



# Shropshire Family History Society

## SHREWSBURY'S "POPPY DAY" COLLECTIONS.

1921	-	-	-	£500
1922	-	-	-	£571
1923	-	-	-	£620
1924	-	-	-	£625
1925	-	-	-	£683
1926	-	-	-	£703
1927	-	-	-	£835
1928	-	-	-	£1022
1929	-	-	-	£1042
1930	-	-	-	£942
1931	-	-	-	£863
1932	-	-	-	£742
1933	-	-	-	£820
1934	-	-	-	£856
1935	-	-	-	£839

*WANTED FOR 1936:*  
£1,001 please.



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Karen Hunter	Chair	<a href="mailto:chair@sfhs.org.uk">chair@sfhs.org.uk</a>
	Editor	<a href="mailto:editor@sfhs.org.uk">editor@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Dave Morris	Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@sfhs.org.uk">secretary@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Paul Quartermaine	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:treasurer@sfhs.org.uk">treasurer@sfhs.org.uk</a>

### Committee members

Dawn Blundell	Trustee	
Simon Davies	Webmaster	<a href="mailto:webmaster@sfhs.org.uk">webmaster@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Lorraine Hunt	New Members' Secretary	<a href="mailto:membership@sfhs.org.uk">membership@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Cathy Matthews	Minute Secretary	
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There are four vacancies on the Executive Committee

**General Postal Enquiries:** For any general enquiries by post please send them to:

Shropshire FHS, c/o 48 Oakley Street, SHREWSBURY, SY3 7JY, UK

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

Telephone contact: Dave Morris, 07980 870007

Front cover: Shrewsbury's 'Poppy Day' collections 1921-1935, and 1930s style poppies. See article on page 114

# The Journal of the Shropshire Family History Society

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## Thoughts from the Chair

### **'Forward to 50'**

On 12 October we have our *'Forward to 50'* event at Cross Houses, celebrating 45 years of Shropshire Family History Society and I hope to see some of you there. The details of the programme are included on page 115 but suffice to say it will be a chance to meet up with fellow members; share with us your ideas; and listen to some interesting and informative talks, including one by Dave Annal whose talks are always eagerly anticipated when he joins us on Zoom. We are not able to live-stream the event but are looking at the possibility of recording the talks so if you can't get to Cross Houses we can make them available on the website in due course. I am certainly looking forward to seeing everyone: please come and introduce yourself if we haven't met before.

### **We are all volunteers**

When our Society was formed 45 years ago, it was achieved by a group of interested individuals working together to make it happen - without them giving their time and commitment we would not be here now! And that support by individuals coming together to get things done has continued over the years. Some of the tasks needed have changed and the ways in which they are done have evolved, especially with the development of computers and electronic means of communicating, but all our work still depends on the willingness of individuals to make things happen and none of us can do it on our own.

The old adage, 'many hands make light work' is very true - the more of us who can do a little bit can make the overall task much easier for each person. Requests for help have been included in the Journal over time, some of which have borne fruit, and I am delighted to say we have been able to find a replacement for Paul, our Treasurer, when he stands down in January but we haven't always had such success. Your Committee is currently considering the roles we need to 'fill' and we will be circulating some 'job descriptions' shortly in the hope of finding some more volunteers to help. When they come out please can I ask that you all consider if you might be able to help.

### **Records, documents and memorabilia**

As family historians we are frequently recording dates of births, marriages and deaths of our ancestors, be it on pieces of paper, in journals, on our own dedicated FH software or on one or more of the online family tree providers, and I am usually no different.

In June one of our nieces had a baby - welcome to the family Otis George - and I was keen to record the event as soon as we heard. However, I have struggled with recording the details of my mother's death in May, and indeed haven't yet been able to bring myself to do it. The details have been included on many official forms and documents over the past few months but adding it to my Family Historian software is proving to be rather hard. I also find it odd to think that when I submit her original will with the Probate application (as is the requirement) it will join all those currently squirrelled away. We heard so much about this earlier in the year when we made our submission to the MOJ consultation so I wonder if it will be destroyed in 25 years time or if the current Government will take a different line to that which was being proposed.



Now we have the task of clearing Mum's house - somewhere she had lived for 64 years. In doing so, my siblings and I have come across items, paperwork and memorabilia of which the origin is unknown or only to be guessed at, including this teddy who looks like he was very much loved! He sat on her couch for many years but I had never thought to ask to whom he belonged. I am fairly sure it wasn't Mum's and I think I might know whose it was, although it will only ever be a guess. But how do you get rid of such a previously loved item?! It has certainly brought home to me how important

it is to make sure any 'old' documents, memorabilia and photographs are labelled in some way so that, when others are having to sort through my 'stuff', including all my family history information, they know to whom they belonged or related to, who are in the photographs, and why I kept them all.

### **Bringing people together**

Our monthly online Talking Family History meetings have brought together some of our members from across the world, including Australia and Canada, and there is a good camaraderie between people. This led to a great opportunity for Michael and I to meet up for lunch with one of our members, Maggie Littlejohn and her husband, when we were in Nova Scotia, Canada in June.



**Karen Hunter, Chair [chair@sffhs.org.uk](mailto:chair@sffhs.org.uk)**

## Richard Maddox 1816-1892

He was not a national figure, he did not forge a pathway for the British Empire, he was not a military hero but he was an important local man who in many ways embodied the ideal of a Victorian businessman. Many Salopians recall Maddox [& Co.] on the junction of Pride Hill and High Street but there was much more to his life than running a department store. He was not always successful in what he did and that makes his story all the more interesting.

He was born in Shrewsbury on 16 October 1816 in St Julian's, Shrewsbury and recorded as 'Maddocks' in the baptism register on 17 November 1816.

His parents were Thomas MADDOCKS a 'Breeches Maker' and Mary ASTERLEY of 'Sutton, Herefordshire' who were living at Meole Lane, Shrewsbury in 1816. They married on 25 September 1806 at St. Chad's, Shrewsbury. Mary Asterley was born on 17 March 1785 at Edgerley and baptised on 7 June 1785 at Kinnerley, Salop. Her parents were Richard Asterley a farmer and Elizabeth MANSELL.

Richard's early years remain a mystery with no evidence as yet of his schooling or of his whereabouts in the 1841 Census.

However he opened a draper's shop c1842 at Gloucester House in Castle Street as '*Richard Maddox, Wholesale and Retail Linen and Wool Draper, Haberdasher, Hosier and Glover. Family Mourning, Funerals Furnished*'.

The next mention of Richard is when he married Jane Mansell [born Bicton c1821] on 30 September 1846 at St. Chad's Parish Church, Shrewsbury. Witnesses were Mary Mansell [Jane's sister] and Thomas Asterley Maddox [Richard's brother.]

Jane's father was Robert Mansell, a farmer at Bicton, and her mother was Mary PLIMLEY of Shrawardine. Richard and Jane did not have any children. According to the 1851 Census they lived in Castle Street, Shrewsbury. Richard was 'a master draper' employing three men. With them were Mary Mansell, "*Mother-in-law, 70, widow, annuitant*" and Mary Mansell, "*35, sister-in-law, unmarried, annuitant*".

Richard and Jane probably moved to Besford House, Trinity Street, Shrewsbury in the mid 1850s. At the time there appears to have been a substantial sale of land in the area as Maddox purchased several 'lots' from John Evan BYNNER. These included "*the dwellinghouse with the stable, outbuildings, garden and pieces of land*" for which Maddox paid Bynner £520 in 1855.

In 'Harrod's Directory of Shrewsbury, 1861' Richard Maddox lived at 'Besford Cottage, Belle Vue.' This is confirmed by the 1861 Census. Richard Maddox is referred to as a 'retired Draper', aged 44. Also resident in the house were his wife Jane (aged 40), Jane's sister Mary Mansell (aged 45), and their nieces Zilpha Mansell (aged 20), Clara Mansell (aged 17) and Elizabeth Mansell (aged 15).

The Census reference to him being 'retired' in 1861 may have been the result of the following business development two years previously:

*"NOTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership lately existing between Richard Maddox and William HOME, lately carrying on the business of Mercers and Drapers, at Shrewsbury, in the county of Salop, under the name or style of Maddox and Home, was on the 26th. day of February now last, dissolved by mutual consent; and that the business will in future be carried on by the said William Home alone, by whom all debts due to and owing from the said co-partners will be received and paid. [Dated] 19th day of April, 1859. Richard Maddox. William Home."* [London Gazette]

Richard seems to have changed his mind about being 'retired'. In 1862 he is described in a Shropshire newspaper as a mercer of Meole Road. In December 1862 he opened his new draper's shop at 26/27 High Street, Shrewsbury. This is at the end of High Street just before the turn for Pride Hill. He was assisted in the shop by two of his nieces. It developed into what was claimed to be the largest department store in the West Midlands.

*"In his windows he displayed pretty flowers and laces, ribbons and handkerchiefs, silks and velvets" [for the better off] but here were also "hard-wearing fabrics at reasonable prices for the working class too". [Davies]*

By 1869 Maddox, with his nieces and their husbands William Exell ROGERS and Walter James SCOTT and trading as Richard Maddox & Co., extended their premises around the corner into Pride Hill but did not own number 25. The business had 300 employees at one time.

By the 1871 Census their home was called 'Besford House'. Richard was referred to as a 'Draper'. Living with him and his wife Jane were Jane's sisters Margaret WILLIAMS a 'farmer's wife', born Edgerley [c1818] and Mary (aged '55', born Bicton). Their niece Elizabeth was still living with them (born Shrawardine) and Emma FARRINGTON aged 13, born Shrewsbury, was a servant.

Between 1855 and 1882 Richard built up a substantial land holding surrounding Besford House. For example in 1872 the 'London Gazette' noted that The Belle Vue General Cemetery Company [opened 1852] was "to be wound up voluntarily". The Company

sold the land to Richard Maddox for £500. Included were “the cemetery, chapel, tombs, vaults, catacombs, monuments, [and] graves [!]”

In the 1881 Census their address was ‘36’ Trinity Street, Shrewsbury. The numbering in the street has since changed. Richard Maddox was aged 64, a Town Councillor and Draper. His wife Jane Mansell was aged 60. Also in the house was their niece Jessie Plimley aged 19 and once again Jane’s sister Mary Mansell aged 65 and Emma Farrington aged 23.

Maddox’s final purchase of land in the immediate area was in 1882 when he paid £300 for an area of land which appears to constitute the rear gardens of 1 and 2 Besford Gardens now. The agreement also required Maddox to make a “substantial wall” to be used and maintained as a “Party Wall” at the rear of the House – a part of the wall remains.

Maddox’s total outlay in the area was about £2,000.

In 1882-3 Maddox had a drive laid from Belle Vue Road with a lodge cottage to accommodate his coachman. The architect was Alfred Barnes DEAKIN of Shrewsbury.

The O.S. Map for 1882 [XXXIV.15] shows Besford House as a substantial building. The stables had not yet been altered. The buildings by the present day cottage were more extensive in 1882 but they were removed in alterations made in 1893 after Richard and Jane died.

The 1885 Kelly’s Directory notes Richard was a ‘Private Resident’ at Besford House, Belle Vue, that he was a “linen and woollen draper” at 23,24,26,27 High Street and 54-56 Pride Hill and Square and also a Borough Magistrate.

The 1891 Census gives the address as ‘Besford House / 36 Trinity Street’. Richard was a ‘Retired Draper and J.P.’ Jane was there with their niece Anna Williams, aged 40 and Emma Farrington, servant.



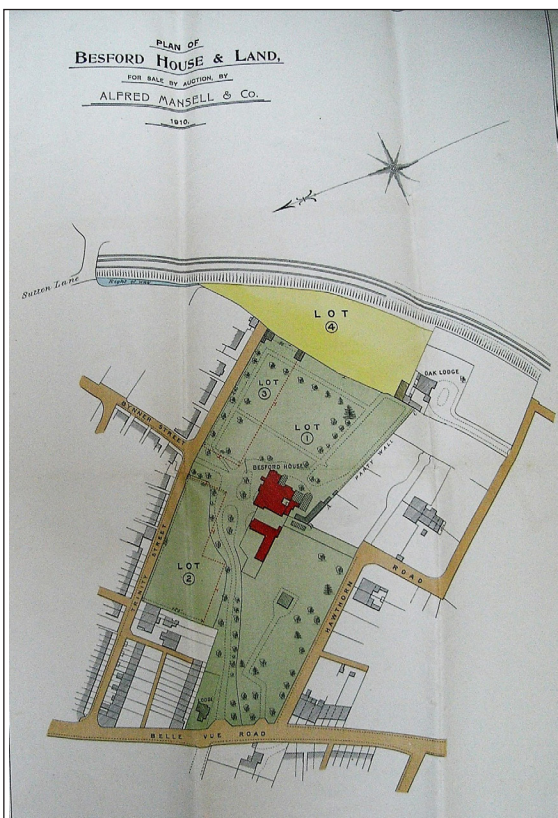
Besford House 2022



From the sale brochure of 1910 [image to the right], the areas covered by lots 1-3 represent the land owned by Richard Maddox when he was living at Besford House.

Richard Maddox owned a substantial amount of other property. For example, Picken's Court off Castle Foregate consisted of 29 dwellings, two workshops and a block of 16 privvies by the time of his death in 1892. Census returns record 14 unoccupied dwellings in 1891 and by 1901 the more southerly range had been demolished. The other remained, as 'Britannia Place' until the 1950s.

He also owned, among many other buildings, 20 and 22 Hawthorn Road and 10 and 12 'Havelock Place'. On the 1871 and 1881 censuses 10 and 12 are listed as 'Havelock Place', Cemetery Road. (Cemetery Road was later re-named Hawthorn Road.)



In an Abstract of Title dated 1924, it is stated that on the death of Maddox and his wife in 1892, the property passed to his two senior employees and Executors of his will, Henry Excel Rogers and Walter James Scott. Scott then made over the property to Rogers. It included 'The Mynd', now number 20, and the adjoining 'Belle Vue Villa', number 22.

After Richard Maddox's death many of his properties were put up for sale at the Music Hall Shrewsbury by Messrs. William Hall, Wateridge and Owen:

### **Richard Maddox – Active Congregationalist**

Richard Maddox was a Non-conformist, an ardent Congregationalist and a member of Swan Hill Church. The plan to build a new church led him on 27 August 1862 to purchase 'Lot 2' [an area of 1,439 sq. yds.] in a public auction at the George Hotel which comprised the Victoria Inn, a shed, a butcher's slaughterhouse, a carpenter's shop, a painter's

shop and stables in Abbey Foregate for £750. His plan was to convey the site to the Congregationalists to enable the building of a new church. He kept his intentions quiet for fear of opposition.

A temporary church was quickly built by converting the existing range of two workshops, stable and coach room at a cost of about £20 and furnished with 200 chairs. The first service was held on Sunday 5 October 1862.

He was admitted to the Congressional Church, Abbey Foregate on 27 October 1862.

The official ceremony for the opening of the church was attended by Richard and his wife Jane on Thursday 6 November the same year.

Maddox sold the property to the church for 10 shillings [50p] and was appointed as a Trustee in February 1863.

*“The Abbey Foregate Church was built upon one of the most conspicuous sites in the Town and was made the more so by having a spire: never before had a non conforming church ventured on one.” [Franklin]*

The church opened officially on 31 May 1864 and was designed by George Bidlake of Wolverhampton. A school room was also opened. The temporary church was replaced by a library, parlour, kitchen, scullery and infants' room. Twelve classrooms were built above the original school room.

Richard Maddox was one of the first four men to be appointed as a deacon in March 1866. However the process did not go smoothly, as at the following Church Meeting alleged influence and improprieties in the election were discussed resulting in the deacons resigning and after “much soul searching” a second election was held two months later with the same members elected though with a change to the voting system.

He was also Joint Church Treasurer from 1869 until he retired from the post in 1887.

In 1870 a mixed day-school was set up with Maddox as Chairman and Treasurer. The establishment of the school was a result of the refusal of some of the Church Day-Schools to receive children who went to the Abbey Foregate Congregational Church Sunday School.

In 1884 Maddox was involved with the examination of the potentially dangerous vane on the spire with a “spy-glass”. He saw no apparent danger but following further inspection in 1886 it was repaired the next year before there were any accidents.

A membership list of the Church [FindmyPast] records the deaths of Richard and Jane and identifies several 'family members' and acquaintances.

Richard died on 11 January 1892 age 75 and Jane his wife died seventeen days later. Richard had been a Church deacon for 25 years. After Richard's death the Church held a memorial service for him.

In 1897 Henry Exell Rogers gave £500 towards the building of the caretaker's house on the site as a memorial to his *"very dear friend and our devoted deacon Richard Maddox"*. It was his initial intention to have the inscription put on the house but *"though the stone was prepared he changed his mind and preferred it should not be inserted"*. [John Franklin]

### **In the newspapers**

Richard Maddox was mentioned on several occasions in the local newspapers, at times in an official capacity, occasionally as an unsuccessful candidate in local elections and on others where he was involved in a variety of court cases!

The following newspapers are referenced:

[i] Eddowes'

[ii] Shrewsbury Chronicle

[iii] Shrewsbury Free Press & Advertiser for Salop

[iv] Wellington Journal

It was not an auspicious start when: *"Mr Richard Maddox, mercer, of Castle Street was on Friday fined 2s 6d and 8s 6d costs, for allowing 17 bales of goods to remain on the footpath on the previous Saturday for a longer time than necessary for their storing."* [i] 3 October 1855

He was soon involved in local improvement projects. He was among a group of locals who requested the Mayor to take under consideration the question of the supply of water to the Borough. [i] 5 December 1855

Soon after he was one of a large group of ratepayers requesting a Public Meeting to consider the best means of promoting the projected Shrewsbury, Hanwood and Welshpool Railway. [i] 2 January 1856

His early work regarding a proposed water supply may have resulted in his becoming more actively involved as he was re-appointed as a director of Shrewsbury Waterworks Company. [i] 29 February 1860

Ownership of the drapery store led to incidents such as when Henry Williams received 6 calendar months hard labour for stealing drapery goods (43 yards of winsey) from Maddox's store. [iii] 6 January 1866

His involvement with the Church led to an appearance *"At the Borough Police Court on Tuesday...Mr Richard Maddox, mercer...and Mr John WOODALL, draper, appeared in answer to summonses taken out by Mr William WILLIAMS jun., grocer and corn factor... charging them with having committed an assault upon [him] at the Abbey Foregate New Congregational Church, on Thursday evening, the first of November. There was a cross-summons, charging the complainant with having assaulted the Messrs. Woodall and Mr Maddox [who are] highly respectable tradesmen of many years' standing in the town... The complainant...offered to withdraw the summons if the defendants would offer an apology"* [they wouldn't].

It seems that a scuffle had broken out when Mr Williams had tried to force his way into a church meeting and had been denied entry [having been restrained]. It was considered that he had no business there having been expelled from the Church four months earlier and was attending to create a row. After hearing from witnesses *"The Chairman, having consulted his [fellow] magistrates intimated that they would dismiss the cross summons"*.

Mr Walker, representing Woodall and Maddox, then proceeded to say that he *"regretted the cause of religion should suffer through such a paltry and trivial case"*.

He asked, *"Did Mr Woodall, a highly respectable tradesman well known in Shrewsbury, and a man of some years, look like a gentleman who was capable of violently shaking and assaulting the man Williams? Or did Mr. Maddox, another respectable tradesman, look like that?"*

In his evidence Maddox said he told Mr Williams *"You are not a member – you'll not be admitted,"* but that Williams had *"pushed me against the bannister and I said 'Now you have done it, you have placed yourself within the reach of the law.' I did not take hold of him. I did not raise my hands nor Mr Woodall. That I swear. I am still a deacon. I was formerly a member of Castle Gates and left to start a new movement in Abbey Foregate."*

Under questioning he denied having been expelled from Castle Gates or of causing a split there.

Following all the evidence *"On their return into court, after a few minutes absence, the Chairman announced that they had unanimously decided to dismiss both summonses, each party to pay their own costs, a result which was received with considerable cheering by a full court."* [iii] 10 November 1866

Frequently Richard Maddox was an unsuccessful candidate in local elections. He even stepped down as a candidate for the Castle Ward Municipal Election. *“To the Municipal Electors of the Castle Ward Within – gentlemen – When I consented to become a Candidate to represent your Ward in the Town Council, I was given to understand that I was not likely to be opposed: but a gentleman [Henry FENTON – ‘a very numerously signed requisition having been prepared for presentation to him requesting him to offer himself’] of wider influence and more leisure at command than myself having offered his services, I at once withdraw. I beg to thank those Electors who kindly offered me their support, and trust they will find in my opponent a more efficient representative.”* Is there a hint of recognising the inevitable here? [i] 6 March 1867

Controversy embroiled him again. He was charged with permitting his chimney *“to take fire”*. The chimney *“was burning for half-an-hour”* and *“the smoke was frightful”*. Maddox said the fire occurred in the boiler flue and as it could not be proved to the contrary the case was dismissed. The Mayor [in judgement at the Borough Police Court] remarked that it was not unusual, indeed it was generally impossible, to sweep boiler flues. [ii] 22 January 1869.

Further electoral failure came in the Municipal Elections for Castle Ward Within. *“The contest was virtually over long before mid-day, having no chance from the commencement.”* Mr Richard WILKES (Conservative) 145 votes, Mr Edward Birch LEGH (Conservative) 140, Mr Richard Maddox (Liberal) 40. [ii] 4 November 1870

It was not only in politics that Richard met with defeat. He failed to gain election as a Poor Law Guardian, finishing 6th of 6 in the poll for St. Julian’s Parish. [i] 12 April 1871

He was perhaps regarded as a minor *‘local celebrity’* when on 26 April 1883 he opened the second day of the Claremont Baptist Church’s ‘Grand Grotto Bazaar’ in the Music Hall, Shrewsbury. Day One was opened at 12 noon by Richard GROOM Esq. of Dothill Park, Wellington and entry cost one shilling at any time but by the next day it was a 2pm opening and one shilling for entry up to 4pm then sixpence thereafter – very much a second day[!] [ii]

He did not give up on his local political ambitions and was successful eventually, as in 1883 he is recorded as being a [Liberal] Councillor for Stone Ward Without.

Richard continued to be involved in his local area and in 1887 was returned as President of Holy Trinity Cottage Gardeners Society.

The following year he is reported to be a new subscriber to the *'Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital for Shropshire and Wales'* having paid £2 2s. [iv] 3 November 1888. Previously, in 1884, he had donated "four pairs of sheets".

Between 1883-1889 he is regularly identified as a General Director of the Shropshire and North Wales Fire Office (The Square, Shrewsbury) and from 1886 he is noted as being a 'J.P.'. He was also a director of the Salop Infirmary.

Maddox & Co. reappeared in the news on 9 March 1889 in a report from the Shropshire Spring Assizes at the Shirehall. It is headed "*Hidden Treasures Revealed. Unexpected Verdict*".

*"Eliza Elizabeth GROOM (74) no occupation was indicted for stealing 71½ [misprint?] yards of check shirting, the property of Richard Maddox and others, Shrewsbury... The evidence was to the effect that on Feb. 9 about nine pm [the] prisoner was observed to fall down opposite Messrs. Maddox's establishment and Edward OLIVER (engineer) went to help her up. This proved difficult as the woman seemed to have something entangling her legs. Other assistance came, the woman was raised to her feet, and then the roll of cloth fell from underneath her clothing. Prisoner declared that a man had thrown it in her way.*

*However, she had been previously seen with it under her arm and she was given into custody. The Foreman of the Jury said they did not deem the evidence sufficient and found prisoner 'not guilty'. His lordship, surprised, discharged prisoner and told her she had had a very narrow escape." [iv]*

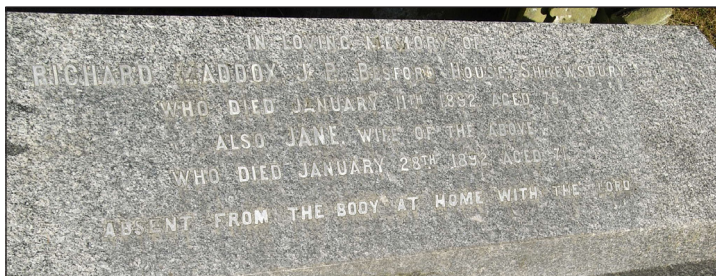
Eliza Elizabeth Groom ["alias Pugh"] had been found guilty on thirteen [previous occasions] for offences and was found guilty of stealing later in 1889 and again in 1892 when she was sentenced to six months hard labour and seven years under police supervision for a further offence of stealing.

Richard Maddox 1816 – 1892.

Richard Maddox died aged 75 on 11 January 1892 'at noon'. There is mention of his death in the *'Shrewsbury Chronicle'* 15 January 1892. Richard is referred to as "Senior Partner in Maddox and Co., Pride Hill." The *Wellington Journal* of 16 January 1892 reported that

*"One of Shrewsbury's most esteemed tradesmen – Mr Richard Maddox of High Street – died on Monday, to the profound regret of his fellow townsmen. By his demise the borough has lost one of its most capable public men. He had been for a number of years on the Commission of the Peace and ever discharged his magisterial duties with faithfulness and impartiality."*

Jane died a little over two weeks later on 28 January 1892. They are buried in Shrewsbury General Cemetery, Longden Road, Section 69, Division I, Grave F. It was 'a single bricked vault for three internments' – but it is just the two of them buried there.



The grave of Richard and Jane Maddox

The inscription reads *“In loving memory of Richard Maddox, J.P., Besford House, Shrewsbury who died January 11th 1892 aged 75. Also Jane, wife of the above who died January 28th 1892 aged 71. Absent from the body, at home with the Lord.”*

Richard Maddox’s will, dated 23 April 1890 [proved 19 May 1892] [Shropshire Archives ref: 1892/254] left all his real estate to his wife Jane and then to Zilpha Scott [nee Mansell] “niece of my said wife” and her heirs “absolutely”. Richard and Jane Maddox died childless and Besford House passed to their niece, Zilpha. Her husband was Walter James Scott who was a partner in the Maddox business.

*[Extract] “I devise my residence called Besford House, Shrewsbury aforesaid together with the gardens and outbuildings and also the land, drive, lodge, Chapel and other hereditaments formerly belonging to the Belle Vue Cemetery Company...To Zilpha Scott, wife of Walter James Scott and niece of my said wife...”*

In ‘cash’ he left £300 to his wife immediately and £3,200 immediately to others. On the death of both himself and Jane he left over £13,000 and two £100 per annum annuities.

He left £500 to Emma Farrington who was a ‘servant’ at Besford House [1871, 1881 and 1891 Census]

Probate was made on 19 May 1892 to *“Henry Exell Rogers and Walter James Scott drapers. Effects £10,074 16s 8d”*.

Rogers and Scott took over the running of Maddox & Co.

Businessman, family man, J.P., unsuccessful political candidate, a director of the Shrewsbury Waterworks Company and ardent Congregationalist are among the many

epithets that can be attached to Richard Maddox. He was one of many people in the past whose story deserves to be told.

Despite extensive efforts I have been unable to discover a portrait of Richard Maddox but the hope remains.

### References

Dorothy Davies "Maddox of Shrewsbury. 100 years of fashionable shopping" [1963] Shropshire Archives.

"Abbey Foregate Congregational Church Centenary Souvenir, 1962." Henry Eldred. Shropshire Archives.

"Notes on the Abbey Foregate Church" John Franklin. Shropshire Archives.

"A history of Besford House, Trinity Street, Shrewsbury". Ian Cripps 2017.

Newspapers: Eddowes, Shrewsbury Chronicle, Shrewsbury Free Press & Advertiser for Salop, Wellington Journal

Mr Stephen Malloy: Sale Brochure map

Pictures were taken by Ian Cripps.

Ian Cripps, 7541 [iansfolk@aol.com](mailto:iansfolk@aol.com)

## The Wild Goose Chase – my version

I was very interested to read the article by Bill Allison in the June issue of the Journal, because I can empathise with the writer totally.

When I first started looking into my Johnson line, based in St. Martins and Oswestry, nearly 40 years ago, I soon tracked them via the paper trail back to 1760 in Chirk, Denbighshire where I got stuck. However back to Shropshire and, in the early days of my on-the-ground research, I found my William Johnson (1803-1861) running the Plume of Feathers Inn in Oswestry. My long-suffering husband took me there in order to find the Inn in Leg Street only to find that on the ground floor of this older building was a rather garish shopfront with wooden slats above and the name of 'Eke's Boutique'. No offence meant, but it looked most out of place and I was so upset. [I've since come to terms with the fact that not everything survives, but it took a long time!]

So then we went to find Ddôl farm on the borders of the River Ceiriog, which formed the boundary with Chirk and was the ancestral home of my Prynald (various other spellings exist) ancestors who married into my Johnson line. Unfortunately our Sat Nav took us into a steeply sloping field, somewhere in the wilds and not to our required destination.



So, faced with not knowing where we were, we gave up. I did eventually find the farm from the Welsh side over a little footbridge.

We already knew that my earliest James Johnson, whose birth date (estimated about 1740) and place I have never found, had taken on the Ponty-Blew farm and Forge on the outskirts of Chirk, so I then wrote to the Chirk Library to be put in touch with the late author of both the histories of Chirk and St. Martins, Neville C. Hurdsmen and ended up spending a whole day with him gleaning far more than what was mentioned in his books. I came away with the latest discoveries and finds and he showered me with documents discovered in a locked room at the Hand Inn, Chirk where my Thomas Johnson was both innkeeper and parish clerk, from which I have now taken all the information I need and deposited the originals with the Ruthin County Record Office. I was well pleased with my day.

But it was with my Bathford, Somerset Newmans that I had similar success to your writer. My mother and I turned up in Bathford one day and found the house (called Northfield) where my Newman family had lived from the early 19th century until 1901 when the last one died. I was standing on the opposite side of the road taking a photograph, when the owner popped his head up from behind the wall and I explained who I was etc. We then got an invitation to see inside the garden and house and I was absolutely gobsmacked. All my Newmans were stonemasons and builders and I knew quite a lot about them, but the best was yet to come. Lining the inside of the side garden wall were a whole row of gravestones from the churchyard which they had obviously removed when it became necessary to make more room for ensuing incomers. (I later found the Archbishop's faculty which gave him permission to do so.) James Newman had repaired and rebuilt the church and its tower several times over the century.

Moving into the house I saw that the inside porch contained a moulded architrave with a Roman Letter N, again moulded, on each side. I still can't decide whether it stands for Newman or Northfield. The then owner pointed out a large stained glass window which descended the length of the stairwell – obviously from the church - and showed me the stairs to the now cellar, once the servants' quarters, then told me that the aspect of the house had been turned round to face the upper road rather than the lower one at some stage. This explained why on the 1881 census the house was empty and my Newmans were living in a property opposite. Fabulous!

So all in all just a few of my ups and down on the way to finding out more about my family. I'd recommend it to anyone!

**Jane Hussey, 1772**

## DNA and ME

### Do not believe everything you read on a Census Return

I began researching my family history in 2007, soon after we retired to live in Herefordshire, when I joined Ludlow U3A's Family History Group. I was born in Shrewsbury but left Shropshire at age sixteen after both my parents died, going away to boarding school, followed by Secretarial College and then working in London until I married my husband in 1968.

Soon I discovered that my Grandfather, George Alfred DICKIN, married twice; his first wife, Elizabeth EDWARDS, being my Grandmother. They married in 1879 at the Wyle Cop Baptist Church and Elizabeth died in 1898 of influenza, leaving George with six children, the eldest being my father. Elizabeth, therefore, only appears on two Census Returns – 1881 and 1891, when a different place of birth was recorded on each occasion – Uppington and Wellington. Their marriage certificate records Elizabeth's father as John Edwards, Farmer, deceased.

Since 2007 I have hunted in vain for Elizabeth's family on all manner of promising leads, all of which ended in failure. I have asked for help with my problem through the Journal but no one responded. As DNA testing has recently become more popular I have threatened to get mine done, only doing so in January/February of this year. I was both surprised and delighted to find that my ethnicity chart was, on the whole, as I expected but with one exception – I had a high percentage for Wales. This could only be one person – Elizabeth EDWARDS. With will renewed, I set about looking for a John EDWARDS, Farmer, with a daughter named Elizabeth born circa 1855, and I found just such a family on the 1861 Census living in Llanbadarn, Aberystwyth, Cardiganshire. I followed the family of five girls through all the relevant censuses and also discovered that both parents had died before Elizabeth married. I am in no doubt that this time I have a perfect fit with information already collected about the family's lifestyle from memoirs and other coincidences.

#### Rachael Hellberg, 6596

Image to the right is of Elizabeth Edwards, Rachael's grandmother



## Our Unique War Memorial

*Editor: Yoland Brown (1247) and Irena White (7049) have shared this information about the Ryton XI Towns War Memorial, having read the review of the recent talk about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and their work.*

The dreadful massacre which was the First World War finally came to an end in 1918, but it will be observed that carved above the Ruyton XI Towns War Memorial are the years 1914-1919. This is because, although the Armistice was signed on 11th November 1918, the final Paris Peace Conference took place at Versailles on 28th June 1919.



Interestingly, Canon Edge, Vicar of West Felton and author of *The History of that village*, was at a meeting of the Classical Association in Manchester when he heard about the Imperial Conference which took place in 1918 at which Sir Frederic George Kenyon was present. Sir Frederic was grandson of Thomas and Charlotte Kenyon of Pradoc, Director of the British Museum and President of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, with a particular interest, among other things, in ancient monuments. It had been a concern in high places, about what would be done about war cemeteries after the war, when Sir Frederic reminded the committee that in 5th century Athens war dead were listed in war cemeteries with just their names being carved in stone with the Tribe, or regiment, to which they belonged. The Committee accepted the Athenians way of recording the dead and so we have a Kenyon to thank that, wherever the war dead are buried, each has an identical headstone with no distinction for wealth or service hierarchy.

An example of exactly what Kenyon wanted to avoid can be seen in Little Ness churchyard where Maurice Darby, son of Arthur and Frederica Darby of Adcote House, has a very ornate monument recording that his uncle, Sir George Arthur, had searched the battlefield until he found his nephew, four days after his death and brought his remains home to be buried with other members of his family. The young man was one of the very few Englishmen killed on the Western Front to be re-patriated. The other 20 men from the village who fell just had their names recorded on the War Memorial.

*Editor: For more information about the history of the Eleven Towns, including the War Memorial, check out their website at <https://www.eleventowns.uk/history.html>*

## Poppy Sunday

I am sure many of us will be attending Remembrance Day/Sunday events and other linked events in November. If you had been around Shrewsbury in 1936 you could have attended a Sacred Concert at The Empire Theatre, Mardol, as shown in the image below.



The image on the front cover of the Journal is taken from the back cover of the concert programme and shows the amounts collected each year in the town, with a push for the appeal in 1936 to reach £1001. I have not yet been able to find out if this target was achieved. The poppies are of the design in the 1930s when they introduced poppies made from two layers of different fabric. The under layer was made from lawn cloth, with an upper layer of silk. There was also a green fabric leaf, faux stamens and a metal centre.

# Forward to 50!

**Please come and join us on Saturday 12 October  
to celebrate our 45th Anniversary  
at Chapel Community Centre, The Chestnuts,  
Cross Houses, Shrewsbury, SY5 6JH  
from 11am - 3.30pm (arrive from 10.30)**

## **Speakers/Talks**

**Sarah Davies**

**Shropshire Archives: past, present and future**

**Simon Davies**

**A Search for the Fallen of WW1**

**Karen Hunter, Editor**

**Our Journal over the years**

**Guest Speaker, Dave Annal**

**Fact from Fiction: what the great 19th century novels  
can tell us about our ancestors**

There is no cost to attend - just come along, although if you could let us know in advance that you will be joining us that would be helpful. Just email [chair@sfhs.org.uk](mailto:chair@sfhs.org.uk)

We will be providing light refreshments during the day (tea/coffee/squash/biscuits etc) but please bring your own lunch. This makes it much easier to organise the day and seemed to work well last year, providing an ideal opportunity for people to meet up and chat.

We are not able to live-stream the event but are looking at the possibility of recording the talks so that, in due course, we can make them available to those who are not able to join us.

We can always do with a few extra pairs of hands to help with things on the day, so if you can help please let us know.

## Shropshire Dialect

*Editor: The recent item about Shropshire Dialect has resulted in some members sharing their memories of some of the words they remember from their childhood. It is interesting to see some of those shared 'translations'*

**From Gwyneth Tyrrell, 5646**

Looking back over recent SFHS journals, in the March 2024 edition I came across the Shropshire Dialect item and realised many of the words were familiar from my early childhood although I haven't heard them for a long time!!

I am in my 80s but grew up at Acton Scott on my grandparents' farm where there were elderly farm workers probably born in the late 1800s.

I offer the following:

Biddy - old woman	Clemmed - hungry
Oon - mole	Fretchit - irritable
Moithered - flustered	Piert - lively
Mummock - mixed up mixture of bits of food	Orts - scraps
Leasings - ears of corn from a field	Ossed - offered or tried
Heft - lift	Pickel - pitchfork
Tush - shove along	Boosey - food cratch in cow house
Dunny, cymet - stupid or daft	Trouse - hedge cuttings
Slang - long narrow field	Tup - ram
Daggley - wet	Puthery - hot and close
Oulert - owl	Mouldiworp - mole
Adlents - headlands, land at the ends of a field for turning horses and plough.	

Just a bit of fun!

**From Janet MacGregor, 6212**

Your article in the June issue of the SFHS magazine regarding Shropshire dialect called to mind happy memories of my beloved Shropshire Grandma. as a child I loved to listen to her tales and many of her words and expressions I remember vividly; including

Pizey - irritable or miserable	Furnaigh - to go back on something, perhaps a promise or one's word
Death - she always pronounced as 'Jeth'	Clipping - cuddling
Axings - Banns of marriage being read in Church	Swapson - big, untidy, messy
Gully - baby goose	Malkin - scarecrow
Sapey - wet	busk bodice - bra
cakey - silly	Sog - punch, blow, hit
Galus - naughty	

Thank you for helping me to recall the 'magical' person Grandma was to me.

**From Barbara Maund, 7611**

I heard it spoken but would query the spelling. I hope these comments are of some interest and would be interested in any other comments. With a bit of imagination I could make quite a lot of sense of the article. The following I do know:

Fretchit - to be miserable, to cry fretfully, to grizzle (of a child)	Askel - a newt
Piert - lively	Dunny - stupid
Slang - a long and narrow meadow	Beasts - steers/bullocks
Daggley - dreary day with outbreaks of drizzle	Oulert - an owl, a barn owl
Mouldiwort - a mole?	
Boosey - I've always known a boosey to be a brick or concrete trough in front of stall fed cattle. However on looking through the lease of my grandfather's farm dated 1884 reference is made to Boosey pasture and further research would indicate this applies to a recently sown pasture, a reseed?	

**News from the Federation**

**Really Useful Family History Shows**

Please note that the ONLINE show scheduled for November 2024 has been postponed following the success of the live shows this year. 2005 will see further shows - keep an eye on the website for announcements [www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/)

## A Victorian Success Story

### James Steele of Childs Ercall, Shropshire, and Trentham, Staffordshire

Our family has long known that our origin can be traced to James STEELE of Trentham (now part of Stoke Trent) in Staffordshire. Each Census, however, taken during James' lifetime shows that he was baptized in the parish of Childs Ercall, Shropshire in 1810. The parish register for January 1810 contains the following inscription: '28th Bap. James Son of John & Sarah STEEL'. The register contains no information about Sarah, nor does it show a marriage for John STEEL to a woman named Sarah. Early searches for a marriage were based on the premise that a baptismal record containing the names of both father and mother implied that a marriage had taken place or could be anticipated shortly after the birth of the child. Countless searches in many jurisdictions for a qualifying marriage all ended in failure.



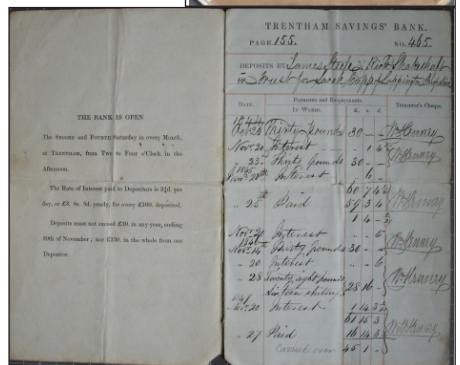
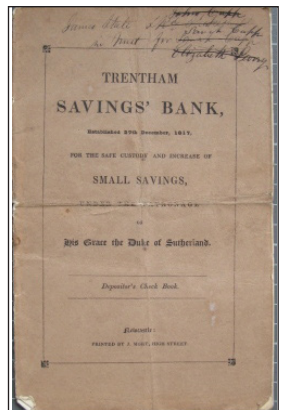
During the early years of the nineteenth century the STEEL/STEELE population of Shropshire was low in comparison with other counties. The parish of Childs Ercall, in the hundred of North Bradford, with only 389 inhabitants in 1824, did not have a single baptism or burial of a STEEL during the century preceding 1797. In the 17 years that followed, eleven STEEL/

STEELE children were baptized there. Except for one child, ten of those children had a mother named Mary. The father of eight of those children was John while the father of the remaining two children was William. The parents of the eleventh STEEL child (James) were John and Sarah. From 1814 onwards the name STEEL/STEELE does not appear in the Childs Ercall baptism, marriage, or burial records, suggesting that the STEEL/STEELE family in Childs Ercall comprised a single family, albeit a complex one. John was 40 years old and head of the household in the year of James' birth. Information obtained much later would show that Sarah was just sixteen years old when her son James was born. Carelessness could have resulted in the inadvertent substitution of the name Sarah for Mary, the mother of the other ten children in the family, but this seems unlikely. More likely, the relationship between John and Sarah was an extramarital one, but even this provided no answer to the question of Sarah's identity: the situation had indeed become a brick wall.



At the time of James' birth John is living in Childs Ercall with his wife Mary, and with Sarah who likely was 'in service' in the STEEL home, a common practice for girls and young women at the time. Sarah could have been present in the STEEL household as early as two years before the birth of her son James. The association between John, Mary, and Sarah, must have been close otherwise the identity of James' father would never have been known and his birth would have been recorded as that by a single woman. James' birth would have produced an awkward situation, precluding any possibility of acceptance as a member of the STEEL family. Under these circumstances the mother and child would have been on their own and seeking accommodation elsewhere. One can only speculate on the daily lives of James and his mother Sarah following James' birth. The only way that she could support herself and her son would be to go into service, but having to care for a newborn child would have made the search for accommodation difficult. The fate of mother and son at this time is not known but it is reasonable to suggest that she may have returned, at least in the earliest period, to live with her parents who may have been able to provide support.

During a visit to England in 2011, a day was spent at the Staffordshire Archives to examine some holdings related to James STEELE. Amongst those items were Trentham Savings Bank deposit books which had belonged to James' children. This collection of documents also included a deposit book for an account held in trust by James for a person named Sarah Capp. In 2011 Sarah Capp's connection with James Steele was unknown but by 2023, with the search for the identity of James STEEL's mother in full swing, the name on the deposit book assumed greater significance. Also inscribed on the cover of the deposit book was the name of John Capp. A brief search of census and marriage records showed that Sarah Capp was the wife of John Capp, a widower, whom she married in 1844 at Trentham; she was fifty years old at the time and had supported herself with service work. The 1841 Census shows that she was employed as a ladies maid in the well to do Dickin household in the parish of Loppington, Shropshire. Her trust account was established at the time of her marriage to John Capp.



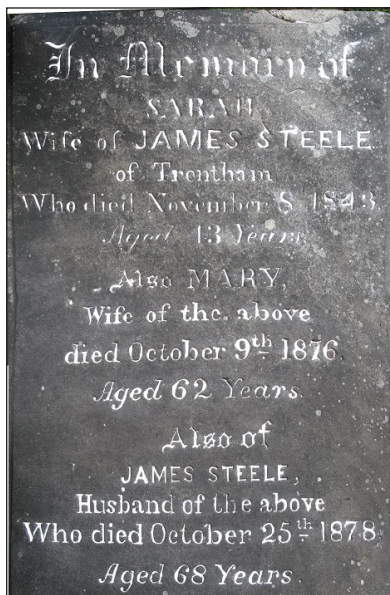
Because coverture was in effect at the time, having her funds held in trust was a way of maintaining control of her money. The fact that she placed her trust in James to do this suggested that he was a close relative. Indeed, subsequent events support the view that Sarah (Bould) Capp was the mother of James Steele. This conclusion is supported by the fact that James was a witness at her marriage. Sarah's marriage certificate describes her as a spinster and gives Bould as her maiden name. She was born December 1793 to William and Elizabeth Bould in Trentham, Staffordshire and was therefore the younger sister of Thomas Bould of Trentham, who, like his father William, was a tailor, and much respected citizen of Trentham. James Steele's relationship with the Bould family was undoubtedly initiated by Sarah Bould following his birth.

In retrospect we can see that James' mother Sarah was probably the person who paved the way for her son to take up an apprenticeship with her brother Thomas in Trentham, where James would have learned his trade as a tailor and clothier. Very likely he would have lived with the family for several years while working as an apprentice tailor. Under these circumstances James and Thomas' wife would have become acquainted with each other. When Thomas died in 1831 James had probably completed his apprenticeship, and with his business established he was then able to marry.

Thomas Bould died in 1831 at the young age of 39 years, leaving behind a widow with five children. Although Thomas' will made clear that his wife Sarah (Forrister) Bould would be provided for following his death she might have worried that with so many young children life would still have been a struggle, hence her desire to marry as soon as possible. Her marriage to James STEELE in 1832, just a little more than a year following the death of her husband may have seemed surprising. He was just 22 years of age. Sarah was older by 13 years with a large family. The union between James and Sarah (Forrister) Bould may have come about because, like many women at the time, she depended on the security provided by a marriage to provide support for a large family. There may, however, have been other reasons that prompted her marriage to James who was her nephew by marriage, not the least being a recognition of his early success in the business world.

It is likely that neither James, nor his mother, maintained contact with John after leaving Childs Ercall. John's relationship with other family members is another story remaining to be told. It is relevant, however, to note here that John was served with a bastardy order by the Parish of Hodnet in 1816. He had been a widower for just one year when this occurred. His wife Mary was buried in her home parish of Shawbury, while John lived into old age and was buried in Market Drayton in 1858.

James enjoyed a very successful career in Trentham. In his tailoring and clothier business he was often called upon to supply the Sutherland estate with clothing, casket linings, etc. He could be described as a public-spirited person, as shown by his membership in the Trentham Association for the Prosecution of Felons, chaired by the Duke of Sutherland, and as a Trustee of the Trentham Friendly Society. In his private life he was a churchwarden at the Church of St Mary and All Saints from 1847 to 1878. His wife Sarah died in 1843. Seven years later he married Mary Williams of Kinnersley, Shropshire. He became a widower for the second time in 1876. James had four children with Sarah: namely Helen Jane, Mary Elizabeth, Samuel, and George. By Mary Williams he had Ada Ann and Herbert. Although no records have been found that would describe James' relationship with his mother it was probably a close one. Had it not been she probably would not have appointed him as the executor of her estate. Many children born under similar circumstances would not have been so fortunate as James. His association with the long established, and apparently well off, Bould family in Trentham provided him with opportunities that he otherwise would not have had. James died in 1878 as the result of an accident in which a carriage in which he was riding overturned, causing him serious injuries. He is buried, along with his two wives, in Trentham Cemetery, just a few feet from the Sutherland Family Mausoleum, where he can look out on his former home, now a Harvester Public House.



**John Steele, 6982 (jsteele@uwo.ca)**

*Editor: All the images are taken by John himself. He tells me that to make the letters on the grave stone stand out he filled the letters with sugar - hence the white letters in the one image on this page. This is not a technique I have come across before - have any other members tried this?*

# Murder, Sex, and Mayhem in English Churches

Talk given by John Vigar on 21 May 2024

The speaker is well qualified to speak on English churches, having visited over 13,000 of them, recording the paintings, objects and carvings relating to murder, sex and mayhem. In a largely pictorial talk, he started by looking at examples of early paintings, mostly related to Saints.

Many images were destroyed during the Reformation. One which survived is at Witton Church, near Salisbury, showing St Catherine about to be beheaded. Reputedly she was tied to a wheel as punishment, but the wheel broke. She was never popular and only 62 churches are dedicated to her. Her association with the punishment wheel is still remembered to this day in the eponymous 'Catherine wheel' firework.

Another is St Agatha, depicted in a painting in the isolated church at Church Norton, West Sussex, having her breasts removed. This happened in Sicily in 1561, so why is she here? The church here was first established in the 7th Century, but was later removed to Chichester by the bishops. The depiction was done 15 years after saints were banned, so perhaps because of its remote location it escaped detection.

The first English saint was Edward, who was both a King and a martyr after he died in battle. The wall painting at Stoke Dry in Rutland shows him being killed by arrows whilst tied to a tree. The bowmen appear to be wearing feathered head-dresses very similar to those worn by native Indians in North America even though they were unknown to each other at the time. 61 Medieval churches are dedicated to him. More famously, when the rulers decided to get rid of St Christopher he was tied to a tree and shot with arrows. The arrows bounced off, and so he was beheaded.

Thomas Becket was murdered in Canterbury cathedral in 1170. A wall painting in Preston church, near Brighton, shows him being slain by four assassins, alongside his chaplain. Another representation is a large wall painting at South Newington, near Banbury, Oxford which, in oil, was rare at the time.

Far less well known is St Uncumber [also known as St Wilgefortis] depicted in an image at a church in Sussex, as the 'bearded lady' who supposedly woke up having grown a beard. Her father had her killed upside down. But 'she' was actually a 'he'! A carved image at Lucia, Italy shows 'her' wearing a skirt, but with a beard.

Bishop John Coleridge Patteson, distantly related to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was a curate in Devon. In the late 1850s he went to Melanesia and was consecrated as the 1st Bishop of Melanesia. Defending the islanders against slavery, he was mistaken for a trader and murdered. Realising their mistake, the natives set him afloat in a boat as was Melanesian custom. A painting at Alington Church, Devon depicts it.

A plaque at Burford Church, near Banbury, commemorates the 'levellers', part of Cromwell's army, who mutinied seeking fair pay and a right to silence. Cromwell sent troops in, killing some and arresting 349, some of whom were locked in the church overnight. Three, Cornet(\*) Thompson, Corporal Perkins and Private Church were later shot [\* a Cornet was a military rank, equivalent today to 2nd Lieutenant]. A 'levellers' day' is held there each year.



Plaque at Burford church, in memory of the executed levellers (Wikipedia)

Among gravestones, the speaker showed one to Robert Trotman at Kinson Church, Bournemouth, an area then noted for smuggling. The stone says he was 'barbarously murdered' on 24 March 1765, and has an ode to him which reads:

*A little Tea one leaf I did not steal  
For Guiltless Blood shed I to GOD appeal  
Put Tea in one scale human Blood in t'other  
And think what tis to slay thy harmles Brother.*

Among carvings the speaker showed one at Bostley(?), Lincolnshire, showing a master beating the bottom of a naughty child (despite a protective book!), while others look on in fright. The Medieval clergy were schoolmasters of the time.

A carving at Blythburgh Church, Suffolk, shows a man restrained in stocks, possibly for asking for higher wages. The use of stocks was prescribed under the Statute of Labourers Act of 1351. Their last use in England was in 1872.

All churches in the Middle Ages had a 'doom door', with effigies showing what would happen to those who stepped out of line; everyone was petrified of dying. At Harling in Norfolk an image of a man pushes a woman in a handcart. It is assumed she was drunk and it may give rise to the phrase of 'going to hell in a handcart'.

At Chaldon Church in Surrey is a complex and superb wall painting from c.1150, said to be the earliest in England and one of the finest in Europe. Depicting the ladder of salvation and purgatory, it shows many folk in a struggle between the angels (Heaven) and the devil (Hell). It is too complex to be described here but an image and description can be seen at <https://wealdanddownlandchurches.co.uk/chaldon-church/>.

Finally, the speaker moved onto sex. In a series of slides (too numerous to describe) he showed many carvings in wood and stone depicting effigies in sexual poses or just displaying genitalia. These were warnings to folk not to dabble in sex unless it was within the Church's teaching. '*Shiela na gigs*' are grotesque erotic female carvings, often above doorways, showing extended genitalia. The message was, don't have lustful thoughts! Male images often have spread legs and distinct erections, as at All Saints, Hereford.

Finally, at Lincoln Cathedral, are modern copies of ancient intimate carvings to persuade people not to have sex with animals, not to pay for sex, and not to have sex with people of a different age group. You have been warned...!

Although there were many other examples, these were a fitting end to an absorbing talk.

**Peter Tandy, 7790**

## **Everything you want to know about Heraldry - and were afraid to ask**

**Review of a talk given by Chris Broom on 18 June 2024**

Genealogists probably avoid or only marginally investigate heraldry. But it can be of huge help in tracing ancestors from times before other records existed. The multi-coloured shields and tunics we are aware of from the Medieval period and earlier were originally to pick out friends or foes in battle. The first use of a heraldic device was in the 12th Century when Henry II gave his son-in-law, Geoffrey Plantagenet, a shield as a wedding gift. Later, at tournaments, Heralds attended to act as comperes, to announce and record names, often on long sheets known as heraldic rolls; quite a few still exist in local archives. Early shield designs were fairly basic, and to identify individuals, so the rule of 'one man – one

coat (of arms)' was followed (and still is). The College of Arms was founded in 1484 to regulate the granting of arms. Heraldic Visitations took place from 1530-1688 for people to prove they were entitled to arms. The College of Arms still grants about 250-300 arms each year. A person granted a coat of arms is said to be 'armigerous'

Heraldry is alive today. We see it in pub signs, churches, football shirts, chinaware, and royalty when pageants are staged. Quasi arms (badges of allegiance) are seen in company logos, car badges, football shirts etc.

Anyone studying heraldry will notice the peculiar language used. A coat of arms is a 'shield' (or escutcheon) not a crest. An 'achievement of arms' is a display of all heraldic devices that a bearer is entitled to display. The speaker showed a typical full coat of arms with a central shield above a mound (grass or earth) with a motto on a scroll, and the shield with 'supporters' either side (denoting a peer of the realm). Above the shield may be a helmet (or 'helm') (denoting battle honours), perhaps with a coloured cloth band ('torse') and surmounted by a 'crest' (which can be anything).

The basic shield is described from the viewpoint of the bearer, and is divided into a top (called the chief), a bottom (base), a left side (sinister) and a right side (dexter). Various shaped horizontal lines may divide the shield. There are seven colours ('tinctures'): 'gules' (red), 'azure' (blue), 'vert' (green), 'sable' (black), 'pupure' (purple), 'or' (gold), and 'argent' (silver/white). There are also two furs, 'ermine' (black tail tips on white), and 'vair' (a blue/white horizontal linear design based (apparently) on laid out squirrel skins). A plain colour shield can be partitioned by a coloured segment or as a chequer board. Onto this are placed various 'charges' which are either geometrical or almost anything else (of the choice of the recipient). Geometric 'charges' might be a band at the top ('chief'), an inverted chevron, a middle horizontal band ('fess'), a diagonal band (if running top left to bottom right known as a 'bend' or if bottom left to top right a 'bend sinister'). There are many others too numerous to mention here. A full heraldic description of a coat of arms is called a 'Blazon'.

For family history research, there are three excellent books. Burke's General Armory ('BGA') of 1842; Papworth's Ordinary of British Armorial, 1874; and Fairbairn's Crests 1859 (all subsequently reprinted). Papworth devised a system of looking up names of bearers if you have a blazon available. Other sources are Burke's Family Index, Marshall's Genealogists' Guide, Whitmore's A Genealogical Guide, Barrow's The Genealogists Guide, and Thomson's A catalogue of British Family Histories.

What benefits does heraldry give? A coat of arms is a unique identifier, and can flag-up remote family connections, reveal full and variant surname origins, give valuable

information about female lines. They often pre-dates parish registers and may lead to other valuable datasets.

After an absorbing talk, there were many questions, some of which were:

- Could Papworth's book be turned into an app?

Yes, it is already thought of. But it is a big job.

- Do the Royal arms show leopards not lions?

Originally they were heraldic leopards, but such creatures were relatively unknown at the time.

- Could all those families who had a visitation in the 16th century, have arms?

Visitations were to prove the legitimacy of bearing arms for individuals.

- Can anyone be granted a coat of arms?

Yes, but it costs about £7,500.

- What is the connection between heraldry and hatchments?

A hatchment is a funerary device hung outside a house, to mark the death of an armigerous person, After a while they were taken into the church. They usually show heraldry on a 'sable' (black) background.

- Do shields ever show illegitimacy or bereavement?

They can do, using different devices.

- Do sea-side coats of arms for one's name, have any legitimacy?

These are known as 'bucket-shop' heraldry. Remember, coats of arms are for an individual, not a family. That said, they do help to promote heraldry.

- Some companies/institutions have coats of arms on 'web pages; are they allowed to do this?

Strictly no, but institutions set up by someone of that name who was connected, do so.

- Does the US's 'right to bear arms' refer to heraldry or weapons?

Sadly, weapons.

**Peter Tandy 7790**

Image: The Coat of Arms (crest) of Shropshire taken from <https://www.heraldry-wiki.com/wiki/Shropshire>





## Setting Up Our Society

As we approach our 45th anniversary I have been looking back at the very early committee papers, including those of the Formation Committee, with the first set of papers referring to their meeting on 7 August 1979. At this meeting the name of the Society was agreed as Shropshire Family History Society, Miss U Rayska agreed to act as Chairman, Mr S C Clifford was adopted as Secretary, with seven other people adopted as Committee members. The Treasurer role was left unfilled until such time as a suitably qualified member could be found for the job. This had been resolved by the following month, with Mr H Tranter being formally adopted to that position. The Society President role was in abeyance until such time as the future of the Society seemed reasonably assured although it was hoped that the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire would accept the position.

The Federation of Family History Societies were to be approached for advice about the Constitution and rules of the Society and a loan from them was to be requested until such time as cash was received by way of subscriptions.

It was also agreed that a Journal should be issued, but no firm decision was made at that first meeting about the frequency of publication, much depending on cost and availability of material. The Rev. Bryan agreed to act as Editor and to arrange for printing etc.

In September 1979 membership was reported to stand at 15; by October this had increased to 57, with numerous enquiries arriving; by February 1980, it almost tripled to 161 and by June that year it was 204.

Early projects instigated in the first few months of the Society, all managed and supported by volunteers included: Monumental Inscription recording across a number of parishes; Indexing Death Notices from the Salopian Journal 1820-1840 and the Indexing of Settlement Examinations.

An inaugural Public Meeting was held on 8 October at the Council Chamber, Shire Hall but unfortunately the record of this meeting is not included in the papers which I have.

Another topic which featured was the Talks programme, with these being arranged for each month, with early topics selected to cover Monumental Inscriptions, Probate Inventories and Heraldry.

*“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose”.*

**Karen Hunter, Chair**

## A Quit Claim Document

After researching the family name in Shropshire for many years along with Sue Page, nee Dickin, we only ever came across one Quit Claim document as follows.

The will of Thomas Dickin of Ewell, gent, in 1688 refers to a bond in the sum of £200 that his brother John Dickin of Lyneal, yeoman, owed to him and his heirs. However, in 1689 his widow Mary Dickin revoked this debt and issued a Quit Claim absolving the said John Dickin of this debt.

The Quit Claim document is reproduced below. No doubt John Dickin was relieved not having to repay this loan to his sister-in-law!

D3651/8/37/1/16

Know All Men by these presents, That I, Mary Dickin the  
Executrix of the last will and Testament of Thomas Dickin  
late of Ewell in the County of Surry Gent my late husband  
Deceased have Remitted Released and Quit-claimed, and by  
these presents do Remise Release and Quit-claim unto Joh  
Dickin of Lyneal in the County of Salop yeoman All and al  
manner of Accions Sutes, Doubts Doubts & Demands whatsoever  
which I heretofore had, now have or hereafter shall, may, can me  
or ought to have against the said John Dickin his heirs & exors  
or Adms or any of them for or by Reason of any matter law  
or thing whatsoever from the beginning of the world until the day  
of the date of these presents (and writing obligatory wherein  
said John Dickin standeth bound unto me for paym of two  
hundred pounds, and by the said will bequeathed unto my daughter  
Mary only excepted) In witness whereof I the said Mary  
Dickin have hereunto put my hand and seal the 24th day  
of June Anno: Dom: 1689

Agreed that the Interest of the above  
mentioned Sum of 200<sup>l</sup> shall be  
payable but from the fourth day  
of July next ensuing and then  
these presents was sealed & delivered  
in the presence of

G. Chamberlayne  
Sic. Henricus  
Geo. Chamberlayne

Mary Dickin

## Transcription of Quit Claim

*Know all men by these presents that I Mary Dicken the Executrix of the last will and testament of Thomas Dicken late of Ewell in the county of Surrey Gent my late husband deceased have remised released and quit claimed, and by these present do remise release and quit claim unto John Dicken of Lyneall in the County of Salop yeoman, All and all manner of Accounts suites, Debts Dutys Divers & Demands Whatsoever which and heretofore had now had or hereafter shall may can, might or thought to have against the said John Dicken his heirs executors or \_\_\_\_\_ or any of them for or by reason of any matter lawful or thing whatsoever from the beginning of the world until the day of \_\_\_\_\_ of these presents (one obligatory wherein the said John Dicken standeth bound unto me for payment unto my daughter Mary \_\_\_\_\_) In witness whereof of the said Mary Dicken have put my hand & seal the tenth day of June Anno Domini 1689*

Mary Dickin

## Roy Dickins, 1370

*Editor: Has anyone come across such a document in their family history research? If so was it related to money or property as all the information I can find about such things appear to relate to the renunciation of a legal claim or right to land - essentially the transfer of property between individuals. Perhaps someone can shed more light on this?*

## Emails and our new Website

When our new website is launched, access to the Members' Area will require you to have a valid email address, which has been notified to us, as this will be part of the registration/'log-on' requirements.

Many of you have already done this, and will be receiving notifications on our talks, the Newsletter and occasional other useful information. However, if you haven't yet done so please let Dave Morris have the details and he will be able to include it on the system. If you are a family member you will need separate email addresses if you both want to access the area.

If you would prefer not to share your 'usual' address why not set up a specific account for your Family History work, either as an additional address with your current email provider or make use of something like Google or Outlook.

## Close family ties!

*Editor: Following on from Gillian's article in the December 2023 Journal [Vol 44 Part 4] we now learn more about the rather close family ties of some of the family, as she outlines below.*

I now know that my 2xgreat grandfather's (Richard G Melling) marriage to his niece-in-law was a bigamous marriage as it is still illegal, not for reasons of consanguinity but, 'as a protection against getting rid of (fatal accident!) the wife who is standing in the way of an illicit relationship'. The Mellings get worse I fear. Not only did my 4xgreat aunt Martha Melling die in childbirth aged 39 and unmarried, but in the previous generation my 5xgreat aunt, Mary Melling, had two illegitimate children, William and John, whom her older brother James brought up as if they were his own, though the birth of William is too close to the birth of his own child to make it feasible. Mary eventually married her cousin John Melling, his first wife Ellen/Eleanor nee Carter having died three months previously. I am of the opinion that he was the father of William and John (William named after Mary's father and John after his own father) which was fine except that William ended up marrying his cousin Betty Melling, who was the daughter of John snr from his first marriage, so making it an incestuous marriage as she was his half sister as well as being his cousin. It is quite possible that they did not know how closely they were related, family secrets being what they were in those days, but both marriages took place in St Mary, Deane (Bolton) and not in Radcliffe where they lived, a distance of a good seven to nine miles in the days before motorways, which suggests to me that they all felt they had something to hide.

By a strange coincidence I was sitting behind someone reading a newspaper last week and the headline on the page read, "My Partner is my Half-Brother", plus ca change.....!

### **Gillian Posner, 5130**

*Editor: This must make for an interesting Family Tree chart! If you are ever confused as to who might be legally able to marry who within your genealogical research this link might help! <https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~framland/genealogy/acts/affinity.htm>*

*This is part of a wider selection of links which provide information on various Acts of Parliament of interest to genealogists <https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~framland/genealogy/acts/actind.htm>*

## Certificate Exchange Scheme

The following are all birth certificates

Surname	Forename	Date	Parents	Location
EDWARDS	Elizabeth	13 Mar 1854	John & Sarah formerly EPSLEY	Wrockwardine Wood
EDWARDS	Elizabeth	10 Dec 1854	William & Martha formerly WOOLLEY	Pontesbury
EDWARDS	Elizabeth	15 Feb 1856	John & Elizabeth formerly JOHNSTONE	Wellington

The following are all death certificates

Surname	Forename	Date	Age	Location
EDWARDS	Thomas	9 Jul 1861	9 months	Ketley
EDWARDS	John	27 Sep 1870	50	Wellington
EDWARDS	Elizabeth	10 Jun 1890	75	Wombourn, Staffs

Anyone wanting to make enquiries about Exchange Certificates can contact Christine at [xchangecerts@sfhs.org.uk](mailto:xchangecerts@sfhs.org.uk)

There is no charge for a certificate but please send a stamped addressed envelope to Shropshire FHS, c/o 48 Oakley Street, SHREWSBURY, SY3 7JY, UK.

Unwanted certificates can be sent to the same address.

### Genealogy or Family History?

*I read once that genealogy was like a tree in winter: a visible structure clearly set out.*

*Family History, by contrast, is the tree in summer: clothed with leaves and teeming with wildlife - the context which adds colour and richness.*

*posted by Jane Hough on X/Twitter on 29 July 2024*

## From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On

The most intriguing thing about the September 1984 Journal (Volume 5 part3) is the amount of space devoted to the exchange of ideas and information about *'where things could be found, alterations to the way material was stored and, of course, how it could be accessed'*. So here goes...!

The Public Record Office was able to announce that *'Restoration and Reconstruction Work in the Chancery Lane Building had begun in January 1984 and that the building project would take two to three years to complete'*.

The announcement continued *'It is also planned to replace the existing paper and pneumatic system...with a computerised system which will be an extension of the current system used at Kew'*. Wow!

The Society of Genealogists was growing and on the move. They announced they were moving to 14, Charter House Buildings, London EC1M 7BA.

Two pages were used to explain a debate in the House of Lords concerning the 2nd Reading of the Public Records (Amendment) Bill. The Act was designed *'to provide for the transfer of certain records in the custody of the Registrar General to the Public Record Office'*. However, to my simple mind the pros and cons were so complicated, the fact that they had already been at it since 1979 did not surprise me.

Shropshire's Ironbridge Gorge Museum was acclaimed by a member of the Federation for its occasional weekend courses. The writer said that hearing about real people's lives such as the Miller's wife, who was accidentally milled up through three floors and only finished up with a broken arm, led her to thinking that family history was more than just names on a chart!

A full-page article reminded readers that the International Geological Index (IGI) was able to claim to be the largest and most easily searched research list in existence. Managed by the Church of Latter-Day Saints their British headquarters in South Kensington provided access to 68 million names.

In a separate article Mr. Gibson drew attention to a new guide *'Where to find the I.G.I.'* The guide consisted of 36 pages and would cost £1 plus 20p for postage and packing!

Stan Newens M.P. (466) asked the Attorney General about progress made by the study group...to investigate ...making microfilms of 100 year old records of birth, marriages and

deaths available for members of the public. In a long garbled reply the Solicitor General stated that he had no idea of a time scale because it had to be a convenient venue and that place had not been found!

A talk offered by Mr. George Evans at the Society's AGM, was entitled 'Wellington really does have a history'. It was explained he would be using slides (in a darkened room?) to illustrate his talk. No computerised pictures on bright screens then!

There was a request for anyone knowing whether 'Pay-role records' still existed for the Kemberton Pit in Dawley between 1870 and 1900 from Maureen Newport (615).

'A cry for help' came from Mr. Stivers (568). He wrote, *In the United States we have organised a 'Society of Shropshires', being descendants of Oliver Shropshire, born 1623, whose son, moved to Virginia about 1698.* He wondered if the surname Shropshire had originated in the County.

Members were reminded that postage costs had risen from 12.5p to 13p for items requiring a reply.

It was noted that people in 1972 were complaining that a Certificate from the General Register Office had risen from 40p to 75p.

The 1984 response...*'Those were the days. They are now £9.60!'*

Denise Rason (514) expressed her delight at the help received from a SFHS member after sharing her list of interests. I wonder if others have stories of help received from other members.

### **Reg Wilford, 5564**

*Editor: How times change! The Society of Genealogists have been on the move again recently and are now based at 40 Wharf Road, London, N1 7GS; postage costs are £1.35 (1st Class) and 85p (2nd Class); and certificates from the General Register Office are £12.50 each!*

*I wonder if anyone knows the answer to Mr Stivers' query about the origin of the surname, Shropshire or perhaps you know of someone with that surname? If so please let us know.*

*I also note the comment from Denise about how pleased she had been to receive help from a SFHS member - please can I suggest you take a look at page 144 where there is a proposal to include a regular section in the Journal where members can ask for help on any particular challenge they are facing in their research. Ask away and let's see if we can help each other out.*

# The Importance of Dates in Genealogy

Dates are the backbone of genealogical research. They anchor events in time, help construct family timelines, and provide critical context for understanding our ancestors' lives. However, the practice of recording dates has evolved over centuries, often complicating the interpretation of historical documents. Understanding these changes is essential for accurate genealogical research.

Dates are vital for various reasons:

**Establishing Timelines:** Dates allow genealogists to place events in chronological order, constructing a coherent narrative of family history.

**Confirming Identities:** Birth, marriage, and death dates help differentiate between individuals with similar names, especially in large families or small communities.

**Contextualizing Lives:** Dates provide context, linking personal events to broader historical events, and giving insight into the social, economic, and political environments of the time.

## Historical Changes in Dating Practices

Genealogists should be aware of historical changes in dating practices that can affect the interpretation of old records:

### Calendar Changes

**Julian to Gregorian Calendar:** The most significant shift was the transition from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. The Gregorian calendar is still used today - based on a 365-day year divided into 12 months. Implemented by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 to correct the drift of the Julian calendar, it wasn't adopted universally at the same time. For instance, Catholic countries switched almost immediately, while Protestant and Orthodox countries adopted it much later (Britain and its colonies in 1752, Russia in 1918). This shift led to the loss of 10 to 13 days depending on the year and country of adoption.

The Calendar Act 1750, passed in 1751, introduced the Gregorian calendar to the British. Firstly, the start of the year had to be moved to 1st January 1752. Then, it was necessary to correct by 11 days. So, it was decided that Wednesday 2nd September 1752 would be followed by Thursday 14th September 1752. And thus, 11 September days never happened. Genealogists must adjust dates accordingly when interpreting records from this period.



**Dual Dating:** During the transition, some documents used dual dating (Old Style/New Style), during the first few months of the year. For example, a date might be recorded as 1 January 1690/91, reflecting both Julian and Gregorian calendars. Understanding dual dating is crucial for accuracy.

## New Year's Day

**Start of the Year:** Historically, the start of the year varied. Before the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, many European countries began the new year on 25 March (Lady Day or Annunciation Day) instead of 1 January. This means that dates between 1 January and 24 March in pre-Gregorian records might be listed under the previous year by modern standards. Genealogists must be cautious and verify the calendar system used in the records they are examining.

## Quarter Days

Since the Middle Ages in Britain and Ireland, 'quarter days' were the four dates in each year on which servants were hired, school terms started, and rents and rates were due. They fall on four religious festivals roughly three months apart and close to the two solstices and two equinoxes. Each new year started on Lady Day, 25th March.

- Lady Day (25 March)
- Midsummer Day (24 June)
- Michaelmas (29 September)
- Christmas (25 December)

## Interpreting Dates in Historical Documents

Interpreting dates in older documents requires careful consideration of the context and historical practices:

**Local Practices:** Different regions and even different churches or municipalities might have their unique ways of recording dates. Familiarise yourself with local history and practices to avoid misinterpretation.

**Language and Terminology:** Dates might be written in Latin, Old English, or other languages, and using terms that are no longer in use. Learning key phrases and terms from the relevant period and place can be invaluable.

**Handwriting Styles:** Old handwriting can be challenging to decipher, and numbers can be easily misread. Paleography skills (the study of old handwriting) are often necessary for accurate date interpretation.

## Tips for Genealogists

**Cross-Verification:** Always cross-check dates with multiple sources if possible. Baptismal records, marriage banns, wills, and other documents can provide corroborative evidence.

**Historical Context:** Understanding the historical context, including major events like wars or migrations, can explain anomalies in dates and provide additional clues.

Dates are more than mere numbers in genealogy; they are crucial markers that help us understand our ancestors' lives within their historical context. By recognising the complexities and changes in dating practices over centuries, genealogists can more accurately interpret historical documents, ensuring that family histories are both accurate and meaningful.

*Editor: This article is taken from the July edition of the Pharos Tutors Newsletter. Published monthly it provides information about their courses, including now courses on the horizon, research tips and genealogy news. Anyone can subscribe, even if you are not signed up for one of their courses - see the sign up section at the bottom of their website home page: <https://www.pharostutors.com/>*

*If you haven't come across them before, Pharos Tutors offer a wide range of online genealogy education covering a wide range of related topics - with anytime, tutor-led and certificate courses. I wonder if any of our members have undertaken any of the courses? If so, perhaps you might consider giving others an insight into how they work and/or writing a review of the course/s you have completed.*



*Other useful newsletters you might be interested in include the following, and each can be subscribed to via their website home page:*

*The Society of Genealogists 'The Genealogy Gazette': <https://www.sog.org.uk/>*

*The Family History Federation Really Useful Bulletin: <https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com/>*

*Also, there are also new Facebook and X/Twitter pages for the Shropshire branch of Victoria County History where you can get updates and posts concerning the work of the team as they endeavour to document the breadth of local history Shropshire has to offer! Or you can sign up for their occasional newsletter at [vchshropshire.org](http://vchshropshire.org)*

## Non-Conformist Chapels in Shropshire

At one of our previous Talking Family History sessions there was a discussion about the Primitive Methodists and their presence in Shropshire. So, when clearing my mother's house, I was surprised to find this picture of the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Wellington, Salop, (Elijah Jones, MSA, Architect, Hanley), presented to my great, great grandfather Thomas Pugh. The reason for my surprise - I had previously no idea of any connection he had with them.

In checking further I have established it is actually the Wellington Tan Bank Primitive Methodist Chapel, and for anyone interested, more information about it can be found at <https://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/content/chapels/shropshire/u-z/tan-bank-primitive-methodist-chapel-wellington-shropshire> and <http://www.vchshropshire.org/chapels/wellprim.htm>

Karen Hunter, 7648



## From the Editor

Our Journal, which has been produced every quarter since the Society was set up in 1979, provides an opportunity for our members to share their experiences of genealogical research, tales of their ancestors and how they lived, and hints and tips for others as they progress their own explorations into family history. And, like all the previous editors, without a regular supply of articles and items of interest, I struggle to produce a full Journal.

At the time of writing there are no articles waiting in my 'cupboard' for our next edition. I sure there will be a few on the way - Reg will be looking back at the Journal for December 1984 and Peter will provide reviews of the next couple of talks and we will need to include some papers ready for our AGM in January, but that won't fill all the blank pages. So please can I ask that you let me have your contributions.

**Karen Hunter, Editor**

## All About That Place 2024



All About That Place is back! The Society of Genealogists (SOG) has described it as the family and local history virtual event of the year, taking place from Friday 27th September to Sunday 6th October 2024.

There will be a plethora of free online bite-sized recorded talks from a wide range of speakers, broadcast over social media, [a pop-up Facebook Group and the SOG YouTube channel], consisting of very short (c.10 minute talks) on a plethora of subjects and supported by an interactive workbook of tasks and activities. The overarching theme for this year is Your Ancestor's Place in History, with daily themes, including Health and medicine; Military and war; Town and country; Leisure and entertainment; Innovation; Politics and rights; Collections and archives; and Tools.

To find out more and to get all the details on how to join this free event and to stay up to date with all their announcements sign up at <https://www.subscribepage.com/allaboutthatplace> and if you would like to get an idea of what this might be like, a number of the 2023 sessions can still be accessed via <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQkoy8bkE6cATx819dHMDr6QbylaH9u0R>

## Talks Programme 2024-2025

<b>17 September</b>	<b>Our Rural Ancestors</b> <i>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.</i>	<i>Dr Nick Barrett</i>
<b>15 October</b>	<b>The Mourning Brooch</b> <i>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.</i>	<i>Dianne Page aka Jean Renwick</i>
<b>19 November</b>	<b>Crime and Punishment in Rural Shropshire 1768-1898</b> <i>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.</i>	<i>Robert Hodge</i>
<b>17 December</b>	<b>Posted in the Past</b> <i>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.</i>	<i>Helen Baggott</i>

<p><b>21 January 2025</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Apprenticeship Records</b></p> <p><i>Learn about the history of apprenticeship and the numerous sources available for family history research. Discover how these sources can help research a “brick wall” ancestor.</i></p> <p><i>This talk will be preceded by the Society’s AGM</i></p>	<p><i>Richard Holt</i></p>
<p><b>18 February</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Sin, Sex and Probate – the work of the Church Courts</b></p> <p><i>There is a wealth of information to be found in the records of the Church Courts from fines our ancestors paid for playing football on a Sunday to excommunication and its aftermath, with lots of saucy doings in between, as Dr Chapman will demonstrate.</i></p>	<p><i>Dr Colin Chapman</i></p>
<p><b>18 March</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Just a Job - Revitalise your Family History with Occupational Research</b></p> <p><i>Dr Kay makes the case for why occupations matter in family history research. The talk includes some general tips and tricks for research, and a section on occupational health and job-related deaths.</i></p>	<p><i>Dr Sophie Kay</i></p>
<p><b>15 April</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bread, Gruel and Suet Dumplings – Workhouse Life</b></p> <p><i>This talk looks at life in the Workhouse, what the alternatives were, what conditions were like and discusses the many records available to find information about either an inmate or a staff member.</i></p>	<p><i>Ian Waller</i></p>

*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.*

*If anyone has suggestions for speakers and/or topics for future talks please let Joan know.*

*When the speakers give permission we do record the talks for those who are unable to join us at the time. When the new website is up and running we will be able to make these accessible through the Members’ Area of the site.*

## New Members

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

- 7964 EVANS Major W A; PENRITH, Cumbria
- 7965 KENYON Mr G; DONCASTER, South Yorkshire
- 7966 MEREDITH Ms C; MALVERN, Worcestershire
- 7967 MALLON Ms E; LIVERPOOL, Lancashire
- 7968 ELLIS Mrs M; SHREWSBURY, Shropshire
- 7969 FISHER Mrs V M; OSWESTRY, Shropshire
- 7970 BRADLEY Ms C; CO.DUBLIN, Republic of Ireland
- 7971 DAVIES Mr P; SHERBOURNE, Dorset

## Membership Benefits

Thank you to everyone for renewing their membership for another year.

With your individual contributions of £10, just the price of a paperback book or a couple of cups of good coffee, we are currently able to offer:

- The Journal four times a year
- 10 on-line talks, covering a wide range of family history related topics
- Opportunities to join our Talking Family History and DNA on-line groups
- Regular Newsletter
- Society website - and the new site will have a Members' Only section with access to back copies of our Journals, Exchange Journals, and expanded databases of information
- Help-desk at Shropshire Archives
- A library, although access is very limited at the moment
- Annual Face to Face meeting and, with additional help, we could look at increasing the frequency



**Karen Hunter, Chair**

## Research Queries

At a recent Talking Family History session it was suggested that we include a Research Queries section in the Journal where members can submit queries, especially where they are facing brick walls in their research, in the hope that others might be able to shed some light, or point them in the right direction of where to look next.

We do have something similar on our website, through the Forum, where anyone can post queries and this can often lead to some useful information being forthcoming. This feature will also be available on the new site.

As Editor I have included a few queries in recent editions of the Journal and I am more than happy to include more if you want to submit them to me, although do bear in mind that there will be a time-lag between sending them in and getting them into print.

If you have a query, but prefer not to have your email published in the Journal (see the item on page 129 about setting up a separate email for family history) any responses can be sent to me and I will forward them to you.

**Karen Hunter, Editor**

## Update on Committee Business

**Website Development:** This topic has continued to dominate our discussions over the last few months. It is making slow progress, with a number of challenges being found with each step in the process. The focus to date has been predominantly on the 'behind the scenes' databases which are essential to enable us to manage our systems. The front facing pages are coming together, but still require some work to make sure they are functioning properly.

**Succession planning:** We are reviewing the 'non-treasurer' roles that Paul Quartermaine has picked up over the years so we are clear of what is required when seeking new volunteers to pick up those roles. We also need to fill some other roles and are drawing together outline 'role descriptions' to be able to encourage volunteers to come forward to support us.

**'Forward to 50':** Consideration has been given to the planning for this event, including the programme.



## Notes for Contributors

Please:

- All contributions should be sent to the Editor at [editor@sfhs.org.uk](mailto: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 acknowledgement 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.

## Useful Websites

Thanks to The Frugal Family Historian, Alison Spring, on her *Free Family History Mini-class 2024* Blog [<https://scotsancestors.blogspot.com/>] I have discovered a few 'new to me' websites that might be of interest or help to others.

If you ever want to work out 'today's money' equivalents in your research try out The National Archives' Old Currency Converter <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

Or have you ever wondered what some of the diseases are that are recorded on an ancestor's death certificate? If so this Old Medical Terminology site might help <https://rmhh.co.uk/illness.html>

Have you come across a place name in your research that you are not quite sure about? The Gazetteer of British Place Names, providing a reference source of over 280,000 places in Great Britain, may be a good place to look <https://gazetteer.org.uk/index>

Our new website will include a substantial list of useful websites and we will make sure these are included. If you have any less common sites you use, please share the details with us and we can include them too.

## Copy Dates

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

### **Membership**

Gift Aid	Paul Quartermaine	<a href="mailto:treasurer@sfhs.org.uk">treasurer@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Subscription Renewals	David Burton	<a href="mailto:subs_renewals@sfhs.org.uk">subs_renewals@sfhs.org.uk</a>

### **Programme**

Programme Secretary	Joan Gate	<a href="mailto:speakers@sfhs.org.uk">speakers@sfhs.org.uk</a>
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### **Enquiries/Help**

*(Please note we do not undertake personal research but will assist if we can)*

General Enquiries	to the Secretary	<a href="mailto:secretary@sfhs.org.uk">secretary@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Research Queries (Members only)	Christine Abram	<a href="mailto:enquiries@sfhs.org.uk">enquiries@sfhs.org.uk</a>

### **Reference Material**

For look-ups or loan see Website for details

Certificate Exchange	Christine Head	<a href="mailto:xchangecerts@sfhs.org.uk">xchangecerts@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Members' Interests		<a href="mailto:members_interests@sfhs.org.uk">members_interests@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Library/Exchange Journals	Graham Moore	<a href="mailto:library@sfhs.org.uk">library@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Parish Registers Books	Graham Moore	<a href="mailto:library@sfhs.org.uk">library@sfhs.org.uk</a>

### **Sales**

Microfiche	Ruth Wilford	<a href="mailto:fiche@sfhs.org.uk">fiche@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Monumental inscriptions	Ruth Wilford	<a href="mailto:copies@sfhs.org.uk">copies@sfhs.org.uk</a>

### **Projects**

Shropshire Marriages Index		<a href="mailto:index@sfhs.org.uk">index@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Original P.R. and 1851 Census Microfiche (Shropshire)	Christine Abram	<a href="mailto:enquiries@sfhs.org.uk">enquiries@sfhs.org.uk</a>
Help Desk Volunteers at Shropshire Archives		<a href="mailto:archives_volunteers@sfhs.org.uk">archives_volunteers@sfhs.org.uk</a>

Please note that as part of the work to create our new website we are reviewing our Society email addresses. This should be completed before the next Journal is published and a new list will be produced here in December.



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