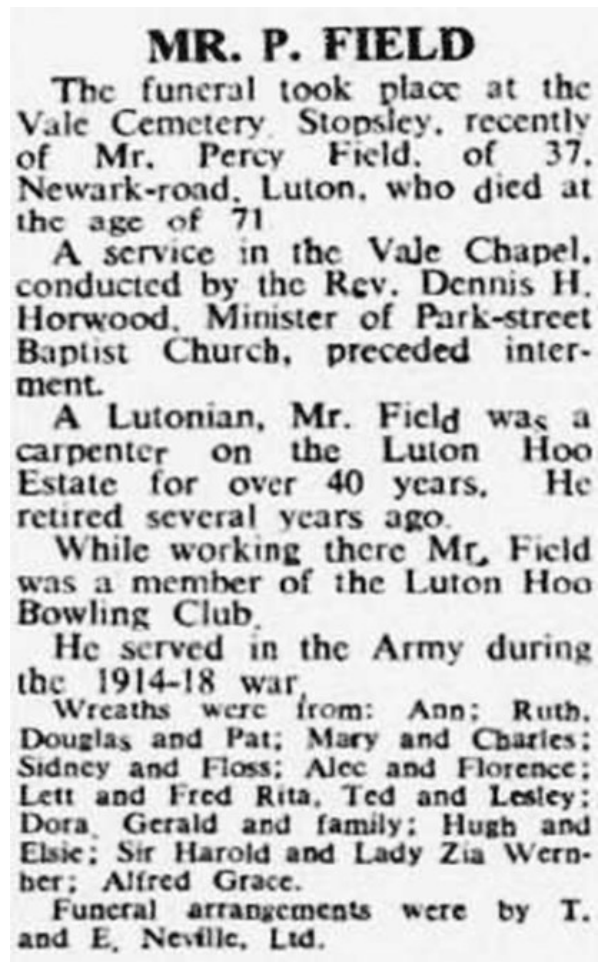
Percy Field returned from his army base at Clacton-on-Sea and attended the inquest, which was held on the day after Ethel's death, at the Baptist Chapel Schoolroom in Pepperstock, on 19 February 1917. A verdict of suicide during temporary insanity was returned by the jury. [Inquest reported in the *Luton News and Bedfordshire Advertiser*, 22 Feb 1917, Funeral in the *North Bucks Times and Country Observer* 27 Feb 1917].

Percy served overseas in France during the war, in the 42nd Stationary Hospital, from April 1917 until he was demobbed in February 1919. His children were looked after by the family. Ten years after the death of his wife, Percy married her older sister Ann, in December 1927.

Percy's funeral was reported in 1954. [*Luton News and Bedfordshire Chronicle* 16 Dec 1954]

The family survived: Percy and Ethel's son, Eric, also became a carpenter and lived until 1981. Their daughter, Ruth, married in 1940, had a daughter, and died aged 79.

The crying baby is rarely heard but it seems to be mainly those who are pregnant who hear the cries. It seems likely to be connected with the suicide and the young children in the house at the time. Perhaps Ethel was pregnant herself and that was why her back was troubling her?



MR. P. FIELD

The funeral took place at the Vale Cemetery, Stopsley, recently of Mr. Percy Field, of 37, Newark-road, Luton, who died at the age of 71.

A service in the Vale Chapel, conducted by the Rev. Dennis H. Horwood, Minister of Park-street Baptist Church, preceded interment.

A Lutonian, Mr. Field was a carpenter on the Luton Hoo Estate for over 40 years. He retired several years ago.

While working there Mr. Field was a member of the Luton Hoo Bowling Club.

He served in the Army during the 1914-18 war.

Wreaths were from: Ann; Ruth, Douglas and Pat; Mary and Charles; Sidney and Floss; Alec and Florence; Lett and Fred Rita, Ted and Lesley; Dora, Gerald and family; Hugh and Elsie; Sir Harold and Lady Zia Werner; Alfred Grace.

Funeral arrangements were by T. and E. Neville, Ltd.

Researching buildings using family history is not unusual, but investigating a ghost is rare!

Felicity Brimblecombe

What's new at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies?

By Sheila White

Herts Memories

WWII Men buried at Venray, Netherlands – can you help?

A Dutch organisation, *Stichting Adoptiegraven* Grave Adoption Foundation is working to keep alive the names of men buried at the CWGC Venray War Cemetery in South East Netherlands. At least twelve of those laid to rest here are from Hertfordshire. The foundation has already tracked down and published photographs of six of the men:

Bernard **Aldhous** (St. Albans), Fred **Fisher** (Hatfield), Ronald **Flint** (Hemel Hempstead), Ernst **Goodspeed** (Watford), Dennis **Plummer** (Garston) and Lewis **Walters** (Hemel Hempstead).

They are looking for photos of the following:

Maurice **Childerley** (St. Albans), Henry Albert Edwin **Capell** (St. Albans), Cecil **Franks** (Watford), Walter John **Hebbs** (Hemel Hempstead), Cyril Kenneth Barnet **Stanley** (New Barnet) and Kenneth Howard Joseph **Thurley** (Bishop's Stortford).

To learn more about the project, view the photos or contribute, search 'Venray' from the Herts Memories home screen (see links below).

New Collections

Recent new accessions to HALS include baptism and marriage registers for West Herts and Borders Methodist Circuit, 1860s – 2017 (Acc 6630); memorabilia relating to productions at Watford Palace Theatre in the 1960s and 70s (Acc 6637) and parish registers for Puttenham, Aldbury, Tring, Hatfield and Graveley.

Events at HALS

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

Thursday, 5 December, 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Free; booking essential (see contact details below).

Online event

Hertfordshire's Notorious Witches

Explore the lives and cases of some of the notorious witches linked to the county.

Thursday, 5 December, 7:00pm – 8:30pm

Live streamed via Microsoft Teams

£7; booking essential (see contact details below)

And, if you have children or grandchildren to entertain over the Christmas holiday, keep an eye on the HALS website for holiday activities.

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.

Did you know?

HALS holds a collection of lantern slides from the early 20th century depicting many towns and villages across the county. The images can be viewed online by searching the archive catalogue for the reference DE/X1025 and then browsing the collection.

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.

If any members have photographs of Hertfordshire ancestors they would like featured in *Hertfordshire People*, but perhaps haven't got enough information for an article, I would be delighted to include them. They can either feature on the cover, or within the pages.

I look forward to receiving emailed scans of your photos, with a short biography of the person, or people, in the photo. Please email me on editor@hertsfhs.org.uk



Family History Research
Hertfordshire, London & Middlesex
All enquiries welcome
Mrs Carolynn Boucher
1 Ivinghoe Close, Chiltern Park
St Albans, Hertfordshire AL4 9JR
Tel: 01727 833664
carolynn.boucher@virginmedia.com



EAST SURREY
Family History Society

Virtual Family History Fair

Saturday January 25th 2025
10.00 – 12.00 & 2.00 – 4.00

FREE EVENT

[Click here for registration & list of societies attending](#)

Society Talks

July 2024

Leaving No Stone Unturned presented by John Pearson

Our Vice President, and former Chairman, John Pearson, gave us a masterclass in how to transcribe gravestone inscriptions and also gave an overview of our Monumental Recording project and its coverage. Although there are now online sources for inscriptions on gravestones in churchyards and municipal 'boneyards' such as FindaGrave (www.findagrave.com) which list burials and gravestones, the photographs of the graves have unreadable inscriptions. The beauty and usefulness of the parish churchyard MI books produced by Hertfordshire FHS since the 1980s is that the inscriptions were legible and a complete transcription was recorded, together with the inscriptions recorded by Gerish in the early 20th century, this making a complete record of the inscriptions both inside the church and also those in the churchyard.

The HFHS has not recorded MIs in any municipal cemeteries, but there are some records available online for Hertfordshire cemeteries, such as that in Hitchin by Jeff Knaggs [Jeff Knaggs - Genealogy - Monumental Inscriptions - Hitchin](#)



Royston Cemetery

[Cemetery \(old section\)](#) with coverage of inscriptions from other Hertfordshire parishes covered by [Hertfordshire - Monumental Inscriptions, Cemeteries and Graveyards](#)

August 2024



In August members had a special Saturday afternoon visit to Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) where the helpful staff and knowledgeable members were able to help break down a few brick walls for the visitors. It was also lovely to see members who we usually see on Zoom attending too.

September 2024

Researching Ancestors in British India presented by Valmay Young.

Our speaker gave a comprehensive and valuable talk on the types of records that are available to help you research your relatives with connections to British India. Valmay advised that to access the rich records of the India Office held in the Asian and African Studies reading room at the British Library, a library ticket would be needed. which can be applied for online.

There are many types of records - biographical, Wills, Parish Records and Military records. FindMyPast has useful records sets too.

Ecclesiastical Returns are on microfilm in the Asian and African Studies reading room and cover Bengal, Madras and Bombay and also Penang, Burma, Macao and Whampoa. The FIBIS website has a video of what to look for. There is also much material available on the open shelves such as Indian Army Medal Rolls, Directories such as Thacker's Indian Directory and Civil Service records as well as other microfilmed records and *The Times of India* online.

Wills, Probate and Admons and Pensions records from the 1770s are also available with some material also on FindMyPast. Biographical Records, the 'O' Series, is indexed on the FIBIS website.

There are also comprehensive records of the East India Company Army (1774-

1860), The Indian Army (1888-1947) and the British Army (1754-1947). The Registers of Recruits give personal details and description and can also give place of birth and age. Service Records such as Muster Rolls and Casualty Returns and the Register of East India Company European Soldiers Services for the Bengal Army, Madras Army and Bombay Army and in the latter the Indian Army. For European Officers of the EIC and Indian Army the records can detail educational testimonials, as well as name, birth, baptism and parentage. At The National Archives at Kew there are also the NCO Service records, Pensions, Muster and Medal Rolls as well as The Army List and records of the Indian Civil Service, including the Special Civil Service, such as the Forest Service.

Valmay also showed us a case study of John **Shreeve** who was a Telegraph Officer using the Telegraph Register, Directories and Thacker's Indian Directory as well as Civil Lists.

Research tools at the British Library include their Archives and MS Catalogue and The National Archives Discovery Catalogue. An oral history catalogue can be accessed at the BL These records are the Niamh Dillon British Diaspora Interviews, Plain Tales from the Raj, The British in India Oral Archive and Partition Voices and will be available again when the digital images and files are recovered from the recent cyber attack.

Valmay also recommended looking at the Families in British India Society (FIBIS) Research Guides via their website - www.fibis.org

No 1 - EIC Armies

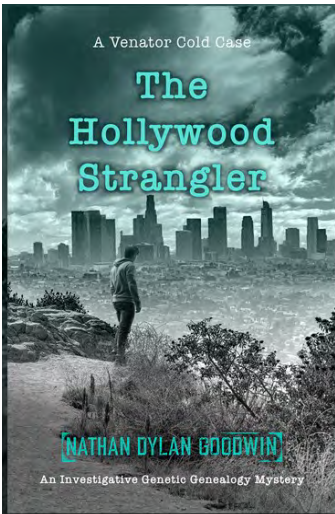
No 2 - Ships, Owners, Crew etc and Passengers

No 3 - Ancestors in the British Army 1868-1947

There is also BL Blog on India Office & Private Papers which is being used during the disruption caused by the cyber attack. The British Library also run free workshops e.g. Introduction to Family History Sources in Asian & African Studies and Beyond Baptisms, marriages and burials: additional family history sources in Asian & African Studies.

This talk was an excellent introduction to these records and promoted many questions from both our in person and zoom audience.

Book Review.....



Goodwin, Nathan Dylan *The Hollywood Strangler: An Investigative Genetic Genealogy Mystery*. A Venator Cold Case #3. 2024. Available in various formats via Amazon.

In this page-turner of a book the LAPD Cold Case Homicide Unit enlist Venator, the elite investigative genetic genealogy company, to try and find a breakthrough in the unsolved case of the 1980s Los Angeles serial killer known as The Hollywood Strangler.

The horrific series of murders of six small time actors left Los Angeles in terror with their bodies found grotesquely posed in scenes from films where they had had some fleeting fame. The unsolved case is, understandably, a favourite with true crime theorists and Venator's boss, Madison Scott-Barnhart, is at first reluctant for her company to take on this high profile case with only a trace of original DNA available to test.

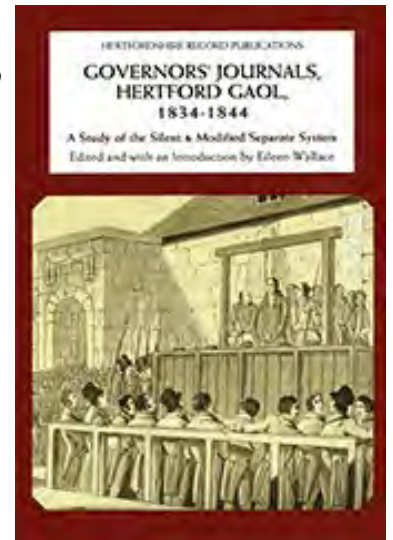
The characters are fully rounded and believable, with readers being witness to their lives outside the office and also being provided with a ring side seat to experience the work that goes on with each researcher to identify the families related to the killer, culminating in the final reveal.

As with all Nathan's books they can be read as a standalone novel but to enjoy the full experience I would recommend reading the two earlier Venator novels to understand the office dynamic alongside the genetic genealogy work. These are *The Chester Creek Murders* and *The Sawtooth Slayer*.

Definitely one for your Christmas stocking!

JT

Wallace, Eileen (Ed) *Governors' Journals, Hertford Gaol, 1834 - 1844. A Study of the Silent & Modified Separate System.* Hertfordshire Record Society, Vol XXXV, 2024. ISBN 978-0-9501741-4-3. £22 (non-members), £17.50 (members). [Volume XXXV - Publications - HR Society](#)



On first sight, this looks to be a minority interest subject for the family historian. How many of us would own up to a criminal past? However, as Eileen Wallace points out in her meticulous and well researched introduction, many prisoners were convicted on charges that today would be classed as trivial, such as stealing turnip tops, goods of trifling value, damaging property and poaching. Furthermore, there were many, who were not convicted of crime, associated with Hertford gaol who feature in this book.

The introduction explores the purpose of imprisonment and the 19th century views, mirroring those of today, on whether incarceration was a punishment or a means of reform. It also explains the role of a wide range of personnel associated with the gaol at Hertford, including the Governor, warders, surgeon and Chaplain which, in turn, introduces a wider cast of characters.

The first two surviving journals of the Governors of Hertford County Gaol (William Willson, 1834 - 1838 and G P Druins, 1838 - 1843) have been transcribed and provide a fascinating but very depressing picture of prison life. One who was spared gaol was J Smith, convicted of stealing turnips at Hitchin. On reaching the prison on 23 December 1840, the Governor noted that he paid his fine & was discharged. It appearing a friend on the road lent him the money. For those not so fortunate, life was spent picking oakum and working on the tread wheel. Talking was not allowed and any infringement of the rules was punishable by solitary confinement. Three days in 1843 are typical entries:

Wednesday October 11th Ordered Wm Marshall 3 days solitary for being very idle in picking his oakum.

Thursday October 12th Ordered Ann Gubby to lose her Dinner 3 days (it being impossible to place her in Solitary owing to her being subject to fits) for

using a leaf out of her prayer book to curl her hair. John Hart 2 days for inattention in Chapel.

Friday October 13th Ordered Jn Anderson 1 Day Solitary confinement for inattention to orders & Geo Pearce 3 days ditto for talking & falsehood.

The gaol staff were also punished. J Bolton, a Turnkey, was fined sixpence on 9 April 1842 *for failing to send a prisoner to his labour after dinner* and the same fine was imposed on Warder Dunning on 16 November 1844 for having a newspaper in the gaol.

It was a hard life and very few concessions. In June 1842 it was recorded that *In consequence of the Extreme heat of the Weather & the apparent suffering of the Prisoners on the Wheel, the Governor altered the usual manner of working (being ½ an hour on & 10 minutes off) to ¼ of an hour on & ¼ off Yesterday & part of this Day.* In August of that year, the Visiting Justices ordered that *one ounce of onions be added to each miscreant's allowance of Soup.*

The appendices contain more information rules and regulations and reports on Hertford gaol, but the treasure trove for family historians is the index. There are 23 pages of the names of all those associated with the gaol, ranging from the prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry, who visited in 1843 to the prisoner, Mary Savill, *a most hardened, incorrigible prostitute.*

Jennifer Ayto

Have you seen any new books with a Hertfordshire theme or content? Would you like to write a review for inclusion in a future edition of *Hertfordshire People*?

I am always happy to receive notices of forthcoming publications and information on new books or online sources on all aspects of Hertfordshire history and topography.

Editor.

SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

Apart From our Monumental Inscriptions and Militia Lists books, did you know that Hertfordshire FHS has also produced several special publications? They have been produced over the years in a variety of formats, print, CD and flash drive.

- **Transported beyond the Seas** - criminals convicted in Hertfordshire who received transportation sentences to Australia 1784-1866.
- **Fleet Marriages of Hertfordshire People to 1754** - an alphabetical list of grooms and brides.
- **Hertfordshire Settlement Certificates**
- **Hertfordshire Removal Orders**
- **Hertfordshire Examinations**
- **Nonconformity in Hertfordshire**
- **Hertfordshire Places**
- **Hertfordshire Obituaries** - from *The Gentleman's Magazine*
- **Hertfordshire Burial Index (CD)**
- **1851 Hertfordshire Census (CD)**
- **Hertfordshire Militia Ballot Lists (CD)**
- **Hertfordshire Quarter Sessions 1585-1615 (CD)**
- **Herts Marriage Links 1538-1837 (CD)**
- **Hertfordshire Strays Index (CD)**
- **Herts Poor Law** - Settlements, Removals & Examinations books above (Flash Drive)

We welcome letters on any aspect of the history and genealogy of Hertfordshire places and families, or in response to articles and extracts which have appeared in *Hertfordshire People*. Contact the Editor at the address or e-mail at the top of page 1.

A Hertfordshire Heraldic Miscellany

By John J. Tunesi of Liongam

68) The Arms of Baker of Bayfordbury, Co. Hertfordshire.

The arms that are the subject of this article were granted by the Kings of Arms at The College of Arms in the City of London around the year 1802 to a gentleman by the name of William Baker (born 1743, died 1824), of Bayfordbury in the County of Hertfordshire.



William was the eldest son of Sir William Baker (born 5th November 1705, died 23rd January 1770), of Bayfordbury and his wife, Mary Tonson. It is strange that when Sir William was knighted on the 3rd November 1760 he did not petition

for a grant of arms from the Kings of Arms. It appears that such action was left to his eldest son to undertake. Therefore, it is my suspicion that Sir William and his forebears may well have used arms without authority which was not at all unusual at that time. Very often families were blissfully ignorant as to the origins of their arms – assuming that all was correct and above board. So, if my hypothesis is correct the intervention by the younger William was undoubtedly to regularise the armorial usage within the family by obtaining a grant of arms anew. Do not imagine that this occurred only in past centuries as it still occurs today when armigerous families approach The College of Arms with an enquiry in respect of their arms to discover to their horror that the arms the family have been using for umpteen generations have heraldically no validity whatsoever. Generally, when such a new grant occurs in consequence of this heraldic *faux-pas*, the heralds are quite helpful in that they often base the design of the new grant upon the 'unofficial' one where at all possible making sure sufficient differences are brought in to ensure that there is no ambiguity between the old and the new.

The blazon of the Arms is:

Arms: *Per pale ermine and gules a greyhound courant between two bars inverted in chief two quatrefoils and another in base all counterchanged.*

Crest: *A cockatrice per fess indented erminois and pean combed and wattled gules gorged with a collar azure and in the beak a quatrefoil slipped vert.*

Motto: 'So run that ye may obtain'

A printed pedigree of the family commences with The Reverend Joseph Baker (born 1626, died 25th March 1668) who was educated at St Catherine's Hall and later Emmanuel College, Cambridge and was ordained as priest in the Church of England and served as such during his career in many parishes. He was married twice. Sir William Baker descends his marriage to his second wife, Ann **Swynfen** (born circa 1636, died 1719) whom he had married on the 2nd June 1661.

Joseph's grandson, Sir William Baker, was an Alderman and Draper of the City of London and a merchant with extensive interests in North America especially along the eastern seaboard in New York, the Carolinas and Georgia. He also had interests

in Barbados.

He served as an Alderman of the City of London (1739 - 70) and was a Director of the East India Company (1741 - 45, 1746 - 50 and 1751 - 53), serving as Deputy Chairman (1749, 1751 - 52) and Chairman (1749 - 50 and 1752 - 53). He was also on the board of Hudson's Bay Company, serving as Deputy Governor (1750 - 60) and Governor (1760 - 70).

For a period, he was also an army contractor in respect of victualling and the paying of troops. Such was his wealth, he occasionally lent substantial amounts of money to Government loans, around the year 1761 amounting to close on £100,000. Being a man of many parts, Sir William also sat in the House of Commons as the Member of Parliament for Plympton Erle (1747 - 68) where he was noted as being an able speaker in the chamber.

His eldest son William was educated at Eton and Clare College, Cambridge (although he did not matriculate). He became a member of the Inner Temple (admitted 1761; called to the bar 1775; bencher 1808; reader 1818). In many ways, he lived the life of a country gentleman during which time, he served as an officer in the

Hertfordshire Yeomanry until 1810. Although he was not involved in his father's business interests directly, William was like his father a merchant in the City of London and was also a member of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1775. He served as Sheriff of London and Middlesex for the year 1770 - 71, but never advanced to become an Alderman.

He served as Whig Member of Parliament for Plympton Erle (1768 - 74, Aldborough (1777 - 80), Hertford (1780 - 84) and Hertfordshire (1790 - 1802) and (1805 - 07). William retired from the Commons in 1807. He married twice, firstly to Juliana

Penn (born 1753, died 1772), the eldest daughter of Thomas Penn of Stoke Poges in the County of Buckinghamshire whom he married on 23 May 1771 at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Co.

His second wife was Sophia **Conyers** (born 1759, died 1847). the third daughter of John Conyers of Copt Hall, near Epping in the County of Essex whom he married on 7 October 1775 at St Mary le Bone, St. Marylebone, Co. Middlesex.



William Baker (1745-1824), of Bayfordbury, Co. Hertfordshire by Nathaniel Dance RA

Your Editor is delighted to receive correspondence, letters or e-mails, from readers in response to any articles, reviews or enquiries that appear within these pages.

Don't forget to write in!

Members' Interests

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

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Dellow	1700-1870	Little Hadham, Bishops Stortford	Hrt	4683
Gatward	+1500	Any	Any	4685
Hearn	Any	Clothall, Rushden	Hrt	4682
Hearn	1840	Shephall	Hrt	4682
Howard	1856	Ardeley	Hrt	4682
Johnson	1856	Ardeley	Hrt	4682
Kidd	Any	Cambridge	Cam	4684
Kidd	Any	Any	Ess	4684
Littler	1750	Any	Ess	4676
Littler	1750	Any	Hrt	4676
Markell	Any	Bishops Stortford & area	Hrt	4682
Pavelin	1800	Any	Ess	4676
Pavelin	1800	Any	Hrt	4676
Rudge	1800	Any	Ess	4676
Rudge	1800	Any	Hrt	4676
Ward	1829	Any	Hrt	4682
Willis	1750	Any	Ess	4676
Willis	1750	Any	Hrt	4676

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Hertfordshire Family History Society

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UK individual - £13/£9; UK Family - £14/£10; Overseas (airmail) - £16/£10;
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

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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 - johnandjanet@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.

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Hertfordshire

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All Enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary
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Information is also available on the Society's website:

www.hertsfhs.org.uk

Hertfordshire Family History Society

Meetings Programme 2024-2025

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.

- Dec 14** **Adventures of a Ghost Hunter.** Much of the material in this talk will come from the speaker's books, *Paranormal Hertfordshire* and *Chicksands Priory*. Have you a paranormal Hertfordshire story to share? *Damien O'Dell. Zoom*
- Jan 25** **Where does my family come from?: Unlocking the secrets of DNA Testing** *Karen Evans. Zoom.* This talk covers understanding how a DNA test works in very general terms, getting the most from the test (what the results mean) and how to use your results to validate paper research or overcome brick walls such as illegitimacy.
- Feb 22** **What would Great Aunt Emily think?** *Frances Francis. Zoom.* Finding her grandmother's older sister and meeting her mother's last living cousin has enabled our speaker to unearth an amazing series of coincidences in her families lives, fill in gaps and identify many of the photographs in her mother's 1930s photograph album.
- Mar 15** **Help Session at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.**
2.00pm until 5.00pm.

Website: www.hertsfhs.org.uk