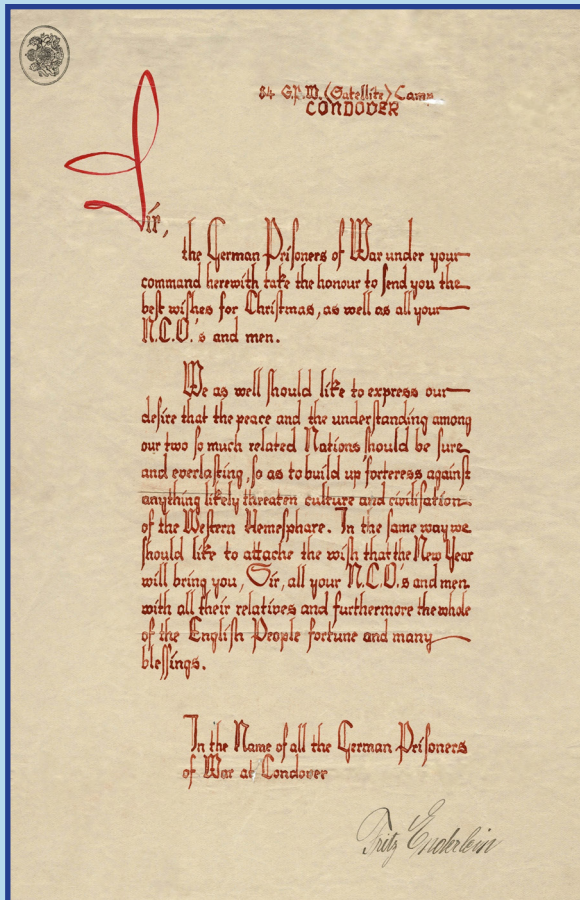




Shropshire Family History Society



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Front cover: '*Peace and Understanding Amongst Men*': Parchment as described in the article on page 120. ©Bill Allison 2023

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Thoughts from the Chair

Combining a holiday with some family history research

I wonder how many of our members have been 'doing' some family history research over the summer months? After the talk at Cross Houses in June Michael and I headed north to spend time with family and to take a bit of a holiday.

However, our first port of call was part way up the M6 to meet friends (who are also members of the Society) when we talked family history, among many other things, which was good fun.

We were then in Scotland where I was able to visit one of the local ScotlandsPeople research centres to do a full day of research on Michael's Scottish ancestors. I have to say that I find the access to their records better than those available to us with English and Welsh ancestors. Scotland's 1921 census was only made available on 30 November 2022 and this was my first opportunity to properly search the details. I found information for a good number of the family but his maternal grandmother still eludes me. I have even checked in the England census although I believe it is highly unlikely she had come south of the border, but to no avail. I think I will probably need to think of yet more search options to see if I can trace her next time I'm up there.

We then headed over to the Scottish Borders and, after a visit to the Great Tapestry of Scotland which I can highly recommend if you are in the Galashiels area, we visited Greenlaw, a small village where Michael's 3xgreat grandfather, the village blacksmith, had lived in the first half of the 1800s. There we found a wonderful, intact gravestone - fully legible and standing almost as tall as me - commemorating most of his family, and on the rear were the names of Michael's 4xgreat grandparents.



Sadly the hunt for my maternal great grandparents' grave just outside Durham was not quite so rewarding - I found their gravestone but it was broken and leaning badly, with the lettering deteriorating and, in time it will no doubt be facedown in the grass. However we were able to locate the various homes they had lived in over the years, although the surroundings had changed significantly - the coal mine that had been the mainstay of the village being replaced with parks and new housing.

Having explored these cemeteries and a few more on our travels it highlighted for me the great value of Memorial Inscription records as held by SFHS, and other Family History

Societies. These are particularly valuable where the stones have fallen, deteriorated to become illegible, have been relocated/removed for safety reasons or when we are too far away to walk between the stones and see them for ourselves. However, we also need to remember that not everyone would have been lucky enough to have a gravestone erected. Certainly a number of my Shropshire ancestors have their burials recorded in the parish registers but there is no evidence of a gravestone to mark their place of burial within the churchyard. I am making sure there is a record of what information I have been able to secure so those who follow afterwards will have some idea of where some of their ancestors might rest.

It is some years since our Shropshire Monumental Inscriptions records were updated but they still provide a rich source of information covering many parishes across the County. As mentioned elsewhere in the Journal we are working to consolidate the digital files of these resources so we can make them more easily accessible through the new website. In the meantime photocopies can be purchased via copies@sfhs.org.uk [The catalogue is available to view on the website via the Shop tab.]

Your support is needed

Any Society needs people to make things happen, and ours is no exception. We are hugely grateful to all those who have helped the Society in the past and those who help and contribute now. But to keep things going and to be able to offer some more activities we need more volunteers, rather than work the current ones into the ground or risk losing them by asking them to take on even more. So, later in this Journal you will find two opportunities to offer your help [pages 135 and 137] and I very much hope that you will give thought to whether you can help. If you want to know more about what might be involved please ask - we are open to negotiating the level of involvement!

Looking forward

The next few months look to be busy for the Society. We re-start our monthly online talks in September; Talking Family History Online will be up and running again in October; our Talking Family History LIVE event happens on 7 October when I hope to see some of you joining us; membership renewals will be due at the start of October [please check the details on the yellow outer wrap of this Journal]; work will be ongoing to get the website up and running, and to complete the Annual Report and Accounts; and we hope to launch a new DNA Special Interest Group.

Best wishes.

Karen Hunter, Chair

So you think it will be over by Christmas

Harry Stinchcombe's Story 1914-18 (Part 1)

My interest in family history started with my paternal grandmother Doris STINCHCOMBE's stories of her childhood in Shropshire. This is the WWI story of her brother, my Great Uncle Harry.

On the eve of the outbreak of war, the 4th Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI), a volunteer battalion, were attending annual training at Glan Rdeidol in Aberystwith. On 3 August 1914, the camp was broken up and the Battalion returned to their respective headquarters where the men awaited their next orders. [1]

Albert Henry STINCHCOMBE, known as Harry, was born in Whitchurch, Shropshire on 21 January 1892. Harry was the second eldest child of Albert Edward STINCHCOMBE and his wife Annie, with one brother and nine sisters. By 1898 the family had moved to 41 Noble Street, Wem, Shropshire. Sadly, just four years later Harry's younger brother Percy died of diphtheria. Harry had an elder sister, Evelyn, and younger sisters Blanche, Dutch, Doris (my grandmother), Hilda, Ivy, Kitty, Jessie and Freda.



Fig. 1 Harry Stinchcombe first left front row with Wem Half Holiday Football Team circa 1914

Harry attended Wem Grammar School, where he was a keen athlete and won a gold medal for gymnastics and a silver medal at Wem School sports. After leaving school Harry worked for his father and learned the trade of a joiner and cabinet maker in his father's

workshop, behind their home in Noble Street, Wem. Harry was also a member of Wem Rover Football Club when they won the Whitchurch and District League championship in 1913/14 for which he received a silver medal.

By the time he was 22, Harry said goodbye to his parents and sisters as he left his home in Wem, like so many thousands of young men at the outbreak of war, not knowing how long it would be before he would return home. Harry and the battalion made their way to Shrewsbury on 4 August 1914 for Barry Docks, Cardiff in two special trains. On 4 September the Battalion travelled by train to temporary accommodation in the village of Milton Regis in Kent, moving to Sittingbourne on 13 September.

An appeal was made for volunteers for service abroad and 85 per cent of the men came forward. On 13 October the 4th Battalion was told to prepare to sail to India. On 26 October the Battalion, together with three other Territorial battalions, were reviewed by His Majesty King George V. At midnight, on 28 October the Battalion left Sittingbourne and embarked the next day at Southampton on *H.M.T. Deseado*. For many of the men it was the first time they had left England and for some their first journey outside Shropshire.

At the outbreak of war, the '*professional soldiers*' of the British Army (who had carried out policing and garrison duties in the British colonies of Rangoon and Hong Kong) were needed at the Western Front and were replaced by territorial units, including the 1/4th Battalion. India was an important colony of the British Empire and the territorial troops, along with Indian troops, formed the British Army in India. [2] The defence of Hong Kong was also important; indeed it was a major port in East Asia and housed the largest dry docks owned by the British east of the Suez.

The Battalion arrived in Bombay, India on 1 December 1914 where it disembarked, and on 3 December continued to Calcutta, which took three days, finally making it to Rangoon, Burma on 10 December.

Back at home in Wem, as late autumn chilled the air and the days grew shorter, Harry's mother prepared Christmas puddings. I can imagine Harry's sisters helping stir the pudding mixture as they made a wish, before the puddings were wrapped in cloths and boiled. At this time many believed that the war would be over by Christmas.

Harry wrote home on 28 January 1915, from Rangoon. He had received a parcel from home; "*a Christmas pudding from his Mam*". It was a little mouldy on the cloth and the basin was broken but the pudding remained intact. He had taken it to the cookhouse to be cooked. Harry and his pal Percy ate all the pudding; it was, he wrote, "*the nicest pudding ever I tasted*". Harry had been busy, taking the 45 signallers for physical drill

every morning for an hour. In the afternoon, he would go out with the company for daily training in the trenches.

By May 1915 Harry, along with B Company, had left Rangoon and arrived in Hong Kong. At this time the 4th Battalion was organised into four companies and Harry moved from B Company to A Company.

Harry wrote to his sister Evelyn on 20 May 1915 from Mount Austin Barracks, a former hotel that had been developed into a British army base on Mount Austin, also known as Victoria Peak and locally as '*The Peak*'. The Peak at 1,811 feet is the highest hill on Hong Kong Island. Harry told Evelyn that he had been on the shooting team and placed third in a tournament amongst eight of the Battalion's finest marksmen.

By June 1915, Harry had been travelling from The Peak to town each morning to instruct thirty minute Physical Drill sessions at Victoria and had also maintained his excellent shooting record, winning a silver gold plated spoon for shooting. He had received a letter and postcard from home and replied, reassuring Evelyn that he was doing well.

In a letter to his Dad on 31 October, Harry wrote how he enjoyed sampling the Chinese food.

Rice curry and shrimps are one of my favourite dishes but frogs and snails don't suit us chaps.

On 12 November 1915 Harry wrote to his sister, Blanche from Victoria Barracks, Hong Kong, citing the notable swings in local temperature. He had shown his mates a photo of the family which "*caused a big attraction*". Harry mentioned that his name is down in the orderly room for going back and he thought he would visit home in February 1916.

In his letter to Blanche on Boxing Day 1915, Harry said he and his mates had a very happy Christmas, with good food, which was far different than anticipated.

For breakfast as much boiled ham as we could eat, for dinner the first course consisted of fried potatoes, carrots and roast beef, the second course mashed potatoes, kidney beans, roast mutton and turkey and finished up with Christmas pudding. There was plenty of pop and beer, and most of the fellows got drunk. For tea we had lettuce, beetroot, onions, bread and butter, and mince pies, so we had a jolly time.

Harry went to Chapel in the morning, and in the afternoon a Salop mate and Harry went for a tour round Hong Kong on the trams and a good walk. After tea he spent time in the barracks and the Picture Palace. Harry had a longing to be with the family at home, to help "*fill the dear little kiddie's stockings*".

On Monday, 3 January 1916 Harry was on guard at the German Prisoner's Camp 10a at Kowloon, it was raining and quite chilly. That same day the Major in command learnt that some of the German prisoners were making an escape route. Harry wrote in a letter to Ivy,

It was one of their own men who gave them away; if they ever got to know that they would surely murder him. It seems a bit hard for this one fellow; he has been brought up in England although he is German he has never been there. The entrance was found in the latrines, a hole two feet square cut through the concrete just under the closet seats where the buckets were placed. They had dug six feet down and then they commenced their tunnelling for 48 yards, going under the barb wire entanglements and part way under the railway line.

In about another week they would have finished the job but it didn't come off. It was clever work but they weren't clever enough to take off the names and numbers from the clothes, which were jammed in the hole when it was found. They had kneecaps and clothing suitable for their night operations. Dirt from the hole had been occasionally put in with the night soil, which had been taken away each morning. Two days later some of the prisoners were before the 4th Battalion's Officers at the Orderly Room. Three prisoners, sailors, were taken away from the camp by an armed escort.

Harry had read in the newspaper that there had been another English Mail Boat sunk, which was due to arrive in Hong Kong a few days previously. The newspaper had reported that German prisoners would be leaving Kowloon, Hong Kong to go to Australia. Harry thought this may be why they tried to escape.

The men had regular physical training. On the morning of 10 February 1916 Harry had taken part in an attack practice on some of the highest peaks around Hong Kong, where it was very cold especially amongst the clouds.

Harry and his chum had a fine meal at a Chinese Restaurant; he was very fond of some of the Chinese dishes.

We tried fried chop suey and lobster. I wanted to be Chinese all the way so I had chop sticks to eat with. Chinese are supposed to be the finest cooks in the world; I should think they are, as they can make anything nice from a frog to an elephant.

Fig. 2 Harry Stinchcombe with dog on his lap, Hong Kong Circa 1916



A new draught of 220 men including officers, NCOs (non-commissioned officers) and an Australian party had arrived on 9 May 1916. The new draught included men from Wem and a few of the old Wem Football Team. They had a splendid voyage but were chased by a submarine.

Harry and his chum posed for a photograph (as included on the previous page): was the dog on Harry's lap a stray that had become the battalion pet?

Harry wrote:

so you seem to think the War can't last so very long, I fancy it will. The men of the new draught tell me it is awful miserable in England. We can't grumble, it is those at home I worry about. Evelyn just see that Mam is well looked after.

Recent letters from home had told Harry how his mother worried about him going to the Front.

In May 1916 Harry rode to Kowloon to commence a shooting course, travelling by tram and across the water on the launch. The standard test which they had to fire was harder than the course the previous year, and they would lose 3d a day, (which was three pennies in pre-decimal currency, worth about £0.87 today), if they failed the test. Harry had passed all other tests so he was not worried.

Back in the cooler climate of Mount Austin Barracks in his letter on 4 August 1916 Harry mentions the latest rumour that 400 men of the 3rd and 4th Shropshires are coming abroad to relieve the men who have been here such a long time.

It is nearly two years since we left dear old Blighty. It is hard to be stuck here no one to comfort and console one. Letters are all we look forward to.

Harry wrote to Evelyn five days before Christmas 1916 to say that they would be leaving Hong Kong for France in about a month's time and hoped to come home first on furlough.

The men jumped with joy when they heard the news but I dare say some of them will wish they were back in Hong Kong.

On the first day in camp, the men had fought a retreating action against D Company, which was a great success for A Company. They had tea and slept out for the night. The next morning they packed up and made their way to Hong Kong which was 18 miles away, which they did comfortably although they were in full marching order.

Harry was expecting to have a fine time at Christmas.

For breakfast we will have ham, eggs, sauce, with bread and butter. For dinner mutton, port with three or four vegetables, and Christmas pudding with plenty of minerals and

beer. For tea cold mutton, bread and butter and mince pies. We will soon be decorating the barracks.

In the spring of 1917 the 4th Battalion embarked from Hong Kong on the *Ingoma*, escorted by the Japanese cruiser *Tone*. The ship, fitted to carry about 800, was crowded as the Battalion at this time was over 1,000. The *Ingoma* arrived in Durban and after waiting for an escort the Battalion sailed in a storm for Cape Town arriving on 30 May 1917. [1]

In stark contrast to the tropical weather in Hong Kong, the weather in Cape Town was bitterly cold with torrential rain, hail and sleet. Harry sent a card to his family from Cape Town on 22 June 1917, shortly before leaving on the *Walmer Castle* for England.



Fig. 3 Card made with silver leaves from Table Mountain, sent from Cape Town by Harry Stinchcombe to his family

Imagine the excitement felt by the family on receiving this card, Harry was getting closer to home, if only for a few days before being sent to France.

After almost three years away from home on Friday, 27 July 1917 the battalion arrived at Plymouth. Harry and his family were to be disappointed. Instead of being granted leave, as they had hoped and expected, the battalion were ordered at once to Southampton to sail the same night for France. The men had not received any mail for six months but they were keen to go to France to 'do their bit'.

Hilary Newman, 7394

[1] The History of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in the Great War 1914-1918 edited by Major W De B. Wood.

[2] Men on the Gates https://menonthegates.org.uk/men_front/bo-india-and-far-east-all-years-4-bn-ksli-1914-11-kent-cyclist-1919/

Editor: Part two of this article 'France 1917' will be included in the December edition of the Journal.

Ernest Alfred WEALE – a career soldier

Ernest, my great uncle, was born in Bridgnorth in 1877, the youngest of six children born to John WEALE and Jane MCCOY. John, his brother, was my grandfather. The Weale family had been in Bridgnorth for many generations and Jane's family had arrived in Broseley from Co. Sligo in Ireland in 1830. I have a brick wall for Jane's parents marriage - found on IGI for 1829 but it was not a parish record, only the return to the Diocese of Elphin.

Ernest was just nine when his father died in 1886 and 16 when his mother Jane died in 1893. Shortly after this, in 1894 he enlisted in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, Third Battalion, at the age of 17 with an occupation recorded as a tinman. Then, in 1898, aged 20 years 11 months, he enlisted for Short Service in 13th Hussars in Dublin, according to his Attestation record and his next of kin was his eldest brother George Weale of 57 Listley Street, Bridgnorth. However, this was amended after George's death aged 28 in 1901, and his sister Annie Weale of 8 Victoria Street, Upton-cum-Chalvey, Slough was entered.

His army record then provides a history of part of his service.

He was stationed 'at home' [England, Scotland, Ireland] from February 1898 to November 1899 although in his first year he spent some of that time in hospital for various treatments: 58 days in Dublin and a further 36 days in Aldershot.

He was then posted to South Africa in November 1899, but again was ill with pneumonia on the troopship *Templemore* on the journey out. He was there until 1902 and fought in the Second Anglo Boer War, receiving both the Queen's South Africa and King's South Africa Medals with clasps covering Orange Free State, Transvaal, Tugela Heights, Relief of Ladysmith, and Laings Nek. He was slightly wounded on 31 May 1901 at Greylingstad, as recorded in a letter from W Syron, Trooper 4038, C Squadron 13th Hussars, dated 3 June 1901 and published in the *Bridgnorth Journal* and listed in *News and Events 1901-1920* by Mr Gwynne Chadwick:

I am very sorry to tell you that my chum E Weale got wounded in the arm on the 1st June. He had only been in the column 3 days when he got in a very warm corner and was shot at 30 yards. He had no chance whatever. It is only a flesh wound and he will soon be in the field again.

Ernest returned to 'home' service in 1902, returning from South Africa to Southampton on the troopship *City of Vienna*. He was promoted to Corporal on 22 April 1903 but was later tried for being absent without leave resulting in being reduced to the ranks on 30

May 1905 and forfeiting his Good Conduct Badge at the same time as being transferred to 11th Hussars, with a change in service number. Then from 1906 to 1914 he was in the Army Reserve, before returning to active service in the 1st World War when he was 37. His record for this period indicates he served as a Private with the Hussars with the service number 13544 for which I have his Dog Tag.

I have found a letter from Cpl E A Weale of Bridgnorth, dated 8 January 1916, published in the *Bridgnorth Journal* and listed in *News and Events 1901-1920* by Mr Gwynne Chadwick which I read at Bridgnorth Library and made notes, but did not ask for it to be copied as it would have to be done at Shrewsbury Archives. In the letter he made mention of Miss Lena Ashwell who entertained the troops; a Magic Lantern Show; Tea, care of the YMCA; Christmas in France and Cavalry details of the Military Mounted Police. One thing that concerned me was his admission “*I for one can't wait to get to the front*”.

The 1911 census revealed that Ernest and his wife Mary were living at 41 Pulford St, London, and that they had been married for 11 years! However, Ernest would have been in South Africa at that time and I can't find any evidence of a marriage. Ernest's birthplace is given as Bridgnorth and his occupation is given as groom and cleaner in a motor garage; Mary Weale's birth place was Malvern, Worcestershire and there were no children born. Yet the form was signed by 'Maria Bench': were they lodgers or tenants? Mary's death was registered in Wandsworth in 1913, aged 38.

On the Great War Forum [<https://www.greatwarforum.org/search/>] in 2018 I came across this post by M Cross:

The demobilization certificate, Army form Z21, for Pvt Ernest Alfred Weale, 11th Hussars, regt no 13544, born 1875, was found in a library book a few years ago. It was put to one side and forgotten about but has recently come to light again. I would like to return it to the descendants of Ernest's family. Can anyone help?

Craig, the site administrator responded: “*Does it give an idea of where he is from? I can't see any 1875 birth, nearest I can see is 1877?*” Then there is the added information given on the 1911 census and the fact that Ernest joined the KSLI and the 13th Hussars.

A public family tree on Ancestry had his name listed and that took me to his marriage in 1920 to a widow, Emily Sophia KINDELL (maiden name STAPLES). Her first husband was a widower, who she married in 1907. They had three children and he died in 1915. [Editor: For further information, the 1921 census record on FMP indicates that Emily and her first husband had five children.]

When Ernest died in 1935 aged 58, they were living at No 4 Orbel Street, Battersea. Emily died in 1971 at the age of 88 years. My late cousin Jean remembers Emily coming to visit Ernest's family which would have been our grandfather in Kidderminster, and he died in 1961. My late cousin Peter, who had a career in the Military, considered Ernest to be a career soldier.

Ernest had three sisters: Annie, born in 1866 – died in Guelph, Ontario, Canada in the early 1940s; Martha Jane BAKER born in 1867 – died in Guelph, 1945; Mary Agnes born in 1870 – died in Lancashire 1887. (I am assuming she was in service.)

This contribution for the Journal was triggered by a granddaughter asking if anyone in the family had served in WW1. The teacher at school had asked them to supply any information that they could so I put together what I knew and realised it could be possible to submit it for the Journal.

Mary Dean, 6796

Editor: I wonder how many of us have done similar for school projects? I recall my boys interviewing one of my uncles about his recollections of life and his service during the Second World War and I think we still have the tape recording of it somewhere. I need to dig it out and have a listen which will be a little poignant for me and perhaps I could transcribe it for my family archive.

Oldies but Goldies

It always seems a shame to have all those family photographs, both ancient and modern stored away in filing cabinets, albums and these days on phones. If we are honest with ourselves they don't get looked at very often. I wanted to find a way in which these images could be rather more useful. So I hit on the idea of making a calendar. The first one I did was several years ago for Granny and Grandpa. They hung it on the wall over their small breakfast table and had a conversation about the photos, it turned out, every day. It proved a wonderful talking point when the members of the family visited. This, in its turn, gave rise to family stories and more wonderful for family historians like me, photographs appeared from their own albums to enrich the family archives.

What can you give as a present to everyone who has everything? So I made a second calendar and gave it to Granny and Grandpa as a Christmas present in December 2021 for 2022. It proved to be just as successful. One of my anxieties was that if I wanted to carry on this tradition, which it has become as I have just presented them with the third

calendar for 2023, was that photos would dry up. Not so, because everyone in the family started looking for ones that could be used and much to my delight some amazing stuff turned up.




On a sad note, Granny developed signs of dementia in November 2021. It is now well established that an often useful aid for this upsetting situation is to show photographs of their own past to those suffering to help them recall periods in their life. So the calendar took on a more powerful role rather than just displaying pictures that might enlarge family history. As a family we know that the 2023 calendar will continue to comfort Granny.


In the best tradition of Blue Peter and here’s one we made earlier, I have fairly basic guide lines. A4 Calendar blanks are readily available. I have made each photo panel in Publisher, cut it out and stuck it onto the calendar. One of our daughters laughed at the crudity of this. Good old cut and paste as it used to be. I tried to get a balance of old and new on each page. This year, after some demand, I also made calendars for other members of the family.

We are always looking for ways of making our family history interesting for others and giving it vitality rather than just resting in files and on computers. Furthermore there is something for us as family historians in that it has turned up stories and photographs I wasn’t aware of. Creating a calendar such this might be an idea to bear in mind for 2024.

Bill Allison, 7760

January 2023



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1 New Year
2 <small>UK BH</small>	3 <small>BH(Sco)</small>	4	5	6	7	8

Editor: What a lovely idea, especially for that person for whom you have no idea what to get them for Christmas, or as a birthday present.

And here is another idea. If you are asked what you would like for Christmas why not think about membership to another Family History Society or two which cover areas of the country for your ancestors who don’t come from Shropshire.

Bicton and Berrington: Family Connections

In June this year, I visited Shrewsbury for the first time in three years. The short bus rides to the villages of Bicton and Berrington would, I hoped, reveal further connections with my maternal ancestors the Lewis family, whose itinerant lives I described in the March 2020 edition of this Journal. The pivotal figure in this family has always been, for me, my great-grandmother Charlotte JONES (1857-1938).

Bicton: Charlotte's Early Life

She was baptised at Bicton in December 1857, five weeks after her birth, and named after her mother Charlotte (nee EDWARDS). Her father was Edward JONES, an 'ag lab' who was (apparently) 60 when young Charlotte was born, twenty-five years older than his wife. The 1861 census shows three children – Martha, aged 19, Joseph 5 and Charlotte junior, 3. The long gap between the first two children could, I suppose, be explained by infant deaths.

Edward Jones must have died shortly after the census because Charlotte's mother married again on Boxing Day 1862, once more to a much older farm-worker, Richard Lewis: he was 65, she was 41. The marriage certificate says only 'Married in the Church of Bicton'.



Holy Trinity Church, Bicton cc-by-sa/2.0
© Paul Evans - geograph.org.uk/p/741729

This odd phrase was in my mind as I got off the bus and headed for Holy Trinity Church where, I assumed, young Charlotte had been baptised and her mother re-married. A notice in the church porch revealed otherwise. Holy Trinity dated from 1887; old Bicton church was, in fact, a small chapel-of-ease associated with St Chad's, Shrewsbury. I walked on down the lane to find its remains, a locked-up area of ruined walls overgrown with weeds. It is an atmospheric place, though, on the edge of open countryside, the focus of field-paths along which country folk would have walked from the scattered settlements around Bicton. Somewhere among the weeds and ruins are, perhaps, the remains of Charlotte's parents and step-father.

The 1861 census locates the Jones family at 'Down Rossall'; in 1871, the family lives at 'Rosshall Cottages'. Contemporary maps show 'Ross Hall' in the area of the present Rossall Grange. What emerges very clearly from the census returns is that this area north

of Bicton village was dominated by big houses and the estates attached to them – Isle Grange, the Isle House, ‘Rosshall Grange’. This is the environment in which my great-grandmother spent her childhood – great estates and the tied cottages of the workers dependent on them. I got a flavour of this when I saw the lion-headed gates at Isle Grange, guarding what is now a large ‘fishing estate’.

In many ways, the childhood of Charlotte Jones set the pattern for her life. Wherever ‘Down Rossall’ was, it was remote from the nearest village, a long way by foot or even horse transport from Bicton and its chapel. She was to live and raise her large family in many similar places across East Shropshire.

Berrington: a Place of Connections

I caught the bus to Cross Houses and turned up the lane towards Berrington. The excellent website of the Friends of Berrington Church had already briefed me about All Saints, a fine Early English building in a small hamlet.

By the time great-grandmother Charlotte came to this area, she was 21 and the mother of a child, George Henry. The father was a wagoner, George Lewis; the assumption is that they were married, though that has yet to be proved. Her next two children, James and Joseph, were baptised at Berrington in 1878 and 1880 respectively. At the time of James’s baptism, the Lewises lived at ‘Cliff Cottages’ (location not established); in 1880, they were at Brompton, a farm on the far side of Cross Houses – another typically remote location.

I found the wonderful old font in which great-uncles Jim and Joe were baptised. It is a rugged, ancient object, reputedly Norman, decorated with animal heads and human faces. Almost as ancient is the figure of a recumbent knight known as Old Scriven. Then a memorial plaque on the wall caught my eye. Its subject was Gilbert Culceth HOLCROFT, a Second Lieutenant in the Durham Light Infantry, killed at Hooge in Belgium on August 9th, 1915. Subsequent research has found that Gilbert was the son of a Stourbridge industrialist, born in 1894 and educated at Radley, Cambridge and Sandhurst. He was a classic example of the young public school subalterns who died in their thousands in the Great War. Gilbert’s life could hardly have been more different from the lives of the Lewis boys who were baptised at All Saints. However, I recognised the name ‘Hooge’ and the date of Gilbert’s death and I knew that there was a remarkable connection with another of my ancestors.



Font All Saints Berrington
cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Chris Gunns -
geograph.org.uk/p/5881470

Gilbert's battalion, the 2nd Durham Light Infantry, arrived in France in September 1914. Within a few days, they were in action at the Battle of the Aisne, in which another member of the battalion, Company Sergeant-Major George HARRINGTON, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM). He was a regular, a veteran of the Boer War and he was my father's cousin. It seems likely that young Holcroft would have heard of the exploits of CSM Harrington and may have known him by sight. The battalion moved to the Ypres Salient in 1915 where it captured German trenches in a daring night attack, the action in which Gilbert Holcroft died. At the time, George Harrington was recovering from wounds, but he returned to the Salient in 1917, winning the Military Medal.

I turned back to the font and thought of the lives of Charlotte's children. Unlike so many of their contemporaries in rural Shropshire, most of the Lewises remained in the countryside. In 1901, after her husband's death, Charlotte gathered eight of her twelve children for the census at Spoonley Gate Cottage at Rudge Heath on the Bridgnorth – Wolverhampton road. The 'Berrington Boys' – James, aged 23, farm labourer and Joseph, 21, 'gardener domestic' – were among them. I realised that tracing the lives of Charlotte and her family through these remote rural locations will never be easy. The work goes on.

Thanks to Sue Bentley and Edward Wild for the use of their research.

I would be glad to hear from any members who would like to discuss this article.

David Stokes 7734 david.stokes7@tiscali.co.uk

VCH Shropshire

The Victoria County History or VCH is a national project to write the authoritative local history of every English place.

Some of you may have come across this project but if not it is well worth a look. An increasing number of their volumes of place history are now available online (without subscription) at <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/search/series/vch--salop>.

However there is also a website specifically for VCH Shropshire [<http://www.vchshropshire.org/>] and from there it is possible to access the volumes currently available [<http://www.vchshropshire.org/volumes.html>]. If you have a particular interest in Wem they published a history of the town in 2019. This is not available online but it can be purchased from a number of outlets as detailed on their webpage.



Talking Family History LIVE

Saturday, 7 October 2023

11am-3pm

The Old Chapel Community Centre, Cross Houses, SY5 6JH

Come and join in the conversations!

Our Talking Family History LIVE event is just a few weeks away. The idea for this event evolved from the success of our online Talking Family History sessions. These have offered the opportunity to get people together to share their shared enthusiasm for all things family history.

There will be a number of sessions during the day (as listed below), when you will be able to hear from other members with a particular interest or expertise, share your own knowledge and experiences and ask questions.

Maps and Family History	One Place Studies
A Few Forgotten Women	One Name Studies
Ways of telling and recording our family history stories	Shropshire based Family History research help-desk
Access to the Parish Registers we hold, Exchange journals and our Library resources	

Our TFH LIVE version gives our more local members, and perhaps some who are able to travel to Shropshire for the day, the chance to gather together and, in the same way, share their interest, enthusiasm and knowledge across a range of topics. So, if you have any experience of or examples of your research related to any of our proposed topics, or other aspects, please come along ready to talk about and share them. We can all learn from each other and you might be holding a piece of the puzzle for someone else.

To make the organisation of the day easier for everyone light refreshments will be available throughout the day but we will not be providing lunch so please bring along your 'picnic' and we can have a shared meal together.

Will you be joining us?

We hope to see you there however we won't be able to fit all our members into Cross Houses (there are over 1000 members). Thanks to those who have already confirmed they will be joining us. If you are planning to come along but have not yet told us please can you let Karen know by email [chair@sfhs.org.uk].

So who was Martha Pearce?

I know little about my great-great grandmother Martha PEARCE. I don't know where she was born, whether she ever married, how many children she had, or when and where she died.

For a long time I didn't even know Martha's name. In the 1841 census my great grandmother Lucy Rebecca Pearce was living with John and Martha Pearce in the south Shropshire village of Lydbury North. At this census Lucy was two years old and had not been born in Shropshire. There is more information in the 1851 census in which Lucy is still living in Lydbury with John and Martha, when she is described as their granddaughter. This census states that Lucy was born in Wolverhampton.

I searched in GRO indexes but was never able to find that Lucy's birth was registered, which it should have been given that she was born in 1838 or 1839. It wasn't until family history records became easily available that I could discover more. A few years ago the baptism registers of St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton were put online and I could find an entry which gave me the name of Lucy's mother.

The register records that Lucy Rebecca Pearce was baptised at St Peter's Church on 25 September 1838, the daughter of Martha Pearce. At last a name for Lucy's mother but as she is a single woman no father's name, nor any other helpful details.

At least there was a name to search for now, but still nothing definite to report. There was a 'Martha Pearce' baptised in Lydbury North in 1820 but her parents were John and Elizabeth, not John and Martha, who had a son Thomas baptised in the same year. The 1841 census has a Martha Pearce aged 26 living in Newton in the parish of Stokesay, one of four female servants of Thomas Beard, an innkeeper and farmer. This Martha was born in Shropshire about 1815, but I haven't found a baptism that fits. This is quite possibly Lucy's mother, but I couldn't track her down in the 1851 census.

Later I discovered that Shropshire Archives has a very detailed catalogue online, and it was thanks to its name index that I could discover a second reference in official documents to the Martha Pearce who is Lucy's mother.

The little bundle of documents is dated 25 September 1839 and were written by the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the parish of Eaton [-under-Heywood], Shropshire. Addressing the same officers of the parish of Lydbury North, notice is given of an appeal against an order of two Justices of the Peace "*concerning the removal of*

Martha Pearce and her Bastard Child named Lucy aged about twelve months to our said Parish of Eaton". One of the grounds of the appeal is that although the "*pauper Martha Pearce*" was hired to serve Mr. Ward of Harton, in the parish of Eaton, for one year, she did not in fact serve him for that long, and so she had not gained settlement in Eaton.

The parish in which you were legally settled was important because that is the one that had to support you if you needed help.

There is a note on the documents that the appeal was given up. I have asked Shropshire Archives if any more information can be found in Quarter Sessions records about Martha but it seems there is no reference to her.

To sum up what is known about 'my' Martha Pearce so far:

1. Martha had worked for Mr. Ward of Harton. The parish registers of Eaton show that Mr. Ward died in 1833, and in 1841 at the census the farm is being run by his widow. This implies that Martha had been in Eaton in 1833 or before. Children would often have left the family home at the age of 13 or 14 to find work.
2. Martha's daughter Lucy was baptised in Wolverhampton in September 1838.
3. Martha must have returned to Lydbury North at some time in 1839. The parish officials of Lydbury felt that Martha was settled in Eaton-under-Heywood and asked two local Justices of the Peace to make an order returning Martha and her daughter there.
4. The appeal against Martha's settlement is not followed up by Eaton.

I may never be able to fill in the gaps in Martha's story. How did she find herself in Wolverhampton where her daughter was born in 1838? Did Martha ask her parents to look after Lucy and find work as a servant with the innkeeper in Newton? Perhaps Martha died in the 1840s. Maybe she married and kept her daughter a secret. Or perhaps Martha went back to Wolverhampton in 1839?

I then decided to search again for Lucy's birth registration. Her combination of forenames is fairly unusual for the time. I searched the online indexes using the forenames 'Lucy Rebecca' without a surname. This brought up a birth registration for a Lucy Rebecca Lewis in Wolverhampton in 1838. I sent for a copy of the certificate and found that Martha had indeed registered her daughter's birth, and had given the information that Thomas Lewis, a saddler, was Martha's father. Lucy was born on 23 September 1838, and Martha's address was given as Stafford Street, Wolverhampton. This was in the early days of civil registration and maybe the registrar was not clear about the procedure for registering a birth to a single mother. No father's details should have been entered, although I am

grateful that they were. If a couple are not married when a baby is born the father's details may not be recorded unless he is there to sign the birth register.

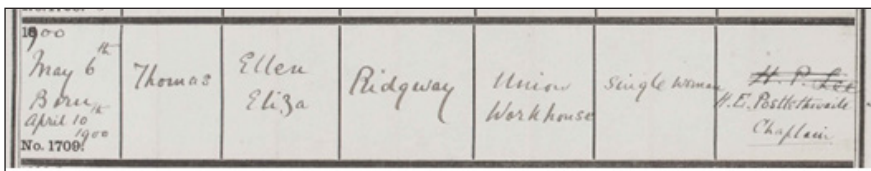
There is a saddler called Thomas Lewis, aged 40, in the 1841 census, lodging in a house in Craddocks Walk, later St Peters Walk, Wolverhampton. This is just round the corner from Stafford Street where Lucy was born. It seems as if this Thomas maybe my 2xgreat grandfather. Curiously enough Lucy would go on to marry another Thomas Lewis and move to Shrewsbury with him.

Janet Smith, 2646 janetpsmith42@gmail.com

Adopted Children

In my family tree I have three 'adopted children'. They were all born to single mothers and were taken in and looked after by my great grandmother and 2x great grandmother. Although I can trace what happened to these children as they grew up and became adults, finding out about their start in life and their biological mothers is another matter.

Thomas RIDGWAY was born on the 10 April 1900 and his biological mother is Ellen Eliza Ridgway. Thomas was brought up by my great grandparents Frederick and Jane JONES in Wem. He lived with them until he turned 17 then he joined the army, putting Jane Jones as his next of kin. I cannot find any other information on his biological mother Ellen Eliza Ridgway, she doesn't appear on any census returns, though Ellen is named as his mother on his baptism record. Ellen's place of abode is shown on this document as in the Union Workhouse in Wem.



It wasn't just Jane Jones who adopted children – her mother (and my 2x great grandmother) Sarah Jane BEAMOND, later WESTON, also took in children. Into her home she took Albert WEBB, who was born on the 26 August 1892. He was also born to a single mother – Agnes Webb. Agnes has been found on the 1901 census, living in the Wem Union Workhouse, and on this date she was living here with her daughter Violet Evelyn, born in 1899. Agnes also had another son Ernest Webb, born in 1901 (he was adopted by Eleanor GRETTY who was also from Wem). What happened to Agnes or to Violet is a

mystery as both cannot be found after 1901, (or why Violet wasn't given a home by Sarah Jane).

The second child to be given a home by Sarah Jane was Ernest William Ridgway – brother to Thomas who was adopted by Jane Jones. As Thomas' brother his mother was also Ellen Eliza Ridgway, and like his brother, when he was baptised Ellen's place of abode was the Wem Union Workhouse. Unlike his brother, when Ernest joined the army he put his mother Ellen Eliza as his next of kin.

On the birth certificates for all these children, no fathers names are entered. Although all these children are described as adopted, I have never found any formal adoption papers for them. Whether Jane Jones or her mother Sarah Jane knew Agnes Webb or Ellen Eliza Ridgway and this is why they gave their boys a home is unknown. All the boys kept their original surnames suggesting that none were ever formally adopted, but taken in and cared for by these two families in Wem.

If anyone recognises any of these names – the children or the mothers, I would love to know more and maybe add some extra detail into my family tree.

Clare Brown 7718 clarebrownfamilyhistory@gmail.com

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SFHS Members' Interests: A Valuable Tool

The arrival of the June 2023 SFHS Journal coincided with one of my irregular updates of my POOLE Family Tree on the Ancestry website. The article on SFHS Members' Interests (MI) reminded me of the great value it has provided in breaking down walls in my family ancestry and has introduced me to a worldwide diaspora of "POOLE relatives" that I was previously unaware of.

I started researching my ancestry in the mid-1990s, but soon hit the "brick wall" of my 2xgreat-grandfather Isaiah POOLE (1817-1890). I had found Isaiah's baptism record in Dawley Magna in 1817, the illegitimate son of Sarah POOLE, but there were no clues as to who Sarah was, nor as to who Isaiah's father could be. There were two potential candidates for his mother: Sarah POOLE baptised 1797 in Dawley, the daughter of John and Elizabeth POOLE, and Sarah POOLE baptised 1798 in Broseley, the daughter of John and Sarah POOLE. There were no real clues as to which Sarah, if either, was Isaiah's mother. My quest was made more difficult for two reasons:

1. Isaiah moved from Dawley to Liverpool, where in 1840 he married a local girl Margaret HOWARD, with their marriage certificate fictitiously claiming that his father was John Poole, occupation Boilermaker.
2. As a consequence of my living in east Kent the only resources readily available to me were the Family Records Centre and Society of Genealogists in London.

So how has SFHS MI helped my research?

About 2012 I added the POOLE surname to the MI and found that another member Ken Wilson-Wheeler also had an interest in the surname. I contacted Ken, but at that time he was certain that he was descended from another Shropshire Poole family, with no known connection to mine. However, he did tell me that he had also been recently contacted by a non-member Jane Poole, who was also asking about Isaiah Poole. Ken kindly gave me Jane's contact details, and she responded to my e-mail to tell me that Isaiah Poole was her 3xgreat-grandfather, meaning that Jane and I are 3rd cousins, once removed.

Jane and I have exchanged a lot of information on our Poole ancestors, but neither of us could break our "brick wall". However, through our Ancestry Family Trees we have made contact with further Poole cousins, who now live in USA, Australia, Spain and even one still living in the Dawley area.

Then I was contacted by another Ancestry member “Sarah” who had found my Tree and asked me if I knew “Robert” POOLE who had been born in Cheshire, probably in the 1930’s, as she thought he may have been her father. “Sarah” also told me that she had no known living blood relatives. After searching through my records I was able to determine who “Robert” POOLE was, and that he was the father of “Julia Poole”, one of my “new” POOLE cousins. DNA testing then showed that “Sarah” had a match with myself, but more importantly that she was the half-sister of “Julia Poole”; they have since made contact and met in person despite living 6,000 miles apart.

But the story does not end there. My autosomal DNA test has a match with Ken Wilson-Wheeler, and that we have a shared DNA match with both “Sarah” and “Julia” Poole. This has resulted in me demonstrating that Ken’s Poole family are linked to my Poole family. Further, it has enabled me to determine that Sarah Poole born in Dawley in 1797 was the mother of my 2xgreat-grandfather Isaiah Poole. Thus, knocking down a “brick wall”, but also taking me back in time to two earlier generations of my Poole ancestry to my 4xgreat-grandparents John (1770-1860) and Elizabeth POOLE and 4xgreat-grandparents Robert (1747-1803) and Jane POOLE.

In conclusion I strongly recommend that SFHS Members add their own research interests to the Members’ Interests directory and also contact other Members who have similar interests. Hopefully they will get as much success as myself, and be patient in awaiting any responses. An unexpected finding such as I had with Sarah will come their way.

Note: Several names have been anonymised (e.g. “Sarah”, etc) within the article to protect the sensitivity of their relationship to my Poole family.

Phil Poole, 5300

Editor: As members will be aware we have started the process of refreshing the Members Interests directory and these will be accessible on the new website when it is finalised. In the meantime we are updating the information on the Family History Federation website where it is also accessible so people could search there while waiting for our own website to have it.

Don’t forget that this facility is not just for ancestors linked to Shropshire - any names and places can be included. If you need more information or a copy of the spreadsheet please contact Dave Morris at secretary@sfhs.org.uk

Peace and Understanding Amongst Nations

William Eccles was born on 1 June 1891 in Bury, Lancashire. Several previous generations of his family had been involved in the textile trade in the cotton towns of Preston, Bury and Bolton in West Lancashire. But seemingly Eccles himself always stated an interest in the Army and such was his desire to be a soldier that in March 1908 at almost seventeen years old he became a member of the newly formed Territorial Force. This was a part-time volunteer component of the Army, created in 1908 to augment land forces. So taking opportunity of this move to strengthen the Army, he was there at the beginning, fulfilling his military interests. On 1 April 1908 the Army Special Reserve was established with the intention of keeping reserves in number befitting a modern Army. Eccles now enlisted in the Special Reserve on 25 August 1908. After this, he remained a professional soldier for most of the rest of his life.

On 24 February 1909, aged 17 and 8 months, he *“joined up”* and became a fully-fledged soldier in the Royal Field Artillery and by August 1911 he had been promoted to Lance Bombardier. During the next few years it seemed that war with Germany was more than imminent as history doesn't hesitate in telling us and the Great War broke out on 28 July 1914. By 4 August Eccles had been promoted to Corporal as a part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). The BEF first engaged the German Army in the Battle of Mons on 23 August 1914. Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany, who was famously dismissive of the BEF, allegedly issued an order on 19 August 1914 to *“exterminate ... the treacherous English and walk over their contemptible little army”*. Eccles was proud to call himself, along with others who were there, an *“Old Contemptible”*.

He began to rise through the ranks whilst on active service. By 25 August 1915 he had become a sergeant. In February 1916 Eccles came home on leave from the trenches to marry his sweetheart, nineteen year old, cotton mill worker, Rose Taylor, in Bolton. After getting married they went to the pictures to celebrate. Eccles wore his uniform, since as we might expect he was very proud of it. He also probably wore it to avoid being accused of cowardice by staying at home and not going to war. Eccles dozed off.



After the hell of the trenches, the warmth and safety of the cinema would have seemed like heaven, whatever the film was. Whilst he was sleeping, he was dreaming. He suddenly shook himself awake, shouting out, *“Oh Christ, look at that bloody horse’s head. That horse’s head has just been blown to bits and the man standing next to it too”*.

Suddenly he was surrounded by people crowding in on the newly married pair. A group made up of predominantly older men who had not gone to fight, harangued him. They crowded in on him and chastised him. Then they proceeded to chastise him for swearing in front of ladies.

But, of course, what happened is not just about the trenches, it is also about the people back home. It is about the people in the cinema and millions of others like them who had no inkling of what thousands like Eccles were going through. The mob was, of course, upholding the sense and sensibility of their time. Eccles like so many others never spoke of what he had experienced in the trenches in his life again. Yet what we might be witnessing in Eccles would perhaps now be described as Post Traumatic Stress. The sense and sensibility of our time. How things change.

Eight months before the end of the War, Eccles was promoted to the rank of Battery Quartermaster Sergeant (BQMS) thus becoming a non-commissioned officer (NCO): a role that involved procuring and managing resources. One year after the end of the War he was transferred to India to serve with the British Army there. His wife Rose followed him later. They found themselves in a place of exotic sights and sounds rather different from the fields of Flanders. In 1920 their daughter, Kathleen, was born in Mhow.

In 1922, Eccles worked with the newly reformed Indian Army Ordnance Corps. He then spent ten years stationed mostly on the North West Frontier in what is now Pakistan, helping to keep peace on the Indian Afghanistan border. More recently we know that the British Army was still involved in fighting in Afghanistan, with many losing their lives. Sadly little seems to have changed.

On Christmas Eve 1930 he was discharged from the Army, with his record stating that he was *“a man of exemplary character”*. Eccles, his wife Rose and daughter Kathleen, returned to England and their family in Bolton. During the 1930s he took a variety



of jobs in various parts of the UK, including becoming a publican in Abergavenny, South Wales. However he maintained his links with the Army, even setting up a branch of the “*Old Contemptibles of Wales*” in his pub, The North Western Hotel. He always remained a member of the British Legion. Having been placed on the Army Reserve list at the time of his demobilisation he then served with the Territorial Army. With the prospect of another World War looming, on 16 August 1939 aged 48 he re-enlisted.

From the outbreak of the War until 11 November 1943 he was Battery Quarter Master Sergeant at the newly established Prisoner of War establishment, Sunnyvale Camp, Rhyl, North Wales. He was then promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and transferred to Conover Satellite branch of Prisoner of War Camp No 84 Sheet, Ludlow, Shropshire. Conover was an RAF Training Field. At the western end of the Training Field former WAAF accommodation was used to house German Luftwaffe prisoners. The prisoners were utilised as farm labourers in the local area until repatriation in early 1947. It was Lieutenant Eccles’ job to liaise with local farmers and ensure that this scheme worked. In December 1947 the prisoners presented Eccles with the document shown on the cover of this edition of the Journal and transcribed on the following page. Written on parchment in a beautiful Teutonic script it still survives today. The rather wonderful and beautiful sentiments speak for themselves and our two much related nations have indeed remained at peace.

By the end of his time in the Army, Eccles was promoted to Captain. He died on 21 March 1956 in Ludlow, Shropshire. William Eccles was my maternal Grandfather.

Bill Allison, 7760

Any memories and photographs to help develop my knowledge of the Satellite POW Camp at Conover would be greatly received. juliaallison@btinternet.com

Editor: Did anyone when reading this article think: ‘Surely Bill must have got his dates wrong, saying that the Great War started on 28 July’. I admit I did (sorry Bill), as I had always understood that it started on 4 August 1914. So I turned to my favourite Search Engine and discovered that Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28 July 1914, precipitated by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, in Sarajevo on 28 June, followed by Germany declaring war on Russia (1 August) and France (3 August), and demanding that Belgium allow them to cross its territory, in breach of the 1839 Treaty of London when Britain, Germany and France had all committed to respect Belgium independence. Germany failed to comply with a demand to respect Belgium and in response Britain declared war on 4 August. They say every day is a ‘school day’ and this has certainly been one for me!!

84 GRW (Satellite Camp) Condover

Sir,

The German Prisoners of War under your command herewith take the honour to send you the best wishes for Christmas as well as all your NCO's and men.

We as well should like to express our desire that the peace and understanding among our two much related Nations should be sure and everlasting, so as to build up a fortress against anything likely to threaten culture and civilisation of the Western Hemisphere. In the same way we should like to attach the wish that the New Year will bring you, Sir, all your NCO's and men, with all their relatives and furthermore the whole of the English People fortune and many blessings.

In the name of all the German Prisoners of War at Condover.

GRO Certificates

Some of you may have seen that some birth and death certificates are now available as digital downloads from the GRO for £2.50 each! However, please note that this is only possible for birth entries from 1837 up to 100 years ago and death entries from 1837 to 1887. Details can be found here: <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/images/CGOVPublicBeta.pdf>

Time will tell if they extend the date ranges but hopefully if this proves popular it will happen.

It would be interested to hear if any of our members have used this new option and if any of the certificates have revealed any interesting information. Perhaps they have helped to break down one of your brick walls, or revealed the facts behind one of those long-told family stories.

Was my ancestor a liar: ignorance, half-truths and wilful deceit?

Talk given by Dave Annal, FSG on 16 May 2023

The speaker started by asking just what ancestors were most likely to lie about, and said that ages, names, birthplaces, parents and marital status were most prevalent. But the key questions were, how easy was it to lie, and what reasons did they have to do it? And having done it, how easy is it for us to be able to spot it. We need to know how and why records were created, how reliable they are, and what did legislation surrounding them say. We must remember that records were not created with family historians in mind!

Legislation at any time gives details of penalties for not complying, some of them severe. Rules governing parish registers, since 1538, stated that failure to comply would not be tolerated, and various penalties could be levied. By 1812, and Rose's Act of Parliament, non-compliance carried a penalty of transportation for 14 years! With Civil Registration, the Births, Marriages and Death Act of 1874, carried a penalty of penal servitude for up to 7 years. Census returns were more lenient, with financial penalties under the 1840 Census Act levying fines of £5 to £40, dependent upon the offence. But there were very few effective checks; for instance, there was no need to prove who you were when getting married. The same was true when registering births and deaths. On Census returns it was easy to lie, as they were completed by a member of the household rather than a person in authority. That person in the household might be a boy or girl who had enough schooling, or maybe a local trader who knew the family. The motive to do so, often involved 'living in sin', or illegitimacy; with illegitimate children facing severe local and social discrimination.

The speaker said that there is no aspect which is less reliable than our surnames. His study of people in Bushy (Herts) showed that 74% had taken their mother's surname, 16% their step-father's surname, with 10% showing a mixture. There was also a correlation between the time taken and the adoption of a step-father's surname.

Between 1835-1907 marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister was not allowed, nor between sisters and brothers-in-law. Divorce was available from 1858 but was far too costly for most people. Of the choice between bigamy and adultery, most chose the former. Even after law changes, bigamy increased, even though bigamous marriages were frequently reported in local newspapers. People had no obligation to divulge that they were already married when marrying a second time.

Ages are often so inaccurate and may be a pointer to some nefarious practices. Significant age differences can be a clue, especially if the woman is older than the man. The speaker also spoke about military records, of which he had made a special study, where ages were problematic.

Another problem is the use of fictitious names, but they can be hard to spot unless you do rigorous cross-checking.

The speaker showed many examples (not reproducible here) which he had found and proved to be lies.

It was agreed that it had been an eye-opening talk which would send many people back to re-examining their own family trees, and he was warmly congratulated.

In answer to a question, the speaker reminded people that while the 1911 Census was the first to be actually completed by the householder, for previous Censuses the enumerators only completed the census books and Census returns, using information supplied by the householders on prepared sheets. Enumerators had large areas to cover and many people to distribute forms to (and collect later) so did not have time to investigate households.

In answer to another question, the speaker said that illegitimate children had no right to inherit money or land etc, but there was nothing to stop people granting such things in a will.

At the end the speaker asked what did people not lie about? He showed a blank screen!!

Peter Tandy, 7790

Tracing the History of the Ancestral Home

Talk given by Nick Barrett on 20 June 2023

The speaker started by asking why research your property? Answers might be to discover the historical context and links to the past, getting inspiration for internal decoration or sensitive renovation, or to add market value when selling a property. But what steps might you take to get there?

Firstly identify your house through time, starting with modern maps showing an aerial view. Take these images to archives to compare with older maps, and slowly 'triangulate' your house's position over time. Also research the wider history of the area. The best collection of on-line OS maps of the past is in the National Library of Scotland.

Now turn to architecture. View the house externally and compare it to others nearby. Many areas have regional build styles (e.g. the Tudor look) known as 'vernacular' architecture. But, caution, beware of the use of salvaged materials from earlier periods, and retrospective building. If you can, research the interior style as well. The design register created by the Board of Trade in the aftermath of the Great Exhibition of 1851 is a good source. Also insurance records, created from the 17th century, especially fire insurance records, are a useful source.

With this information, you can start to build a timeline, starting with the present day and working backwards. The use of sequential records can show changes in house numbers or street names, and street directories (Kelly's etc), rate books and electoral lists are useful. During WW2 there were no electoral registers, but the 1939 Register plugs a gap. In built up areas especially, bomb census records created by the Home Office are available. If your house is associated with farming in a rural area, the National Farm Survey may well help. It is held at The National Archives (TNA).

In 1910, the Valuation Office surveyed the entire country looking at every single property, and assigning a 'hereditment' number. This was written up in field books, which can be found in TNA (under Class IR58). But don't just look for your house. If it sits in a community you might locate the plot from landmark properties (e.g. pubs). The 1910 VO survey gives a good link into the 1911 Census, and they can be used together, while the 1921 Census has various mapping tools. Census data can be combined with Tithe Apportionment data, post 1836. Tithes, usually 1/10th of the produce of the land were given to the local rector. Tithe maps can be compared to OS maps and aerial surveys, which can give land boundaries. If there are no tithe maps, look for Enclosure Awards.

With a timeline, you can start to look for owners and occupiers. Registration of land in England and Wales is under the Land Registry where title deeds might be found (known as sasines in Scotland). But when mortgages are paid off, the title deeds for a property are passed to the owner, until the property is re-sold, so many deeds may be in private hands. Once, title deeds were kept as far back as possible, but a law change in 1926 meant they only had to be kept for a number of years, and many historic title deeds were thrown away (many are sold today on Internet sites). In Scotland, the sasines go back to the 17th-Century and can be found in the National Records of Scotland. As title deeds were so important for showing land ownership, many people had them 'enrolled' (i.e. copied) and these can be found in TNA under Class C54. For the break-up of large estates, newspaper articles are useful.

The manorial system was established by William I in 1066. Land was owned by the Crown, but portions were given to knights to set up manors. These had a Lord to oversee them, but he was able to pass on land to his followers; some of this land was free of rent (freehold land), other was held in copyhold where a rent was paid. This system lasted until 1925/26. Latin was the language used up to 1732, when English took over. Records exist in vast numbers in court books, and many manorial records are found in estate records, although most are in local archives. The Manorial Records Index is in TNA, and the excellent Victoria County History volumes often give information.

Another obvious source is wills and probate. Land could not be passed on in wills until 1540 (for freeholders) and not until 1815 for copyholders. Pre-1858 wills are dealt with by the Diocesan probate courts, chiefly of Canterbury and York. Disputes over land were settled at the equity court pleading, and records, often detailed, are available at TNA.

Finally, are records there due to natural events like the dissolution of the monasteries or the Civil War of the 1600s. Later events such as railway or canal building, and slum clearance may be important, as well as insurance records, utility company records and personal papers.

Peter Tandy, 7790

Editor: The recording of the talk and the accompanying slides are available from Dave Morris.

My Shropshire Ancestors

Uncovering the truth from family stories

Talk given by Karen Hunter at Cross Houses on 6 June 2023

Karen has a significant number of Shropshire ancestors on her paternal side and in her talk she told the stories of just a few of them. She painted a picture of their lives, illustrating how various sources can help to tease out the truth from the family stories - stories with which we are no doubt all too familiar.

Local newspaper reports enhanced the story of her great-grandfather cycling to London in the 1870s, providing a photograph of him and his bicycles, and taking us into the life of a village blacksmith who turned his hand to making bicycles. They also told the very tragic story of the suicide of one of her great uncles, which had previously been unknown, illustrating the detail of some reporting in the 19th century which can sometimes be difficult to read.

Parish records revealed children who were born and died in between census returns - again telling a sad story of loss - although not uncommon at the time in the 1880s. They also eventually helped her resolve the truth behind a long whispered story of two children born to her grandfather and his first wife, although it wasn't made easy as the surname was Jones! Again, a sad revelation, but it has given the children their own identities and a recognised place within the family. It also provided more information about her grandfather's movements around the country, teaching her a lesson about not assuming people stayed close to home.

One of the most heartbreaking stories centred on her grandfather's first wife, with local Asylum records accessed at the Shropshire Archives revealing the truth behind one of the family tales, illustrating how some illnesses were categorised in the early 20th century and how attitudes and treatments have thankfully changed over the last 100 years. This search also highlighted for Karen that if we go 'digging' we should always be prepared to uncover information which can be challenging, unexpected or painful to take in.

From examining a will for Thomas Pugh, Karen's 2x great grandfather, there were a number of questions which Karen has yet to resolve and it led to some helpful suggestions from the audience during the afternoon.

Karen Hunter, Chair

Lest We Forget

Corporal Charles TANDY 1881-1915

Charles TANDY was born on 16 August 1881, in Stanley, near Wakefield, Yorkshire. He was the second son of William TANDY and Ann CAPEWELL, who were married on 28 September 1879. William is variously stated to be from Worcestershire (Upton on Worrall or Astley) or Staffordshire (Newport), while Ann was from Old Hill (Staffordshire). William was a coal miner and this probably accounts for his five children all being born in different parts of the country (William in Old Hill, Charles near Wakefield, Annie in Barnsley, Thomas and Samuel in Ince, near Wigan). The connection is that all these places are on coalfields, and perhaps they moved around the country wherever there was work to be had. By 1901 they were living in Tory Street, Rowley Regis (with two more children: Henry Arthur and Rosina). William was still a miner, as was his son William, but Charles made bricks, while Annie and Thomas made rivets. On 18 May 1907, Charles married Nancy Emily BARNSELY, born in 1884 in Rowley Regis, at the parish church, Reddal Hill.

They moved to Penyardarren, near Merthyr Tydfil. Although it is plum on the South Wales coal field, Charles is listed as a road repairer in 1911, but it's hard to believe he didn't go there initially as a miner. Two children, Sarah Ann and Samuel were born in Dowlais, but Samuel died just two years later.

With the advent of war in 1914, Charles signed up in Merthyr on 27 October 1914 for service with the 6th South Lancashire regiment, as a Private under regimental number 15674; he had previously done some service with the Worcestershire Volunteers. He was promoted Corporal on 22 May 1915.

With the war raging in Europe, the Russians appealed for Britain to mount a diversionary attack against the Turks; Lord Kitchener wasn't optimistic but felt that the Dardanelles, especially the Gallipoli Peninsula offered the best option. Churchill at the Admiralty concurred and was in any case chaffing at the bit for some naval action. With the French wanting a delay until troops were available, Churchill pushed on regardless, sending vessels in on 18 March 1915. Instead of working together, the army and navy worked separately. Naval vessels were thwarted by mines and two were sunk by submarines, blocking the entrance. Troops were eventually landed but came under heavy fire from dug-in units on the cliffs above. It was also said the Turks were short of ammunition – they were not. It was a disaster of planning and execution. Eventually, a retreat was ordered and the excuses started to flow. The Turks lost 86,000, the French 10,000, the Australians nearly 9,000 and the New Zealanders 2,700. One of those who died was Charles Tandy, killed on 27 August 1915. He was buried (with many others) in Junction cemetery, near Anzac Cove. He was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, British War and Victory medals. My father (also Charles) was born in Penyardarren in February 1915. He never knew his father....

TANDY, CHARLES, Corpl., No. 15674; 6th (Service) Battn. The South Lancashire Regt., s. of William Tandy; b. Wigan, co. Lancaster, 17 Aug. 1881; educ. Old Hill, co. Stafford; enlisted 27 Oct. 1914; served at the Dardanelles, and was killed in action there 27 Aug. 1915. He m. at St. Luke's Church, Bradley Heath, 17 May, 1907, Nancy Emily (28, Tory Street, Old Hill, co. Stafford), dau. of (—), and had three children: Charlie, b. 23 Feb. 1915; Sarah Ann, b. 1 June, 1909, and Nancy Emily, b. 8 Dec. 1913.

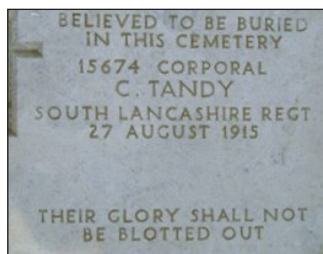


Image above taken from De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1919, Findmypast]

The images to left and right are of Charles Tandy's grave marker in Junction Cemetery, Anzac Cove.



Peter Tandy, 7790

From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On

The September 1983 Journal reported on a great idea and a great response.

An approach has been made to the lady chairman of the Shropshire Womens Institutes asking whether the various village institutes would list monumental inscriptions in the churches in their vicinity. Officers of the Society were present at a meeting of W.I.s at the Shirehall when over 200 delegates attended to receive advice on how to begin. More than 100 branches took part.

It was reported that Stanley Clifford would be standing down as the Society's Secretary. He was to be replaced by a General Secretary, Research Secretary, Outings Secretary, Correspondence Secretary, Membership Secretary and a Programme Secretary. Six for the price of one!

The 1983 AGM was to be held at the Coalport China Museum on a Saturday afternoon. Whilst the AGM was planned for 2.30pm., the venue would be open from 10.00-5.00pm., with a beginners table and other facilities for advice and help. Lunch would be available.

John Davies (member 512) was keen to hear from any descendants of John Davies and Sarah Newnes married in Ellesmere in 1815 who then had 12 children, as far as he could discover.

Robert William (member 157) decided to seek out Salopean Veterans who had served with the 7th Regiment of Foot (Royal Fusiliers) and were injured in the Napoleonic Wars between 1807 and 1828. He found 12 Out-Pensioners, meaning they were not living in Chelsea but received a pension. Though injured, they were, however liable to do drill under the staff officer of pensioners. A staff officer was posted in Shrewsbury with the idea of forming an invalid company for times of national emergency. He listed the 12 men in great detail.

The Manchester and Lancashire FHS were pleased to announce the formation of '*The Anglo Scottish Family History Society*'. to satisfy the demands of Scots living in England.

Member 29, Philippa Gray, enthusiastically recounted how sharing journals between Societies had opened the door to unexpected information and discovery of shared ancestry.

Patricia Woodward (member 149) shared her regret that she didn't take an interest in discovering her ancestral roots until after her grandmother died. A typical tale of woe

and a reason we should leave our stories where our grandchildren might find them when we are gone!

Patricia goes on to recount how her cousin Donald Peploe wanted to marry a German woman before the 1939 war during Hitler's regime. The German authorities required proof of non-Jewish ancestry before permission was granted. A list of Peploes was produced which went back to Samuel Peploe, Bishop of Chester from 1726-1745. The tree supplied for the German authorities must have been copied from *Burke's 'Landed Gentry'* – a piece of fiction which might have satisfied the Nazis but which, however much my family cherished it, would have to be dispensed with!

The Journal included an alphabetical index of Shropshire Marriages covering five pages from Abdon to Wroxeter. Janice Capewell, Projects Co-ordinator, comments *'that Shropshire is fortunate since many places are covered by one or more registers'* (ie Boyds, Gwynne and Lewis registers). We had to search long and hard in those days!

Four pages of the Journal listed a Calendar of Saints and Feast Days. Catherine Aitchison argued that *'One of the smaller annoyances in genealogical research is the confusion caused by births or marriages being recorded as having taken place on a Saints Day and no date mentioned'*.

The Journal carried a review of a book entitled *'Reconstructing Historical Communities'* by Alan Macfarlane, Cambridge University Press. He says *'to the average reader the most fascinating aspect of this study is the wealth of detail concerning the lives of ordinary men & women in 16/17th Century, England'*.

Reg Wilford

Editor: As ever when I read Reg's contribution I can find a number of aspects of the work of the Society which still ring true 40 years on.

We are working on how the Monumental inscriptions and Exchange journals we hold can be made accessible on our new website.

Work has also begun to consolidate any existing files and scan back copies of our Journal so digital copies can be made available.

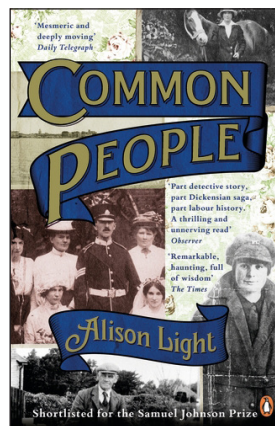
Planning for our next AGM is on the current agenda for the Committee so look out for details in this and the December Journals and the Newsletter.

Common People - a book review

Writing about Family History is a process which starts with verifiable facts, moving onto creating a narrative, and then putting the narrative down on paper. The writer is then faced with a choice, which style of writing should I use? It seems to me there are two we might consider. The first of these is a straight forward recounting of the facts. To me a second is perhaps much more interesting. This is a style which uses what we might describe as a discovery, exploratory style. It is written in such a way that the writer themselves takes you on a journey of exploration as she or he discovers the family “swings and arrows of outrageous fortune”.

This style tacitly suggests that the map for the journey is already there but the author gives the impression to the reader that they have not been down the road before and is finding out these things for themselves for the first time. To do this the writer asks the reader to suspend disbelief as they both go on this journey of discovery together as if it is just happening. The version of the story written in this way could well be much more exciting than a straight forward recounting of the facts. This is a style seen visually in the BBC’s “*Who do you think you are?*”.

The best book I have ever read about family history is *Common People: The History of an English Family* by Alison Light (Penguin Fig Tree 2014) and is written in the manner described above. She traces in turn her father’s family, the Lights, and then her mother’s family, the Smiths. She trawls through different census, as we all do, but investigates the each ten year period in between the census. This, of course, is rather more difficult as we know. One thing she does frequently is refer to literature written at the time of each incident she describes. This is an idea I am particularly interested in which might give some depth to circumstances our ancestors found themselves in. Light mentions Dickens’ “*Hard Times*” to help us appreciate what was going on in the lives of her father’s ancestors in the industrial towns they lived in. The literature offers touchstones to greater understanding.



For me, tracing my family history has been a great educator. After seventy odd years of life, so called good schools and university, I finally feel at last I have discovered what learning is. I now know for example, a great deal about the piano trade in London in the early 19th Century, coach travel at the same time and the importance of Methodism to

the history of this country, amongst many other things. Light also uses this same idea wherein for example she offers a quite detailed description and history of the nail making trade in and around Birmingham in the 19th Century and its importance to the economy of this country. Things that might concern us all such as workhouses and cemeteries are features of English History that are also treated in this way.

The book is detailed and academic. Her research is supreme. But at the same time, her style is invigorating and exciting. It has been described as a new history of the British Working Class and seen as a worthy successor to E. P. Thompson's "*The Making of the English Working Class*" (Gollancz 1963). In the post script she says that she thought she might find an ancestral palace but what she found was a movement. She thought that she was as English as they come but in fact discovered herself to be the descendant of men and women whose history is local, national and global and as family historians we all fit into this paradigm.

Bill Allison, 7760 juliaallison@btinternet.com

Editor: Bill has been telling me about this book for some months now and this review has finally prompted me to download a copy for some holiday reading on my long-haul flight to Canada!



Free Access!

Did you know that many county libraries across the UK have free access to some of the main genealogy subscription sites, although they may not provide full access to all their databases. Given the cost of subscriptions to these sites it is well worth exploring. You will need to be a member of the library and that usually means you have to live in that County.

The Shropshire Libraries provide free access to Ancestry.co.uk, British Newspaper Archive and also partial access to FindMyPast (most of Shropshire Parish Registers up to 1900). You just need to be able to get to the library and have a library card and PIN number.

Reflections on our book stall

I have been connected with the SFHS sale of books for many years and now that we are no longer able to sustain a book stall I thought it might be time for some reflection.

Many visitors at the more recent meetings will be used to seeing Sue Tarr with the local books and my stall of reference books and storage materials. Over the more than 20 years during which I have been associated with the book stall things have certainly changed significantly! When I started I believe Margaret Beale was in charge of the local section and initially Rev. Martin Whitwell stored the 'reference' books and I did the buying, ordering and helped with selling them.

I kept some yearly records of that time when an order seemed to be sent to the Federation of Family History Society Publications or the Society of Genealogists nearly every month to replenish the stock. Besides the monthly meetings at Shire Hall committee members attended many Fairs sometimes six or seven a year. Some of these were fairly local but others included Southport, Gloucester, Stoneleigh, York, Brecon, Worcester, Llandudno, Northwich, Weston-super-Mare and many, many others even pre the WDYTIA in London and Birmingham.

At first it was mainly using our local knowledge, books and maps to help visitors but increasingly we were able to take computers and then much more was available via the web. Early on it was indeed fairly difficult for members from afar to find the maps and books they sought and sales certainly proved that as we often took over £50 and sometimes £100 at these Fairs which were very busy indeed. Our annual Fair was another time when stock was in great demand. In the year 2004-05 sales of 'my' stall (not local) reached over £1,100 despite this being the year we offered 10% discount to members – thank goodness I still had a local branch of Lloyds Bank nearby!

As more books became available on the web and more information was online our sales started to shrink and lockdown and lack of meetings heralded the end of the need for the service. It is interesting to glance at the earlier titles – *Introduction to using Computers*, *Genealogy 4 Macs*, *Amstrad PCW Programs* and such, but others have really stood the test of time albeit updated, such as the *My Ancestor* books. In the early days we also held Pigot's fiches for each county and rejoiced when the first NBI came out on disc.

Many will remember Margaret, Martin, Joye, Dot, Chris, Pam and the many others who contributed their time and energy over the years. Our stalls were a place where anyone

could browse, buy, ask questions or just chat. I will certainly miss meeting the great variety of members and non members, especially the 'regulars'!

Nadine Shearman, 0958

Editor: Many thanks to Nadine and all of our members who have helped with book sales in the past. I wonder if any of our members have their own copy of the titles mentioned in this article or indeed others that perhaps you still make reference to during your research?

As Nadine highlights, times have changed and sustaining sales in the same way has not proved to be realistic. However, we continue to explore ways in which we can come together to chat and share our passion for family history. It will be different but still an important part of our role as a Society.

The Society Needs You!

Please can you help?

We are coming up to that time of the year when the Committee starts the task of planning for the Annual General Meeting which is scheduled for January 2024.

This includes producing the year-end accounts, which our Treasurer does so well every year; preparing and producing the annual report; and ensuring we have a viable Executive Committee to enable the Society to continue.

I am delighted to say that our Treasurer and Secretary have indicated their willingness to stand for election for a further year, as am I, if people wish me to do so. However we really need a few more committee members, to bring a range of voices and views to support our work and decision making on all aspects of the Society. As you might have seen there are currently five vacancies and it would be great if we could fill some of these at our AGM in 2024.

The Committee is responsible for 'administering the affairs and funds of the Society' in accordance with the Constitution (a copy of which can be obtained from Dave Morris) and meets on line on the first Tuesday afternoon of each month (usually excluding July and August).

If you are interested in finding out more or would like to join one of our meetings to get an idea of how we work please let me know.

Karen Hunter, Chair chair@sfhs.org.uk

From the Editor

We will remember them

As I have highlighted before the Journal relies predominantly on contributions from our members and I hope you will agree with me that this edition is a great example of how a wide range of articles can come together to create a good read for everyone. The articles linked to those who served in the armed services in a variety of conflicts and places over the years have, for me, clearly illustrated the breadth of experiences some of our ancestors endured and have provided a brief opportunity to reflect on their sacrifices as we approach that time of remembrance and reflection in November.

Discovering resources to help with our family history

As the sharp-eyed among you might have noticed there are two references to ancestors in our families being village blacksmiths - one in Eyton on the Weald Moors, Shropshire and the other in Greenlaw, Berwickshire. In wandering round Social Media and the Internet recently I came across *The Blacksmiths Index* website which is a great site for anyone with ancestors who were blacksmiths or in related trades. It relies on people adding in details and that is something I will be doing when home from my holiday. <https://blacksmiths.mygenwebs.com/index.php>

This got me wondering if any of our readers have come across any new resources to help with their research - a website, a specialist archive, unusual records, a podcast - that you could share with us? Or perhaps you have read a good book which has further opened your eyes to how our ancestors lived that you could write a review on.

A quick look in my articles 'cupboard' highlights it is currently rather short of copy so please send me some for future editions. Without them the Journal will be a rather slimmed down version. The guidelines for submission are on page 143 but if you are not sure about something just drop me an email and I will get back to you.

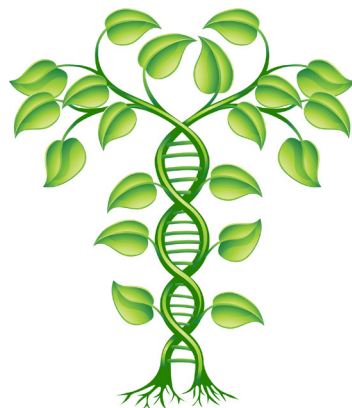
Disappointingly my suggestion for examples of memorabilia that trigger stories about our ancestors hasn't yet resulted in any articles. However, if you do have any objects and associated tales to share please send them in. Perhaps you have a Christmas Tree decoration that has been handed down through the generations which brings back memories each time you bring them out of the decorations box over the festive season.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Karen Hunter, Editor

DNA Special Interest Group

During the last Talking Family History online session in July we had a discussion about DNA and family history, touching on things some of us had discovered from doing a DNA test, how it works, etc. It raised a number of questions from some who are interested in exploring this facet of family history but not sure where to start and a suggestion was made about establishing a DNA Special Interest Group for members.



The Committee have agreed to explore this, on the understanding that if it is to go ahead we need some help to make it happen.

The proposal is to set up the group which would meet online every other month (dates and times to be finalised) but help is needed to:

- Co-ordinate the sessions (dates/times/etc); maintain a 'list' of interested people; and send out the links for each session.
- 'Chair' the sessions.
- Bring some some experience in using DNA for family history to the sessions and be willing to share knowledge with others during the sessions.
- Set up the Zoom meetings and act as host for the online sessions. (We will use the Society Zoom account and details would be provided to enable this.)

If you are interested in taking part in this group and/or think you could help with one or more of these tasks please let Karen Hunter know on editor@sfhs.org.uk

Membership Renewals

This is just a gentle reminder that membership renewals are due on 1 October, so if applicable please send your subscription payment to us. The yellow outer wrap gives the details you will require and the envelope your Journal arrived in will indicate if you need to pay. If you have subscribed to the PDF version of the Journal you will have received the information separately.

Thanks to everyone for renewing - it is only through the membership fee that we are able to do what we do to promote family history and support our members across the world.

Talks Programme 2023/2024

Below is listed the talks which have been booked for our 2023/24 season. Many thanks to Joan Gate for sorting all this for us. It certainly looks like there is plenty to look forward to in the coming months.

17 October	Thirty Days Hath September etc. Why are our months different lengths, what happened to February and why did the New Year begin on March 25th and other intriguing calendar anomalies	<i>Robert Hodge</i>
21 November	Wenlock Abbey – a Shropshire Country House 1857-1919 Exploring the rich architectural and historic heritage of the abbey and the history and associates of the Milnes-Gaskell family who lived there	<i>Cynthia Gamble</i>
19 December	In the Family Way – illegitimacy between the First World War and the Swinging Sixties Looking at the social stigma that having an illegitimate baby brought to women and the secrecy surrounding illegitimacy and the ways in which society coped with this discreetly hidden subject	<i>Jane Robinson</i>
16 January 2024	What's That Job? Delving into a range of resources and strategies for demystifying unfamiliar occupations, including some Shropshire-specific jobs and industries. Preceded by the Society Annual General Meeting	<i>Dr Sophie Kay</i>
20 February	The Work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Using their Archives	<i>Sarah Moody</i>
19 March	Counting the People Using the Census This talk will introduce some essential techniques for searching online databases and will provide some vital clues for tracking down elusive ancestors	<i>David Annal</i>

Talks Programme 2023/2024

16 April	Sin, Sex and Probate – the work of the Church Courts There is a wealth of information to be found in the records of the Church Courts from fines our ancestors paid for playing football on a Sunday to excommunication and its aftermath, with lots of saucy doings in between, as Dr Chapman will demonstrate	<i>Dr Colin Chapman</i>
21 May	Murder, Sex and Mayhem in English Churches A look at the information to be found about our ancestors within the English Parish Church	<i>John Vigar</i>
18 June	Everything you wanted to know about Heraldry – and were afraid to ask! A gentle introduction to the fascinating world of heraldry and how it can be used to further family history research	<i>Chris Broom</i>

Talking Family History Online

These sessions have been running for 18 months now and we will be starting up our Autumn series of online sessions on 5 October. As usual they will usually be held on the first Thursday evening of each month, from 7.30-9pm. If anyone else would like to join in the discussions just email Karen Hunter on editor@sfhs.org.uk and she will add you to the list.



New Members

Welcome to the following new members who have joined us in the past few months.

- 7937 GILCHRIST Ms L; WEM, Shropshire
- 7938 BOYD Mrs S; CAIRNS Queensland 4870, Australia
- 7939 SCRIVENS Mrs G; BIRMINGHAM,
- 7940 HAKANSON Mrs I.P.; PERTH 6022, Australia
- 7941 MCCAIG Mrs A; COVENTRY, Warwickshire
- 7942 DARRELL Mr D G L; CHURCH STRETTON, Shropshire
- 7943 BLACKMAN Ms L R; STIRLING A.C.T. 2611, Australia
- 7944 PURSLOW Mrs E; SHREWSBURY, Shropshire,
- 7945 WILKINSON Dr I; WELLINGTON POINT, Queensland 4160, Australia

We have been notified of the deaths of the following membes and we offer our condolences to their families and friends.

- MILNE Mr C R; FARNBOROUGH, Hampshire
- HILL Mr L G; NORTH FERRIBY, East Yorkshire
- SHIPLEY Mr A; MORETON-IN-MARSH, Gloucestershire

Where do you read your Journal?



Peter has been combining his hobbies! Here he is reading his June Journal in front of a 24"-gauge steam locomotive (No.1641) built in 1919 by Andrew Barclay Sons & Co. in Kilmarnock, Scotland, which currently operates during the summer along about four miles of track at the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway in Bedfordshire.

He also tells us that one of these locomotives went to war in WW1, although not this one.

Does anyone else read their copy of the Journal in an unusual place? I certainly recall someone mentioning they read theirs while on the treadmill at the gym!

Update on Committee Business

The Committee met in August and the key discussion points were as follows.

Details of Members' Interests are continuing to be sent to Dave Morris and we are working on a solution to make them searchable on the new website when functional.

Work continues on consolidating the digital versions of the Monumental Inscriptions – some challenges have arisen in this so more work is required.

We received an update on progress on the Website. The structure of the database has been reviewed and work is now being undertaken to translate that into workable solution for the new website. The aim is this will be ready for testing by the end of this month. The testing will initially work with a sample of the data and move towards a full set so we can be sure it is working as required before we can go live. A solution to ensure the Forum function is retained is being addressed.

Following the success of the Face to Face meeting at Cross Houses in June the Committee plan to introduce three or four in-person meetings in the coming year, with planning for these to be done in the early autumn.

Karen will include an item in the September Journal encouraging members to consider joining the committee for the coming year. If anyone would like to know more about what this entails please get in touch.

The Committee supported the proposal to explore interest in establishing a DNA group which would run online, with more details to be included in the September Journal, including the requirements for some volunteers to help run the group.

The Society is looking to see if it is possible for us to 'attend' the FHF Really Useful Family History Show (online) in November.

The Committee reviewed current membership numbers and was pleased to note a gradual increase. We will look to see how we can encourage others to join us when the new website is launched.

If you want to know more or have any questions about any of this please contact our Secretary, Dave Morris.

Certificate Exchange Scheme

The following birth certificates have all been advertised before but not for many years.

Surname	Forename	Date	Parents	Location
ANDREWS	Elizabeth	20 Jun 1866	William and Catherine formerly NICHOLLS	Condoover
ANDREWS	Mary	6 Oct 1865	Joshua and Mary formerly HINKS	Pontesbury
BARBER	Roland John	6 Apr 1849	John and Ellen formerly BENNETT	Wellington
BARBER	Thomas	13 Jul 1853	Thomas and Harriet formerly LEECH	Ercall Magna
CADMAN	Emma	23 Jan 1839	Enoch and Emma formerly HASLE	Wellington
CADMAN	Emma	12 Oct 1845	James and Ann formerly HAMIS/AMIS	Wellington
EDWARDS	Joseph	26 Oct 1853	Thomas and Mary Ann formerly THOMAS	Shrewsbury St Mary
EVANS	John	25 Feb 1859	Edward and Eliza formerly PHILLIPS	Bishops Castle
EVANS	John	12 Jun 1859	William and Margaret formerly TUNLEY	Radnor, Llanfihangel
EVANS	Thomas	3 Jun 1865	William and Martha formerly MILLICHAP	Clee St Margaret

Anyone wanting to make enquiries can contact Christine using the email address below. There is no charge for a certificate but please send a stamped addressed envelope to the postal address on the inside front cover. Unwanted certificates can be sent to the same address. For a full list of certificates available please go to the website and look under 'Forums'.

Christine Head, 5373 xchangeCERTS@sfhs.org.uk

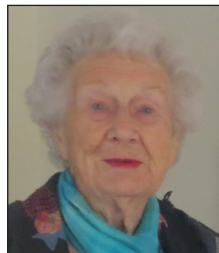
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- Include your name, membership number, e-mail and other relevant contact details in the same file as the text of your article and indicate which of them can be included. Otherwise, only your name and SFHS number (if appropriate) will be printed.
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Obituary: Jessie Elizabeth Hanson

Jessie Hanson, a long-standing member of the Society died on 1 June this year, aged 98. She was born Jessie Howells in 1925 and grew up in Milford, Baschurch, attending school in Basford and then the Priory School, Shrewsbury. She went on to train as a teacher and worked in Shropshire - Ryton, Bridgnorth and Baschurch - before moving to Nigeria and then to Berkshire.



She and her husband retired to Llansillin. There, Jessie developed her great passion for history research when she went on a course for writing and researching local history, led by Barrie Trinder. Jessie put this knowledge to good use and wrote three books: one on the early life of Charles Darwin, another on the Darbys of Little Ness and the last one on Baschurch School and the founder Eleanor Harris, all of which appeared on our bookstall over time. Jessie was also a member of many history groups and loved giving history talks on many different subjects around Shropshire, including to our Society.

Taken from a full obituary by Leanne Seward, daughter of Jessie Hanson

Copy Dates

Publication Date	Items to be submitted by
December 2023	1 October 2023
March 2024	1 January 2024
June 2024	1 April 2024
September 2024	1 July 2024

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