Shropshire Family History Society

Journal 45 - Part 1 March 2024

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Post will be passed to the appropriate member of the Society team and a reply issued as soon as is possible.

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Front cover: A selection of images as included in this edition of the Journal. See related articles for more details

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Thoughts from the Chair

I hope 2024 has started well for you. The Society started the year with our AGM in January and the Committe have been re-elected together with a new member, Dawn Blundell, who has joined us. Thanks Dawn for coming forward, and if anyone else is interested in joining we do have some vacancies so just let us know. I am honoured to have been elected Chair for a second year and I hope that together we can continue to work to take forward our ideas to develop the Society.

Following on from my comments in the December Journal, and as I explained at the AGM, we have now contracted a website developer to take the project through to completion. It is fair to say this still comes with some challenges to ensure we get exactly what we need and want from the new site, but we are working through those with the developer. The current timetable is for a launch of the new site in late Spring, but I'm not going to give a specific date at this point. However we will keep you updated via the monthly Newsletter and all being well we will be able to tell you all about the new site in our June Journal.

Shortly after the December Journal was published the Ministry of Justice launched a consultation document on the *Storage and retention of original will documents* and we flagged it up in the January Newsletter, encouraging people to take a look and, if they felt so inclined, to respond and hopefully some of you did just that. It is fair to say that over the past two months there has been a signficant reaction from among many in the genealogy/family history community and as of 22 January Mike Freer MP (Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Justice) stated '*we have already received several hundred responses, largely drawn from the historian, archive and family history sectors*'. At our February Committee meeting we agreed to prepare and send a response. This response will provide support in principle for the digitisation process although acknowledging it is not the full solution to retaining records. However we will be expressing our strong opposition to the proposal to destroy the bulk of the documents after digitising them.

Making use of DNA in family hisotry research is becoming ever more popular - indeed some people are giving kits to relatives as Christmas and birthday presents although I would suggest it is something which needs careful thought before taking such a step. A recent series on ITV, *Born From The Same Stranger,* has highlighted yet another aspect of testing which could provide some challenges for anyone. If you haven't seen it the series focuses on people who were conceived using donated sperm or eggs or, in some

cases, a donated embryo. We should all be prepared to discover the unexpected when researching our family history and even more so when using DNA as a tool, but this adds some additional challenges, both for the individuals searching and also for those who they may connect with. The guarantee of anonymity for donors which was in place up to 2005 (when the rules changed) has been blown out of the water with the use of DNA testing. Imagine opening your DNA results and discovering you have multiple half siblings when you thought you were an only child, or even a potential father that you previously knew nothing about. Admittedly you can come across these when there has been no involvement of donation but it it potentially increased when it does. I have found some good results from my DNA testing so far but I recognise there is still the chance for some unexpected surprises to emerge from people who have yet to test.

Like many other organisations our Society is run by volunteers, and without people coming forward to help in a myriad of ways we couldn't function. From making the tea at our in-person events, running the Zoom meetings, booking the speakers, helping at the Archives Helpdesk, keeping our finances in shape, even editing the Journal, and a host of other tasks. And to everyone who does their bit to help, thank you. I would however like to say a special thank you to Christine Head who, for some time now, has been writing reviews of the talks we have so they can be published in the Journal to give a flavour of them to those who are not able to take part. However, Christine has decided to step back from this role to take a well deserved rest. We will miss your contributions Chris but appreciate all that you have done. Peter Tandy has been sharing the task for a couple of years now and he also offers his thanks:

I started to write reviews of SFHS meetings, in December 2021 following a request in the Journal for someone to help Christine Head. Although I am literate, and (I like to think) a bit of a wordsmith, and had a certain amount of experience of taking meeting notes and writing them up, I still needed Christine's advice and help, and she gave this very willingly. Now, as Christine has decided that she has done enough, I would just like to publicly thank her for helping me with the job, and making my task a lot easier. Thanks Chris! Now you can relax!

So, is there anyone who is willing and able to step forward to share the load with Peter? If so, or you would like to know more of what is involved please get in touch with me in the first instance and I can then put you in touch with Peter who can help you in the way Christine helped him when he started.

Best wishes.

Karen Hunter, Chair chair@sfhs.org.uk

The brothers Gwilliam: emigrants from Shropshire to Alberta

In 2013 I wrote an article about 'A Mystery House' for the Journal of the Shropshire Family History Society (Vol. 34 Part 4, December 2013). It featured a grainy black and white photograph showing my paternal grandmother, Catherine GWILLIAM, standing outside a ruined house somewhere in England. But where? And when? I knew from her birth certificate that she had been born in the Lower House, Chetton on 28 May 1872. On visiting Chetton a first glance at that house was sufficient to prove that it was not the house in the photograph. The article went on to describe how, with help, I was able to solve the mystery and locate the once ruined house.

My father died in 1964, a man of few words, none of which I recall mentioning his antecedents beyond his parents of whom he was inordinately fond. They died before I was born so the key to the door to knowing anything of those who went before did not exist. I researched parents, grandparents, and siblings, put them tidily into a family tree and then largely forgot about them. Family history lesson number one: a door without a key may be worth a phone call to a locksmith.

For the following thirty years I devoted my genealogical energies to research on my maternal line. It was only then that I returned to the paternal line and stumbled over the fact that one of Catherine's brothers, Thomas, born on 27 February 1868, like Catherine at Chetton, had emigrated to Canada. Might I perhaps have living relatives in Canada?

It quickly became evident that Thomas was not the only GWILLIAM in Catherine's family who migrated, first within England from Shropshire to Staffordshire, and then to Grassy Lake in Alberta. In an earlier generation the family had owned a farm, later when their wealth declined, they became tenant farmers before some of the men in the younger generation headed further afield in search of employment in the Staffordshire coal mines. Catherine did what women often did by going into service in Staffordshire where she married Ernest Albert Hall at Ogley Hay, 12 August 1896. Close by were her coal mining brothers, Thomas and William.

Why, I wondered, had Catherine, Thomas, and William, moved from a seemingly secure and settled family existence in Shropshire to Staffordshire? The answer almost certainly lay in the relative employment opportunities in the two counties at the time. During the late nineteenth century, a depression in British agriculture, sometimes referred to as the Great Depression, brought hardship to farming communities throughout the country

from about 1873 to 1896. It was mainly caused by a dramatic fall in grain prices following the opening of the American prairies to cultivation in the 1870s at the same time as the arrival of cheaper transportation that accompanied the expansion of international trade following the advent of steamships. Shropshire was of course a significant agricultural county. In Staffordshire coal mining was flourishing as it met the needs of Victorian industry in its heyday.

In Staffordshire I found Thomas working in the Woodpecker Mines at Brownhills near Walsall. On 26 December 1892 he married Mary Jane WHITTINGHAM in the Anglican church in Ogley Hay, Staffordshire. Mary Jane was a local girl aged nineteen. Thomas then served in the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902). For whatever reasons they then decided to emigrate to Canada, no doubt in the hope of a better life abroad. Perhaps they heard rosy tales of a good life for farming folk in Canada and, like many others, found the prospect attractive. In the background, colonial policy stressed the mutual benefits of people moving out of England, venting surplus population, and taking skills and energies to the new found lands across the seas.

Thomas and Mary Jane arrived at Montreal on 6 May 1905 aboard the Ottawa. Walter, a brother of Thomas, arrived shortly afterwards on 17 May aboard the Kensington. Thomas and Mary Jane took up a homestead at Grassy Lake, Alberta, with the June 1906 Canadian Census showing them as farmers living at Bow Island P.O. with Walter, one of four boarders in the household.

An article in '*Faded Trails, Grassy Lake, Purple Springs*' has a grainy wedding photograph of Mr and Mrs Thomas GWILLIAM on their wedding day in England and tells how Thomas in Canada had an additional string to his employment bow, working the farm in season as well as in the mines at nearby Taber in the winters. In the short-run he may have found life in Canada no easier than the life he left behind in England.

'*Faded Trails*' also has an image of their home and an account of how they '*hired Isaya Lyons, a stone mason, to build their house of stone. These stones were taken from the coulee. The coulee not far away was the north fork of the 40 mile. This house stands today, an old landmark of homestead days*'.

If their new life was hard, it may have seemed to Thomas, Mary Jane and Walter that the move to Canada still offered future prospects of better times to come. But storm clouds were gathering. After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Walter's thoughts turned to

Europe and his Canadian Attestation Paper shows that on 12 November 1915, he enlisted at Lethbridge with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force (CEF), swearing on oath to '*be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth*'.

He arrived in England in March 1916 before embarking for France where he served as a Gunner in the 39th Battery of the CEF. In October 1917 he was in hospital in Boulogne suffering from influenza before being transferred to Aubengue in November where, fortunately, he recovered from his illness. For many combatants in the War the influenza outbreak, 'Spanish 'flu' as it became known, posed a greater hazard than the enemy.

When the War ended in November 1918 Thomas no doubt looked forward to Walter's return from France just as Walter, no doubt relieved to have survived the War, had high hopes of his return to Thomas and Mary Jane and a farming life in Canada.

But it was not to be. If Walter had survived influenza Thomas was less fortunate, for after contracting an acute respiratory infection he died from influenza in the general hospital at Medicine Hat on 27 December 1918. The Lethbridge Herald of Dec 31, 1918 (page 17) carried a short article as follows:

'Thos. GWILLIAM Grassy Lake, A Victim of Influenza',
Death of Citizen

He leaves to mourn his passing his wife, a brother with the forces overseas, and many friends,' adding only that 'The interment took place in the Grassy Lake cemetery.

Subsequent research shows him in an unmarked grave. I found that surprising but it may just have been that Mary Jane could not afford even a simple memorial.

It must have been a devastating Christmas for Mary Jane, far from her family in England and with Walter still away in Europe. If it was a time of rejoicing for many families, for others it was a period of grief and reflection.

After the War Gunner Walter GWILLIAM was discharged from the CEF at Medicine Hat, Alberta, on 31 March 1919. He returned to Grassy Lake and resumed farming with Mary Jane.

Family history research is always capable of producing an occasional bolt from the blue and at this point re-enter stage left Catherine Hall (GWILLIAM), my grandmother and sister of Thomas and Walter, who arrived in New York on 30 May 1919 aboard the Cunard liner *Saxonia* ex London. Catherine was recorded as 'in transit' with her final destination shown as Alberta, Ontario. She can surely only have been heading to Lethbridge to support Mary Jane, her sister-in-law, Thomas' widow, and no doubt also her brother Walter. It was a

major journey and financial commitment given that her husband Ernest Albert Hall was at that time employed in a modest position as a gardener in Keynsham. During her absence Ernest Albert and their only son, my father Gerald Vincent GWILLIAMs Hall, aged eighteen, in his first year as an engineering student in the University of Bristol, remained at home. And yet, although my father, who was very close to his mother, must have been aware of these goings on, I have no memory of him mentioning family connections in Canada. Did he see his family as being of humble lineage, an embarrassment, and hence the least said the better? There can be no doubt though that he was aware of his Canadian relations and his mother's absence in Canada to visit them.

It was not long before Catherine and Mary Jane returned to England. Was Mary Jane considering a permanent return or just visiting family? In the event she returned to Grassy Lake and the farm with Walter.

After the death of Thomas and his return from the War, Walter seems to have remained close to Mary Jane and eventually become closer still for they married at Lethbridge on 16 March 1923, with Walter now aged forty-three, and Mary Jane, shown on the marriage registration as 'Housekeeper', aged forty-nine. Unsurprisingly in view of her age the marriage did not result in any children. Neither have I found any children resulting from her previous marriage to Thomas.

'Faded Trails' also has an image of 'Mr. and Mrs. Walter GWILLIAM' standing on what may be the step to the front door of the house that Thomas and Mary Jane had built all those years before. The article also notes how '*many may recall Mary Jane singing "Cockles and Mussels" when friends got together.*' For me this briefest of fragments of information somehow breathes life into someone long gone.

In about 1938, coincidentally the year I was born, Walter retired from farming and he and Mary Jane moved to live in British Columbia. He died in Vancouver on 18 September 1953 aged seventy-three having lived there for fifteen of his almost fifty years in Canada. Two stones mark his grave in the Mountain View Cemetery, the first, simple but clearly contemporary with his death, is marked 'Gunner W GWILLIAM, C.F.A.' with a maple leaf

and his date of death, while a second and more recent stone bears the same inscription but adds his regiment.

After Walter's death Mary Jane moved to Toronto, Ontario, to live with such family as she had in Canada, but what family did she have in Canada? She died three years after Walter in 1956 and is buried in the Park Lane Cemetery. The '*Find a Grave*' website now added another vital brick to my family wall. On her gravestone are listed other GWILLIAM names including Bertram W. (1890-1966) for whom Mary Jane was 'Dear Aunt', and Walter G. GWILLIAM (1920-1989), and a Darren G. Williams (1967-1971).

It was Bertram who was the kingpin of her family, through GWILLIAM, in Canada. Bertram William GWILLIAM was born at Brownhills, Staffordshire, on 26 May 1890. His birth certificate shows him as Bertram William, the son of William Edward GWILLIAM and Ann Matilda GWILLIAM formerly DONE. He was born at New Street, Ogley Hay, Brownhills and his father was a coal miner. Hence, he was not a brother of Catherine, Thomas, and Walter although his father, William Edward GWILLIAM, was a relative of their father, Edward GWILLIAM.

Bertram arrived at Montreal on 4 May 1910. Clearly word had got around in the family that Canada was a good place to go. Aged twenty-two, Bertram married Ellen Leonora Baker at York, Ontario, on 16 November 1912.

If I have no memory of my father ever mentioning family in Canada, I recently found evidence I had overlooked in a rusty Maison Lyons Chocolate Biscuits tin which I had squirreled away in a cupboard after he died. It contained a collection of items that must have meant something to him including his razor, his father's spectacles, a silver medallion inscribed Champion Souvenir for Sweet Peas Presented by Henry Eckford the Specialist Wem Shropshire. There was also a hat pin with a Maple leaf at one end, a cigarette case with the flags of Canada and the United States on one side and the words Niagara Falls on the other. A Vesta case marked T. GWILLIAM on a little silver label was another object of which I saw no significance at the time. This tin might well have gone straight into a skip after my father died and here lies yet another warning to family historians: genealogical treasures may lie concealed in memorabilia passing for junk that forebears leave behind.

The names on Mary Jane's grave were tantalising. Although they were all dead I wondered if their children and grandchildren might be my living relatives in Canada. With wonderful help from the Lethbridge Genealogy Society, I was soon equipped with a list of names and addresses of some living descendants from those named on the Toronto grave. I wrote to all five on the list and received one reply by return. This included a family tree of

GWILLIAM descendants in Canada. I have now located and restored the contact lost when Catherine my grandmother died in 1937. I like to think she would have been pleased.

Job finally done? This being beyond my wildest genealogical dreams I pondered a final lesson before answering 'yes': there is always more beyond . . .

Bernard Hall, 6944

The help I received in tracing my GWILLIAM family in Canada is a striking example of the remaining value of local family history societies notwithstanding the advance of internet sources, DNA, and other newer aides. Similarly, my thanks to the volunteers who contribute to the wonderful '*Find a Grave*' project.

The Eykin Family from Worfield

Editor: One of our members, David White, has asked if anyone can help with the following. If you can please let me know and I will be able to put you in touch.

Does anyone have a keen interest in Worfield? In particular, I wondered if anybody knows the names of the Eykin people buried in the Eykin vault at Worfield church? My great (x9) grandparents were Richard (died 1651) and Jane Eykin from Ackleton, Worfield. Supposedly, the Eykin family were in Worfield parish for 800 years. My first connection with the Eykin family is my great (x6) grandparents, Roger Devey (born 1674, Pattingham), who married Rebecca Eykin (1678-1750) from Ackleton, Worfield.

Many years later, my mother's uncle and auntie, Joe and Beatrice Farrier, owned Ackleton Hall.

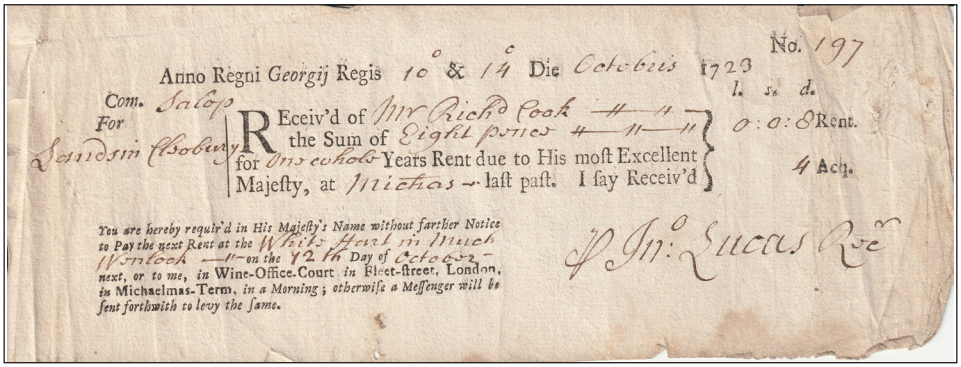
David White, 1514

[*Editor: the image is of Ackleton Hall, The larger part of the hall, built of roughcast rendered brick, and which dates from the early 19th century, rather hides away behind surrounding buildings. It was Grade II listed in 1974.*

cc-by-sa/2.0 - Ackleton Hall, Ackleton by Richard Law
https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6405704]

Cleobury Rent Receipts

I recently acquired a collection of rent receipts relating to land in Cleobury, the earliest of which is dated October 1723 when George I was king. Despite being just simple bits of paper, albeit of significant age, they hold a surprising amount of family and local history.



No. 197

Anno Regni Georgij Regis 10° & 14° Die Octobris 1723

Com. Salop
For Leasows in Cleobury

Receiv'd of Mr Richd Cook the Sum of Eight pence for One whole Years Rent due to His most Excellent Majesty, at Michas last past. I say Receiv'd

l. s. d.
0 : 0 : 8 Rent.
4 Acq.

You are hereby requir'd in His Majesty's Name without further Notice to Pay the next Rent at the White Hart in Much Wenlock on the 12th Day of October next, or to me, in Wine-Office-Court in Fleet-street, London, in Michaelmas-Term, in a Morning; otherwise a Messenger will be sent forthwith to levy the same.

J. Jn° Lucas Rec

The receipt from 1723 is above and reads:

> *Receiv'd of Mr Richd COOK the Sum of eight pence for one whole Years Rent due to His most Excellent Majesty, at Michaelmas last past. I say Receiv'd.*

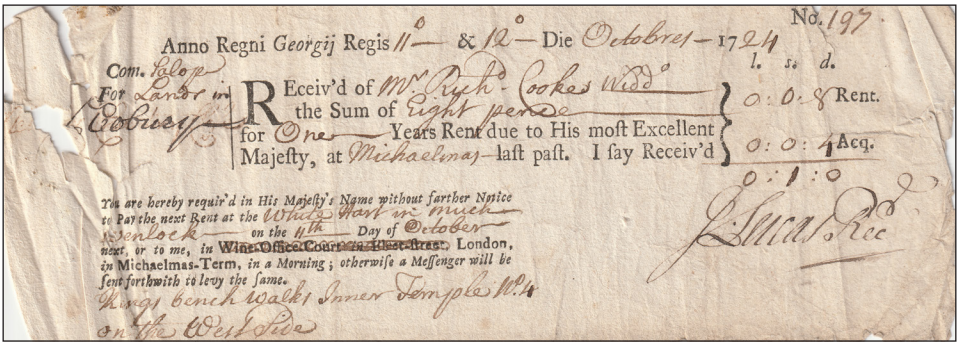
The sums listed are then 8 pence *Rent* and 4 pence *Acq*.

In smaller print is:

> *You are hereby requir'd in His Majesty's Name without further notice to Pay the next Rent at the White Hart in Much Wenlock on the 12th Day of October next, or to me, in Wine-Office-Court in Fleet-street, London, in Michaelmas-Term, in a morning; otherwise a Messenger will be sent forthwith to levy the same.*

The following year's receipt for October 1724 is similar, [see the image on the facing page] but the payment is received from *Mr. Richard Cookes Widdow*. This continues until 1727 when she is recorded as *Mrs Martha Cooke Widdow*.

Looking at the Cleobury parish register reveals a marriage on 2 July 1710 of Richard COOK to Martha GRIME, and also the burial of Richard COOK on 2 January 1723. With Richard paying his rent in October 1723 and then being buried in January 1723 this is a really good example of how the calendar used to work prior to 1752, when the New Year started on 25 March (Lady Day).



No. 197

Anno Regni Georgij Regis II° — & 12° — Die Octobris — 1724

Com. Salop
For Lower in Cobbery

l. s. d.

RECEIV'D of Mr Rych. Cookes Widd° the Sum of Eight pence for One — Years Rent due to His most Excellent Majesty, at Michaelmas last past. I say Receiv'd — 0 : 0 : 8 Rent. 0 : 0 : 4 Acq. 0 : 1 : 0

L. Mich. Rec

You are hereby requir'd in His Majesty's Name without farther Notice to Pay the next Rent at the White Hart in much Wenlock — on the 11th Day of October next, or to me, in ~~Wine Office Court in Fleet-Street~~ London, in Michaelmas-Term, in a Morning; otherwise a Messenger will be sent forthwith to levy the same.

Kings bench Walks Inner Temple No. 4 on the West Side

Richard COOK was baptised on 24 June 1675, parents Ralph and Margret; and Martha GRIME was baptised on 5 December 1675, parents Henry and Elizabeth. The couple appear to have only baptised three children, all in Cleobury Mortimer:

Richard: 20 April 1711
Elizabeth: 20 April 1711
Martha: 27 December 1713

Sadly, Richard didn't survive, being buried on 22 April 1711, two days after being baptised.

Martha COOK's name continues on the receipts, denoted as a widow, until 1756 and on the next receipt in 1759 (1757 and 1758 are missing) the name changes to Mrs. Martha WRIGHT.

Martha COOK Snr. was buried on 26 July 1753 in Cleobury Mortimer and possibly wasn't changed on the records for a few years after, though it does appear that her daughter Martha Cook Jnr. took over responsibility.

On 20 April 1732 Martha COOK married John WRIGHT in Cleobury Mortimer, both of whom were recorded as of the parish, which explains the name change on the receipts in 1759.

On the final receipts from 1769 and 1770, the receipts record John WRIGHT as the payee.

The White Hart on Spittle Street (now High Street) in Much Wenlock, where these rent payments were collected, is still standing and is now known as Raynalds Mansion, described as follows in the Victoria County History of Shropshire, Volume 10:

> *The White Hart in Spittle Street, held by John Raynolds, had seven ground-floor rooms, six chambers, and four garrets. It was also called Reynolds Tenement (and later Raynalds Mansion). Formerly a 15th-century hall, it had been enlarged by 1682.*

Online ref. https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/salop/vol10/pp399-447

From 1733 the payments were made at the Crown Inn in Bridgnorth, which still exists on the High Street and has a distinctive recessed bow window. Originally an assembly room, it was used for the court quarterly sessions from late 1723 onwards.

Turning farther afield to the official addresses in London that appear on the receipts; Wine Office Court, Fleet Street in London still exists and is notable for Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, a pub which has stood in its current form since being rebuilt in 1667 after the Great Fire of London and has paid host to many famous visitors, including Thomas Carlyle, Alfred Tennyson and Charles Dickens. Definitely somewhere I'll visit on my next trip to London.

Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese: cc-by-sa/2.0 ©Colin Smith - geograph.org.uk/p/650446

On subsequent receipts the official address changes to 4 King's Bench Walks in the Inner-Temple, London. This too is still standing, having been rebuilt in 1678 following the London fire of 1677; and the street was mentioned in Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities.

Stuart Massey, 7798, stuart.massey@googlemail.com

Editor: This article illustrates very well how something which initally appears insignificant can lead us down some wonderful rabbit holes of reseach.

When you're young, your grandparents try to tell you their history, and you don't care because it doesn't interest you at the time.
Later on, you wish you had written down what they said.

Twisted Twigs on Gnarled Branches Genealogy Facebook page

‘All Change’

The Welsh Church Act of 1914 and Deanery of Oswestry

The Staffordshire Sentinal of 10 May 1920 carries the following report:

16 NEW PARISHES FOR LICHFIELD DIOCESE.

A historic event took place at Oswestry yesterday, when under the Welsh Church Act, the Bishop of Lichfield received the transfer of 16 parishes from the Diocese of St. Asaph. Oswestry deanery is reputed to have been in the Diocese of Lichfield up to 1160, and for the last 760 years paid obeisance to the Cathedral of St. Asaph.

This article is a brief attempt at explaining the background to the report in the Staffordshire Sentinel. Information has been derived from published and online sources - notably Census returns, newspapers, and parish registers.

From the twelfth century the Deanery of Oswestry had been an integral part of the Diocese of St. Asaph. Administratively however, the Deanery lay in the territory known as the Welsh Marches. The Welsh Marches were the territories lying between the English shires and the King’s shires in Wales. These Marcher territories were feudal mini statelets with their own laws and regulations. The King had renounced papal authority in 1534. This break with the Church of Rome saw the establishment of an independent Church of England - which has been compared to a semi nationalised industry. [C. Harris & R. Startup, The Church in Wales: The Sociology of a Traditional Institution. (Cardiff, 1999) P.4.] To strengthen the power of the Crown, the Laws in Wales Act of 1535 introduced English Law and administration to the Marcher Lordships, thus curtailing the powers of these feudal rulers. The Laws in Wales Act incorporated the nearly fifty Marcher Lordships which existed in and along the borders of Wales into either existing border shires or into new shires. The Lordships of Oswestry, Whittington, Maesbrook and Knockin were incorporated into the Hundred of Oswestry and allocated to the existing county of Shropshire. Seven new shires were created in Wales, namely Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire, Breconshire, Monmouthshire, Glamorganshire and Pembrokeshire. What process was following in the allocation of Lordships to shires is not clear; one can only suspect behind the scenes pressures and manoeuvres by influential individuals at the Court of King Henry VIII.

Although the Church of England had a priviledged position in the life of the State and country, by the early nineteenth century, the Church had lost the allegiance of much of the population of England and Wales. The disconnect between Church and People was

most pronounced in Wales. The Religious Census of 1851 revealed that Nonconformity claimed the allegiance of far more people than did the Church - but ironically, both Chapel and Church people together were fewer in number than those of no religious affiliation.

There were political implications to the numerical superiority of the Nonconformists in Wales. They made common cause with the Liberal Party (or perhaps vice-versa) and sought to deprive the Church of its priviledges of Establishment and of much of its wealth. Between the years 1894 and 1914 a total of four bills seeking the disestablishement and disendowment of the four dioceses of the Church of England in Wales were placed before Parliament, but it was the Act of 1914 which reached the Statute Book. However, the full implimentation of the Act was delayed on account of war time exigencies, but a body entitled The Commissioners for Church Temporalities in Wales, otherwise The Welsh Church Commissioners or WCC, was established. This body was tasked with the investigation the nature and extent of Church property, and to determine what was to be secularised and what was to be returned to the Church. This pause in proceedings also allowed the Church time to arrange its affairs to meet the challenges of the new order; to receive and manage such properties that were to be retained a Representative Body was established.

One of the problems faced by the law makers arose from the disconnect between the boundaries of civic Wales and those of ecclesiastical Wales. Along the border between England and Wales, forty three parishes were in an anomalous position: -

A. 14 parishes were entirely in England but situated in Welsh dioceses;

B. 10 parishes were entirely in Wales but situated in English dioceses;

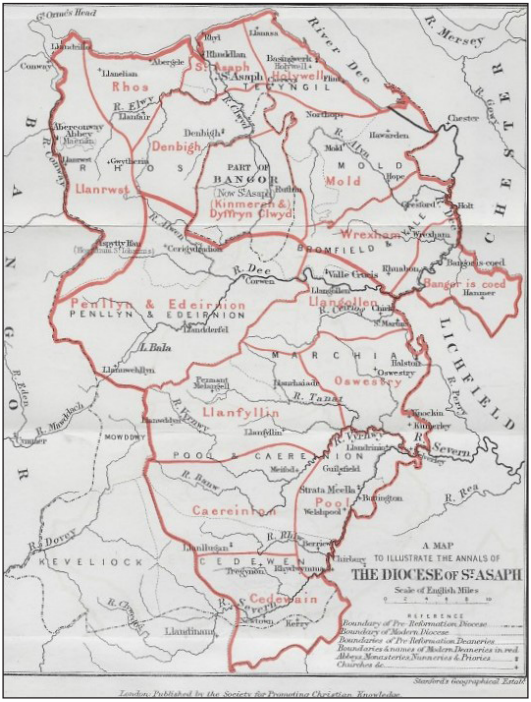
C. 19 parishes were partly in Wales and partly in England.

Of the eighteen parishes comprising the Oswestry deanery:-

Fourteen fell into Category A. These parishes of Hengoed, Kinnerley, Knockin with Maesbrook, Llanyblodwel, Melverley, Morton, Oswestry St. Oswald, Oswestry Holy Trinity, St. Martins, Selattyn, Trefonen, Welsh Frankton, Weston Rhyn and Whittington were transferred from the Diocese of St. Asaph to the Diocese of Lichfield.

Church of St Mary the Virgin, Selattyn, geograph-6512095-by-Eirian-Evans

No Category B parish existed in the Deanery.



Three parishes fell into Category C. Llanymynech straddled the Shropshire/ Montgomeryshire border; Llansilin and Rhydycroesau straddled the Shropshire/ Denbighshire border. The parishioners in these three parishes were allowed to vote between remaining in ecclesiastical Wales or transferring to ecclesiastical England. Following a ballot organised by the WCC in the spring of 1915, the Home Secretary, Reginald McKenna, announced in the House of Commons on 2 March 1915, that by a convincing margin, Llanymynech wished to accompany its neighbouring parishes in the Deanery into the diocese of Lichfield. As the results for Llansilin and Rhydycroesau were "*not determined*" a second ballot was held in 1916; Llansilin voted to remain in Wales, Rhydycroesau voted for England, thus joining the other parishes in the Deanery in the diocese of Lichfield.

The remaining parish in the deanery was Llangadwaladr which lay entirely in Wales, and would so remain.

Midnight of 31 March 1920 saw the implementation of the Welsh Church Act of 1914. The four diocese of the Church of England in Wales, freed of their connection with the State, freed of their allegiance to the Archbishop of Canterbury, deprived of thirty four parishes, and deprived of all endowments accrued before 1662, were reborn as The Church in

Wales. (*In* not *Of* because it was no longer established.) This new organisation, relieved of the incubus that was the Disestablishment controversy, had regained authority over its own administration, including the power of patronage of all parishes, the election of Bishops and election of an Archbishop. No longer would it be called "*an alien sect*."

The State sequestered assets from the Church, and the Church received money from the State by way of compensation. As Professor P. M. H. Bell so succinctly commentated "Churchmen had held that the property of the Church was sacrosanct: Liberationists that State money should not be used for religious purposes. Yet, the Church was to lose its property, and the Treasury to give £1,000,000 towards the cost of disendowment. It was all very strange, even comic." [P.M.H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*. London 1969. P. 314.]

The long standing dispute was ended. The boil had been lanced. The Disestablishment and Disendowment controversy that had persisted for over seven decades had been driven by an explosive and complex interaction of economic, political, religious, social and nationalistic factors in nineteenth century Wales. At the time it was the major theme in Welsh life. It so dominated the agenda of the Liberal Party that it had "*assisted in the rise of statesmen and downfall of governments*." How did historians in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries view the episode?

Canon Roger L. Brown felt that the controversy had inflicted a spiritual attrition akin to the physical attrition of Flanders campaigns of the Great War. [Roger L. Brown, *Traitors and Compromiser; the shadow side of the Church's fight against Disestablishment*. Journal of Welsh Religious History. Vol. 3 1958. p.49.] Another historian felt that all the sectarian squabbling between Church and Chapel did not reflect well on the relationship between Christians. [Emyr Price, *Datgysylltu a dadwaddoli'r Eglwys Sefydledig yng Nghymru* Trefor, 1980, p.12] More recently the disestablishment campaign was declared a "mean spirited political imbroglio." [D. Densil Morgan. *The essence of Welshness? Some aspects of Christian Faith in Wales c 1900 - 2000*, in Robert Pope (ed.) *Religion and National Identity in Wales and Scotland*. C.1700-2000. Cardiff, 2001, p.149.]

The Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury of 3rd April 1920 reported that Bishop Kempthorne of Lichfield paid his first official visit to Oswestry on 1st April and had confirmed 225 candidates; if he made reference to changes under the Welsh Church Act, it was not reported. On 9 May, he formally received the transfer to the parishes of the Oswestry Deanery from the diocese of St. Asaph. Looking forward he felt that the diocese of Lichfield was now so large and unwieldy that there would be a new diocese of Shropshire in ten years time.

In August local newspapers reported that the Bishop spent five days of a working holiday in the Deanery with six engagements in Oswestry. During his visit he visited seventeen churches, preached eleven sermons, unveiled two church war memorials, consecrated a burial ground, attended four tea parties and was the celebrant at several Holy Communion services. He had found the Oswestry Deanery in a very healthy and flourishing condition. He had been received with the utmost enthusiasm, kindness and everywhere Church people had crowded to his services. He was now going to Cumberland where he would spend the remainder of his holiday among the quiet splendours of the English Lakes.

Amongst the assets Bishop Kempthorne inherited from St. Asaph was the patronage of five parishes; the remaining parishes were under private patronage. Two local clergy were patrons of one parish each, as was the Lord Chancellor, whilst local landowners - the Earls of Powis and Bradford, Lord Trevor and Brigadier General Lloyd were patrons of two parishes each.

Bishop Kempthorne also inherited sixteen incumbents and three curates. Seven of the incumbents had held their parishes for twenty years or more (Feilden of Frankton had been in office 56 years). The numbers of clergy were almost equally divided between the Welsh born and English born. Most of the clergy were Oxford graduates, with a number of Alumni of St. David's College, Lampeter. Many of the English born men were sons of Clergy and most of the Welsh born men were of farming stock, mainly from the counties of Carmarthen and Ceredigion.

In January 1920, a matter of weeks before 'transfer day', the Earl of Powis presented the living of Clun to the Rev'd WMB Lutener, Vicar of St. Oswald's, Oswestry. Lichfield had lost the incumbent of the most populous parish in the Deanery at virtually the last minute. Fortunately by June 1920 the Earl of Powis had found a successor for Lutener, the Revd AR Langford Brown, Diocesan Missioner of the Diocese of Exeter.

At this juncture, with the appointment of Langford Brown to Oswestry, it is opportune to conclude this report as to how and why the Oswestry Deanery was transferred from St. Asaph to Lichfield. How Lichfield managed the influx of new clergy, new assets and liabilities, new parishes and parishioners and ministry to the Welsh language congregation in Oswestry is a matter that someone else might wish to investigate.

Peter Meurig Jones

Editor: This article might help with those who have ancestors from the borders, especially if trying to track down registers.

A Gruesome Business

The quarter sessions were instituted to deal with felonies and misdemeanours and were held on the four quarter days, Epiphany, Easter, Midsummer and Michaelmas. In Shrewsbury, however, in the 17th century they met less often as there were insufficient cases. The defendant, having been presented by the plaintiff, a private individual or a constable, was brought before the mayor and a justice of the peace and was examined and depositions taken from any witnesses. If it were decided there was a case to be answered a bill of indictment was issued and the defendant was sent to prison, pending trial, or released on bail with pledges to guarantee his/her appearance at the next quarter session. At this session the bill of indictment was passed to the grand jury, composed of 12 burgesses, whose job was to further examine the defendant and any witnesses and confirm, by a majority decision, that there was a case to be answered. If so, they declared that the bill of indictment was true and it was accordingly marked 'Billa Vera' [True Bill]. If the defendant pleaded guilty at this stage then he would have been sentenced; if not he was, at the same session, brought before a petty jury of twelve men, not known to him and usually of lower social status than the grand jurors. He would have been stood at the bar, and, if he had come from prison his shackles would have been removed. The defendant had the right to reject up to 25 potential jurors assembled to form the petty jury. Witnesses were called and examined by the jury and the defendant. The suspect was not allowed a counsel but had to tell his 'story' so giving the jury a means to assess his character and motivation. Having heard the case, the jury used their moral judgement to unanimously commit or acquit the defendant or to reduce the severity of the charge. Imprisonment was regarded as a burden on the community and was rarely used. Punishments varied from the stocks, whipping, branding on the hand for theft or, in the extreme, hanging and confiscation of all goods and chattels that would have left the defendant's family destitute. The sentences handed out have survived in some cases but in others the fate of the convicted is not known.

The case of a suspected murder of a bastard child provides a rather gruesome example of how criminal justice worked in the 17th century. It is followed through here with transcriptions of the surviving documents.

The deposition of Robt. Evans of Harlescott deposeth as followeth [1]

Who sayeth upon oath that yesterday night last Elizabeth Bagley the younger confessed to him that her Mother was ~~brought to bed~~ delivered upon good ffriday last past [4th April] in a peece of ground adioyninge to the black poole neer Almon Parke and as she was goeing to great Berwicke and that the said Elizabeth Bagley the Elder had buryed it in a ditch banck or in rushes as she related unto her daughter and as the daughter as hath tould this deponent and further deposeth that he this deponent hath made search with others in a Mixon [dung heap] for peeces of the childe and found non as alsoe amongst the rushes aforesaid and could not finde any childe or any parte of a childe there & further sayth not

Signed
Adam Webb *The marke of Robert X Evans*
Cha: Benyon
Tho: Hayes

The 12th day of April 1656

Robert Evanes of Harlescott in the County of Salop xls to give Evidences etc
[Pledged in the sum of 40s to appear and give evidence at the next quarter session]

The examination and saying of Elizabeth Bagley of Harlescott within the Liberties of the Towne of Shrewsbury being suspected to putt away and Murder a Bastard Childe who sayeth as followeth before Adam Webb Esquire Maior of the said Towne the xiiijth day of Aprill 1656 [2] Who confesseth and sayeth that shee was with Childe & was within a moneth last past delivered the Childe being perished within her came from her by peeces some at one tyme & some at another, which she this examinant as the same came from her did cast on the side of a Mixon and that it was full nyne dayes before that she was fully delivered, and that the afterbirth she buryed in the Ashes, being demanded the last tyme that the last peece as she call it came from her, sayeth that to her best remembrance as she was goeinge to Great Berwicke which was upon Thursday was fortnight last [3rd April], the last came from her by a place called the Parke neare Berwickes greene but sayth she was not neare any Poole or water and confesseth that it was some of the hinder parte of the childe which was very black & she this examinant tooke it and putt it in the side of a ditch and covered it with Mould and being demanded who was the father of her Childe sayth that one Richard Poole late servant to James Smyth of Harlescott aforesaid and that the said Poole was and is this examinants husband and were married together in this examinants house about Michaelmas last past there being noe body by but the Man that did Marry them & one man that the said Richard Poole brought with him and this examinant doth not know

the said persones to witt neither the man that marryed them nor the other that was present and that they were not seene by this examinant before that tyme nor since and this examinant beinge further demanded what her reason was that she called not her neighbour unto her at the tyme of her travile sayth that it was because the Childe came from her by peeces, save onely this examinant called Sara Huntt her next Neighbour and acquainted her that it came from her by peeces but confesseth that shee did not shew unto the said Sara Hunt any peece of it and further sayth not.

Signed Adam Webb *The marke of Elizabeth E Bagley*

The deposition & sayinge of Elizabeth Bagley [the daughter] of Harlescott spinster taken before Adam Webb Esquire Maior Charles Benyon and Thomas Hayes gentlemen Justices of the peace of the said Towne & liberties deposeth as followeth

Who deposeth and sayth that Elizabeth Bagley this deponents mother was with childe of which this deponents Mother tould this examinant that she the said Elizabeth the Elder upon good ffriday last past as she was goeinge unto greate Berwicke in a greene leasow near Almon Parke was delivered of her Childe (in these wordes that she had lost her childe) and that she the said Elizabeth this deponents mother buryed it in the rushes growing in a poole side and in the same peece of ground as her mother tould this deponent where she was delivered And further deposeth that she hath heard her Mother confess that she was three weekes quick with Childe and doth beleeve that her said Mother is not marryed unto Richard Poole as she sayth she was, And this deponent beinge demanded what she said unto her mother when her mother tolde her of her loosing her childe sayth for that tyme shee said not any thing but on the Morrow after tould Katherine ffrannce wife of Richard ffrannce of it which was the first discovery of her Motheres delivery of her childe & saith further that she hath seene the said Poole often times in her motheres house

The marke of Elizabeth X Bagley

The examination and saying of Sara Morris the wife of Robert Morris of Harlescott laborer taken upon oath before Adam Webb Esquire Maior Charles Benyon and Thomas Hayes Esquires Justices of the peace the 17th day of Aprill as followeth 3

Who sayeth that Elizabeth Bagley of Harlescott hath severall tymes acknowledged to this deponent that she was with Childe and that about a fortnight agoe the said Elizabeth tould this deponent that the Childe was dead within her bodie and that

the Childe came from her the saide Elizabeth at three severall tymes by peeces but she this examinant never saw any part of the Childe and further sayeth not

Adam Webb *The marke of Sara V Morris*
Cha: Benyon
Tho: Hayes

On the basis of these examinations and depositions it was decided that there was a case to answer and a bill of indictment was issued.

The towne of Shrewsbury [4]

The Jurors for his highness the Lord Protector of the Comon Wealthe of England Scotland and Ireland and the Domynions thereunto belongeinge upon there oath doe present that Elizabeth Bagley late of Harlescott in the Countye of Salop widdowe beinge with childe of a certaine live Bastard childe begotten the fowrth daye of Aprill in the year of our lorde 1656 aboutes Nyne of the clocke in the morninge of the same daye at Allmon Parke within the liberties of the saide towne of Shrewsbury in the aforesaide Countye of Salop and within the jurisdiction of this Courte by the providence of god of a certaine Bastard Childe borne alive in a certaine Greene Leasowe in Allmon Park aforesaide secretlye and without the knowledge or companye of any other Woman did beare and bringe forthe And that the aforesaide Elizabeth Bagley not havinge the feare of god before her Eyes but beinge seduced by the divells instigation voluntarilye and of her malice before had and before thoughte the saide Elizabeth Bagley the saide Bastard Childe soe borne alive and in naturall beinge then and there that is to saye ymediately after the Berth of the saide Bastard Childe of her malice before had and before thoughte feloniouslye and voluntarilye did Murder againste the forme of the Statute in that case made and provided and againste the publique peace

Edward Mason

Meanwhile Elizabeth Bagley was imprisoned until the next quarter session, when she and four other prisoners made up the gaol delivery on 3rd September 1656. On this day the bill of indictment was presented to the grand jury and they examined Elizabeth and the witnesses and decided there was a case to answer and accordingly marked the back of the bill of indictment '*Billa vera*'.

The towne of Shrewsbury [5]

The names of the Grand iury to enquire for his highness the Lord Protector and the said Towne & Liberties thereof

Richard Wareinge of Sallop Esqr)
Thomas Cotton of the same draper)
Richard Price of the same draper)
John Atcherley of the same draper)
John Gardner of the same Ironmonger) Sworne
Richard Bowdler of the same mercer) in
William Farmer of the same Clothier) Court
Joseph Lowe of the same draper)
Joseph Proud of the same gent)
Nathaneell Lea of the same mercer)
William Pears of the same Corvisor)
Andrew Bowdler of the Lea gent)
Adam Colerox of Meriden gent)
John Newnes of Grinshill yeoman)
Thomas Deakin of Hadnoll yeoman)
Thomas Wright of Shelton yeoman)
Ri: Clarke)
) Coroners
John Bromley)

Elizabeth pleaded not guilty and put herself on the country, that is, sought to be tried by a petty jury

The towne of Shrewsbury [6]

The Jury to enquire betweene his highnes the Lord Protector and Edward Jones, Elinor Heap, Thomas Keyffin, David Lloyd and Elizabeth Bagley prisoners at the barr

Thomas Alkins of Sallop Tanner)
Richard Manninge of Berwicke yeoman)
Thomas Dew of Sallop Currier)
Andrew Wright of Astley yeoman)
Samuel Davies of Sallop baker) Sworne
John Buttler of the same baker) in
Thomas Maddox of the same corviser) Court
Richard Amyes of the same corviser)
George Dickin of the same Clothier)
Richard Johnson of the same baker)

Edward Wolfe of the same baker)
Richard Hencockes of the same sadler)
Ri: Clarke)
) Coroners
John Bromley)

The calendar [7] of the prisoners at the general gaol delivery held on Wednesday, 3 September 1656 records that: -

> *Elizabeth Bagley of Harlescott in the countye of Salop Widdowe taken for suspicion of Murder & felony to witte for murdering of a Bastard Childe.*

Over this entry is written: - *Culpabile Judicium suspendum.* [Culpable. Judgement to be hanged]. When and where she was hanged is not known. Three of the other prisoners tried that day were found to be not guilty while the fourth, Elinor Heape, was guilty of theft of 12d and was sentenced to be branded on the hand.

Ralph Collingwood, 5399

References

1 Shropshire Archives 3365/2246/25
2 Shropshire Archives 3365/2246/24
3 Shropshire Archives 3365/2246/26
4 Shropshire Archives 3365/2246/90
5 Shropshire Archives 3365/2246/95
6 Shropshire Archives 3365/2246/88
7 Shropshire Archives 3365/2246/22

Feedback

Following the write-up of *Thirty days hath September etc* in Journal 44/4 may I draw members' attention to David Ewing Duncan's excellent book *The Calendar: The 5000 year struggle to align the clock and the heavens, and what happened to the missing ten days* [Published by Fourth Estate, 1998]. It tells you all you want to know and more in a very readable form.

For those members who live in the historic county of Gloucestershire, or with ancestors there, the Lloyd George Domesday Survey for the county can be accessed at https://www.bgas.org.uk/projects/the-lloyd-george-1909-survey and go to survey of land values.

Alan Tyler, 7814

Cherished Heirlooms – My Nan's Prayerbook

The only item that I own from my great-grandmother Caroline DAVIES (nee BROOM 1841-1921) is the prayerbook which she gave to her youngest daughter Jane on her wedding day (2 May 1909). She married George CARSWELL at St Barnabas Church, Balsall Heath, Birmingham although they were both born in Shropshire and returned to live in Hanwood shortly after their marriage. They had two children, Kathleen who died aged 1 and Ivor. George unfortunately only lived until 1914, dying of lung disease from working in the coal mines.

Later Jane went on to marry again to my grandfather William TOMLIN and have five more children, the youngest being my mother, Jean. They started their married life living in Ford where my grandmother was born and lived as a child, before returning to Birmingham. Shropshire remained part of her life until her death at 95.

Nan's prayerbook is tiny, only measuring about two by two and a half inches and is a copy of the Book of Common Prayer with Hymns included. It has an ivory cover with silver decoration and is hallmarked to the year of her wedding. When we first started researching her family history, recording it on a roll of old wallpaper, Nan gave me her prayerbook to keep with the family photos. Her wedding photo from her marriage to George had survived because she used it as backing to a photo of her children.

Image: Wedding of Jane Davies to George Carswell, 1909. Andrea says her great-grandmother, Caroline Davies, is the lady in the hat, standing behind her daughter, the bride.

The book was in a poor state of repair when I received it, as shown in the image to the left, with the spine gone and the covers held on with Sellotape which had marked them badly. Luckily the pages were all intact. For many years, I kept it wrapped in acid free tissue in a box and only looked at it occasionally. Talking about it more recently to other cousins, they had never seen it and it seems Nan had only shown it to me and my mom. For several years I had thought of getting it restored but didn't know who to take it to. I tried contacting the TV programme "Repair Shop" but wasn't accepted. I then read an article about a company who repaired and restored old books and documents and decided to contact them for advice. After initial emails and photos, they quoted for restoring it and so the prayerbook was parcelled up and posted to R & L Lancefield. They kept me informed of the progress of the work and returned it promptly, now rebound with a new cream leather spine and as many of the marks removed from the cover, as illustrated in the image to the right.

It is lovely to have the prayerbook restored and to keep it as a reminder of my grandmother and a memento of her first and very loved husband George and as one of the only items from her mother and my great grandmother Caroline. It is now stored with other treasured family history documents and photos and may at some point be a gift to another bride for her special day.

Andrea Fitter, 1948

The Geneaolgist's Internet

Peter Christian has very generously made his seminal book, The Genealogist's Internet, freely available online as a Creative Commons version (2024) and can be accessed here: https://archive.org/details/the-genealogists-internet/page/n1/mode/2up

He cautions readers to bear in mind that this is not a new edition but he's checked and updated several hundred broken links. Some of you have well have a copy already sitting on your bookshelf but if not, or if you would like to check out the updated links, this might be a useful resource.

From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On

Chairman, Major Ivison, welcomed Gina Lewis as the new Secretary for the SFHS.

Membership of the Society was still growing at a fast rate. 32 new members were enrolled and there were nine pages outlining members interests. Members provided their full names and addresses so that they could be contacted by other members with similar interests.

Vera Howell reminded readers of the value of '*strays*', people who are found living well away from their family home. One example was where Daniel Lyons, writing in 1795, commented that many female raspberry fruit pickers in Isleworth came from Shropshire. Vera comments that '*it would be surprising if some of these women did not stay on at the end of the season, and probably married local men'*.

The uproar mentioned in the December 1982 Journal concerning the 'Public Records (Amendment) Bill continued into 1983. The Federation of FHS were heavily involved in opposing the charges recommended for public documents. However, it seems that '*the Bill fell with the dissolution of Parliament*', but was likely to be revived in a different form in the new Parliament, reported George Pelling, the Federation Chairman. (I haven't looked to see, nor do I remember what happened next!)

The Editor of our journal was very good at lifting articles from other Societies (presumably with permission) as the next two items show.

There was an interesting article by Adrian Phillips, of the British Telecom and Post Office Family History Society. He explained how many private telecom companies from the 19th century gradually emerged into British Telecom (as of 40 years ago!). Of interest to Family Historians was the fact that the early directories were stored at the British Telecom Museum.

For today, members might well be interested in the Postal Museum, details of which I found on Google.

Another article, by Geraldine Beech (of the Hampshire Family Historian) concerned the value of maps, especially those produced before the 1841 census. The article explains the differences between the varying sorts of maps (i.e. Enclosure Award Maps, Tithe Maps, Valuation Office Records, Registrar General Office, Crown Estate Office, Overseas Territories). At that time, they were stored at Chancery Lane and Kew.

The Shropshire Committee '*had considered suggestions for inauguration of house meetings and branch meetings in the North, South, East and West areas of Shropshire where people may have difficulty in coming to Shirehall for monthly meetings*' People were urged to indicate if they were interested.

Mrs. Morrison (304) from New Zealand was thrilled that she had three people write to her concerning family links in Ludlow and Australia following her membership.

I am interested to know if the following is common practice today. It was written '*Accommodation is often needed by Society Members visiting from further afield. The Society would like to maintain a register of such accommodation which may be available. If you able to offer bed and breakfast, please advise our secretary and indicate how much you would charge for the service*'.

Henry Christmas (369) was thrilled that the Society's book of 'Members Interests' enabled him to contact a Christmas Family in Surrey, from where he was able to trace his line back to 1589.

Full details for the 10th Anniversary of the Federation of Family History Societies were set out on the back cover of our Journal. '*The cost of £5 per person to include access to the house with coffee, lunch and afternoon tea in the walled garden of our patron, His Grace the Duke of Wellington at his home at Stratfield Saye*'. Booking would be essential.

Reg Wilford

Editor: I am always intrigued how Reg's highlights from 40 years ago can find reflections now. The uproar about the Public Records (Amendment) Act back in 1983 seems to have similarities with the recent concerns over the proposals in the Ministry of Justice consultation paper about the 'Storage and retention of orginal will documents'. There is certainly signficant opposition from across the Family History community. Our Society has agreed a response to the consultation which, by the time you read this, will have been submitted to the Government. My understanding is our response will be one among many. Time alone will tell if the dissolution of Parliament will lead to being dropped as a proposal. One can but hope that they see sense, particularly in relation to their plans to destroy the vast majority of the documents 25 years after they have been digitised, unless one is lucky enough to have a 'famous' ancestor in which case they plan to keep them.

The arrangements in place at that time around publishing in the Journal the full contact details of members when they joined have been changed in light of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road

The Highs and Lows of Family History Field Work
The Paper Chase

To follow. Follow. In more recent times we have become used to this infinitive and its imperative use. Follow the Science. Follow the Work. Follow the Money. Follow the Yellow Brick Road. We can all recall when we started on this Family History Road that research took a straight forward path. It would trace relatives backward through time, using our surname and in many cases tracing the paternal line. Quickly comes the realisation that's it not that straight forward and although a line through time may seem uncomplicated and convenient, life isn't like that and families most certainly are not. Consider what comings and goings and what can be said and can't be said in our own families today. Furthermore how intertwined partnerships and relationships are. In many families, one wrong word can bring the house of cards crashing down.

One way in which families can be intertwined is that one figure may stand out as an enabler for much of what be going on in the wider family. This person may stand directly in the main stream or alone in our family lines. Indeed this outsider stance may benefit the role they play and what they are able to achieve. It may not even be that they live close by. Nevertheless such individuals can and often do effect things in such a manner that the family would not be the same without them. Perhaps this could be seen as an example of the so called "Butterfly Effect". Coined by Professor Edward Lorenz in 1961, it suggests that a minuscule occurrence, such as a butterfly flapping wings in the Amazon, could hypothetically set in motion events that could cause tornadoes to touch down in Texas days later. So too it can be with individuals rather than butterflies. Individuals, who do not cause tornadoes to touch down in Texas, but more readily have a beneficial effect on our family lines in Shropshire. In my family one such person was Ellen Isabella Allison.

Ellen Isabella Allison, my second great grand aunt, was born on 4 October, the second daughter of George and Elizabeth Allison of Green Man's Lane, Islington, Middlesex, and baptised two months later on 5 December. Her father, George Allison, was a "Musical Instrument Maker". George and Elizabeth had five children.

Emma Thorne (1817-1862); Ellen Isabella (1819-1896); Thomas James (1821-1876); George William Hellar (1823-?); Sarah Jane (1825-1901)

So leaving wider family in London, by the time of the 1841 Census, Thomas James and Sarah Jane had moved with their parents to Oswestry. Best guesses suggest that this may have been about 1835. George William Hellar we hear no more of. Ellen Isabella spent

her life in service so it is reasonable to assume that when the family left for Shropshire, she stayed in London and went into service at about fifteen years old. Follow the Work.

The next time we find Isabella, travelling to Shropshire, is as a witness at the wedding of her elder sister, Emma Thorne, on 24 May 1846. This perhaps could suggest that Emma Thorne did move to Shropshire with her family in the mid 1830s and met John Lythe her husband to be. The ceremony took place in the Parish Church Chirk.

Five years later in 1849 something happened that would have a great effect on Ellen Isabella's life and would linger over the whole Allison for the next fifty years.

In March of 1849, Thomas James Allison, my great, great grandfather, George's eldest son, married Susan Hales. The most interesting feature of their marriage certificate is that they were married in a Primitive Methodist Church. Formed in 1811, Primitive Methodism was an evangelistic movement. It catered for those who desired a different religious experience, greater spiritual fervour and a much more intense, one to one relationship with God which was not hampered by the trappings of the Anglican Church.

By the time of the 1851 Census, Thomas James and Susan had had two daughters, Elizabeth and Ellen. By 1861 they had had five more children; Emma, Thomas Watson, William Launcelot, Walter Henry, Mary Isabella and Sarah Ann. By 1871 they had also had George Frederick, Emily, Sarah Ann who died after twelve months and Harriet Louisa. As the story reveals itself it is important that all Thomas James' children are named here. This is important to the children themselves and important to Ellen Isabella. All will be revealed by and by.

After the wedding of her sister, Emma Thorne, in 1846, the next time Ellen Isabella appears on record is in September 1859 when her father, George wrote his will. Although, as often, when we consider documents such as this, we are initially struck by what we might consider to be the most important information, on closer examination it is often the most insignificant facts that stand out and become the most important.

In his will, her father stated that after expenses were paid, he left everything else not to his first born daughter, Emma Thorne, nor indeed his first born son, Thomas James, nor to his wife, Elizabeth, and none of his children, bar one. He named his second daughter, Ellen Isabella, as Executrix and left everything to her.

The date of the Will was 3 September 1859. George did not die, in fact, until 1868, almost ten years after it was written. However, in reality, the most significant fact of all is that the Will tells us where Ellen Isabella was living at the time it was written;

Kilsyth in the County of Stirling Scotland.

When George, her father, did die on 29 November 1868 and Probate was granted, additional information was added to Isabella's address. This was not only Kilsyth in the County of Stirling but also 34 Wilton Place Belgrave Square London.

On further investigation, supported by the Census of 1871, 1881 and 1891, we find that she was housekeeper to Sir Archibald and Lady Emma Edmonstone. However, from her father's will written in 1859, (he died in 1868) we know that Ellen Isabella was in the employ of the Edmonstones as early as 1859 with her residence in Kilsyth. Ellen Isabella did, in fact, complete forty years in service to the Edmonstones.

Sir Archibald Edmonstone (1795-1871), 3rd Baronet of Duntreath was educated at Eton and Oxford. In 1819 he travelled to Egypt and wrote an account of temples found there. In October 1832 he married his first cousin, Emma, daughter of Randle Wilbraham of Rode Hall Cheshire.

They had three daughters, all of whom died in infancy. In what seems a rather strange and alien Victorian practice to us now, the first two daughters, in succession after the death of the previous one, were both called Mary Emma. Mary Emma Edmonstone (17 July 1833-18 August 1833) and Mary Emma Edmonstone (17 September 1834–27 September 1834). The third daughter was named Emma Edmonstone (13 May 1841 -11 June 1841). After these repeated losses, the great work of his life became the restoration of the old castle of Duntreath on his estate at Kilsyth. Perhaps this was to dispel the sadness of his lost children. Sir Archibald himself died on 15 March 1871 at 34 Wilton Place.

However we get ahead of ourselves. Let's return to 1862. In October, Emma Thorn Lythe (nee Allison) eldest daughter of George and Elizabeth Allison died of cancer when her daughter, Emma Elizabeth Lythe was still only six. If we recall, Ellen Isabella had travelled to Oswestry to witness her sister, Emma Thorne's, marriage in 1846. In this series of complicated, intertwined relationships that Ellen Isabella presides over, Emma Thorne's daughter, Emma Elizabeth Lythe later becomes a main player.

Back to the children of Thomas James. In 1865 something happened, which I have always thought to be truly astounding. Thomas James and Elizabeth, despite being married in the Primitive Methodist Church in 1856, as I have shown and presumably practising as Primitive Methodists from that time onwards, on 14 August 14 1865 they had seven of their children baptised into the Anglican faith at St Oswald's, Oswestry Parish Church.

Ellen Jane aged 13; Thomas Watson aged 11; William Lancelot aged 9; Walter Henry; Mary Isabella aged 6; George Alfred aged 3; Emily Susannah aged 1.

Were Thomas James and Susan disaffected by Primitive Methodism? They had just had a daughter, Emily Susannah, born April 1865 who was baptised on the day the other six

were baptised. They had lost a child, Sarah Ann Allison, a year before. This must have surely have affected their outlook. But would it be enough to make them return to the Anglican Church?

Could this be an attempt by Thomas to ingratiate himself to his father by leaving Primitive Methodism? Thomas would have known the details of his father's will and the fact that he had left nothing to him or his children. However we know that it had no effect, for after probate was proved on 3 February 1869, Ellen Isabella would have returned to Oswestry to execute her father's will. It is important to recall that nothing was left to Thomas James or his children.

We next see Ellen Isabella on the 1871 Census residing at 34 Wilton Place. The Census is interesting for a variety of reasons. Firstly Ellen Isabella is in charge on her own, for Sir Archibald and now The Dowager Lady Emma Edmonstone are not recorded as being in the house on Sunday 2 April 1871, on the day that the Census was taken. However we do have to recall that Sir Archibald died 15 March at 34 Wilton Place, two weeks before the Census. This may well explain why Lady Emma is not in residence since she must have been in a period of mourning somewhere other than her townhouse.

Looking at the Census we find another Ellen Allison

Ellen Allison	Unmarr	Female	26	Kitchenmaid	Oswestry

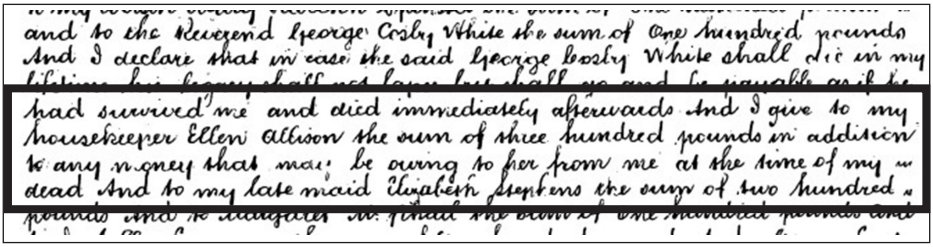
It is, in fact, Ellen Isabella's niece, a daughter of her brother Thomas James. Aunt Ellen Isabella has procured a job for Ellen in the service of the Edmonstones. She has brought her from Oswestry to work in London.

Ellen Isabella's brother Thomas James died 9 November 1876. His wife Susan died two years later 5 May 1878. Clearly most of their children were grown with lives of their own by this time. However, Emily, born in 1865, now ten and Harriet Louisa born in 1869, now four, were left as orphans and taken into the families of their brothers or sisters.

On the 1891 Census for 11 Royal Place, Greenwich we find Harriet Louisa, living with her grandfather's brother, Thomas Allison and his wife Annie. Harriet was then 21 years old and was employed as a dressmaker. We also find Emma Elizabeth Lythe, daughter of Ellen's sister Emma Thorn Lythe, nee Allison, More examples of the Shropshire Allisons brought to London.

We also find Ellen Isabella on the 1891 Census, now living at 141 Cromwell Road, Kensington where the Dowager Lady Emma Edmonstone had moved to, after the death of her husband. Ellen Isabella was still housekeeper. There were five other staff so Lady Edmonstone continued to run a large household. However on 24 May 1891 the Dowager

Lady Emma Edmonstone died. She had previously made a will in February 1882. In her will, there are many, many family beneficiaries.


and to the Reverend George Cosby White the sum of One hundred pounds
And I declare that in case the said George Cosby White shall die in my
lifetime his legacy shall not lapse but shall go and be payable as if he
had survived me and died immediately afterwards And I give to my
housekeeper Ellen Allison the sum of three hundred pounds in addition
to any money that may be owing to her from me at the time of my
dead And to my late maid Elizabeth Stephens the sum of two hundred

However if we look at this extract from her will (as above), we find that Dowager Lady Emma Edmonstone left Ellen Isabella Allison £300. Rather stunningly, this seems a remarkable sum, seen to be worth £38,000 today. However, when we consider the forty years plus of dedicated service Ellen Isabella gave through thick and thin, upsets and downsides, to Lady Emma, we perhaps should not be surprised, but rather pleased.

In I895 William Launcelot Allison, one of Thomas James sons' came to London and married his cousin, Emma Elizabeth Lythe, the daughter of Elizabeth Thorne Lythe, nee Allison, Thomas James' sister, on the 11 July 1895. The marriage certificate shows that Emma Elizabeth lived at 11 Royal Place Greenwich. It is a not unreasonable suggestion to make that William Launcelot and Emma Elizabeth came to London through the auspices of Ellen Isabella. Ellen Isabella herself died just one year after the wedding. She was buried in the Cemetery at Greenwich.

Ellen Isabella, having been ill for a year, died of paralysis, aged 77, at 11 Royal Place Greenwich. We might take this to be the home of William Launcelot and Emma Elizabeth, as William Launcelot was shown on the death certificate as being present in the house when Ellen Isabella died.

Ellen Isabella had made her own will on 4 May 1895. There's always a twist in the tale. Maybe in this case even a twister. Back to where we started, the "Butterfly Effect". A tornado, hypothetically, does touch down.

Emma Elizabeth Lythe was the executrix of Ellen Isabella's will. The probate statement read as follows;

Allison Ellen Isabella of 11 Royal Place Greenwich Kent Spinster died 17th August 1896 Probate London 12th September to Emma Elizabeth Allison-nee Lythe, wife of William Launcelot Allison. Effects £1924 10s.

The detail of the will stated:

I give the sum of £50 each to Elizabeth, Emma, Emily and Harriet being the daughters of my late brother, Thomas James. I give the sum of £20 each to Thomas, Walter, William and Frederick being the sons of my late brother, Thomas James Allison

On the 12th day of September 1896. Probate of this will was granted to Emma Elizabeth (wife of William Launcelot Allison) (formerly Lythe spinster) the sole executrix and as to all the rest residue and reminder of my estate and effects whatsoever and whosesoever situate I give devise and bequeath of my estate the same unto my niece Emma Elizabeth Lythe of No 11 Royal Place Greenwich

So in the twist and turns of what could well be the plot of a Victorian novel, Ellen Isabella astounds us again. Follow the Money.

Let's think about the money. Ellen Isabella herself left £1,900. At today's estimate that could well be £33,000. She left £50 each to the girls. At today's estimate, £8,000. She left £20 each to the boys. At today's estimate, £3,000 each. Rather a nice touch to see that the girls got more than double the amount the boys got.

In leaving these not inconsiderable amounts, it could be argued that in her own mind she was trying to right the wrongs of the past. Their grandfather, George left no money to his son, Thomas James, consequently he was unable to leave money to his own children. So Ellen Isabella, a long way from Shropshire, was able to affect what went on in the lives of her family there in the many ways we have seen, and although this would be the last time, Ellen Isabella would affect these live directly, she had set up her nieces and nephews for life.

So finally back to our initial hypothesis. One way in which families can be intertwined is that one figure may stand out as an enabler for much of what be going on in the wider family. This person may stand directly in the main stream or alone in our family lines. Indeed this outsider stance may benefit the role they play and what they are able to achieve. It may not even be that they live close by, in the bosom of the family, so to speak. Nevertheless such individuals can and often do effect the family in such a manner that the family would not be the same without them.

This is where the paper chase Ellen Isabella took us on ends. After that she led us on a wild goose chase which will feature in part two!

Bill Allison, 7760

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This is my family tree

So now what do I do with it?

A theme explored in a recent Talking Family History gathering was that of what to do with family tree research if you have no descendants who are interested in taking it further, when we each become a death statistic in it.

Given there is no central library hub to which you can leave it (and there never will be) what can you do with it? Major genealogical libraries (e.g. The Society of Genealogists) would be inundated if they started to take in anyone's family research. The Federation of Family History Societies (from 2019, known as the Family History Federation) has, as part of its principal aim to *foster the spirit of mutual co-operation by sponsoring projects in these fields (i.e. in family history and heraldry)*. The FHF represents about 180 FH societies but can't act as a repository for individual research. Not only does it almost certainly have no suitable repository, but the number of pedigrees or lineages it would have to store would be huge. Local libraries are unlikely to be interested unless the person had some strong connection with the area, and even then it would surely depend upon the state of the presented information (neat folders in order or backs of torn envelopes).

And in any case, what interest would a tree have to outsiders? In my opinion, family trees are largely very personal things, of interest to the named person, but few others. Only when someone else's tree intersects your own tree does some interest develop, or maybe if it links with the tree of someone famous (Lord Nelson, Isaac Newton, Ada Lovelace, etc). I wonder how many SFHS members have looked at the tree of some ordinary person of whom they know nothing about, just for 'fun'? They are probably countable on the thumbs of one hand!

The possibility of digitising one's family tree was mentioned, and indeed, this would appear to be the most obvious way, but it doesn't get over the problem of needing a suitable repository or someone to take it onwards or look after it. In addition, with the pace of IT, for how long will your digital records be readable? Anyone remember 'floppy discs' which I seem to recall were about 6" square and floppy, and were lauded as the answer to saving space with instant recall and searchability. Who could play one today? Nonetheless, if only for the reduction in volume, digitisation seems a good idea. It also enables copies to given to other people, far and wide, in the hope that at least one survives.

I don't have an answer to this problem. But as one attendee at the TFH session said, at the end it is just a hobby, and like most hobbies which require accumulating items or information, it is in the lap of the Gods whether your efforts survive or not. Most collections get re-distributed amongst like-minded others, but that is not so likely for family tree research, because, as I said, it has little interest to others. My suggestion is to try and gather enough personal information, write it up as a storyline, and try to get it published as a book/booklet by a genealogical publisher. A few years ago, I bought (second hand) a book on the Wasey family of East Anglia (mainly). Apart from the fact that it spoke of people I didn't know, living in places I had not heard of, it was mostly an interesting read in a social history sense. I eventually put it back into circulation (via a charity shop) but sadly, long after I had lost contact with the only person I ever knew with this surname. The alternative is simply to not worry, and just let circumstances take their own course. Requiescat in Pace!

Peter Tandy, 7709

Editor: This is a question/topic which often features in discussions among family historians and genealogists and, as Peter highlights, we touched on it at a recent Talking Family History session. It is fair to say that we didn't come to a single, definitive approach which is probably not a surprise to anyone. After all we all approach our family history research differently; we save and store it differently; some of us are lucky enough to have one or more people in the next generation who have an interest in taking it on when we have shuffled off this moral coil, and others, as Peter suggests will have no-one interested in picking up the family history baton.

Back in December 2021 (SFHS Journal, Volume 42 - Part 4) in an article titled 'Legacy Issues - My Solution', Dave Tonks wrote of his decision to use of FamilySearch, and uploading all of his research to their site, so the next generation can access the information in the immediate or long term. Who knows if, in reality, that will be possible, but I guess we won't be around by then to know.

Emma & Carl J. Sandberg family tree (included for illustration)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emma_%26_Carl_J._Sandberg_family_tree.jpg

Wenlock Abbey:
A Shropshire Country House 1857-1919

Talk given by Dr Cynthia Gamble on 21 November 2023

This was a very difficult talk to encapsulate because it was based on many illustrations - beautiful paintings, photographs, etchings, etc. Dr Gamble has written a book about Wenlock Abbey which contains these illustrations.

A monastery was founded in Much Wenlock in 680 with an abbess in charge. In the eleventh century the Earl of Shrewsbury rebuilt Wenlock Abbey as a priory occupied by monks. This flourished until the sixteenth century when Henry VIII closed every abbey in the country. Wenlock Abbey then went through centuries of decline and neglect. What was left was rescued by James Milnes Gaskell in 1857, and the talk concentrated on the period from then until 1919. The abbey now consists of the prior's lodging, which is residential, and the ruins of parts of the monastery. The prior's lodging is private and in the ownership of the actress, Gabrielle Drake. It is in poor repair at present. The ruins of the monastery are under the care of English Heritage.

We were treated to a pictorial trip through Much Wenlock, past the museum and present church, to the ruins of the abbey. When the Milnes Gaskell family moved in and made improvements, many people flocked to Much Wenlock. Many were visitors of the family and Dr Gamble has transcribed the visitors' book, which contains the signatures of people from all over the country, including some who were famous, such as John Ruskin, Henry James and Thomas Hardy, among others.

James Milnes Gaskell was MP for the borough of Much Wenlock. He married Mary Williams Wynn who was a talented artist. Some of her paintings were shown. Their elder son, Charles Milnes Gaskell, inherited the estate and carried on his father's good work. He was a barrister. He had a relationship with Lady Mary Hervey but in 1868 she jilted him on the eve of their wedding. In 1876 he married Catherine Wallop, daughter of the Earl of Portsmouth. She was also a talented woman, writing several books, including one called 'Spring in a Shropshire Abbey', and working beautiful embroideries, one of which was (and may still be) in the present church.

We were given another pictorial tour of some of the most interesting features of the abbey ruins. These included the lavatorium which could accommodate 16 monks. It was discovered, buried, in 1878, and is unique in the country. Archaeologists were employed to reconstruct it. The exterior is decorated with slabs containing biblical scenes. These

have now been replaced by replicas, but the originals are in Much Wenlock museum. We then saw the Norman lectern, beautifully carved in stone, totally unvandalised, found and taken into the prior's lodging by the family. This is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. We then looked at the intricately carved arches which were part of the old chapter house. Among many other things, we also saw the well head which is in the abbey garden and is very overgrown and neglected, and the tomb of the Milnes Gaskell family in the churchyard.

My husband was born and bred in Much Wenlock and I have been there many times but this talk has inspired me to go again and have a closer look.

Christine Head, 5373

In the Family Way: Illegitimacy between WW1 and the Swinging Sixties

Talk given by Jane Robinson on 19 December2023

Jane Robinson's talk on illegitimacy between the WW1 and the 'swinging' sixties, was based largely on her book (of the same title), and she started by relating, with an extract, the situation of Sue who was born illegitimately in 1949, after her mother, following an earlier failed 'shotgun' wedding and a childbirth, had another child with another man. Sue was destined to spend years in foster homes and didn't even know she had siblings until 14 years later. Some foster homes were good, others bad, and some foster parents were positively Dickensian. At the age of six and a half she was chosen to be someone's child, but life was still difficult as her 'mother' was 43. Sue was 'on approval' for the first 18 months and was told cruelly by someone, that she could be returned to a children's home at any time. At the age of eight all papers were signed and she became someone's child. Sue is now in her 70s and has started to search for her birth parents.

During the medieval period, marriage had nothing to do with the state, and couples could get together with only a priest's blessing. Illegitimacy didn't really exist. The church looked kindly on those wed without lock provided they lived in faithfulness. It was not unknown for men to be able to 'try before they buy' and if the woman became pregnant, cohabitation was acceptable. Different 'ceremonies' were offered in different parts of the country. In parts of Wales, courting couples were encouraged to engage in 'bundling' by sharing a bed; in Dorset grooms were expected to 'groom' a bride, while in Yorkshire the couple only had to hold hands and propose over a broomstick wedged in a doorway and get married later if a child arrived; if not they could reverse the procedure.

There were changes in the 16th century when Parish Registers were introduced, and bastards were recorded for the first time. The dissolution of the monasteries in 1530 meant that other arrangements had to be made, and illegitimate children were now alone. The Poor Law Acts of 1576 onwards meant parents had to pay. After 1601 rates were levied on all parishioners to pay but there were objections - why should parishes pay the '*wages of sin*'? Mothers were punished for their weakness, while fathers, if known, were chased for maintenance payments. Illegitimacy now became an economic as well as a social problem. By the Victorian age, illegitimacy was looked on as both a sin and with some curiosity (think of the illegitimate children in novels of the period). Organisations like Barnardo's and The Salvation Army started to take a hand in providing funds and help. Of course, it hadn't applied for centuries to those from the higher echelons of society, like Kings and Queens. By the 19th and early 20th century and the days of the workhouses, the problem was isolated from society by becoming the butt of jokes. A favourite was about a lad in Yorkshire asking for fatherly permission to marry a succession of girls, each time being told he couldn't because they were all his sisters. Finally he went to his mum and said he would not marry because all the girls were his sisters. She said it is all right, after all, your dad isn't really your dad!! It all intensified the sense of shame felt by those affected. As England emerged from WW2, the picture was always of neat suburban families with all the trappings of society. So what happed to the 'love child'? 'Love children' were hidden away. Between 1913–1959 single parents could be admitted to asylums if they were under 21 and often became institutionalised.

The speaker then read out two further extracts from her book, regarding the situations faced by single mothers Alison and Jennifer, one of which was gruesome, the other with a happy ending..

She noted she had not spoken about foundling hospitals, life in children's homes, child migration to the colonies between the 17th and 20th centuries (where records were often expunged), the Magdalene homes in Ireland, single fathers (who are always overlooked), and history's famous 'bastards' – showing pictures of William the Conqueror, Ramsay Macdonald, Sir Samuel Baker (Victorian explorer), Lawrence of Arabia and Sarah Bernhardt.

In the past few decades there has been a huge shift in public perception, with many simply ignoring it. Today more babies are likely to be of unmarried parents. The ability to talk about it must be the greatest thing of the permissive age.

Following the talk there was a lively discussion with a number of questions posed with the following responses:

- The people whose stories are included in the book often found being able to talk about their situation liberating and found it easier to talk about it to others afterwards, with some now having told their families.
- Religion impacted on the situations, but not always in the way expected, with some being very intolerant, and others more open hearted, but there were no set patterns.
- Where an adoptee has been able to trace their birth parents, in about 20% of cases a meeting between mother and child has not been good.
- The frequency by which children in the 1940s being given their father's name was unknown.
- It was suggested that DNA testing may help when looking for an illegitimate child where the father's name is known.
- Finally, Jane indicated she was unaware of any cases where legal claims for compensation for such bad treatment had been made, and highlighted that mostly they want recognition of what they went through. While some things were awful, many were done with good intent.

Peter Tandy, 7790

What's That Job?
A 'Shropshire Special' seminar

Talk given by Dr Sophie Kay on 16 January 2024

The speaker started with a quotation: "*The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there*"; it is true, the past often contains unfamiliar places, names and even language. The talk started with some general resources, especially maps, showing one derived from the 1851 Census entitled '*Distribution of the Occupations of the People*', which was covered with small symbols representing different occupations. Enlarging the area around Shrewsbury, she showed how it was mostly agricultural but with some symbols for quarrying, coal mining, iron mining, and iron production.

When looking at jobs, there are two main facts to consider: the place (i.e. where) and the era (when).

Variations in language need to be considered when looking at censuses. As examples she said a 'deck hand' is understood in most areas to be a young person on a vessel, but in Great Yarmouth they were often known as 'younkers'. A warehouseman in Manchester is different from a Manchester warehouseman; the former applies to someone managing

stock in a warehouse, while the latter refers to someone who acts as a sales agent for goods (especially cotton) made in Manchester. In Oxfordshire, a 'fodderer' was responsible for feeding animals each day, and was equivalent to a cattle man or head-man elsewhere.

As a specific example she took the job of 'bandsman' in 1830s rural Scotland. Not surprisingly, most would assume this to be someone in an orchestral or military band. Wrong! This is not a term for a musician nor of military personnel. Further back in time it referred to an agricultural worker whose task was to tie sheaves or corn into bundles with a flexible band. It is equivalent to 'banster'. One very useful reference work is *A Dictionary of Occupational Terms*, published in 1927 by the Ministry of Labour (online at doot.spub.co.uk) and another is *Dictionary of Old Trades, Titles and Occupations* by Colin Waters (1999). For dialectical words, there is the *English Dialect Dictionary* by Wright and Lea (online at https://archive.org/details/englishdialectdi01wriguoft/mode/2up). Originally published as 6 volumes it contains 70,000 entries which also show where such dialect terms were most used. Some resources useful for searching are: JSTOR (Journal Storage), which allows 100 searches for free per month, Google Scholar and Google Books, and of course, newspapers which were written for people of the time and so use words as they were then known.

The speaker moved on to urban occupations in the 19th and 20th centuries, largely after the Industrial Revolution which is generally said to have started from the late 1700s to mid-1800s. Production was slowly mechanised, which meant more large settlements and a move away from rural communities, with the creation of new jobs. More factories led to new service industries, with jobs named after specific processes. As an example, the speaker took the job of 'compositer', from the 1911 Census. This was the first census filled in by the people themselves and was to be done in black ink. But she pointed out how they usually show also green ink additions by census clerks (generally as numbers after trades/professions.) The example had the numbers 820 and 824 (for 2 compositers) and, looking at the coding manual for 1921, (there isn't one for 1911) showed that 820 referred to a printer compositer, setting out type for printing, from type held in a set of drawers (cases) with larger letters higher up above smaller letters, hence our use of '*upper case*' and '*lower case*'.

Part three of the talk moved on to rural occupations from 16th to 20th centuries, and explained how we can interpret the unfamiliar terms and language from earlier centuries. At this time there were a greater proportion of rural occupations, some of which may last into later centuries and others which might disappear, with the possibility of seeing traditional cottage industries alongside agriculture. There is a need to bear in mind that products of agriculture may well feed secondary, smaller cottage industries.

When researching around these times it is even more important to understand the local context. As an example, she took the occupation of 'finer' in the Coalbrookdale area in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and illustrated how an interactive map of the UK, the Economies Past tool, produced by CAMPOP (Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure), allows you to explore the different sectors of employment within the population in an area of the country at a given time. [https://www.economiespast.org/lfpr/1851/#7/53.035/-2.895/bartholomew]

An example given was related to a 'finer', a term which was a contraction of refiner: someone working in the iron industry refining the iron, which was passed to the 'hammerman' who, using a tilt-hammer which was often water-powered, was able to beat the iron into thinner sheets.

She recommended the Victoria County History for Shropshire with provides a good overview of Shropshire industries, highlighting the development of printing occupations around Shrewsbury; coal mining and wrought iron production in East Shropshire; chain making in Shifnal; bricks and tiles in the Donnington area; tobacco pipe production in Broseley, flax, thread and linen in North Shropshire and glove production around Ludlow. Also Books of Trades, such as Whittock's Complete Book of Trades (1842) can help to understand the occupations of the time and their terminology.

A final example was of an unusual occupational term was that of a 'scutcher' in rural Shropshire of the 16th Century who, it was explained was a woman who removeed the outer husk of the flax with a large knife in preparation for turning the flax into thread.

In summary: Don't jump to conclusions about occupational terms; consider the context around it; and make use of books of trades and collate the various databases and resources to provide a reference in the future. Remember that an occupation is far more than just a cross-checking point; let where and when be a guide; paid work indicates a value in that area; and finally expect to use a range of resources to decipher any unfamiliar occupations terms.

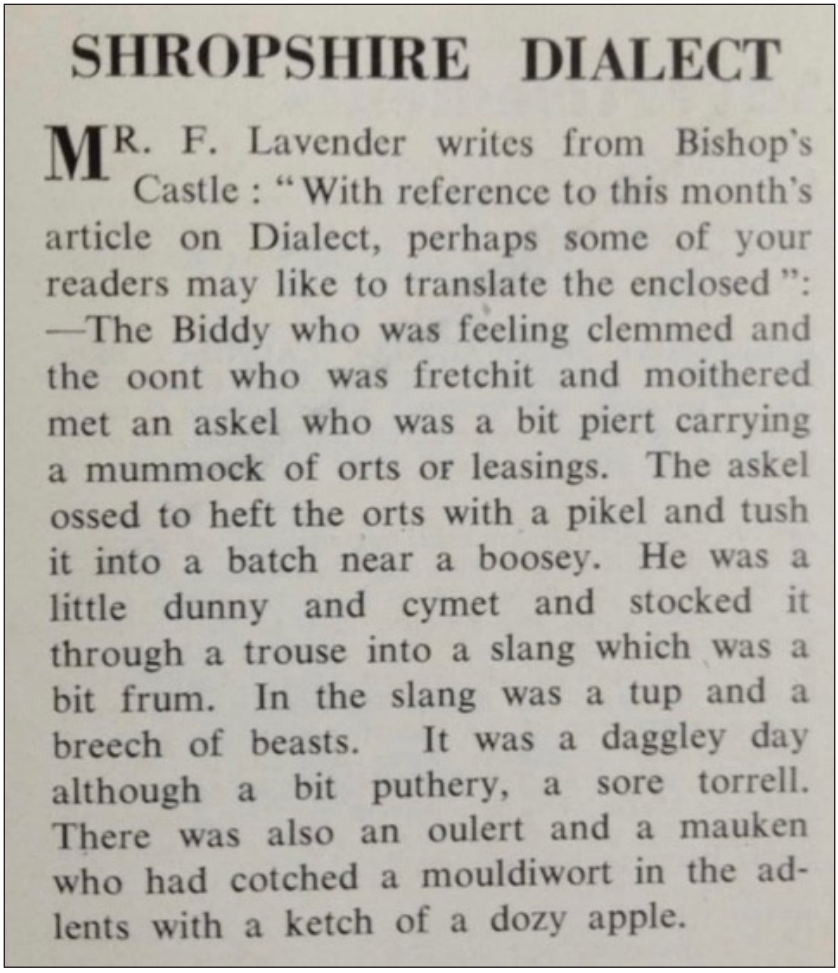
A very lively question and answer session followed, building on the areas covered in the talk and exploring some of the occupational examples that members highlighted.

Peter Tandy, 7790

Editor: As you will have read elsewhere Christine Head has stepped aside from writing reviews of our talks so we are looking for someone else to volunteer to help with this task so Peter doesn't have to cover all the meetings. Please contact me (editor@sfhs.org.uk) if you're interested. Remember, many hands make light work!

Shropshire Dialect

Editor: Dave Morris has shared this with me, suggesting it would be interesting to see if any of our members can help to translate! I had no idea that there was quite such a distinct dialect in the County but, as they say, every day is a school day! Any suggestions would be welcome and I will publish any I receive.



SHROPSHIRE DIALECT

MR. F. Lavender writes from Bishop's Castle : "With reference to this month's article on Dialect, perhaps some of your readers may like to translate the enclosed ": —The Biddy who was feeling clemmed and the oont who was fretchit and moithered met an askel who was a bit piert carrying a mummock of orts or leasings. The askel ossed to heft the orts with a pikel and tush it into a batch near a boosey. He was a little dunny and cymet and stocked it through a trouse into a slang which was a bit frum. In the slang was a tup and a breech of beasts. It was a daggley day although a bit puthery, a sore torrell. There was also an oulert and a mauken who had cotched a mouldiwort in the ad-lents with a ketch of a dozy apple.

Source unknown

From the Editor

This edition has a variety of articles, some of which are a little different to those we often publish, but they go to illustrate that this hobby of ours can be approached in many different ways. For example, who would have thought that a few old receipts, as Stuart has written about, would lead to such an interesting story.

I hope that those members with ancestors who straddled or went back and forth across the Shropshire/Wales border will find some helpful information in the article about the changing parishes in that area. Certainly having an idea of where best to track records down can be a useful starting point, particularly when they don't 'pop-up' quickly through a search on the Internet.

As has often been highlighted, belonging to a Family History Society can provide us with advice, suggestions and different ideas to help each of us in our research. It would seem that a number of recent Journal articles have prompted others to respond, either in providing more information about the topic to the author, or encouraging someone to explore further down one of those rabbit holes. So, if you have got something you need some help with, or have approached your research in a slightly different way, please let me know so I can share it with our members. You never know when your nugget of information will be just what someone else was looking for to resolve their challenge.

Karen Hunter, Editor

Ightfield Church - Presentation Event

Following on from the article in the December Journal [page 170] we have now received further details about the launch of the new guidebook for this church if anyone is interested.

There is an event planned at the Church of St John the Baptist at Ightfield on Saturday 11 May 2024, commencing at 2pm. The church is a fine 15th century building with an interesting history which includes two fine and historically important monumental brasses of the Warren and Mainwaring families. The presentation will be fully illustrated and will include the historical contexts and the structural history of the building, with references to the families associated with it. There will also be opportunities to examine the church and buy the new guidebook. The postcode SY13 4NU will get you to within walking distance of the church.

New Members

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

7952 EVANS Miss R; WILLENHALL, West Midlands

7953 GRAHAM Ms R M J; HAYWARDS HEATH, West Sussex

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

JEFFELS Mrs M A; WREXHAM, Clwyd

LIDDIARD Mrs J A; BRISTOL

Talks Programme 2024

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*	*David Annal*
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*	*Dr Colin Chapman*
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*	*John Vigar*
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*	*Chris Broom*

17 September	**Our Rural Ancestors** *In this talk, Dr Barratt explores the sources and techniques you can use to find out more about your ancestors who were agricultural labourers and the communities in which they lived. He looks at how they may have been employed, the sort of work they did and how they made their mark on history.*	*Dr Nick Barrett*
15 October	**The Mourning Brooch** *Writing and presenting as Jean Renwick, our speaker will talk about the family history she uncovered behind a mourning brooch which she inherited. Her talk covers part of the late 19th and early 20th Century, and how relatives left Yorkshire, the Welsh Marches and other parts of the country to seek their fortunes as far apart as California and Turkey. She invites members to produce any pieces of their own mourning jewellery as a start to a conversation before and after the meeting.*	*Dianne Page aka Jean Renwick*
19 November	**Crime and Punishment in Rural Shropshire 1768-1898** *In this talk Dr Hodge will highlight some interesting findings from fourteen South Shropshire parishes with an analysis of crime and punishment in the area at a time when hangings, whippings, transportation and internments were commonplace.*	*Robert Hodge*
17 December	**Posted in the Past** *Helen's well-illustrated talk looks at the family stories behind some of the post cards sent in the early years of the 20th Century, one of our earliest forms of social media.*	*Helen Baggott*

Editor: There is certainly plenty to look forward to with this varied programme of talks for this year. Many thanks to Joan Gate who works hard to book the speakers.

Update on Committee Business

Website: As referenced elsewhere in the Journal we are aiming for a launch of the new site in the late Spring of this year. The website developer who we have contracted is working on the back-office processes to enable the membership and finance systems as required together with development of the front-facing pages.

Social Media: A volunteer has come forward to help with our Social Media accounts which is great and we are also hoping a second person might come forward to help share the load. If anyone is interested please contact Karen Hunter.

GDPR/Privacy Policy: This is being revised to take account of the amended processes which have been introduced and also those that will be applied with the launch of the new website. This will be finalised to co-incide with the launch of the site

In-person meetings for 2024: We plan to hold an all day event in October - date to be confirmed. Ideas for what members would like to see included are invited and consideration is being given to the possibility of opening it to the general public as well as members. In light of the demands on time of the website project there is not sufficient capacity to organise an in-person event in the first half of the year.

Response to the Government Consultation: Storage and retention of original will documents: The Committee has agreed to send in a formal response indicating agreement in principle with the proposal to digitise the holdings but opposing the proposal to destroy them after 25 years, together with that of only maintaining those associated with 'famous' people. We will make the response available when it is completed.

Can you contribute to the new website?

We are drawing up a list of useful website links to put up on our new website as a resource for our members and others with an interest in Family History and Geneaology. Your suggestions of sites you would recommend or those which are favourites of yours when undertaking your FH research would be really helpful. Whether they are general, specific, unusual, for beginners or the more experienced or something else, please send any suggestions, with the name of the website, the URL and a sentence explaining what it is about, to Karen Hunter at chair@sfhs.org.uk

Notes for Contributors

Please:

- All contributions should be sent to the Editor at editor@sfhs.org.uk, or by post using the address inside the front cover if you don't have email.
- 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.
- Send pictures as separate image files (eg e-mail attachments), and only include them within the item or article as well, to give the editor an idea for suitable positioning. The relevant place could just be clearly referred to in the main body of the text.
- List the filenames of any pictures you are sending in the e-mail with relevant acknowledgements.
- It is assumed that place names, surnames etc will be spelt correctly and they will be printed as submitted unless otherwise informed.
- If possible, please CAPITALISE all family surnames within your submitted articles.
- Any pictures or other images should have a file size as large as possible. Most digital cameras and those in mobile phones are more than adequate but the higher the resolution, and therefore quality, the better.
- Scanned photographs etc should be at a minimum of 300dpi if at all possible. JPG (or JPEG) is the preferred file format but in certain circumstances, others could be considered. Please contact the Editor for clarification if necessary.
- Original pictures, documents etc, can be submitted and scanned by the Editor but this should preferably be a 'last resort'.
- All items (articles, images, photographs) submitted must have permission to print granted with the correct acknowedgement included when submitting them.
- Please note that items which essentially consist of full or significant transcriptions from Wikipedia or other websites will not be published.
- Any submitted articles may be edited by the Editor.

Can you help?

Derek Jones (5013) has sent in a request for any help that members might be able to give about this 1669 Token from Oswestry which he assumes are from a Boot Man. He wonders if anyone has any knowledge about Trade Tokens and could provide him with further details and/or anything about the trader who was issuing this token back in 1669 or knows where he might find the information. The reverse side of the coin has the name Hugh Edwards on it and the images below indicate the size of the coin.

If you are able to provide any information please send it to editor@sfhs.org.uk and I will send it on.

Copy Dates

Publication Date	Items to be submitted by
June 2024	1 April 2024
September 2024	1 July 2024
December 2024	I October 2024
March 2025	1 January 2025

Advertisements

The Society welcomes adverts relevant to the interests of family historians. Prices are per issue.

Members	£20 full page	£10 half page
Non Members	£24 full page	£13 half page

Copy should be submitted to the Editor. The Society reserves the right to refuse any advert it considers inappropriate.

Other appointments

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(Please note we do not undertake personal research but will assist if we can)		
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Help Desk Volunteers at Shropshire Archives	Liz Roberts	archives_volunteers@sfhs.org.uk

Back cover: Church of St Mary the Virgin, Selattyn, geograph-6512095-by-Eirian-Evans: see the article on pages 13-17

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