



HILLINGDON FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Member of the Family History Federation



The Canal School Boat 'ELSDALE' (see page 21)

JOURNAL No. 143

SEPTEMBER 2023

2023 MEETINGS PROGRAMME

Unless stated otherwise meetings take place at Hillingdon Baptist Church, 25 Hercies Road, Hillingdon, Middlesex. UB10 9LS. Doors open at 7.30 p.m.

DATE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT
Thursday 22 nd June 7.30 ZOOM	Judy Hill	'Upstairs Downstairs'
Thursday 13 th July 7.30 pm	Simon Keable	'Utterly Immoral, Robert Keable and his Scandalous Novel'
<i>AUGUST NO MEETINGS OR RESEARCH ROOM</i>		
Thursday 14 th September 7.30 pm	Sir John Randall	'The History of Randall's of Uxbridge'
Thursday 12 th October 7.30 ZOOM	Wendy Tibbitts	'Longford: A Village in Limbo'
Tuesday 14 th November 2.00 pm (joint with U3A)	Susan Gordon	'Telling Your Story - An Introduction to Writing About Life and Family'
<i>DECEMBER — NO MEETING</i>		

NOTE: ZOOM MEETINGS. The link to join each meeting will be included with the preceding NEWSLETTER.

We always welcome visitors to our meetings at an entrance £1

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Visit our website at: www.hfhs.org.uk
 Contact us by e-mail at: enquiries@hfhs.org.uk

Contributions to the Journal are encouraged and should be sent to the e-mail address above or by post John Symons, (address on back cover).

**A LARGE PRINT VERSION IS AVAILABLE ON
 REQUEST TO THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY.**



JOHN'S JOTTINGS

John Symons

At the time of writing the General Register Office (GRO) has just made available many of the births and death certificates as an immediately available download at a reasonable cost of £2.50. This prompted me to remember the 'good old days' when searching for a birth, marriage or death index entry meant a visit to St. Catherines House where you often faced something of a scrum locating the required volume, then finding a space on the reading shelves. On some of the older volumes the indexes were hand written on vellum rather than printed on paper which made them heavier and often more difficult to read. Mostly the event you wanted wasn't in that volume so on to the next quarter and so forth. If you were really lucky you might find what you were looking for, so over to the application forms then a queue to pay. Then you waited for a week or more hoping that you had applied for the correct one.

At least for me St. Catherines House was immediately opposite my then place of employment in Kingsway and you could always have another try on another day and if you did succeed it could be regarded as a hard fought for result. I still have these early certificates in folders to remind me about how it used to be.

The same could be said of the census records which were then held in the 'dungeons' of the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, not that far away. There in the gloom you could peer at microfilm readers until you gave up. There were next to no indexes so unless your ancestors lived in small rural parishes your chance of finding anyone was very low. Any success at all was often greeted with a triumphal cry which broke the silence in an amusing way. Then if you wanted a bit of light relief, you could always try to find a will in the period setting of Somerset House.

(contd.)

Parish registers invariably meant an excursion to the local record office which sometimes had its own trials.

I remember that at one repository the archivist regarded these documents as her personal fiefdom and certainly not to be mauled by Mr. Joe Public.

All in all then we are now in a much better place, are we not? Instead of hurried transcriptions and blurred photocopies we now usually have crystal clear images which remove most ambiguities.

I know that my recent records are more accurately recorded than those taken thirty years ago. Somewhere though I have this nagging feeling that part of the experience has vanished, never to return.

EDITORS' JOTTINGS

<i>Journal Dates for 2022</i>	
Edition	Dead Line
December	21 st October

We were pleased to receive the following email from Janet (H52):

Good Morning John: Another fantastic Journal, many thanks. I notice your request for articles so am attaching one which you may think is worth including. It is about my father's friend Harry HIRONS, I am also attaching a couple of photographs to accompany it which you may also like - I note you generally ask for a photograph or two! Looking forward to the September journal.

*All good wishes
Janet Hewitt-Winch H52.*

You will find Janet's article on page 21.

CAN THIS BE TRUE?

By John Bridger

It was great to receive an email from John BRIDGER with an article for the journal, it has been some while since we heard from him. Here is his latest submission:

A while ago the Familysearch organisation notified me that as I had made sufficient entries on my family tree, they had used this information in their search for other relatives that I may not have recorded or know about and indeed, with other trees and information in their vast resources.

I was astonished to see that I had links with some Famous Relations! Some 49 in all! Ranging from presidents of U.S.A. to authors, actors and various other leaders. They are spread over the following categories-

19 LEADERS: 9 INVENTORS and SCIENTISTS:
17 ENTERTAINERS and ARTISTS: 4 TRAIL BLAZERS.

For each family connection they provide details of how they came to their conclusion, thus one is able to at least check out one's own family and reach back to find the common ancestor.

I took a quick look at a sample and found that the common ancestors were back mainly in the 15th and 16th centuries. No wonder then that I had no idea they existed, let alone connected to me and it would have been an enormous task to verify each and every one.

Fortunately, I was presented with an easy option with this bold statement from the Familysearch information:

“FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE is John BRIDGER’s 11th cousin 2 x removed”

(contd.)

I was really surprised as none of my family had ever mentioned her name and as far as I know, there was no 'handed down story'. I have visited the Nightingale Museum at St Thomas Hospital, London where there is plenty of information of her life and family.

My curiosity roused, I re-opened the Familysearch file and immediately saw that it provided a thread to my grandmother Lucy Ann (née DOUGLAS) who married Harry William BRIDGER.

Then directly back through her DOUGLAS line to Alexander DOUGLAS who married Zillah LANGDALE, daughter of Marmaduke, around the end of the 16th century. Marmaduke's father, Thomas, married Amica(?) Ann VAVASOUR and it is this marriage that takes us a step nearer to Florence. Amicia's father Peter VAVASOUR was married to Elizabeth WINDSOR which finally leads to the COMMON ANCESTORS, namely Elizabeth's father ANDREW de WINDSOR (born 1467) and his wife ELIABETH BLOUNT (born 1468).

It is often the case that the sort of charts supplied by Familysearch only provide a basic name which means you have to research the background of each. In this case however, I recognised nearly all the names on my side that formed the link to Florence. But as far as those on Florence's side I was unable to verify so I had to rely on the accuracy of the information Familysearch. (See the following page for the Lines of Descent).



Born 1820 in Florence, Italy, Florence was an English social reformer, statistician and the founder of modern nursing. She came to prominence during the Crimean War as manager/trainer of nurses and organiser of care for wounded soldiers at Constantinople. She significantly reduced death rates by improving hygiene and living standards. Florence gave nursing a favourable reputation and became an icon as 'The Lady with the Lamp' making the rounds of wounded soldiers at night.

(contd.)

The Bridger and Nightingale Lines

John V Bridger

J R Bridger

J F Bridger

Harry Bridger **m**

Lucy A Douglas

E Douglas

J E M Douglas

James Douglas

John Douglas

Thomas Douglas

Alexander Douglas **m**

Zilla Langdale

Marmaduke Langdale

Thomas Langdale **m**

Amica(?) Ann Vavator

Peter Vavator **m**

Elizabeth Windsor

Florence Nightingale 1820/1910

William E Nightingale **m**

Martha F Smith

Samuel Smith **m**

Martha Adams

James M Smith

m

Elizabeth Dixon

George Smith **m**

Sarah Pert

Langrave T Smith **m**

Barbara Atkins

Aaron Akins **m** Joanne

John Atkins **m** Mary Sandys

Edwin Sandys **m**

Elizabeth Sandys

Baron William Sandys **m**

The COMMON ANCESTORS:

Andrew de WINDSOR **married** Elizabeth BLOUNT

With the marriage of Andrew WINDSOR and Elizabeth BLOUNT the point of common ancestors is reached which places them on my family tree as my 12th great grandparents.

I was satisfied that the names on my side could be vouched for but I could not say the same of Florence's side. However, I did test each name in her ancestral line and all appeared to be logical with later names appearing in the many websites covering Florence's life and background.

IS THIS GETTING BORING?

By Alan Rowland

Returning to the long ‘s’: in the last edition we saw how ‘f’ can be mistaken for the long or medial ‘s’ and when seen in hand written works it can resemble a sloping, elongated 8.

On old pre-printed forms etc. it seems that the long ‘s’ looked very much like an ‘f’ but I recently had occasion to look at a marriage bond and was surprised to see another form in the pre-printed document.

On the single sheet of paper, it took the form of what I can only describe as half of a sloping, elongated 8!

*are hereby become bound unto the Right Reverend Father in God,
Bailey, by Divine Permission, Lord Bishop of London,
in the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds of good and lawful Money of
Great-Britain, to be paid to him the said Right Reverend Father
in God, or his lawful Attorney, Executors, Successors or Assigns;
For the good and faithful Payment of which Sum, we do bind
ourselves, and both of us, jointly and severally, for the Whole,
our Heirs, Executors and Administrators, firmly by these Pre-
sents. Sealed with our Seals. Dated the Seventh Day of
August in the Year of our Lord 1794 /L.*

Further down in the same document I found examples of the long form (those that look almost like a regular ‘f’). So it seems that both types were used on printed documents but the question is: Why?

may lawfully solemnize Marriage together, and in the same afterwards lawfully remain and continue for Man and Wife, according to the Laws in that Behalf provided: And moreover, if there be not at this present Time any Action, Suit, Plaint, Quarrel, or Demand, moved or depending before any Judge Ecclesiastical or Temporal, for or concerning any such lawful Impediment between the said

VISIT TO LONDON TRANSPORT POSTER AND ART ARCHIVE - 16TH MAY 2023

Report by Charles Hampshire

Members of the Society joined members of the Harefield History Society for a guided tour at LT's Acton Depot. This is where artifacts not on display at the London Transport, Covent Garden, museum are stored. It was the first museum repository open to the public.



As we waited for the tour to begin a wonderful video of a metropolitan railway journey was viewed in black and white showing pre-war Middlesex mostly as undeveloped fields. Walking past old trains and ticket booths we went upstairs to a controlled environment where the art works and posters are stored. *(contd.)*



We were split into two groups as the rooms are not huge. My group saw the posters first. Most are in cabinets but a selection was out on display. Some famous and familiar, others which we had never seen before. We viewed posters from many decades and in different styles.

Often the iconic London Transport logo was subtly inserted and sometimes being the only clue that it was an LT poster. Some of the older posters were in map form, some advertised sporting events or sightseeing and entertainment opportunities. A few were promoting safety such as cartoons to move along the platform. Others were pure art.

The heyday of the poster was probably the 1920s and 1930s when Frank Pick was head of the organisation. Pick believed in fitness for purpose and the power of good design to enrich life and more information can be found on,

[Frank Pick: the man behind London Transport's identity](https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk), London Transport Museum ([ltmuseum.co.uk](https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)).

(contd.)

The art and posters were commissioned originally because the new tube lines were not attracting the required number of passengers, and once deployed the posters helped improve passenger numbers and profitability. Our guide stressed that every poster had a target market within the passenger possibilities; a big market was women otherwise stuck at home as the housewife while the man was the breadwinner, and the posters suggested plenty of reasons for the women to travel into London.

The posters were a historic journey over time, both fascinating and beautiful. The groups swapped over and we went to the art store where original artworks are stored on pull out racks.

Some were paintings later turned into posters, sometimes with slight alterations, others pure works of art commissioned and perhaps hung in offices. They encompassed a range of styles including modern abstract.

My favourites were scenes of rural London and a fascinating black and white map where London was represented as an island. There was also a map showing pre-war London when Harefield, Ruislip and Ickenham were small villages surrounded by farmland.

Unfortunately due to copyright issues one could not photograph individual works however, much can be seen at [Collections - Search London Transport Museum \(ltmuseum.co.uk\)](https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/collections-search).

The museum discovered some forgotten art which is valuable, such as work by Eric Ravilious.

For lovers of art and design the tours ended much too soon as it is only possible to see a fraction of the collection but it was a most interesting and worthwhile trip, enjoyed by all who attended.

For those unable to attend our tour, the depot run open days when the public can see the collections. Details at [Art and poster store tour London Transport Museum \(ltmuseum.co.uk\)](https://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/art-and-poster-store-tour)

VISIT TO THE BATTLE of BRITAIN BUNKER

Report by Charles Hampshire

On the 23rd May 2023 some fifteen members of the Society attended the May meeting where they were treated to a talk from the Curator, Joseph Hill, entitled the Battle of Britain in five objects.

Several members clambered down the 76 steps beforehand into the historic 1939 grade 1 listed bunker, where they learnt how Britain's Air Defence system worked during World War II to control operations in our group (Group II Fighter Command), scramble aircraft and warn of raids.

Later in the lecture theatre of the exhibition building (completed and opened in 2018), the Curator talked about his five favourite objects of the 6,000 items held.

1 - Jim Nicholson Victoria Cross telegram - we heard about Jim's career as a Flight Lieutenant (Joining the RAF in 1936) and later Wing Commander and how he came to be the only VC awarded in Fighter Command. His modesty was emphasised when we learnt and he was once threatened with a court martial if he didn't wear his VC on parade. Later he was also awarded the DFC, tragically he died in an air crash in 1945 aged just 28.



2 - Battle of Britain Chess Set - a unique set depicting the key figures on both sides of the battle including Winston Churchill and Hitler.

3 - German Reconnaissance photograph of Uxbridge - a black and white picture showing how RAF Uxbridge didn't look that important to the Germans.

(contd.)

4 - WAAF tags - Over 80% of those working at the bunker were women and we gained an insight into their work and working pattern during the war.

5 - ME 110 part - a piece from a Messerschmitt significant as it was from one of at least 17 aircraft shot down by Sgt. W.T.E Rolls who in his time with No. 72 squadron was one of the very few triple aces. He also received the DFC with bar and the DFM.

After the talk Members visited the exhibition area where they saw many of these items, life size models of a Hurricane and a Spitfire fighter, items from the Polish Airmen collection, a plotting table, audios from people who worked in the bunker and exhibits about Dunkirk and other missions, the Dam busters, the blitz and other significant events.

This plotting table picture was taken by John Symons.



All in all, a very good afternoon which was sobering, reminding us of the hardships, bravery and events endured by those in service and at home during the second world war and especially those who flew and served in support roles during the Battle of Britain. (contd.)

The grounds of the museum have replica planes, a memorial and a statue of Air Chief Marshall, Sir Keith Park, Commanding Officer of No. 11 Fighter Group RAF Uxbridge during the Battle of Britain (pictures by Charles).



PRE 1836 CATHOLIC MARRIAGE PRACTICES

By Alan Rowland

Using the link 'Victorian Marriage' in the 'Lost Cousins' June 2023 newsletter, I found this:

The following, from the UK Parliament website, sets out the state of English Catholic marriages in 1832/1833.

Until the middle of the 18th century marriages could take place anywhere provided they were conducted before an ordained clergyman of the Church of England.

This encouraged the practice of secret marriages which did not have parental consent and which were often bigamous. It also allowed couples, particularly those of wealthy background, to marry while at least one of the partners was under age. The trade in these irregular marriages had grown enormously in London by the 1740s.

In 1753 the Marriage Act, promoted by the Lord Chancellor Lord Hardwicke, declared that to be legally binding all marriage ceremonies in England and Wales must be conducted by a minister, in a parish church or chapel of the Church of England. No marriage of a person under the age of 21 was valid without the consent of parents or guardians. Clergymen who disobeyed the law were liable for 14 years transportation. Jews and Quakers were exempted from the 1753 Act, but it required religious nonconformists and Catholics to be married in Anglican churches. The Act came into force in 1754, Scotland and the Channel Islands were exempt from the legislation.

Under the Act, banns were made compulsory and licences were only valid for a specific church. The Act also declared that only marriages held at approved places (i.e. Anglican, Jewish or Quaker churches) were legal. This was a big change as previously couples who made a vow before witnesses, who lived together and who had children were recognised by the church and the law as being 'married'.

(contd.)

In order to legalise their marriage, some couples married again in an Anglican church, having first married in a non/conformist chapel.

Marriage by other denominations, (i.e. Roman Catholic and Nonconformist) wasn't legalised until 1836. This restriction was eventually removed by Parliament in the Marriage Act of 1836 which allowed Nonconformists and Catholics to be married in their own places of worship e.g. chapels and Roman Catholic churches.

The provisions introduced in England and Wales empowered the Established Church to register the marriages but marriages in other churches were to be registered by a civil registrar. In Ireland the Roman Catholic Church was concerned that this latter requirement might detract from the religious nature of the marriage ceremony. Consequently, in 1845 provision was made by the government to enable the registration of non-Catholic marriages and for the appointment of registrars who were also given the power to solemnise marriages by civil contract.

Ireland had legalised exclusively Catholic/Catholic marriages in the late 18th century, but the penalties for marrying a Catholic/Protestant couple were extreme to put it mildly. The death penalty and a large fine were still on the Statute Books in 1830.

In a House of Commons debate on the 4th May 1830, Daniel O'Connell tried to change things: (HC Deb 04 May 1830 vol 24 cc396/401). It was one of the first things he raised, after taking his seat as the first Catholic M.P. since the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829.

Later in a separate Google search I found this snippet:

The Marriage Act of 1836 has been in the news thanks to the Government's decision to repeal the restrictions on when people can get married. The current requirement for marriages to be held between 8am and 6pm is set to go as part of the Freedoms Bill, but why was the restriction introduced in the first place?

The answer is a neat illustration of how regulations do not exist in a vacuum but have to fit with the current social context.

(contd.)

In addition to introducing civil registration of marriages, the Act introduced the limit on hours of marriage as a reaction to the number of secret marriages taking place without the knowledge of the parents and many of which (it was claimed, with some if not full justification) were bigamous.

The idea of curbing bigamous marriages would still have widespread support today, but restricting the hours of marriage is not (any more) an effective way to do that. Society has changed in too many ways for it to any longer be an effective step.

The Marriage Act of 1836 was a liberalising measure in one important way, as it allowed Catholics and Nonconformists to be married in their own places of worship rather than having to marry in Anglican churches,

One odd footnote about The Marriage Act of 1836: although it introduced the restriction on hours of marriage, it has actually long since been fully replaced by other Acts (which retained the hours restriction).

However, during a piece of legal consolidation in the 1940s, the 1836 Act's statement that the civil marriage provisions did not apply to members of the Royal Family was (probably inadvertently) dropped. Hence Prince Charles was able to marry Camilla Parker Bowles in a civil ceremony.

It follows then, that when you run across what appears to be a marriage anomaly at a date before 1836 be careful. If you find that a marriage between members of known staunch Roman Catholic families is recorded in Anglican parish registers, the above offers a possible solution.

DIGITAL BIRTH AND DEATH CERTIFICATES

By John Symons

A welcome facility recently introduced by the General Register Office (GRO) means that for some historic births and deaths it is now possible to view the information directly for a reduced fee. This currently applies to:

Births from 1837 to 100 years ago.

Deaths from 1837 to 1887

The advantages are twofold: Firstly, the cost at £2.50 per entry is considerably less than the £7.00 charged for a pdf copy manually produced or the £11.00 for a certified paper copy although these options remain available. For many other years these of course may be the only options. Secondly you do not have to wait. Once a card payment has been made the information should be revealed. If you tend to be impatient like me this is a real benefit. I used to only order birth death and marriage certificates for my direct family unless there was a puzzle that could not be solved any other way. Illegitimate children might be an example where it is unclear who the mother is. I have now ordered some digital downloads for other close family members. Often you don't learn much more but sometimes you do which makes it worthwhile.

The system generally works well in my experience. On one occasion I was informed that a digital download was not available despite being within the criteria above and on another occasion, I was sent the wrong entry (but with same volume and page). I contacted the GRO and received a refund.

You should find it straightforward as you use the same ordering site as before at:

<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/Login.asp>

If you do need any help book a place at our research room and we can show you how it works.

RUISLIP IN POETRY AND A HINT OF TRAGEDY (3)

By Melanie Winterbotham (W8)

Here, with our thanks, we conclude our poetic sojourn in Ruislip, all provided by Melanie.

A VISIT TO RUISLIP

After receiving a View of that Village, painted by Mrs Addison of Ickenham Rectory

I came to gather from the sealed up book
Of other days a fragment of the past;
To live again o'er moments unsurpassed
In quiet joy; by the dream-feeding brook,
The rustic bridge and many a fairy nook;
Through woodlands rich and rife with pastoral tales;

O'er hill that overlook delicious vales, –
Dear scenes that wear the old time-hallowed look.

Well did the season with that stroll agree –
I heard the requiem of the dying year; the lightest breeze disrobing
every tree,

The path bestrewn with faded leaves and sear –

All were in tune with the sad memory
Yet sweet, of pleasures that lie buried here.
And I returned to mark how Art had traced
Some of the choicest features of the spot,
And feel that though I could be with them not,
Their image might be evermore embraced:
Not only from the memory uneffaced,
But present to the eye; and bright and real,
And lovelier than Fancy's best ideal,

(contd.)

With taste, and skill, and sunny richness graced.
‘Tis peace personified! the blue skies smile
In pure serenity; the couchant sheep
Seem types of it; its noiseless beauties steep
The herbage, the tree-shadowed cottages,
But most the holy venerable pile
That teaches peace and peaceful charities.

Ruislip, Oct. 15, 1840. J. W. Dalby

FINED 24 SHILLINGS FOR SCRUMPING!

By Barbara Green (G58)

On reading the article by Alan Rowland, ‘Has The Sentence Ever Been A Deterrent?’ in the June 2023 edition, I was inspired to share with you the appearance in Cambridgeshire Quarter Sessions records of my ancestor George Peachey.

My interest in researching my family history developed in the late 1990s, when I used to visit the now long-gone Family Records Centre in Islington. There I was able to find my ‘Peachey’ ancestors in 19th century census returns (in the days when they were on microfilm). These show George as an agricultural labourer living in a cottage with his wife Frances and their growing family in Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire. I could imagine George working hard to support his family, and wondered if he was employed on a regular or casual basis and did whether the chances of work varied according to the season.

His wages were perhaps no more than eight shillings a week, to be spent on rent, food, clothes, firewood. Frances may well have had to ‘make do and mend’ when their clothes became worn. Was she perhaps able to earn a small wage by taking in sewing or laundry?

(contd.)

As family historians, we often try to add context to our ancestors' lives by looking at their wider family, and also by researching local and social history.

In the hope of taking George and Frances's lines further back, I employed a professional researcher based in the local area to search parish registers for their baptisms, marriages and burials. (These registers have been indexed; I believe by the Cambridgeshire F.H.S.)

After several visits to Cambridgeshire Record Office, the researcher provided transcripts of the relevant entries and her diligence meant I was able to compile quite an impressive family tree going back a few more generations.

She also helpfully decided to consult the Quarter Sessions index for any mention of my ancestors and found, in Michaelmas 1833 (Q/S.01 6.p508), reference to George Peachey of Fen Ditton having been fined for stealing apples from the vicar's garden.

The condition of the original document was good enough to allow it to be photocopied and the entry shows that he stole on 6th October 1833 '.....one bushel of Winter apples then growing in the Garden of The Reverend John Haggitt of Fen Ditton aforesaid for which offence the said George Peachey was adjudged to pay the sum of 5/- penalty, 10/- damages and 9/- costs.' I was advised that there was no follow-up entry and no further reference to George in these records.



I was thrilled! As well as helping to 'put flesh on the bones' of the names and dates on my family tree.

I was now able to imagine George, as a young man in his 20s, climbing over the garden wall and enthusiastically filling a bushel basket with apples, intending to take them home to Frances to help supplement the family's diet. *(contd.)*

How was George able to pay such a fine? Did he pay by instalments, or work for the vicar in lieu?

A bushel is a significant quantity of apples to carry, but there is no mention of any accomplice.

As we dig deeper into our family tree and discover more information, this often raises more questions than it answers; but I think it safe to say there was no apple pie in the Peachey household that evening!

Note: a bushel of apples can weigh 10 to 30lbs depending on the variety of apple.

HENRY 'HARRY' HIRONS 1909-1991

By Janet Hewitt-Winch (H52)

My father, Walter Stanley PEGGEM (1909-1984) was born in Dawley, son of Thomas George and Elizabeth Ann PEGGEM (née STOCKER).

Although I know virtually nothing of his formative years, he often spoke of his best friend Harry HIRONS, one of a group of 'Dawley lads' as they were known.

Being born in the same year as my father they obviously came into contact with each other at an early age, Harry was one of the 'boat children' and their family boat the 'Alice' was moored at Dawley Lock.

When my parents married in 1941 in Hayes, Harry was father's best man and the friendship continued for a number of years afterwards.

Henry, always known as Harry, was born on 1st July 1909 and baptised at Uxbridge Moor on 23rd January 1910. His parents were Henry, a labourer, and Sarah Sophia. Their address was given as Uxbridge Moor.

(contd.)

Henry snr and Sarah Sophia DUCKETT were married at Croxley Green, Hertfordshire on 20th May 1899.

Sarah's maiden name was BRADSHAW although she had briefly married George Henry DUCKETT some two years before but for some reason that marriage had not lasted.

Both the HIRONS and BRADSHAW families were narrow boat people of several generations standing, Henry snr having been born in Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire in 1861 and Sarah Sophia born in 1866 in Staffordshire.

Harry was one of a number of children born to Henry and Sarah Sophia, the younger ones all in the Uxbridge Moor area and Henry snr's occupation in each case was usually given as Boatman.

In 1881 at the age of 15, Sarah Sophia was living on the 'Experiment and Rose of Irvine' narrow boat in the hamlet of Calcutt, Grandborough, Warwickshire and her occupation was recorded as boat woman. It was common practice for all family members to be involved in the day to day running of a boat as it plied its trade along the canals.

Meanwhile the 1881 census for Harry's father, Henry, gave the family address as 39 Great William Street, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, 'Harry' was aged 20 and his father was aged 50. The occupation for both was given as boatman.

Just prior to their departure from the Midlands area Harry Snr and Sophia had a daughter Lucy born 23rd February 1900 in Northamptonshire.

Then followed another daughter, Hester Alice, baptized on 28th February 1901 at St Gabriel's, Birmingham and it is rather charmingly stated on her baptism entry that she was born 'on the land'. Sadly, she died in September of that year, so one wonders why she was not included on the census return.

The 1901 census reveals that the family were now living at Toll Lock, Marsworth, Buckinghamshire, Henry snr was 40, Sophia 34, daughter Sarah 15 (born Cheshire) and daughter Lucy 1 year. *(contd.)*

A short time later the family took up a permanent mooring at Dawley Lock aboard the 'Alice' where, between 1903 and 1909, four more children followed, the last being Harry.

Obviously, it was important for the children of the boat people to be provided with an education and this facility was provided by the Grand Union Canal Company in the form of a barge designated specifically for this purpose and known as the floating school.

It was designed and equipped to serve both as an ordinary or an open air school, so presumably Harry and his siblings took advantage of this facility.

My father lived close to the canal at Rigby's Row and later at Bolingbroke Cottages so presumably his and Harry's paths crossed. He often mentioned that as children they would play on Hounslow Heath, the land subsequently becoming Heathrow Airport.

My father had a dog, Rastus and often told me of the times he and Harry took Rastus with them to go ratting along the canal letting him flush out the rats from their holes and then quickly despatching them. Not something one would do these days but in the early 1900's it was part of the way of life. Another pastime of theirs was fishing around the area.

Many of Harry and my father's friends lived in Bolingbroke Cottages, Ship Row and Rigby's Row all in the immediate area of Dawley.

Throughout their youth and into their twenties they were often to be found in the local hostelrys, the White House and The Woolpack being two of their favourites. For many years the group also went on holidays together.

One by one, the Dawley lads married and settled in the area but Harry didn't follow them and continued to have a life of his own although he remained good friends with my father.

Apparently, my parents met on a blind date to the cinema, or the 'pictures' as it was always referred to in those days.

Harry took along his girlfriend (who was also my mother's friend from Northolt) and my father. The rest, as they say is history but Harry's relationship with this particular girlfriend didn't last long. (contd.)

The 1939 register gives Harry's occupation as 'Machine-hand Steel Ceilings' but I have no idea where this business was neither do I know whether Harry was called up for National Service in WW2.

I think perhaps he wasn't although I do have a photograph of him with some air personnel but he is in civilian clothes not a uniform. My father was in a reserved occupation so he undertook fire watching duties mostly on the roof of his employer Nathaniel Greening and Sons, of Britannia Works, Hayes to look out for incoming aircraft.

The HIRONS family remained on the narrow boat 'Alice' at Dawley Dock well into the 1940s. Harry's father Henry, died in October 1940 at 53 North Road, West Drayton, this was possibly the home of one of his children because his wife was still living on the 'Alice'.

Harry subsequently lived there with his mother until 1946. According to the Probate entry Henry snr. left £140.12s.6d to his wife Sarah Sophia. She died in 1948.

By this time my parents had married and in 1949 we moved to Reading. Harry still kept in touch and in the early 1950s he came to live with us.

My father gave him some work in his wireworks business but this was not really Harry's choice. He couldn't settle so he found himself a job on a new trading estate recently built on the outskirts of Reading. at Gillette's, the razor manufacturer,

Harry stayed with us for a number of years but then disappeared from our lives, whether he moved back to the Hayes area is unknown, neither do we know whether he married or remained single.

Harry died in June 1991 in Hillingdon; he was aged 81 and although my father died in 1984 Harry was not present at the funeral so one can only presume that by this time all contact had been lost.

(contd.)



Henry Hiron about 1936

(contd.)

NB Janet had hoped to include a photograph of the Floating School but she was unable to track it down in her records. Fortunately, and by a happy co-incidence, the education of the boat children was the subject of an article in our March 2008 journal by Barbara Nield and the same picture was part of that.



It seems that at least until 1951, the children of the canal boat families could attend a floating school.

The following image was found on the *Canal and River Trust* (in partnership with the *Inland Waters Association*) web site:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/original/31089-life-on-the-english-waterways.pdf?v=288f40>

(contd.)

CAN YOU HELP ME? (1)

By Alan Rowland

It must be me! I seem to have great difficulty when trying to carry out a census 'address' search using Findmypast. I find it nigh on impossible to get to the search page from the home page, there doesn't seem to be an obvious button to click to open the address search window.

I don't know how I did it, but I recently stumbled across this web site address:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/search-address?ds_kid=39700059459777006&&&&&gad=1&gclid=EAIAIQobChMIn_nmr6yugAMVAuXtChILKAsLEAAYASABEgLimvD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

Using this should take you straight to the 'address search' page and after you sign in, you can carry out your search.

If there is anyone out there that can offer a simpler method or instructions that will get me from the home page to the same address search page, please send it in for me and others to share. Of course, assuming my plea for help is answered and I am able to make use of the address search facility, no doubt Findmypast will 'improve' their site and change the address search method.

CAN YOU HELP ME? (2)

By Alan Rowland

As you have seen in this journal sometimes my wonderings and wanderings lead to a response from our readers with their own take on subjects. This is just the sort of thing, together with family histories and stories that we need. So, thanks to all who contribute and we anticipate more of the same from others.

A SNIPPET FROM THE H.F.H.S JULY NEWSLETTER.

By John Symons

The July Really Useful Bulletin from the Family History Federation is available here:

<https://1drv.ms/b/s!AqkiLHDSmabDqSlQwdMaYksNdVr7?e=UcFoFq>

In this edition there is an article on Catholic ancestors by our President, Michael Gandy. Michael is an authority on Catholic records and anyone with Catholic ancestors will find it interesting.

My wife's ancestors were largely Irish Catholic having come to England at the time of the potato famine in the 1840s. Many settled in London and as there were few Catholic chapels, they often used the Sardinian chapel in Bloomsbury there primarily for the use of Italian Catholic immigrants.

As Michael notes, once you are in the civil registration period from 1837 research is no harder generally than for anyone else but baptisms can be a problem. More recently I have used the digitised records of a number of London Catholic churches now available on Findmypast to find missing baptisms. Some of these are updated to show a subsequent marriage which is a most definite bonus. The only downside is that they are written in Latin which in itself is not too much of a problem as the records for baptisms and indeed marriages usually follow a standard format. You need to be aware though that the Latin version of forenames are used which can be quite different from the anglicised versions.

A ZOOM TALK — REMEMBER THEN! MEMORIES OF 1946 – 1969

Report by John Symons

On Thursday 20th April 2023 we had a Zoom talk by Janet Few. Her topic was the project she ran to bring together the personal stories of a group of eighty women over the first couple of decades following the end of the Second World War.

This was a period of great social change especially for women as opportunities for educational and career development became more widely available. The women, aged 59 to 95, were from a wide variety of backgrounds including those known, by the more affluent, as working class!

The end result was more than just a collection of stories, it reflected how their lives changed and how they compared with those of their parents. It was in effect a social history with the added benefit of photographs to give that extra dimension to their accounts.

Janet made the point that whilst we strive to record the lives and work of our ancestors, the people we most often overlook are ourselves. We often leave it too late to ask our forebears about their lives, but if we discovered that they had already provided their own account we would probably be delighted.

How should we go about this for our descendants? Janet had two suggestions: The straightforward chronological approach which is likely to ensure nothing important is missed out and is quite satisfactory. An alternative themed approach should also be considered with headings such as education, family members, hobbies, careers and so on which show how each played out during your life.

If you then add things that were important to you, it should be possible to produce something of interest not just to a relation but to anyone with an interest in the social history of the era. *(contd.)*

Why not try this for yourselves? Janet's book *'Remember Then: Women's Memories of 1946-1969 and How to Write Your Own'* is available from a number of sources.

A ZOOM TALK — UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

Report by John Symons

On Thursday 22nd June 2023 an online talk by Dr. Judith Hill on the subject that many of us have a connection with.

Most of us have in our family people referred to as domestic servants. In the late 19th and early 20th century a substantial number of women and men were so employed. Beneath this homogenous group lay a wealth of different roles that we may well have not appreciated. Judy's aim was to clarify and illustrate these differences and to show that life below stairs was in many ways just as structured and hierarchical as life above stairs.

The chief male servant was often the butler and for women it was usually the housekeeper. Beneath them were an array of different positions such as footmen, cooks, ladies' maids and so on. Generally speaking the larger the house the more servants there were. The numbers were often held to be an indicator of the social status of the employer more than the range of tasks that needed to be undertaken.

Many young people entered domestic service simply because the alternatives were even less attractive.

Even so there were hurdles to overcome. Women were generally expected to provide their own uniforms, although men, particularly for those working in larger houses, may have theirs provided because for example a state livery was very expensive although in such cases the dress remained the property of the employer.

(contd.)

In a well-run house the maintenance of the house and care of the family usually happened behind the scenes. It is not often that the household team appear in portraits or photographs but when this does happen, they offer an insight into their life and times in a unique manner.

Quite often domestic servants came from areas some way from the employing householder.

Many employers preferred this arrangement as it avoided the possible distraction of local events and they could, it was felt, better focus their energies on the job for which they were employed.

A good source for checking this is to look at the census returns for large houses and you will probably find a wide spread of staff from different regions of England and possibly beyond.

So domestic service often led to a degree of social mobility not found prior to the 19th century aided by the development of the railway system and improved roads.

In the late 19th century domestic servants represented the largest working group in the population. In 1891 there were 1,386,000 female indoor servants and 58,500 male indoor servants from a population of 29,000,000. This number peaked around 1900 and declined in the 20th century. Some could even be under the age of 15. Female servants were more popular with employers as they did not receive as much pay as male servants. Moreover, the employment of male servants required the payment of a servant tax which was not repealed until 1937. These factors led to domestic indoor servants being predominantly female.

Another factor leading to the increase in job opportunities was the industrial revolution. A few became very wealthy by investing in new technologies and had money to build large houses both in the town and country to rival and often surpass those owned by the aristocracy. These houses needed large numbers of servants. It was a sign of great respectability to have a full retinue of servants. Formal dining served at the table required many staff, especially footmen, and this was increasingly looked at as the standard to aspire to.

(contd.)

By the early 20th century universal education, even if at a basic level for both boys and girls, was becoming established. Job opportunities for educated girls such as typists and telephonists began to become available. These would typically offer more pay and freedom than those associated with domestic service and so it became harder for house owners to recruit sufficient staff.

As the numbers of domestic servants grew in larger house so did the separation between them and the family.

The ideal situation from the employers' perspective was to have the work done but rarely to see the staff except the senior staff such as butlers and footmen.

They were expected to rise early before the family, make the fires and clean before the family appeared for breakfast. The servants could then attend to the family bedrooms. Many houses were designed to minimise contact between the family and staff with subterranean spaces for food preparation and bedrooms in attics with back stairs leading into the family rooms where they could appear and disappear as required. The austere back corridors used by the servants were often in marked contrast to the opulence on display in the family rooms. Sometimes there were even tunnels connecting the house to the stables and other outbuildings. Some servants rarely saw daylight as a result. This frugality extended to the bedrooms and living quarters occupied by the servants. The furniture would also be plain and utilitarian with very few decorations, again in marked contrast to life upstairs.

How many servants were employed depended on the size of the house and the social status of the family.

An increasing number of middle-class Victorian families were able to employ one or two servants, typically general maids who were expected to assist in all areas of housekeeping. Life for servants in such positions could be very demanding and the work relentless but much would depend on the attitude and demeanour of the employer. In larger houses roles would be more clearly defined such as cooks, parlour maids, laundry maids, etc. *(contd.)*

If the house includes grounds, then outside servants such as gardeners would be needed. The inside staff would by then be headed by a butler and housekeeper who in addition to fulfilling their own roles would also be expected to manage a diverse selection of lower grade domestic staff. The upper senior staff in a large house would probably be the only ones known to the family. They may even have separate dining arrangements to the lower servants. Upper staff were sometimes known as 'pugs' for reasons that are not entirely clear.

Additional staff might be taken on to meet changing circumstances. Typically, young children might require nurses and older children might have governesses.

This latter group often had a difficult role to fill, being neither part of the family or the servants which could mean an isolated existence as is often recorded by those who did these jobs, one notable example being Charlotte Bronte.

There were strict codes of conduct for servants as well which all employees were expected to know and abide by including how they were to be known and how they should address members of the employing family if their job brought them into contact, for example footmen serving meals. Not following these could mean instant dismissal. If you were not given a reference the chances of further employment in domestic service were remote.

Ladies' maids needed to know the latest fashion trends. Often, they would try to emulate the styles in clothes and hair of their employers so that they could ensure that the ladies were always dressed to impress.

Some of the large houses had a very large staff. Judy cited the example of Petworth House which had a staff of well in excess of a hundred, both indoors and outdoors.

Marriages were generally not allowed, but women who had been domestic servants were often viewed by potential suitors with favour as they knew many of the tasks needed to run a private household. Consequently, many did leave service in order to marry. *(contd.)*

Wages depended on age and experience. They were usually paid quarterly. With few outgoings and board and lodging included, many servants, especially senior servants were able to accumulate significant wealth over time. I can attest to this in the case of my 2nd great uncle Henry Symons who worked all his life for the eventual Bishop of Winchester, latterly as butler, and had enough funds to purchase a decent property for himself and other family members on his retirement. He even married the housekeeper but not until late in life.

In essence Judy provided us with a well-documented and illustrated account of the regulated life of domestic servants. She portrayed a life of formality, long working hours and sometimes poor conditions. Why would people voluntarily choose such positions? Most often it was because the alternatives were worse, agricultural or industrial work in probably worse conditions.

At least board and lodging were provided for servants. So when we see these domestic servants shown in the census, spare a thought about the circumstances that led them there.

A TALK — UTTERLY IMMORIAL, ROBERT KEABLE AND HIS SCANDALOUS NOVEL

Report by John Symons

Are your ancestors interesting? If so, you are fortunate but very few of us will find someone like Robert Keable in their family. One evening in July his grandson, Simon Keable, visited us to tell us the story of Robert Keable and how he caused a stir around the world by writing fictional books. One in particular ‘Simon Called Peter’ became the catalyst for much of what followed. *(contd.)*

Robert's life looked at first as it was set for tradition and stability. The son of a parish priest, he followed his father and won a scholarship to Magdalene College, Cambridge, to study theology. He was subsequently ordained as a curate in Bradford and might have been set for a quiet life in an English parish. This was not to be though.

In Cambridge Robert became involved with the Universities' Mission in Central Africa. Leaving Bradford he joined a mission in Zanzibar.

Soon after the First World War started and he decided to become a chaplain with the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC).

By 1916 these were providing troops for the war effort and Robert finds himself in France providing spiritual comfort for these troops. He also found time to marry Sybil Armitage who he had met in Bradford.

Around this time he penned the novel 'Simon Called Peter' which tells the experiences of a soldier in the First World War. Included in this is the soldier's experience of a French brothel in some salacious detail. Many religious and other bodies denounced the book and called for its removal. This naturally caused sales to soar and in short order it also became a successful play on Broadway.

His experiences in the war led him to becoming disillusioned with the priesthood and left the Church.

At the time he was short of funds and had to take up a teaching post in Surrey but financially things soon improved. His marriage to Sybil, a devout Catholic, was failing. He had met another woman, Jolie Buck, who seemed to be more on his wavelength and they made plans to escape to Tahiti.

Eventually they find themselves renting the house of the artist Paul Gauguin there but his life there was soon interrupted by Jolie's death in 1924. (contd.)

He left Tahiti for America and England and continued to write more books which, it was now becoming clear, had an autobiographical element. When he returned to Tahiti another woman entered his life, a Tahitian princess called Ina Salmon. This too was not to last as Robert Keable died in Tahiti in 1927, aged just 41 years.

This is just the bare bones of Robert's story which is infinitely more complex. Simon has written his own book on Robert's life and times which is available for purchase.

For this he has assiduously researched every aspect of his life with a commendable thoroughness and if you are interested in learning more this is the place to find it.

What comes across to me is that many of his life events may have been a reaction to his puritanical upbringing.

Over time he began to doubt his religion when confronted with the realities of the First World War and life in early 20th century South Africa where he was shocked by the treatment of the native population.

His move to Tahiti was possibly a means of escape although he recognised that by the time when he arrived it was far from the tropical idyll exemplified by Gauguin.

His was a complex character who certainly packed more into his short life than most would. Robert's book 'Simon Called Peter' and others he wrote are now out of copyright and can be found on Google Books and elsewhere and you will of course find numerous references to him and his work on the Internet.

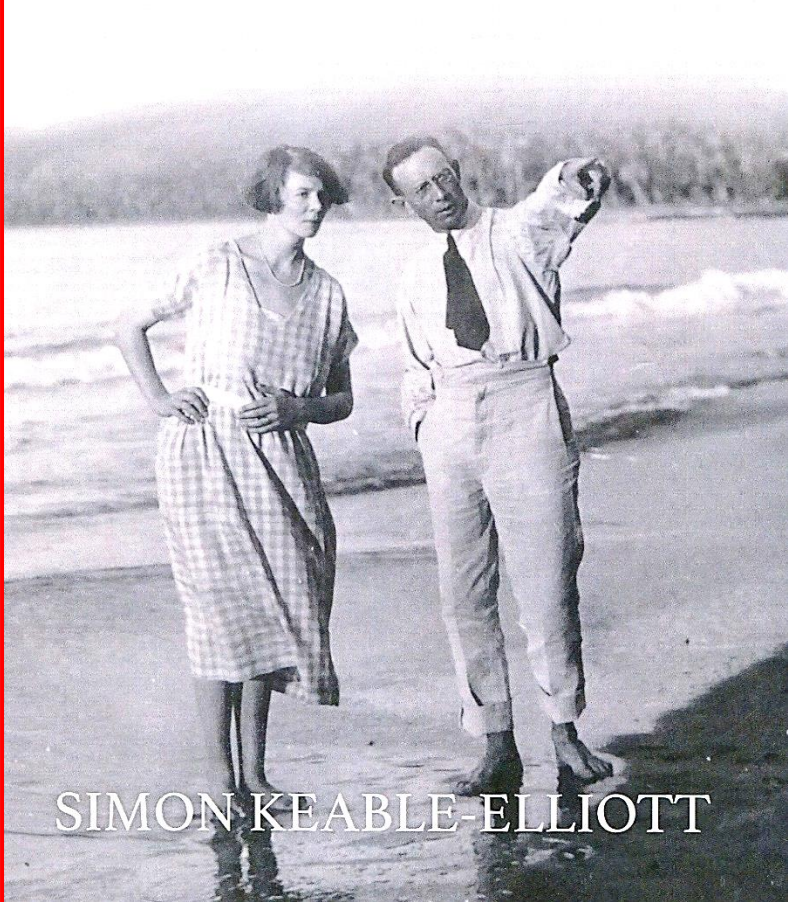
Those who heard Simon's presentation on his grandfather's life were not disappointed.

NB We show below the covers of the original book (1921) and of Utterly Immoral

(contd.)

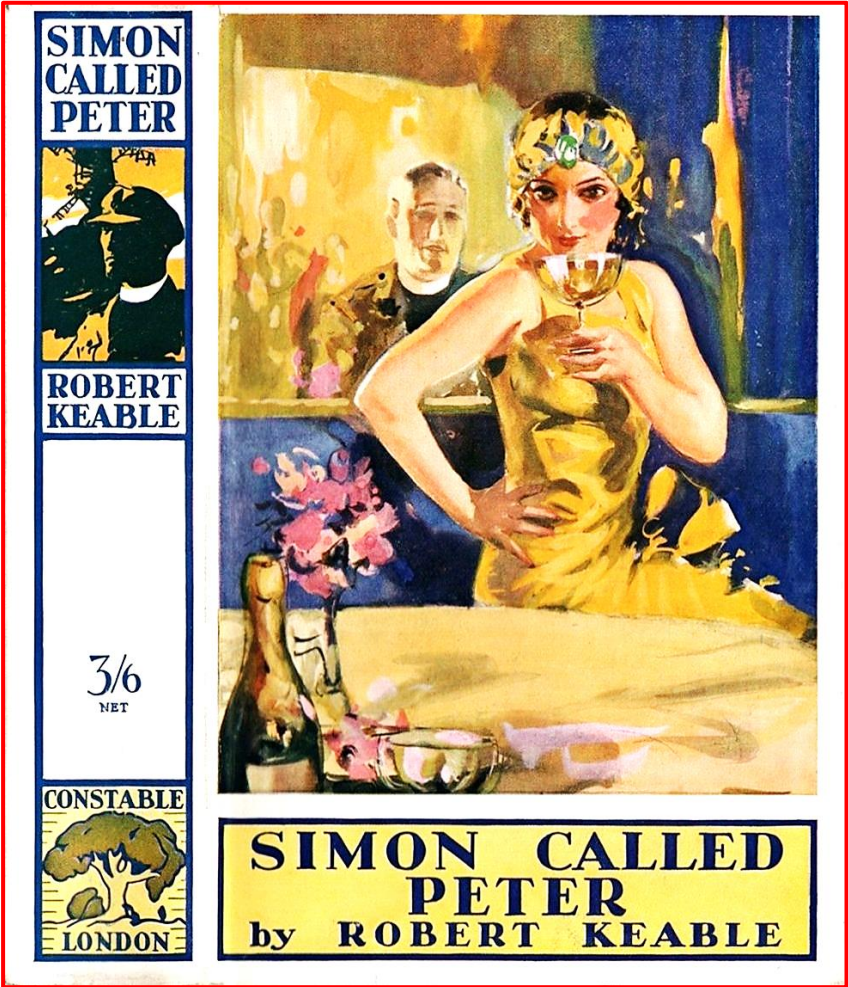
Utterly Immoral

Robert Keable and his scandalous novel



Cover of Simon's book

(contd.)



Cover of the original book

WELCOME TO ALL OUR NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following members who recently joined our society:

Mark & Denise Buckingham, from Uxbridge	Jane House, from Chingford
Rachel Fahri, from London	Kelly Neighbours, from Wellington, NZ
Mary Ghrist, from Uxbridge	Anne White from, Monks Risborough
Sandra Hooker, from Hillingdon	

This brings the total membership at present to 141.

AULD LANG SYNE

By Alan Rowland

For some while now the commercial providers of parish record images have pushed our researches further back in time. In doing so we find a certain level of confusion can be generated.

I speak of calendar dates and the two systems that operated in Western countries. The switch from the Julian calendar (in use from 1582) to the Gregorian calendar in 1752 famously resulted in the loss of 11 days in September and it was the first occasion that, for general and legal purposes, the year began on 1st January.

It follows therefore that prior to 1752 the 1st January was not the start of the year. For legal purposes in England, until 1752, New Year's Day was on 25th March, the Feast of the Annunciation. However, long before the legal change, most people regarded 1st January as New Year's Day (Samuel Pepys began his famous diary on 1 January 1660).

(contd.)

Any dated documents that you find for the year 1752 need a little more scrutiny as to whether the date is between 1st January and 25th March because the year could be 1751 or 1752.

I realise of course that we do not often find records pertaining to our ancestors as far back as 1751/2 (the exception being connection with royalty or the aristocracy!) but should you be lucky enough to stumble on these very early records, for the sake of veracity, the calendar change over is worth bearing in mind.

As an illustration of the 'March' New Year start we show below a page from a typical London parish register.

The change of year (from 1750 to 1751) is indicated in the left margin opposite the baptism that took place on 25th March of one John son of Joseph and Jane Morgan. Interestingly on this old record the birth date is also given (date furthest right) a feature that was not always included.

		Baptized Anno 1750. & 1751.		Born.
March	20	Mary	John & Mary Letnic Fleet Lane	Feb. 22
	22	Elizabeth	Matthew & Elizabeth Jones Hindmill Court	March 15
	23	Henry	Thomas & Catharine Bishop Old Bailey	18
	24	Isiah	John & Catharine Widgeon Charterhouse Lane	11
		MaryAnn	John & Ann Rane Cock Lane	3
		Elizabeth	Joseph & Mary Clark Chick Lane	6
		Sarah	John & Hannah Howles Long lane	10
		William	William & Ann Dain Cow lane	20
		William	William & Elizabeth Stundanought Inowhill	14
		William	John & Ann Vickers Cow f	1
		John	John & Mary Jones Smithfield	6
		Elizabeth	Samuel & Catharine Hepburn Goslane	Feb 23
1751.	25	John	Joseph & Jane Morgan Charterhouse Lane	March 15
		MaryAnn	Thomas & Mary Skellon St John's Street	4
	26	RachelAnn	James & Suddannah Bunn Seafoal Lane	Feb 21
		William	John & Mary Harris Chick Lane	March 5

DON'T FORGET THIS FACILITY

A gentle reminder, our website carries a number of other societies' journals which can be viewed in the Members' Area. Others will be added when received.

FROM SOCIETIES IN ENGLAND	
Airedale and Wharfedale F.H.S.	Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies
Barnsley F.H.S.	Felixstowe F.H.S.
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Berkshire F.H.S.	Nottinghamshire F.H.S.
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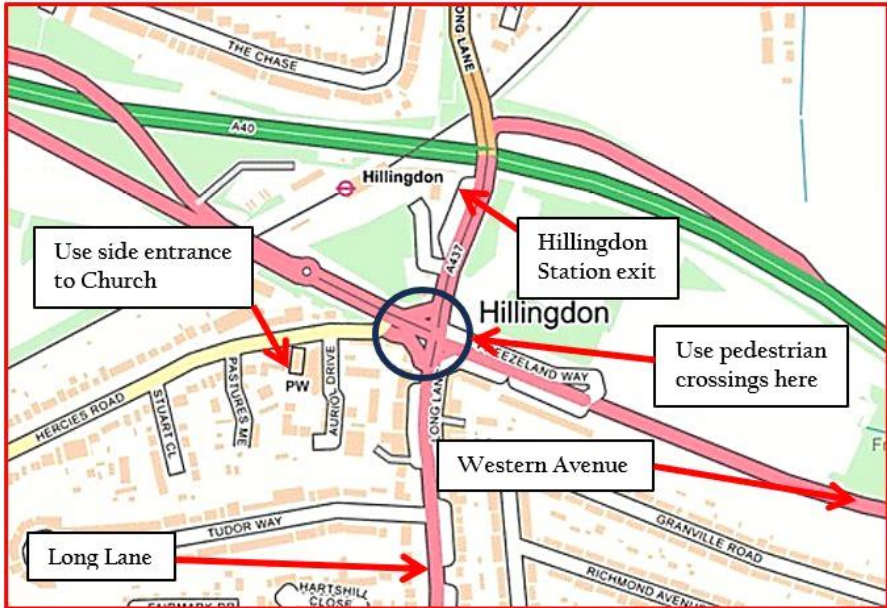
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Telephone: 01753 885602 Email: gillmay20@btinternet.com

or

visit this on-line bookshop: www.parishchest.com

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Hillingdon Park Baptist Church, 25 Hercies Road, Hillingdon, Middlesex. UB10 9LS

By Car: The Church has a very small car park that can be reached via Aurio Drive and there is a public car park on the eastern side of Long Lane access between the Co-op or via the exit slip road off the A40 from London.

By Public Transport: The nearest T.F.L. station is Hillingdon which is within easy walking distance of the Church.

There is also a frequent bus service, the U2, which stops outside the Church

Please note the main entrance to the Church is on the side of the Church and our Research Room is on the 1st floor.

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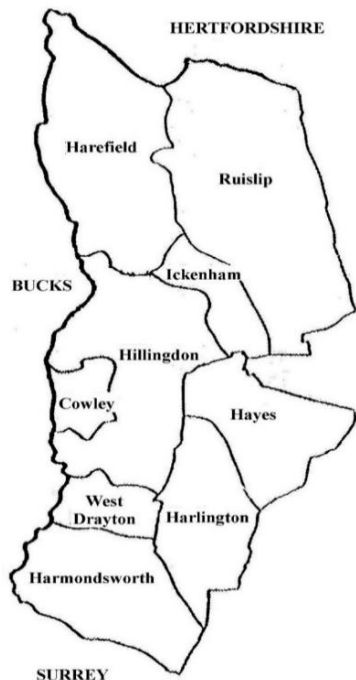
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THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON



The London Borough of Hillingdon is the most Westerly of the Greater London Boroughs. It is bounded by the counties of Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Surrey.

It was formed from nine ancient Middlesex parishes: Cowley, Harefield, Harlington, Harmondsworth, Ickenham, Ruislip and West Drayton.

Hillingdon embraces a mixture of Greater London suburbs: ancient, modern, large and small, each with its own distinctive identity. In the South of the borough lies Heathrow Airport.

Other localities within the borough are: Colham Green, Eastcote, Longford, Northwood, Ruislip Manor, Sipson, South Ruislip, Uxbridge, Yeading and Yiewsley.

Most of the parish registers for the original Anglican parishes and some more recently created are deposited at the London Metropolitan Archives and are available for viewing online on Ancestry. Many of the monumental inscriptions in the churchyards have been transcribed and may be searched on FindMyPast under the 'Middlesex Monumental Inscriptions' dataset.

*If undelivered please return to: Mrs. P. Reynolds,
20 Lilac Place, Yiewsley, West Drayton, Middlesex.
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