

ORIGINS

SUMMER 2024



Included in this Issue

- The Six Bells (Alan Dell Award Winner) •
- Grave Robbery at Great Missenden •
- Where Are You Really From? •

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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*The affairs of the Society are governed by a Constitution,
copies of which are available from the Secretary or Chairman*

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FHS MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES for the year commencing 1st January 2024

UK Individual (A)	£12.00	Overseas (E)	£17.00
UK Family (B)	£15.00	Individual online (W)	£6.00
UK Corporate	£14.00		

Go to <https://www.parishchest.com> and join online
Or email membership@bucksfhs.org.uk for how to pay by standing order

MAGAZINE OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Summer 2024 Vol. 48 No. 2

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From the Editor

Welcome to the summer edition of *Origins*, where you will find a really good selection of articles and hopefully plenty of other resources to help you progress your Buckinghamshire research.

Please continue to submit content – articles, photos, help wanted requests, interesting snippets that might help others, details of local heritage events – all these help to keep this journal relevant.

Alan Dell Memorial Award

Thank you to everyone who entered in 2023. The winning article from Alexa Mason is published on page 73, and details of how to enter this annual competition are on page 71. We look forward to more fantastic articles to consider!

Help the Society

Please take the time to read the update in the Secretary's report (opposite). If you are able to help the Society continue its activities, please get in touch. It will be a real loss to Buckinghamshire family history researchers if new volunteers cannot be found. There are ways in which you can help which do not require a large time commitment or particular expertise.

Rebecca Gurney
editor@bucksfhs.org.uk

Please send your contributions and comments to the Editor, who reserves the right to edit all contributions.

Disclaimer: Buckinghamshire Family History Society does not hold itself responsible for statements made or opinions expressed by contributors to *Origins*. © The Bucks FHS and contributors.

A Note From the Honorary Secretary

**** Appeal for your practical support ****

For too many years now, there has been nobody wishing to be Chairman of Bucks FHS. This has been and continues to be a problem. A further sign of continuing problems is that the Bucks FHS Executive is too small to be healthy and effective for the Society. Now Bucks FHS is in the situation where members carrying out important roles are not in the best of health. Two members are having to stand down this year.

Now is time for you to consider helping Bucks FHS. The minimum requirement is being able to get online via Zoom once a month for a meeting. Then, if you wish, there are opportunities to carry out roles that need a bit of extra time. There is a mechanism that allows the Executive to co-opt people at any time.

Some of the roles are computer based and can be carried out from anywhere in the world: for example, the creation of a new website. Some roles, involving banking, are better carried out from the UK as Bucks FHS is regulated by the UK Charity Commission. At the moment our programme of online talks will continue until November 2024, but somebody willing to book speakers for 2025 is required.

If there are no members willing to come forward to keep Bucks FHS running, the alternative is simple. The process of winding up the Society will start. Debts and liabilities will have to be sorted out and assets either sold or transferred to another charity. Is this the outcome you wish to see?

Tony Sargeant, Honorary Secretary
secretary@bucksfhs.org.uk

Society Notices

Cheque payments

The Society is no longer accepting cheques for search services and new memberships. Those who are already members and renew by cheque will not be affected.

**** POSITIONS VACANT ****

CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PUBLICITY OFFICER

All Society activities are run by volunteers

If you would like more details about these roles, please email:
secretary@bucksfhs.org.uk

Origins Submissions Deadlines

December 2024 (Winter) issue – 2nd October 2024

March 2025 (Spring) issue – 4th January 2025

July 2025 (Summer) issue – 5th May 2025

Submissions received after the deadline must be held over for the next issue

The Buckinghamshire FHS Shop has Moved!

In a planned move, work has been going on behind the scenes to transfer our online shop to **Parish Chest** (<https://www.paritychest.com>), where memberships, and the Society's publications are available to buy securely alongside those of other societies.

To land on the Society's page, point your browser to:

<https://www.paritychest.com/buckinghamshire-fhs-12284.php>

Alternatively, visit the Parish Chest website at:

<https://www.paritychest.com>

and navigate from the Bucks FHS Logo which can be found by scrolling down to the 'Societies' header.

If you have not used Parish Chest before, you will need to register before making a purchase. (Sorry, existing login credentials to the Society's shop cannot be transferred to Parish Chest.)

Please visit Parish Chest soon, and familiarise yourself with the various products the Society has to offer.



Society Meetings

Come and Meet Us!

The Society holds regular meetings for members at Bletchley, Bourne End and online via Zoom. Visitors (non-members) are welcome to attend face-to-face meetings, but there is a charge of £2. Online meetings are available to members only.

Most meetings have a topic which is introduced by a knowledgeable speaker, with the opportunity to ask questions. There is time before and after meetings to chat with other members, and some libraries and research aids may be available for consultation. Meetings are held at the venues below.

Note: all speakers are subject to change at short notice.

SOUTHERN GROUP	ONLINE	NORTHERN GROUP
<p>Community Centre Wakeman Road BOURNE END Bucks SL8 5SX</p> <p>email: southernbranch@bucksfhs.org.uk</p> <p>On the second Tuesday of each month (there may be changes at Christmas and New Year).</p> <p>Doors open 7:30pm Meetings start 7:45pm</p>	<p>Held via Zoom. Members only.</p> <p>Log in to the Society's website for joining details, and information about the talk being given.</p> <p>On the fourth Friday of each month, except in December.</p> <p><i>Start time will change from August – please see the pages which follow.</i></p>	<p>Methodist Church Hall Queensway BLETCHLEY Milton Keynes MK2 2HB</p> <p>email: northernbranch@bucksfhs.org.uk</p> <p>On the first Wednesday of each month (there may be changes at Christmas and New Year).</p> <p>Doors open 7:15pm Meetings start 7:30pm</p>

Tea, coffee and ample parking are available at Bletchley and Bourne End.

Northern Group

**NORTHERN GROUP Methodist Church Hall
Queensway BLETCHLEY Milton Keynes MK2 2HB**

**NORTHERN GROUP : MEMBERS' NIGHT
Wednesday 5th June 2024 7:30pm**



For the theme of this members' night, please see local publicity nearer the date.

**NORTHERN GROUP Methodist Church Hall
Queensway BLETCHLEY Milton Keynes MK2 2HB**

**IAN WALLER : RESEARCH BEFORE PARISH REGISTERS
Wednesday 3rd July 2024 7:30pm**



Pre-1600 research is an entirely different "ball game", having many records that can be useful although the familiar ones had not even commenced. Many of the early records are under used and some family historians consider their research can go no further when parish registers stop. This talk helps to highlight what is available.

**NORTHERN GROUP Methodist Church Hall
Queensway BLETCHLEY Milton Keynes MK2 2HB**

**IAN WALLER : AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS
Wednesday 2nd October 2024 7:30pm**



Most of us will have agricultural labourers in our ancestry. This talk discusses their lives and the wealth of records which enable us to piece those lives together. The fact that they existed means that documentary evidence exists.

East Riding Archives under Creative Commons

Southern Group

SOUTHERN GROUP Community Centre
Wakeman Road BOURNE END SL8 5SX

JULIAN HUNT : A HISTORY OF MARLOW
Tuesday 11th June 2024 7:45pm



The river has always been important to Marlow now-a-days it's use is almost entirely for leisure and sport. However in earlier times, the Thames was a vital commercial artery. Julian Hunt will tell us about the Marlow of wharves and bargemen, and of flash-locks and eel traps.

Marlow riverside by Mark Percy, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons

SOUTHERN GROUP Community Centre
Wakeman Road BOURNE END SL8 5SX

SOUTHERN GROUP MEMBERS : 5-MINUTE TALKS
Tuesday 9th July 2024 7:45pm



In July we'll be inviting members to give a 5-minute talk on the subject of 'In the Newspapers' or about something interesting from their research.

SOUTHERN GROUP Community Centre
Wakeman Road BOURNE END SL8 5SX

TONY SARGEANT : FAMILY HISTORY PROGRAMS
Tuesday 13th August 2024 7:45pm

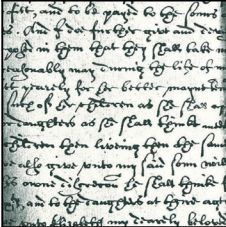


It's been a while now since Tony last gave us a review of the various programs which are available to help us store and display the results of our research, but tonight he'll bring us up to date with software developments you may like to try.

Online Talks

Buckinghamshire Family History Society ONLINE TALK VIA ZOOM FOR MEMBERS ONLY

JOHN TITTERTON : MAKING THE MOST OF A WILL
Friday 28th June 2024 from 20:15 UK / 19:15 UTC

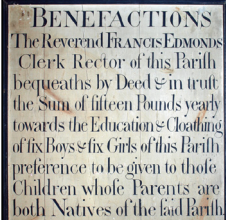


John considers the deceased, the testators, the bequests, other documents and records and shows how combining information will produce surprising results.

Members will find the link required to join the meeting by logging in to the Society's website.

Buckinghamshire Family History Society ONLINE TALK VIA ZOOM FOR MEMBERS ONLY

RICHARD HOLT : CHARITY RECORDS
Friday 26th July 2024 from 20:15 UK / 19:15 UTC



Local charities can be identified using the survey carried out by the Charity Commission in the 1830s, but others will be revealed by parish material.

Members will find the link required to join the meeting by logging in to the Society's website.

Buckinghamshire Family History Society ONLINE TALK VIA ZOOM FOR MEMBERS ONLY

CLARE WILSON : USING FACEBOOK FOR GENEALOGY
Friday 23rd August 2024 from 19:45 UK / 18:45 UTC



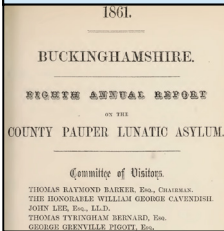
Facebook can be a powerful addition to your research toolkit. It contains many pages dedicated to localities, names, industries, military and more topics as well as a mass of genealogy groups.

Members will find the link required to join the meeting by logging in to the Society's website.

Online Talks

Buckinghamshire Family History Society ONLINE TALK VIA ZOOM FOR MEMBERS ONLY

PHIL ISHERWOOD : ANTIQUARIAN RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET
Friday 27th September 2024 from 19:45 UK / 18:45 UTC

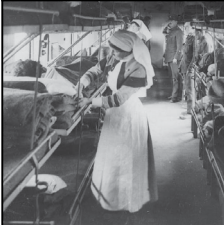


Access thousands of antiquarian (i.e. copyright expired) books that can enrich your research and provide access to information not available elsewhere. This talk describes the four main sites for these resources. Members will find the link required to join the meeting by logging in to the Society's website.

Public Domain Mark 1.0 Universal Wellcome Library via Internet Archive

Buckinghamshire Family History Society ONLINE TALK VIA ZOOM FOR MEMBERS ONLY

IAN WALLER : WARTIME VOLUNTEER MEDICS
Friday 25th October 2024 from 19:45 UK / 18:45 UTC



Ian looks at the work and records left by the various nursing organisations whose service was freely given by thousands of volunteers through both World Wars.

Members will find the link required to join the meeting by logging in to the Society's website.

National Library of Scotland 2957856955, no restrictions, via Wikimedia Commons

Buckinghamshire Family History Society ONLINE TALK VIA ZOOM FOR MEMBERS ONLY

DR SOPHIE KAY : WHAT'S THAT JOB?
Friday 22nd November 2024 from 19:45 UK / UTC



Have you encountered a labbet amongst your ancestors? A lumpman, or a water gilder? Sophie's Buckinghamshire themed talk aims to demystify the unfamiliar historical occupations you may meet.

Members will find the link required to join the meeting by logging in to the Society's website.

FAMILY HISTORY WORKSHOPS

The first Saturday of the month sees the
Society's Family History Workshop at
Buckinghamshire Archives, Walton Street, Aylesbury,
where we aim to help with:

- **RESEARCH:** Advising visitors on how to conduct family history research, and to offer advice and guidance on how to move forward.
- **RESOURCES:** Explaining the resources available to them via our Society as well as those of the Archives and Local Studies Library.
- **SEARCHES:** Conducting searches for Baptisms, Marriages and Burials on our Names Database for those researching their Bucks ancestors.
- **RECORDS:** Enabling those wishing to see original records to book a space in advance with the Archives. Requests can be made for up to 8 documents per session, ordered in advance. A further 3 documents can be ordered throughout the day.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

Come to see us on:

July 6th, August 3rd, September 7th, October 5th
between 9.00am and 4.00pm.



Diary Dates

*** PLEASE NOTE ***

Details are correct at the time of writing (May 2024), but are always subject to change. PLEASE CHECK with the event organisers or on the relevant websites before attending.

Family History & Heritage Events

Thur 13th June 2pm to 4pm	Visit to Nunhead Cemetery, London Non-members £10. Nunhead is one of the 'Magnificent Seven' cemeteries laid out in a ring around London between 1831 and 1842 to address the appalling burial conditions in London's overcrowded churchyards. It is perhaps the least known but most attractive of the Seven. See https://members.sog.org.uk/events/
Sat 15th June 10am to 4pm	Wiltshire Family History Day Community Centre, Emlyn Square, Swindon SN1 5BP Free Berkshire and Oxfordshire FHSs are expected to be exhibiting. See https://www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk/about-us/news
Mon 24th June 2pm to 3.15pm	Visit to Stationers' Hall, London Arranged by The Society of Genealogists £14.40 (£12 for SoG members) Work on the present hall began in 1670 and it was ready for use three years later. 18th century additions include the magnificent stained-glass windows. For further details visit: https://members.sog.org.uk/events

<p>July (all month)</p>	<p>Chilterns Chairs Festival Organised by Wycombe Museum as part of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Partnership A varied programme of events celebrating the unique chairmaking heritage of Wycombe and the local area. For further details visit https://wycombemuseum.org.uk/events/chilterns-chairs-festival</p>
<p>Thur 12th to Sun 29th September</p>	<p>Chilterns Heritage and Culture Festival Arranged by the Chiltern Society A programme of events including heritage tours and talks in the local area. For further details visit: https://chilternsociety.org.uk/heritage-festival/</p>
<p>Sat 5th October 10am to 4pm</p>	<p>The Family History Show Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Rd E, Sunbury-on-Thames TW16 5AQ Featuring talks, experts and exhibitors. Tickets on the day are £12.00 per person, under 16s are free Early bird offers available. For details, see: https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/london/</p>
<p>Sat 26th October 10am to 4pm</p>	<p>Oxfordshire Family History Society Fair Cherwell School North Site, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford OX2 7EE For details of those exhibiting, see: https://www.ofhs.uk/whats-on/fairs/ofhs-family-history-fair-2024-information</p>

20-22 SEPTEMBER 2024

**THE LIDDIARDS
THROUGH TIME &
DISTANCE**

Liddiard Gathering 2024 – Aldbourne Wiltshire

The Liddiard Family History Society would like to invite you to our next Liddiard gathering which will be held from 20th to 22nd September 2024. If you have any Liddiards (of any spelling) in your family, we would love to see you.

Bring out your family photos and anything Liddiard/ Lidiard/ Lyddiard/ Lydiard / Lediard and join us as we follow the family's journey from North Wiltshire to the six continents of the world.

Berkshire & Wiltshire Family History Societies & the Guild of One-Name Studies will also be joining us.

For more information, please see our website.

<https://liddiardfamilyhistorysociety.com/wp/events-2/>

Facebook: <https://fb.me/e/5fc5a8dZ3>

Or email us & RSVP info@liddiardfamilyhistorysociety.com



Just some of the activities planned:

Over 300 feet of family trees will be on display.

Tour of Aldbourne and the Aldbourne cemetery

Presentations

Photos & special items of interest

Meeting Reports

Summaries of the talks delivered by our guest speakers at our Northern and Southern Group meetings. If you regularly attend meetings and can help by writing the occasional report, please do let us know!

NORTHERN GROUP MEETINGS



February 2024

Coaching Inns

Julian Hunt

At the February meeting, Julian Hunt revisited one of his favourite topics – coaching inns. This time he traced the major routes through Buckinghamshire from London to Bath, Oxford, Worcester, Birmingham, Shrewsbury and Manchester, using modern photographs of the surviving coaching inns on these roads. He explained the role of the coach-masters, who had contracts with the innkeepers in each town to provide sufficient horses to pull their coaches to the next stage throughout the day and night.

He also highlighted the role of the coaching inns as meeting places for social and political gatherings, when the landlords might be called upon to provide meals for over 100 guests. He showed a stunning photograph of the ballroom at the Lion Inn at Shrewsbury, which had large sash windows with expensive drapes, two enormous fireplaces and chandeliers hanging from a highly decorated ceiling. He introduced us to the diaries of Lord Torrington, an indefatigable traveller of the late 18th century, whose criticisms of the services offered by the coaching inns was sometimes appreciative but often brutal.



March 2024

The CWGC Archives

Mike Chapman

In March Mike Chapman, a volunteer speaker with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), returned to give us a second talk on the work of the organisation which commemorates the 1.7 million men and women from Britain and the Commonwealth who fell during the First and Second World Wars. In the first talk, which took place last October, Mike had given us an overview of the CWGC's history and its operation today, along with the stories of some of the fallen from the north Buckinghamshire area.

This time the presentation was titled 'Records and Research' and it was a more detailed look at the archives which record casualty information along with records relating to the history of the Commission itself.

While talking about the archives, Mike again brought in the stories of local casualties to illustrate the detailed information that is available from the CWGC's archive, much of it available online from the CWGC's website, www.cwgc.org. This included the story of Gunner Cyril Coleman who is commemorated on the War Memorial at Bow Brickhill, and who served in the First World War with the Canadian Garrison Artillery. Cyril died aged just 21 in April 1917 and the information we saw included the records covering the exhumation of his remains in 1922 from a temporary grave in France for relocation to his final resting place, the details for his headstone and the registration records for his permanent grave in the Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery near Souchez.

It is well worth visiting the CWGC website to see the extensive information available online.



April 2024

A Very Lucky Sailor

Steve Bacon

This talk focused on named participants to outline the story of the Atlantic war in WW2, principally Steve's late father-in-law Richard 'Dick' Jones, the 'Very Lucky Sailor', as well as two U-boat captains and, in passing, Frank Laskier, a merchant seaman who broadcast about life at sea on the radio.

Dick was sunk only once in the war but came very close on another occasion and was also invalided out in the middle of the war, which served to illustrate the role of the 'Merchant Navy Pool' which regularised the service of merchant seamen.

The tactics used in the sea war by both sides were mentioned, as well as the technological advances made by the allies which ultimately led to the negation of the U-boat threat.

Churchill stated that the only thing that truly frightened him in the war was the U-boat campaign, as we were so dependent on imported goods.

This talk sought to celebrate and highlight the brave and vital role played by Britain's merchant service.





May 2024

The Victorian Way of Death

Kevin Varty

Kevin's highly illustrated talk to a small audience kept us interested for well over an hour. He explained that the Victorians were much more willing to talk about death than we are these days, possibly because of the frequency of child death and the short life expectancy averaging 40–50 years.

Until the early part of the 19th century burial had to be in the local churchyard. Most graves were unmarked or, at most, marked with a wooden board, which when decayed left the plot subject to re-use. Early burials were not in coffins and often shallow. This changed after the plague outbreaks when sealed coffins were buried six feet down.

As space became limited in churchyards, some took advantage. An extreme example was the vicar of the Enon chapel who charged a fee to inter bodies below the (wooden) chapel floor. Initially bodies were laid out, then vertically and later on top of each other. The congregation above did not enjoy the smell. Another solution was exhumation of the bones after decay and storage in charnel houses. Kevin showed slides of examples including the famous caves under Paris.

Everybody tried to provide the best funeral within their means. Inevitably this led to competition among the rich to provide something bigger and better than others. Private cemeteries appeared where clients could have whatever they wanted – a vault or magnificent monument. Kevin showed examples of the famous seven London burial grounds and others in continental Europe. Toward the middle of the 19th century civil cemeteries opened for the general population.

Mourning dress was expected, extending to over two years for women and limited to a black armband for men for rather less time. With the emphasis on mourning, clothing, jewellery and other items were sold. Kevin brought

along some examples. Queen Victoria wore black for all her life after the death of Albert. As a result, firms stockpiled black items ready for her eventual death. However, when she died in 1901 she insisted on a white funeral leading to economic problems for the suppliers and a change in public attitudes. Kevin suggested this and the many deaths in the First World War, where burial at home was not possible for so many, resulted in the decline of the elaborate funeral practices in the 20th century.

Alan Dell Award

Firstly, a huge thank you to everyone who took the time to enter the Alan Dell Memorial Award last year. This annual competition for 'best article' submitted for publication in *Origins* commemorates the life of Alan Dell who made such a great contribution to the Society as President, long-serving committee member and award-winning editor of *Origins*.

The judges enjoyed reading the high-quality entries in 2023, and selected Alexa Mason's *The Six Bells* (page 73) as the winner, and Cyril Verey's *The Verey Family* as a worthy runner up.

The Award encourages articles that have Buckinghamshire content, evidence of original research and, of course, tell a good story.

If you would like to try your hand at writing an article, the full guidelines are available on our website at: <https://www.bucksfhs.org.uk/> (Select Bucks FHS, then *Origins* from the menu options).

Not only is it a great chance to showcase your research to other members (who may have mutual interests) but you have a chance to win £50 for first prize, and £25 as runner up.

We look forward to reading your entries for the 2024 Award, which has a deadline of 31st December 2024.

Alan Dell Memorial Award

Best article competition

DEADLINE 31 DECEMBER 2024

First prize £50.00

Second prize £25.00



For entry requirements visit

www.bucksfhs.org.uk

The Six Bells

Alexa Mason

Alan Dell Award Winner 2023

My first Bucks Family History Society Meeting turned out to be an Online Helpdesk run by Tony Sargeant. I really had no clue what I had signed up for and was a little nonplussed when I joined the Zoom meeting to find there were only, perhaps, a dozen people on the call and I couldn't hide. I quickly realised what a great resource this is, however, when someone mentioned the 1832 Beer Act – of which I had never heard – and another member sent me the 1872 list of all the beer houses in Buckinghamshire. It was from this list that I learned the name of the beer house that my great, great, great grandparents, Samuel MASON and Sarah LACK, established in Stoke Poges in, or slightly before, 1832 – the Six Bells.

In 1872, in fact, Samuel Mason was long dead, and the beer house was owned by his youngest child, Samuel Lack Mason, known as Sam. It was leased to Messrs Wethered, a brewery in Great Marlow. Eventually I found all sorts of fascinating documents in a brown manila envelope in the archive in Aylesbury, including Sarah's will, that of her father, Thomas Lack, as well as the leases and eventual sale documents of the property. Before then, however, I turned to the British Newspaper Archive online which not only provided me with some local colour but also several details which helped fill out the family narrative.

In December 1845, according to the *Windsor and Eton Express*, [1] "Samuel Mason, beer-house keeper of Stoke Poges, was charged with having kept his house open for the sale of beer" on a Sunday morning "during the time of divine service". This was obviously a serious misdemeanour. Through the window, Constable William BROCK had spied three people in the tap room of the Six Bells at 11:15 that Sunday morning. When he knocked on the door, it was opened immediately, and a stranger

abruptly left. “On going in he saw a jug and two glasses on the table, one glass was half full of beer.” In court, Samuel defended himself robustly. He explained that he had one son at home recuperating from an injury sustained in Paris while in the service of a Mr Grenfell, and another son who had come down from London to visit him. The second son had met a stranger on the train who accompanied him to Stoke Poges on the way to Beaconsfield and it was he who had left just as Constable Brock arrived. Samuel swore that he had not sold any beer. The Court seemed inclined to believe him but nonetheless fined him one shilling plus expenses of 19s 6d. Samuel “considered the indictment was not proved — he had not opened his house for the sale of beer. He felt obliged to the magistrates for their leniency, but at the same time he was not guilty of any offence.”

Samuel’s health, however, was failing. Five months later, after decades of hard, physical work, he died of “dropsy” [2] on 10 May 1845, not yet 50 years old.

Remarkably, we know what happened on the day Samuel died. That day, according to the *Bucks Herald* [3], a well-dressed young man of about 15 or 16 went into the Six Bells, “the house of Mrs Mason, whose husband was then lying dead upstairs (having expired only a few hours previously) and asked her if she could give him £2 10s in gold for so much in silver, for Mr Stone, the schoolmaster of Stoke.” Sarah agreed to do so but became suspicious when the young man retreated to a dark corner to pull out his money. She took the coins to the window to count them and noticed they looked rather black. Sensing that Sarah was a little suspicious, the young man asked for the money back and said that the schoolteacher himself would come by later for change. Sarah returned the coins to the young man but sent a little boy – perhaps her son Sam who would have been 8 or so – to follow him. On learning from the boy that the young man had walked right past the teacher’s house, Sarah sent for Constable HEARNE who tracked the lad to a public house in Farnham Royal. There the constable found Thomas RUSSELL with “twenty-one bad half-crowns in one pocket, and twenty bad shillings in another, and in another twenty shillings in good silver.” That was £3 12s 6d in counterfeit and £1 in good coins. Thomas Russell was arrested and appeared before the magistrate in Eton before being sent up to London to appear in court.

In subsequent news articles I found that the young Thomas Russell, a clerk, had fallen in with a gang of thieves – known as the “St Giles’s Gang of Swindlers” in one newspaper – and had helped them trick several wholesalers out of expensive bolts of silk satin in addition to trying to pass off – or, in 19th-century parlance, to utter – the counterfeit money at the Six Bells. Indeed, I fell down a Dickensian rabbit hole following their numerous court appearances which even included mention of an Irish girl “who goes by the name of Big Moll” and a “Jew” who refused to buy the stolen goods. Thomas Russell was swift to identify and turn on the gang members and was remanded in custody between hearings for his own safety. At the June 1845 trial of the gang, Russell testified against William SIMPSON, alias “Butcher,” Timothy LONG and Barnett BARNETT. Simpson and Long were found guilty of fraudulently stealing the valuable silk and sentenced to seven years’ transportation. Barnett was acquitted of having received the fabric while knowing it to be stolen. I can’t confirm what happened to Thomas Russell but one of the papers noted that “Without the lad Russell’s evidence the case against the prisoners could not be sustained. In consequence of his having been the means of causing the apprehension of Long, Simpson and the others, it is expected that great leniency will be exercised towards him on the part of the Crown ...”.

On 15 May 1845, just one day after appearing in Eton magistrate’s court to testify against Thomas Russell, Sarah, still only 46, buried her husband Samuel in the beautiful graveyard at St Giles, Stoke Poges, immortalised by Thomas Gray in his ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’. Samuel lies in the oldest part of the graveyard, in a tranquil spot close to the church:

“There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high.”

The Six Bells continued as a public house well into the middle of the 20th century. Sam Mason sold it to his brother George who sold it to Wethered & Sons in 1879. Wethereds sold it to Eton RDC, a housing association, in August 1967 under a compulsory purchase order to develop that part of Bells Hill. The Six Bells, the Sefton Arms, and all the other shops and buildings in the vicinity were knocked down and the land used for new houses, flats, shops, garages and a branch library. A new public house

calling itself the Six Bells then opened in a particularly ugly modern building a little further up the hill. That too has been demolished.

References

1. *Windsor and Eton Express*, Saturday, 4 January 1845
2. Dropsy – now known as edema (or oedema) – an abnormal accumulation of fluid beneath the skin or in one or more of the body's cavities, was caused by congestive heart failure, liver failure, kidney failure or even malnutrition, though heart failure seems to have been the most common cause.
3. *Bucks Herald*, Saturday, 17 May 1845

Alexa Mason

A Very Grand Funeral, 1571

12th June 1571 – Sir Thomas PACKINGTON, who died on the 2nd, was buried in Aylesbury Church this day; he was the son of Robert who was assassinated in London in 1537, and grandson of Lord Chief Justice BALDWYN. He married Dorothy KITSON, of Hawridge, by whom he left 8 children. The funeral was a very grand one, the like of which was never before seen at Aylesbury. “There were trumpeters and heralds, and led horses all caparisoned, and the officers of the College of Arms attended [...] The mourners were John PACKINGTON, Esq., son and heir; Sir W. CORDELL, Knight, Master of the Rolls ; Sir John SPENCER, Knight; John BURLACY, Esq., and Richard COOPER, Esq., and the ceremony was witnessed by a great concourse of people.”

Source: *Local Occurrences* by Robert Gibbs (1878)

Footnote: Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service hold the PAKINGTON family, property and manorial records spanning the 13th to 18th centuries. These very extensive archives cover the counties of Worcestershire, Buckinghamshire and Pembrokeshire, and are now available on microfilm. [Reference: 705:349 BA12946]

(Howard Lambert)

Grave Robbery at Great Missenden

Gwyneth Wilkie

Grave robbing is mostly associated with large cities with burgeoning medical schools, such as Edinburgh and London. It is not what you might expect to find when combing the Buckinghamshire Archives catalogue for anything to do with medical practitioners in Amersham. The initial hit was the description 'of the medical profession' applied to Henry Okes BRADFORD, assistant to Mr 'RAMSEY' [RUMSEY], surgeon of Amersham, who was called as a witness in a trial at the Epiphany Quarter Sessions in 1821.

The expanded version of the catalogue entry showed that three men had been put on trial for 'unlawfully entering churchyard and digging up and taking away dead body of John Aries'. So this was clearly a case of body-snatching but there was nothing about it in the British Newspaper Archive, except for one brief mention of the men's names and that they were charged with 'stealing dead bodies'.

The catalogue entry read as follows:

'R. v Thomas King, Robert Clark, Thomas Robinson, Great Missenden.

On 6th December 1820, unlawfully entering churchyard and digging up and taking away dead body of John Aries.

Witnesses: Charles Cortis, Amersham, bailiff to Mr. Drake, Shardeloes, James Rogers, butcher, Amersham, Henry Okes Bradford, "of medical profession", assistant to Mr. Ramsey, surgeon of Amersham, Samuel Clark, baker, Gt. Missenden, John Aries, keeper to Earl Bridgewater, father of dead child, Daniel Belch, silk weaver at Amersham, John Salter, labourer in Squire Drake's garden, lives at Amersham.

Guilty – Each fined £10. and imprisoned for 12 months, and until fine is paid.'

This is a synopsis of the Justices Case Notes at Q/JC/4/8, which briefly summarised the proceedings and seems to be the only account available of this trial.

At 8am on 6 December 1820 Charles CORTIS, the bailiff at Shardeloes, had seen the three men with a horse and cart and thought they looked suspicious. An hour later a young man reported to him that he had seen a package containing a dead body hidden in some leaves. This appears to have been John SALTER, a labourer in Squire Drake's garden at Shardeloes. Cortis decided to pursue them, taking with him James ROGERS, a butcher. They overtook the cart between Chalfont St Giles and Chalfont St Peter and stopped them from going further. The men were handcuffed and placed in the [Parish] Constable's gig.

On arrival at Amersham the package found in the back of the cart was taken to the Vestry Room and opened. Henry Okes BRADFORD, who was then assistant to Mr RUMSEY, surgeon of Amersham, was sent for by the Reverend W JONES and when called as a witness stated that the body had been rolled into as little a space as possible. The boy had probably been dead for 7 or 8 days and could have been aged about 7.

The body was identified by his father John ARIES, keeper to Earl Bridgewater. The child was aged 4 and had a speck on his lip. William CHILD, a baker from Great Missenden who had known the boy, confirmed his identity. He had died on 25 November 1820 and been buried 4 days later.

The three men were then taken to Aylesbury. The Calendar of Prisoners for the Epiphany Quarter Sessions shows that they were 'Committed 6th December 1820 by the Revd Wm Jones charged upon the Oaths of Charles Cortis & others on a strong Suspicion of having on the Night of the 5th or Morning of the 6th of Decr instant dug up & carried away the dead Bodies of a certain Woman & also of a certain Male Infant of the Age of about 7 Years whose names are at present unknown.'

This is the only indication that there was a second body. If there was, perhaps she could not be identified, as she was not mentioned in the charge when the case came up for trial in January 1821.

Cortis testified that one of the prisoners had in his pocket a package containing several turnscrews, a gimlet and a packing needle. The fresh dirt on the screwdriver, which was white and chalky, looked the same as that on the prisoner's breeches, which were still wet.

The prisoners claimed not to know each other. Thomas KING said he was not with the others but was on his way to Brentford. Robert CLARK stated that he had come across ROBINSON driving the cart and had asked him if he could throw his frock into the cart. He was a navigator [a labourer excavating canals] and had not previously met Robinson. Robinson tried to exonerate the other two, declaring that they were not involved and had not been present. The tools had been given to him by 'the parties concerned'.

Their stories were challenged by the statement given by Daniel BELCH, a silk weaver of Amersham. He deposed that he had seen the three men together in the Chequers pub, Amersham, the afternoon before they were apprehended. They had left between 3 and 4 o'clock, having spent an hour and a half there drinking from a single pot.

The magistrates had heard enough to decide that all three were guilty. They were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment plus a fine of £10, to be paid before they were released.

THE BACKGROUND

The Buckinghamshire Burial Index contained details of a 4-year-old child, John AYRIS, having been buried on 29 November 1820 at Great Missenden. The body-snatchers would presumably have wanted to disinter him as soon after burial as possible. The distribution of witnesses is surprising, as only one came from Great Missenden. It seemed likely that the cadaver would have been intended to be sold in London, where fresh corpses were in great demand for students in all the hospital and private medical schools of the capital.

By this date many private medical schools had been set up. Medicine towards the end of the 18th century was looked upon as a good career but by the 1820s there appeared to be an excess of supply over demand and it was generally held that the profession had become overcrowded. This led

to fierce competition for the openings available. At the same time scientific advances were being made and the importance of a sound knowledge of anatomy was more widely acknowledged. This necessitated an adequate supply of dead bodies. The optimum ratio of cadavers to students was thought to be 3:1. Two bodies were used to learn anatomy and the third to practise operations. Meanwhile the number of students in London alone was calculated to have increased from around 300 in 1798 to approximately 1,000 by 1828. For several centuries the traditional source of supply had been the donation of the bodies of executed criminals to official entities such as the Company of Barber Surgeons, which had never been adequate.

This meant that there was a ready market for those willing to supply fresh cadavers, who became known, amongst other labels, as resurrectionists. It was a seasonal trade, best carried out in cold weather as that slowed putrefaction. The extent to which corpses were treated as merchandise is revealed in evidence given to the 1828 Select Committee on Anatomy. Prices had ranged between 2 and 20 guineas but were settling at around 8 guineas. In the 1790s the notorious Lambeth gang had been offering children's corpses at 6 shillings for the first foot [in length] plus ninepence for every extra inch.

Figures quoted in Appendix C of the Poor Law Commissioners' First Annual Report (pp 354–5) show agricultural labourers in Bucks in the 1830s earning 7 or 8 shillings a week, supplemented by some income from other family members when possible. Seven shillings was one-third of a guinea, so it is easy to see how tempting the crime might be, especially in hard weather, when agricultural wages were down while outgoings for food, fuel and clothing went up.

The eventual passing of the Anatomy Act in 1832 aimed to bring an end to a repugnant trade while still assuring an adequate supply of cadavers for medical training. In future these could be supplied from workhouses and hospitals when no relatives came forward to claim the body.

THE OFFENCE

The charge upon which they had been arrested was 'unlawfully entering churchyard and digging up and taking away dead body of John Aries'.

When body-snatchers took away a shroud or parts of a coffin, this constituted theft, which was a felony and thus subject to severe penalties.

The legal precedent for the offence of disinterment, *Rex versus Lynn*, had been heard in 1788 before the King's Bench. It was decided then that the carrying away of a body from a churchyard, even though for the purpose of dissection, constituted a misdemeanour as it was an offence contra bonos mores and common decency. The law had not changed since. Since a body could not be defined as anyone's property, unlawful disinterment could not be classified as theft and typically was punished by a fine or six months' imprisonment. Where the body-snatchers had links with a particular medical school or surgeon, the fines might be paid for them, or other support given.

Other sentences handed down around this time highlight the difference in outcomes for those charged with misdemeanour or felony. In December 1820 in Norfolk a man was transported for 7 years for stealing 19 geese and 8 ducks and stealing some pork and a cheese resulted in 2 years' imprisonment – double the time to be served by the three men, which was already twice the average.

This was an offence which could cause enormous distress to relatives and some adopted defensive measures such as mort-safes or even booby-trapped graves to frustrate graverobbers. This may help to account for body-snatchers ranging further afield where people were likely to be less vigilant.

Deep-seated fears, part pagan, part Christian, made people view the dismemberment of bodies with horror. If a body could not be reconstituted, how could the reunion of body and soul at the Last Judgement take place?

THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

The three men arrested

Disappointingly, it has been impossible to get further information about the prisoners. They all have fairly common names and without extra detail such as their age it is impossible to get them to stand out from the crowd. It looks as though Thomas Robinson, who owned or had the use of the cart, was a

key figure. Robert Clark, the navigator, may have been recruited because of his specialised skill. Canal (and later railway) navvies were renowned for their prowess in shifting large amounts of earth at speed. Thomas King may or may not have had some connection with Brentford.

Charles Cortis, bailiff at Shardeloes

Charles Cortis appeared in the 1841 census aged 61, so was born in about 1780. He was living at Coldmoreham House which is where the Shardeloes estate office was to be found and was clearly a figure of authority to whom anything causing concern might be referred. The 1851 census adds that he was born in Ashby, Lincolnshire. His retirement followed soon after and on 5th October both the *Bucks Herald* (p 5) and the *Bucks Advertiser* (p 6) carried accounts of the dinner given in his honour and the speeches made. He died in 1853. He and his wife Dinah, who died in 1858, were both buried at St Mary's, Amersham.

James Rogers

James Rogers is likely to have been the Parish Constable as he is listed immediately after Charles Cortis. Cortis took Rogers with him in pursuit and it was the parish constable's gig which was used to bring the three men back to Amersham. The 1830 Pigot's Directory lists a James Rogers, butcher, in the High Street while the tithe map shows him as owner and occupier of plot 362, a house, yard and garden between Coldmoreham House and the Market Hall, not far from where the museum is now.

In the days before the County police forces were formed, the job of parish constable was undertaken for a year at a time. It was an unpopular post partly because of the impact on earnings of having to spend a lot of time on parish business. If churchwardens accounts or vestry minutes survived from this period it should have been possible to see who held this post.

John Aries/Aris/Ayris (father)

Has not been found in the 1841 census. It seems likely that he and his wife Elizabeth had two more children who were baptised at Great Missenden in 1822 and 1824. In 1824 he is described merely as 'servant' but the 1822 entry records him as a gamekeeper residing at Water End, which was in

Hertfordshire. The Earl of Bridgwater seems to have held numerous parcels of land locally, including in West Wycombe, Ivinghoe and Wendover, and to have had a financial interest in building the canal connecting Aylesbury and Wendover with the Grand Junction Canal. Gamekeepers moved around quite frequently, so Aries may have been transferred to another estate if he stayed with the same employer.

William Child, baker of Great Missenden

The 1847 Pigot's Directory does not list him among the 9 bakers and flour dealers of Great Missenden, although a Benjamin Child, clockmaker, does appear.

Reverend William Jones

It was on his sworn oath that the three men were committed to prison. It is likely that he was the Reverend William Jones who was lord of the manor of Chalfont St Giles and resided at The Stone. If so he died in 1837. He may have had jurisdiction over the place where the arrest was made and certainly would have been a person of authority in the neighbourhood.

John Salter

Salter is a surname with a long history in Amersham but even so no further information has come to light about him.

Daniel Belch

He was a local man and a silk weaver. Amersham had a silk mill on a site now underneath Tesco's car park in the old town and not far upstream from the Chequers pub. He cannot be found in the 1841 census in which 7 other silk weavers appear.

Henry Okes Bradford

He successfully completed his apprenticeship and went on to become a member of the Royal College of Surgeons on 4 September 1829. In 1832 he published a book co-authored with his late father Robert Bradford and dedicated to HRH the Duchess of Kent, *The Mother's Medical Guide Containing a Description of the Diseases Incident to Children with the*

Mode of Treatment, as far as can be Pursued with Safety, Independently of a Professional Attendant. This can be found in Google Books.

The Sun Fire Insurance records show that he was insuring premises in Tottenham Court Road, London, during the 1830s. He married Frances KNIGHT, only daughter of the late Captain John Knight, on 10 January 1838 at St Pancras but from 1841 seems to have been producing children with Angelina Davenport WHY, whom he married on 27 April 1853 at Holborn St Andrew. The register recorded him as a widower. The 1841 census showed him as a surgeon living on his own in the St Pancras area. In 1851 and 1861 he can be found with Angelina and their children, still shown as a surgeon but not practising. He died aged 71 in 1874 in Birmingham after appearing in the final census there as a pawnbroker.

Although at the time this must have been a shocking incident, very little information about it is available. If this article can bring forth from family or local historians any further details about the people concerned it will have done its job.

Gwyneth Wilkie

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Resurrection Men in Buckinghamshire

A midnight attempt has been made at a country churchyard in Buckinghamshire to disinter the coffin containing the remains of William Penn, founder of the colony of Pennsylvania, in America, and who died at Ruscombe, in Berkshire, in 1718.

The resurrection men were disturbed, and decamped. It is suspected that their intention was to convey the remains to Pennsylvania, and that they were employed by some enthusiasts there.

One man has been arrested.

The Mercury (Hobart) 10th Oct 1898

Family History Federation

The Federation, on its associated websites, carries a wide range of family history publications, CDs and other resources from its members – including Bucks FHS.

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Run by the Family History Federation, these are a great one-stop shop for all your family history needs!

Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes

Tony Sargeant

Southern Buckinghamshire is dominated by the Chiltern Hills, an area of high ground running from Luton to the Goring Gap near Reading. The landscape is ably described in the book *The Chilterns* by L.W. Hepple & A.M. Doggett in 1992 and there are many other books looking at different aspects of life in the area, such as *Hilltop Villages of the Chilterns* by David & Joan Hay.

Due to the distinctive Chiltern landscape, Buckinghamshire was managed as two units.

- Ashendon, Cottesloe and Newport Hundreds mainly in the Vale of Aylesbury can be described as typical South Midland farming country with flat fields suitable for the plough. Typical of this area is the three field system around a nucleus village.
- The Aylesbury, Burnham, Desborough and Stoke hundreds were more wooded and undulating, making the area difficult to plough. Being situated on chalk, there are villages dependent on ponds and wells.

Wages set and recorded in the Quarter Sessions were slightly higher in the Chilterns, as was the cost of wagon transport.

A local project

In 2004 the Chiltern Conservation Board came into existence to manage the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and it continues to ensure that landscape is managed and enjoyed for years to come.

CHILTERN

LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP



In 2019 a heritage project called Woodlanders' Lives and Landscapes started as part of the larger Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Woodlanders project, led by Helena Chance and Lesley Hoskins from Buckinghamshire New University,

enlisted a team of volunteers who looked at the history of working and living in Chiltern villages to the north of High Wycombe, with a particular focus on women's work: lacemaking, straw plaiting, chair caning and tambour beading. Original research was undertaken with exhibitions held, and books and blogs published. Some of the results of the project work appear online at:

<https://www.chilterns.org.uk/chalkcherrieschairs/category/woodlanders-lives-and-landscapes/>

Project data on the Bucks FHS website

Buckinghamshire FHS has the opportunity to host some of the results of the volunteers' research, in particular village descriptions and statistics about the places with the underlying census details. It was a tremendous undertaking by all those involved. This valuable information is freely downloadable at:

<https://www.bucksfhs.org.uk/index.php/census-data-for-selected-chiltern-villages>



Where Are You Really From?

Dawn Adams

No, I'm not revisiting a recent event at court, but asking a question of my ancestors. How do I know where I was born? I have a birth certificate, showing a hospital near where I was raised, where babies were registered on site; I have the family stories of my parents and grandparents. But what of the days before certification, pre-1837?

Information is contained in censuses, baptismal records, family Bibles, memoirs – but all dependent on what the informant believed to be accurate, and what the hearer wrote down.

The DORRELL Family

In the mid 1820s, John and Mary DORRELL took their family from Chalfont St Giles (or thereabouts) in Buckinghamshire to the East End of London. John was a carpenter. At that point their family consisted of John William, aged about 10; Mary, aged about 6; and Thomas, aged about 2. It can be deduced that Margaret was born en route (see below); four further children were born in Stepney.

But that is not the story that any one census tells, as shown in the table of baptisms and stated birthplaces (overleaf).

For Thomas and Margaret, who were still at home, the 1841 census was completed by their parents. Their father, John, died in 1848: I cannot find Mary, his wife, thereafter. By 1851, all the Buckinghamshire-born children were married. Thomas, now a carpenter himself, was actually providing a home for two of his younger siblings (of the other two Stepney-born, one died young and the other had married).

	Baptism	1841 census	1851 census	1861 census	1871 census	1881 census
John William	1817 Chalfont St Peter	Aged '25' Not Middlesex	Aged 32, Gold Hill, Bucks	Aged 45, Bucks, NK	Aged 55, High Wycombe	N/A, deceased
Mary	1821 Chalfont St Giles	Not found	Aged 32, Hackney	Aged 41, Stepney	Widow, aged 52, Bucks	Widow, aged 61, Bucks
Thomas	Not found	Aged '20' Not Middlesex	Aged 31, Bucks	Aged 40, Stepney	Aged 53, Stepney	Aged 58, St Peter's, Bucks
Margaret	1834 Stepney (coincident with younger sister, Susanna)	Aged '15' Not Middlesex	Aged 26, Stepney	Aged 35, Stepney	Aged 47, Uxbridge	N/A, deceased

So the answers given to the 'birthplace' question on the census depended on who was answering.

John William was old enough to have had a memory of Buckinghamshire, and of the journey, and of what his parents told him (hence, 'Gold Hill', not even, in fact, a hamlet).

Mary and Margaret were dependent on what their husbands (heads of household) said, who had known them only in Stepney. Perhaps later the women were able to give their own input, and Margaret remembered being told about Uxbridge, which is on the canal route into London (although as far as I can find, she was not baptised there). Interestingly, only in the 1871 census is Margaret's husband's birthplace incorrect, given as Stepney instead of Birmingham.

For Thomas, my great-great-grandfather, we cannot know why 'Stepney' appeared in 1861 and 1871, but he clearly knew where he really came from.

Dawn Adams

Riot!

Tony Sargeant

Datchet

Sometime in early 1813, in the genteel village of Datchet there was a riot. This was recorded in the Quarter Sessions when the case came before the court at the High Summer Quarter Session that year.

There were three charges: Assault on Mary BOURY, Riot, and Conspiracy to Riot.

Here we must look at a newspaper, as the Session Order Books only show the orders and the outcomes of the event. In the High Summer Session all that happened was the issuing of sureties to ensure all appeared at the Michaelmas Session on 7th October that year. The defendants of the Conspiracy charge had to find sureties of £40 each and the other charges carried a surety of £20 each.

On the 7th October 1813 Joseph POND, Robert BUTLER, William BOWSER, William GOULD, Richard LEWIS, Richard WINTER, John NORRIS, Henry SIMSON, John DAVIS were found guilty, fined six pence each and six months in Aylesbury Goal; then on leaving had to give a £50 surety and give an oath of good behaviour.

The other conspirators, John WESTON, John STYLES, John HAWTHORN, Thomas HILL, Edward ALLEN, Robert WHITE, James HILL, George HILL, William SWANKY and John WHITTON were found not guilty. All the defendants named above were found not guilty of the other two charges of riot and assault.

What happened?

The *Morning Chronicle* reported on the 13th October 1813:

The conspiracy was against the Rev James Phillips, the Curate of Datchet, consisted of the defendants assembling outside his house,

both by day and night, making hideous yells and noises, interrupting him in the performance of his duty, and also using towards him most offensive language in consequence (as it has been alleged) for procuring his Vicar to dismiss the Parish Clerk from his office, but which Clerk, before he was restored to his situation, confessed himself to have been guilty of the most gross misconduct.

To cut a long rambling story short, the prosecutor, Rev James Phillips curate of Datchet, forgave all the defendants after the conspiracy to riot part of the charge was successful. He also asked the chairman of the Quarter Session, the Marquis of Buckingham, to prefer a light sentence.

Colnbrook

Four years later, in 1817, there was a riot in Colnbrook. There were other charges for this as shown by the prosecutions and fines handed out at the Stoke Hundred Petty Session by William Hexter Esq who was on the bench.

These were:

Langley Marish

John DULEY the younger

By William Hexter Esq. for unlawfully casting and firing certain fireworks (to wit) squibs into the public street or Highway

Langley Marish

William DULEY

By the same Magistrate for the like offence

Langley Marish

William Fellows

By the same Magistrate for the like offence

Langley Marish

John FULKES

By the same Magistrate for the like offence

Langley Marish

William BARRETT

By the same Magistrate for the like offence

The more serious indictment could not be tried by a JP at the quarter sessions, so they were bailed to appear at Aylesbury Quarter Sessions.

William Duley, John Duley and John Duley Snr were all charged with an assault on William MOLE, Horton's Constable.

John Duley Senior was fined £10 and was placed in Aylesbury Goal until it was paid.

Riot

So what can be said about these two riots in southern Buckinghamshire? It appears that "Riot" was employed as a catch-all indictment used to make any incident much more serious. Riot is really a breaking down of the control of the population, or means that the peace has been broken. In both cases the minor officials, a curate and a constable, were not able to apply control. Once the line has been crossed the only remedy is the court system. Firstly the Petty Session of the Hundred, then the Quarter Session for the County or the Assize Court for the most serious crimes.

Tony Sargeant

Where's That Place?

Historic England Photo Archive

Can you help Historic England identify mystery images in their archive?

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/historicenglandarchive>

Diamond Princesses

John Gurney

The Koh-i-Noor, which is Persian for 'Mountain of Light', is one of the largest and most valuable cut diamonds in the world and belongs to the crown jewels of the United Kingdom set into the front of the crown of the Queen Mother.

There are multiple conflicting legends of the origin of the diamond but it almost certainly was sifted from the sand of India's alluvial diamond mines thousands of years ago. The first verifiable record of the diamond was in the 1740s when it was looted from Delhi during an invasion of Northern India by Persian ruler Nader Shah. It then changed hands between various empires and rulers in South and West Asia before the founder of the Sikh Empire Ranjit Singh took possession of it in 1813 in Lahore. After his death in 1839 it changed hands again several times during a violent four-year period but was eventually gifted to the newly installed five-year-old Maharaja Duleep Singh in 1843.



The Singh sisters: Sophia, Bamba and Catherine (1894)

After the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1849, the Treaty of Lahore ceded the Maharaja's assets elsewhere including the diamond, which was surrendered as a gift to Queen Victoria by 11-year-old Duleep Singh. It was formally presented to Queen Victoria on 3rd July 1850 at Buckingham Palace by the Deputy Chairman of the East India Company. Duleep was exiled to the UK in 1854 aged 11 and was immediately befriended by Queen Victoria. He went on to father nine children, all of which Victoria was very fond of and in particular three of his Princess

daughters, Bamba Sofia Jindan Duleep Singh born 1869, Catherine Hilda Duleep Singh born 1871 and Sophia Alexandra Duleep Singh born 1876 who was Victoria's goddaughter. Victoria advised them how to dress and conduct themselves in public and encouraged them to become socialites with strong royal connections.

Despite having this royal background, Catherine and Sophia both became leading activists in the Women's Suffragette movements and were involved in the Black Friday protest march in 1910 with Emmeline Pankhurst. Sophia led a very busy life breeding championship dogs and pursuing her interests in photography and cycling. After living at several different venues around Britain over the years, the princesses purchased a six-bedroom house in Hammersley Lane, High Wycombe, in the 1930s, then known as Colehatch House. The princesses were very popular in the nearby Tylers Green village and enjoyed being involved with the community and local activities.



Colehatch House, Hammersley Lane in 1920

(SWOP RHW51895)

This popularity was later tested when the sisters decided to house a number of German Jews who had escaped as refugees. The villagers were not very happy to learn that at least a dozen Germans were residing at Colehatch House at the start of World War II and their feelings were made public in letters of complaint to the *Bucks Herald*. The problem was partially resolved when most of the refugees were interned on the Isle of Man.

When Catherine Hilda died in 1942 at Colehatch House aged 71, Sophia renamed the house to its present name of Hilden Hall as a tribute to her sister's middle name. Sophia passed away at Rathenrae, now Folly Meadow, nearby on the opposite side of the lane in 1948 aged 72. When Bamba passed away in 1957 in Pakistan aged 87 she had been the last surviving member of the family that had ruled the Sikh Empire and owned the Koh-i-Noor diamond.

The diamond has a very controversial and turbulent history involving many deaths of the past owners, giving rise to the theory that male owners were cursed. The controversy continues today and the governments of India, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan have all claimed ownership of the jewel and have been demanding its return since 1947. For these reasons Camilla declined to wear it at her coronation in May 2023 and it continues to be displayed in the jewel house at the Tower of London where we are assured it will remain despite the continuing ownership claims.

John Gurney

The death is announced of Mrs. JOHNSTON, relict of Commander Robert Johnston, R.N. aged eighty-five years. The venerable lady was a daughter of J. WELLER, of Amersham, Bucks, who, in 1826, came to the colony with the deceased and his two sons. Mrs. Johnston's husband was a son of Colonel Johnston, who deposed Governor Bligh, and it is interesting that she, with a sister of the late Sir William M'Leay, was one of the last ladies in the colony to receive a grant of land upon her marriage. For many years Mrs. Johnston had lived in retirement, though previously she was a leader of society in Sydney.

Queensland Times, 27th Jun 1896

Bathing Huts in Brighton around 1800

Lynette Chappin

Why should bathing huts in Brighton be of interest to Buckinghamshire? Maybe it is worth reading on – family history research has some unexpected links.

I happened to be reading some information about bathing machines. It caught my interest and I continued to read on. The popularity of sea bathing is usually credited to Dr Richard Russell who moved his practice from Lewes to Brighton.

One famous person visiting Brighton was the Prince of Wales, later Prince Regent, (1762–1830). He started visiting Brighton in 1782. He had been advised by his physician that salt water and fresh air would be beneficial for his gout. He enjoyed an extravagant lifestyle and he had Brighton Pavilion built. Due to his visits the town grew quickly and became a fashionable resort.

Many of us will know about bathing machines in Brighton and their attendants. The Prince Regent was usually assisted by John ‘Old Smoaker’ Miles who was a local celebrity bathing man. Prince Regent had a mistress called Mrs Maria Fitzherbert who also took the sea waters. She was dubbed ‘Mrs Prince’ by Mrs Martha Gunn who assisted her from the bathing machine.

Suddenly there was an amazing moment. I quickly checked the CHAPPIN family tree. Could there be a link to Mrs Martha Gunn? Yes! Yes! Yes! Sarah Matilda GUNN from Brighton married Arthur CHAPPIN on 26th December 1908 at St Mary’s Church, Pitstone, Buckinghamshire. Martha (née KILLICK) and Stephen GUNN were the great, great grandparents of Sarah Matilda Gunn. I later found out that John ‘Old Smoaker’ Miles had married Abigail Gunn (sister of Stephen Gunn) in 1750.



Arthur John Chappin's wedding (1944).

The groom was a sergeant in the army due to the Second World War.

The picture is a family photograph.

Martha Gunn (née Killick)

I already had Martha Gunn (1726–1815) and her ancestors in the Chappin family tree. What an amazing chance to find such a famous person.

Martha was the daughter of Friend KILLICK and Ann BRIDGER. Yes, her father's Christian name was Friend. It appears to have originated as the maiden surname of Martha's paternal grandmother. John KILLICK married Mary FRIEND at St Nicholas Church, Brighton on 21st June 1692.

Martha Killick was christened at St Nicholas Church, Brighton on 19th September 1731. She married Stephen Gunn (of the well known local fishing family) at the same church on 9 March 1758. They lived with their children at 36 East Street, Brighton. Mrs Martha Gunn is buried at St Nicholas Churchyard, with her husband Stephen.

Martha Gunn dipped several members of the Royal Family and was a favourite of the Prince of Wales (later George IV). A great tribute to her celebrity status was the fact that Toby Jugs were made depicting her. Female characters were rarely featured as Toby Jugs.

There is more information featuring Mrs Martha Gunn on the internet.

Sarah Matilda Chappin (née Gunn)

Sarah Matilda Gunn was born at home, 19 King's Road, Brighton, on 31st October 1881 to Sarah and Nathaniel Pope Gunn (fishmonger). She married Arthur Chappin at St Mary's Church, Pitstone, Buckinghamshire.

The couple lived for many years in Stockwell, London. Their only child Arthur John Chappin was born in Lewisham in 1917. Sarah died 30th June 1944 in Wendover, Buckinghamshire and is buried at St Mary's churchyard, Wendover (plot D 162).

Her son, Arthur John Chappin, married in January 1944 [photo, page 98]. I believe Sarah Matilda Chappin (née Gunn) is standing beside the bride (her daughter-in-law).

Lynette Chappin

BMD certificates price increase

From late May 2024, General Register Office (GRO) birth, marriage and death certificates for England and Wales have increased in price.

- Paper certificates now £12.50
- Pdf certificates now £8.00
- Jpeg certificates now £3.00

Pdf or jpeg formats are available for births from 1837 up to 100 years ago and for deaths 1837–1957. Marriage certificates are available to order in paper format only.

Order from: www.gro.gov.uk

Country Life

Tony Sargeant

Country Life magazine first appeared on newsstands on the 8th January 1897 as *Country Life Illustrated*. With a picture of the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire on the front cover, and an article on national hunt horse racing, the tone of the magazine was set to appeal to an audience with the time to enjoy country pursuits for leisure. The 'country set' and the aspiring upper middle class were the target audience.

By May of that year advertisements were beginning to appear. London-based estate agents and auction houses were placing adverts for property with photographs. It is these adverts that provide information that can be useful for the family historian.

Here are a few examples to illustrate what information about properties in Buckinghamshire can be gleaned from *Country Life's* pages:



Sanbrook House in Colnbrook

Photo: Tony Sargeant

In the 8 June 1967 issue, there is an article discussing the Oak Apple Club at Marsh Gibbon.

In 1988 we find that, according to *Country Life*, Sanbrook House in Colnbrook was a character property, formerly a coaching inn built approximately 400 years ago.

The house offers spacious accommodation with 4/5 bedrooms and 2/3 reception rooms with an attached freehold shop on one boundary. The house has been completely renovated and restored yet still retains all of its original character and charm. Seeking offers based on £325,000.

In March 1912 there is an article about Middle Claydon House and the Verney family, with a photograph taken at the time. Below is one of my own photographs of the house. (This is to make an important point. The magazine, available through British Newspaper Archive, contains many unique and copyright images. The images are all copyright of the publisher.)



Middle Claydon House

Photo: Tony Sargeant

The benefit for your family history could be interesting. Was your ancestor footman or maidservant below stairs in a large house? Were they wealthy enough to own a property that was sold and later demolished? The opportunity for useful discoveries is there for you to take.

Tony Sargeant

Mr Thomas Bailey, Gardener at Shardeloes

The death is recorded of Mr. Thos. Bailey in his 81st year. He was one of the oldest of British gardeners. He lived 50 years in his last situation, Shardeloes, Amersham, Bucks. He was a thorough gardener in the best sense of the term, and in former years was a very large prizetaker at exhibitions.

Leader (Australia), 4th June 1887

The time has not long passed since Shardeloes was much talked of [...] for from thence came to the great exhibitions of the Horticultural and Botanical Societies of London, and to the Crystal Palace and other centres of activity, subjects for competition in great classes, and they carried away many honours. Most famous perhaps were the show pelargoniums of the grand old type of Beck, and Hoyle, and Foster; and these carried the name of their cultivator, Mr Bailey, into gardens by that cheapest of conveyances, the newspaper report.

Bucks Advertiser & Aylesbury News, 6th July 1889

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- Names indexes and databases.
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- Individual service request procedures are detailed on the following pages. Information is also on our website at <https://www.bucksfhs.org.uk>
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We are able to accept payment by credit card for all transactions though our shop at <https://www.paritychest.com>. For searches, please refer to the Research tab of the Society's website.

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Bucks FHS has published parish registers, 1851 census and miscellaneous records available for purchase variously on CD and printed formats.

CDs are designed for Windows systems and are NOT compatible with Apple Mac systems. Microfiche (fiche) require a microfiche reader. Many libraries and Record Offices have microfiche readers.

To purchase items by post:

- For a catalogue, please send a C5 sae (162 x 229 mm).
- See 'how to pay' on the introduction pages to this section
- Use the details in the catalogue for prices including P&P charges for postal purchases – Please do NOT use the prices in the online shop when purchasing items by post, as this will delay your order.

To purchase items online:

Consult the Society's online shop at <https://www.paritychest.com>.

Contact

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Email: printed.publications@bucksfhs.org.uk (for printed publications)
cd.publications@bucksfhs.org.uk (for CD & DVD)

Search Service

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A search of a specific type of record will be undertaken for members by volunteers at the Buckinghamshire Archives in Aylesbury.

For each member, the time spent on searches will be limited to 2 hours per annum. Further time may be made available to a member with a donation to the Society's funds.

Requests should be sent by email to the Search Service with details of the type of record and the time period to be searched together with your Membership Number. Searches will normally be undertaken and the results reported back to the member within 21 days.

Contact

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Email: cbsinfo@bucksfhs.org.uk

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This searchable database is an ongoing transcription of baptism and burial entries from deposited Buckinghamshire parish registers 1538 to 1908.

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Payment for baptism and burial searches can be sent by post (by postage stamps). Credit card payments can be made online; please email for details.

Contact: Madeleine Harvey, BFHS Baptisms, 1 Drove Cottages, Newhaven Road, Rodmell, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3HD

Email: baptisms@bucksfhs.org.uk

Marriages

This searchable database contains transcripts of marriage entries from deposited Buckinghamshire parish registers. It is fully transcribed from 1538 to 1837, with many parishes up to 1908.

- Option 1: Single Marriage Search – first name and surname (£2.50)
- Option 2: Single Surname Search – all available parishes per 100 years (£5.00)

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Contact: Marilyn Blake, BFHS Marriages, 5 Mandeville Close, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 2BD

Email: marriages@bucksfhs.org.uk

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We will add more Societies' journals as they start exchanging with us electronically.

Contact

Exchange Journals Librarian, Bucks FHS, Box 2, c/o Unit 7 Broadfields, Aylesbury, HP19 8BU

Email: magexchange@bucksfhs.org.uk

Take a look at our FACEBOOK GROUP

Our Facebook group (which is separate to our Facebook page) is proving popular. There are many photos of Bucks churches and chapels. Members share research interests, and some have already found common ancestors and other links. It's also a good source of news about family history developments, and the various events and shows that BFHS will be attending during the year.



Useful Contacts

Buckinghamshire Archives

Buckinghamshire Council, Walton Street Offices, Aylesbury, HP20 1UU
archives@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
01296 382587
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/culture-and-tourism/archives

High Wycombe Library

5 Eden Place, High Wycombe,
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Tel: 01296 382415
Email: lib-hiw@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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Society of Genealogists

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