

# SUFFOLK ROOTS

Vol. 49 : No. 4 : March 2024



THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY



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VOLUME 49 : NUMBER 4 : MARCH 2024



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### **Theme of this Issue**

***I'll Drop You a Line***

*How did we communicate?*

### **Cover Picture**

*London and Ipswich Motor Parcel Mail, 2 April 1907  
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### **Suffolk Roots**

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# SUFFOLK ROOTS

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## TRUSTEES' MESSAGE

I was delighted to be able to attend, with several other Trustees (past and present), the 40th birthday celebrations for our Haverhill Group. It was also an opportunity to present **Brian** and **Charmian Thompson** with their **Derek Palgrave Award** – the photo shows Brian and Charmian with our Patron, **Doug Howlett**.



It is membership renewal time – also an opportunity to update us if you have changed any of your details. Our Membership Secretary, **David Horton**, has written more on this elsewhere in this edition.

As you will see from her article about the new Marriage Index release, **Pamela Palgrave** is standing down from her involvement with the Suffolk Marriage Index. The Index developed from a card index intended to supplement the coverage of the

IGI, and the 1813-1837 series was first published in book form in 1992. Pamela and her husband, Derek, were heavily involved in this. Pamela has thus been involved for over 30 years in transcribing, checking and making available the marriage indexes, as well as supporting with lookups. The final CD/download Pamela has been involved in, Sudbury East 1650-1753, will be released in the near future. We thank Pamela for her work on this and for all she has done for the Society.

We have a new Trustee, **Julie Johnson**, who lives just north of Ipswich. Julie is a keen genealogist and is in her final year of an MSc in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies. She is also writing a book exploring the life of a Victorian lady and the challenges she encountered during a period of significant societal transformations.

Suffolk County Council announced in early January that they are cutting funding to the arts and museums sector, which would result in the closure of the Record Offices/Archives facilities at Lowestoft (already much diminished) and Bury St Edmunds. Alan Bumpstead covers this in more detail under Baptism Index News, as the closures will impact on our ability to transcribe. We know that many councils are really struggling to balance budgets, some even becoming bankrupt, because of the rising costs in particular of social care. In mid-January the UK government announced a £600 million support package for councils – Suffolk probably would get £3-4m of this, which would more than cover the expected savings from the sector cuts. The Council's 'final' decision is to be taken at a meeting on 15 February, so after this edition has gone to press.

Thank you to all who took part in the membership survey – over 50% of you, which is a great response rate. A huge amount of information and suggestions. We also had people offering their help, and are following up with those concerned.

*Andy Kerridge, Chair*  
*chair@suffolkfhs.co.uk*

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

In my report in December's edition of *Roots*, I was pleased to note a significant increase in the membership for no obvious reason other than, perhaps, a follow-on from our Zoom talks and a general uptake in genealogical interests. Since then around 30 new memberships have appeared, with a significant number originating from overseas, particularly Australia.

I'm happy to report that the majority are now opting for electronic membership, which is having a significant positive impact on our finances, especially when it comes to publication costs and postage of our journal. It also simplifies processing of new memberships from this end.

The switch to direct debits from standing orders is going apace, with over 130 instructions received so far. In future this will make the inevitable changes to subscription rates easier to manage, by reducing the reminders to members still paying by standing order. Notwithstanding that, some members have indicated they prefer to stick with standing orders, which is understood and fine.

We have introduced two additional methods of paying subscriptions: via an online Google form, which is still processed by Suffolk FHS, or through Parish Chest (<https://tinyurl.com/y2tw3ecb>), which is separate from our online shop. The latter does not have the facility to add or amend the member's interests, which need to be sent to the Membership Secretary on a separate form.

The current membership categories and subscription rates can be found on p.380 of this edition. Payment may be made through the online shop, but cheques are still acceptable.

There are likely to be some significant changes to the website in the coming months, which Andy will inform you about in the newsletter. Hopefully this will make membership processes simpler than at present, something I for one will look forward to!

*David Horton, Membership Secretary*

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## NEW MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Below are the interests of our newest members who joined between 1 November 2023 and 31 January 2024. If you see a name you are interested in, take a note of the member's number, go onto our website, and use the **Members' Interests** section (on the **Resources** tab) to find out more, using the number to search with – you will see any other surnames they are interested in and also be able to contact them. If you cannot use the website, please write to the Membership Secretary (details at the end of this journal) briefly outlining your interest, and your contact details, and he will forward to the relevant member.

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Cnty</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Member #</b>
Airey	NFK	Any	All	12948
Airey	SFK	Any	All	12948
Albon	SFK	Glemsford	All	12926
Algar	SFK	Any	1750-1850	12915
Algar	NFK	Diss	1750-1850	12915
Archer	SFK	Needham Market, Barking	Pre-1800, All	12943
Bailey	SFK	Risbridge Hundred	All	12923
Baldwin	ANY	Any	All	12907
Barnes	ANY	Any	All	12953
Barrell	SFK	Thurston	1700s	12938
Beavis	ANY	Any	All	12940
Bently	SFK	Tuddenham	1835-1859	12930
Betts	SFK	Peasenhall	1500-1900	12944
Bolton	ANY	Any	All	12955
Boniwell	SFK	Halesworth	1700-1900	12956
Boon	ANY	Any	All	12947
Boon	ANY	Any	All	12955
Boulton	ANY	Any	All	12955
Bradman	ANY	Any	All	12940
Bradshaw	ANY	Any	All	12907
Bridge	CAM	Dullingham, Newmarket	All	12906
Bridge	SFK	Newmarket	All	12906
Brodie	ANY	Any	All	12905
Calfe	SFK	Bury St Edmunds	1750-1840	12932
Cardy	SFK	Bures	All	12907
Carlton	ANY	Any	All	12940
Chapman	NFK	Great Yarmouth	Pre-1800, All	12943
Chapman	SFK	Harleston, Bungay	Pre-1800, All	12943
Chaston	SFK	North Cove, Barnby	All	12934
Clark	ANY	Any	All	12905
Clegg	DEV	Any	All	12948
Cockton	ANY	Any	All	12953
Cole	SFK	Gisleham	All	12934
Copping	ANY	Any	All	12908
Cowles	ANY	Any	All	12947
Crack	SFK	Bury St Edmunds	1750-1880	12932
Crask	SFK	Tuddenham	1850-1859	12930
Crick	SFK	Bury St Edmunds	1750-1880	12932
Curtis	SFK	Any	1750-1900	12911
Dalliston	SFK	Brundish	1500-1900	12944
Death	SFK	Edwardstone	All	12924
Denny	NFK	Alburgh	Pre-1800, All	12943
Dilliston	SFK	Brundish	1500-1900	12944
Dorling	SFK	West Stow	All	12942
Driver	ANY	Any	All	12947
Eagle	SFK	Cavendish	1650-1900	12935
Eastaugh	SFK	Peasenhall	1500-1850	12944
Elliott	ANY	Any	All	12908
Etheridge	SFK	Any	1750-1800	12915



<b>Surname</b>	<b>Cnty</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Member #</b>
Flint	SFK	Any	All	12954
Forster	SFK	Dunwich	All	12927
Friend	SFK	Any	All	12918
Fruchard	LND	Any	All	12948
Gall	CAM	Dullingham, Newmarket	All	12906
Gall	SFK	Newmarket	All	12906
Gipp	SFK	Stradishall	All	12914
Glyde	SFK	Ipswich	19th C	12910
Goodrich	SFK	Stanningfield	1650-1800	12944
Green	ANY	Any	All	12919
Gresham	ANY	Any	All	12905
Gridley	SFK	Hundon, Glemsford, Stansfield	All	12914
Halliday	ANY	Any	All	12953
Hart	SFK	Rickinghall, Redgrave and Botesdale	All	12937
Hartnell	DEV	Any	All	12948
Hartnell	LND	Any	All	12948
Harvey	ANY	Any	All	12907
Havell	SFK	Any	1666 on	12910
Haylock	ANY	Any	All	12940
Heaps	ANY	Any	All	12905
Holden	SFK	Lindsey	1500-1600	12922
Holder	ANY	Any	All	12919
Howard	SFK	Risbridge Hundred	All	12923
Huband	DEV	Any	All	12947
Ife	SFK	Kelsale	Pre-1900	12931
Jay	ESS	Belchamp St Paul	1600-1825	12935
Johnson	ANY	Any	All	12929
Kemp	SFK	Any	1850 on	12910
Kemp	SFK	Rickinghall, Botesdale, Mellis	All	12937
Kennell	SFK	Any	19th C	12910
Kettley	ANY	Any	All	12947
King	SFK	Sudbury	All	12909
Long	ANY	Any	All	12948
Lovely	SFK	Needham Market	Pre-1800, All	12943
Mackintosh	ANY	Any	All	12905
Maulden	SFK	Any	All	12948
Mays	SFK	Stowmarket	17th to 20th C	12913
Meggs	ESS	Any	All	12921
Meggs	SFK	Any	All	12921
Mingay	CAM	Dullingham, Newmarket	All	12906
Mingay	SFK	Newmarket	All	12906
Moore	SFK	Wangford	1800 on	12945
Mullenger	SFK	Any	All	12911
Mutimore	SFK	Any	1700-1805	12915
Mutomore	SFK	Any	1700-1805	12915
Nice	SFK	Hadleigh	All	12919
Nunn	SFK	Cavendish	1650-1825	12935
Page	SFK	South Elmham	1700 on	12945
Palmer	ANY	Any	All	12928

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Cnty</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Member #</b>
Pearl	SFK	Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds	All	12949
Pledger	SFK	Hundon	All	12914
Pollard	ANY	Any	All	12929
Riches	SFK	Saxmundham	Pre-1900	12931
Ridgeon	SFK	Thingoe Hundred	1650 on	12902
Rous	SFK	Westleton	All	12927
Runacres	ANY	Any	All	12913
Salmon	SFK	Any	Pre-1750	12950
Sealey	SFK	Hundon	All	12914
Searle	ANY	Any	All	12940
Self	SFK	Eye, Fressingfield, Wingfield, S Elmham – St Margaret	18th to 20th C	12915
Serles	ESS	Belchamp St Paul	1600-1750	12935
Sickelmoore	ANY	Any	All	12903
Sillet	SFK	Any	All	12911
Smith	SFK	Ipswich	1800-1900	12911
Solomon	SFK	Any	Pre-1750	12950
Southgate	ANY	Combs	All	12946
Southgate	ANY	Ipswich	All	12946
Sowgate	ANY	Combs	All	12946
Spirling	SFK	Kesgrave	1850 on	12910
Stearn	SFK	Shelley, Hadleigh, Brundish	All	12909
Steward	SFK	South Elmham	1800 on	12945
Stimpson	NFK	Alburgh	Pre-1800, All	12943
Strutt	ANY	Any	All	12919
Syckelmoore	ANY	Any	All	12903
Symes	SOM	Stoguresey	All	12942
Symonds	CAM	Balsham, Teversham	All	12914
Symonds	SFK	Great Wratting	All	12914
Tilbrook	SFK	Risbridge Hundred	All	12923
Towler	SFK	Thetford	1897 on	12933
Trail	ANY	Any	All	12905
Tunbridge	ANY	Any	All	12947
Turner	SFK	Cavendish	1600-1830	12935
Tuthill	SFK	Any	1800 on	12945
Upton	SFK	Saxmundham	1800 on	12945
Ward	SFK	Bungay	All	12954
Watling	SFK	Saxmundham	Pre-1900	12931
Weeds	SFK	Beccles	1750-1850	12916
Weeds	YKS	Meadowhall	1750-1850	12916
Whyatt	CAN	Any	1850 on	12910
Whyatt	LND	Any	1850 on	12910
Whyatt	SFK	Any	1850 on	12910
Wilby	SFK	Frostenden	1700-1850	12916
Wilby	SFK	Any	All	12918
Wilding	SFK	Cockfield	1500-1750	12944
Willingham	SFK	Bures	All	12907
Woolner	SFK	Dunwich	All	12927
Young	SFK	Cockfield	1500-1800	12944

## BAPTISM INDEX NEWS

A new year, and we're resolved to bring you yet more deanery areas to fill those 'gaps' and so help grow your family trees; but we've new and unforeseen challenges to encounter too, it seems.

### New release

We are pleased as always to bring you news of another release: this one, for Loes and Orford, is our 13th phase 3 (1650-1753) deanery area. It's also a relatively large one, comprising over 40 parishes, from Aldeburgh and Orford on the coast inland to Framlingham in the north and Boulge in the south.

Our thanks for this to our dedicated team of volunteers working at The Hold in Ipswich:

**Diane Kirby** (Team leader)

**Carole Athroll**

**Sandra Fosker**

**John Fox**

**Audrey Howard**

**Adrian Howlett**

**Linda King**

**Jean Licence**

**Joan Munns**

**Silke Pinson-Roxborough**

**Jeff Ward** and

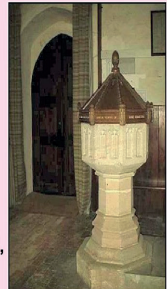
**Marion Withey**

### Suffolk Baptism Index

Loes & Orford Deaneries

1650\* - 1753\*

Aldeburgh (1691-), Benhall, Blaxhall (1673-), Boulge, Brandeston, Bruisyard, Campsea Ashe, Charsfield (1727-), Chillesford (1740-1749), Cransford (1653-), Cretingham, Debach, Dunningworth, Earl Soham, Easton, Eyke, Farnham (1696-), Framlingham, Friston, Glemham Gt, Glemham Lt (1650-1658 1749-1753), Hacheston (1703-), Hoo (1654-), Iken (1669-), Kenton, Kettleburgh, Letheringham, Marlesford (1661-), Monewden (1705-), Orford, Parham, Rendham, Rendlesham (1722-), Saxmundham, Snape, Sternfield, Stratford St Andrew (1722-), Sudbourne (1661-), Sweffling (1696-), Tunstall, Wantisden (1708-).



SFK-BPI-13/P3

PDF



CDs and downloads are available from our online shop at <https://suffolkfhs.co.uk/shop/index.php/> and CDs from our Publications Manager: **Jean Licence**, 60 Oldfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3SE. Cheques payable to SFHS Publications Ltd.

All members can get a 20% discount (excluding any postage) on the Society's publications using the code available in the Members' Area of the website.

Entries from this, and all our other completed parish files, published or not, are also available from our Baptism Search Service, details at the back of the journal.

## Progress

Our teams working at Bury and Ipswich Record Offices, together with our Home team, continued to make good progress on their respective deanery areas in 2023, and with one of those areas only a handful of parishes away from completion and another close behind, things were looking rosy for 2024.

That was until the first week of January, when Suffolk County Council (SCC) announced its cost-saving plans and amongst the proposals was one to close the Record Offices at Bury and Lowestoft by the end of the year.

Now for those of you not in the know, SCC had recently announced a plan to relocate the Bury Record Office, deemed by them to be unfit for purpose at its present location, to part of a multi-function proposed development in the town by West Suffolk District Council (WSDC). Unfortunately, the cancellation of this scheme due to budget pressures on WSDC has become the catalyst for SCC's proposed draconian measures; but WSDC are keen to retain a Bury Record Office for West Suffolk archives and are said to be offering alternative locations to SCC.

These closures could also coincide with another SCC plan for making digitised images of parish registers available online, which in turn might restrict future viewing of original registers at Ipswich and also the availability of fiche copies of registers for use by our Home team.

These plans are to be voted on at a full SCC meeting on 15 February. With campaigning and lobbying taking place, we can only keep our fingers crossed and continue to do our best, until they turf us out, to bring you further deanery areas for phase 3 (details below) and also phase 4:

- Our Bury team are working on Sudbury East, the last of their phase 3 deanery areas in the west, and have work underway on the final 10 parishes.
- Our Ipswich team are working on one of their largest phase 3 deaneries, Dunwich, comprising some 47 parishes – they have already completed a quarter of these with all but two transcribed.
- Finally, our Home team phase 3 deanery areas include South Elmham & Wangford, with just three parishes, albeit the largest ones, left to complete.

It will be a sad day for us all if the Record Office closures go ahead, but spare a thought for the staff at Suffolk Archives who have been such a great help to us over the years and who may lose their jobs as a result of these changes.

***Alan Bumpstead***

*Baptism Index Co-ordinator*

*baptisms@suffolkfhs.org.uk*

## NEW MARRIAGE INDEX RELEASE

We are pleased to get the year off to a good start, and perhaps your research too, with the release of Hartismere Deanery marriages, which has figured in recent enquiries.

This latest release fills a big gap between other previous releases: Blackbourn and Hoxne deaneries along the Norfolk border, and Stow and Bosmere & Claydon deaneries in the south. It covers 31 parishes from Bacton in the southwest to Eye in the northeast and is the 11th of 17 planned Phase 3 releases (1650-1753) across the county.

**Suffolk Marriage Index**  
Hartismere Deanery  
1650\* - 1753\*



Aspall, Bacton, Braiseworth (1709-), Brome (1653-), Burgate, Cotton (-1754), Eye, Finningham (1654-), Gislegham, Mellis, Mendlesham, Oakley, Occold (1681-), Palgrave, Redgrave (1654-1755), Redlingfield (1740-), Rickingham Superior (1652-), Rishangles (1661-1748), Stoke Ash, Stuston (-1749), Thorndon (1654-), Thornham Magna, Thornham Parva (1711-), Thrandeston, Thwaite (1711-), Westhorpe (1653-), Wetheringsett cum Brockford, Wickham Skeith, Wortham, Wyverstone, Yaxley (1684-).



SFK-MI-20  
PDF

CDs and downloads are available from our online shop at <https://suffolkfhs.co.uk/shop/index.php/> and CDs from our Publications Manager, Jean Licence, 60 Oldfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP8 3SE. Cheques payable to SFHS Publications Ltd. All entries are available from our Search Service – see the back of the journal for details.

My thanks once again to all those dedicated members of the Society who have been involved with the Suffolk Marriage Index over many years. Whilst the new year heralds work on further deanery areas, I'm sorry to say that I am no longer in a position to continue with this. I am though especially pleased that the current team of **Yvonne Hesketh**, **Arthur Bird** and **Derek Wright**, who have been responsible for a number of our recent CDs, including this latest one, are willing to continue with the project – helping you grow your family trees. My most sincere best wishes to you all.

*Pamela Palgrave*

*Marriages Index Co-ordinator*

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## SUFFOLK SCENIC CARDS AVAILABLE IN SHOP

It's taken a little longer than anticipated, but we're pleased to say that we're now offering some lovely atmospheric cards for sale, which you can buy in our online shop. Our very own **Andy Kerridge** provided four of the images of very interesting houses in various parts of the county, and the fifth is a snowy Suffolk church scene, available under a Creative Commons licence.



Bridge Cottage, Denston, Suffolk.  
© Suffolk Family History Society



Stoke by Clare (1), Suffolk.  
© Suffolk Family History Society



Stoke by Clare (2), Suffolk.  
© Suffolk Family History Society



Moot Hall, Aldburgh, Suffolk.  
© Suffolk Family History Society



All Saints Church, Barnardiston, Suffolk.  
User:BozMo, CC BY 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>, via Wikimedia Commons

## Product and price details

Each card is 18 cm x 13 cm, weighs 350 gm, and comes with an envelope.

The cards are for sale in packs of five at £10.10 a pack, plus postage:

- A. All Saints Church, Barnardiston, Suffolk – ‘Seasons Greetings’ inside
- B. Bridge Cottage, Denston, Suffolk – blank inside
- C. Stoke by Clare (1), Suffolk – blank inside
- D. Stoke by Clare (2), Suffolk – blank inside
- E. Moot Hall, Aldburgh, Suffolk – blank inside
- F. Five different cards – one of each

*Carolyn Alderson, Treasurer*

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## WELCOME FROM THE EDITORS

The theme for this edition of *Roots* is ‘I’ll Drop You a Line’, looking at how our ancestors communicated in the past, what they communicated about, and the working lives of those in the communications ‘industry’. We are delighted to bring you some fascinating and instructive articles. In reading them, we were struck by how expectations of postal speed have changed over time – not always for the better! We were also fascinated by how random the survival of written messages from the past can be. The treasured heirloom handed down the generations may convey an invitation to tea; but the many joyous or tragic things that happened in the lives of those concerned may not have been committed to paper, or the paper may not have survived to the present day. This prompts the thought that we should all perhaps be more active in ‘curating’ our personal stories, for example by writing our memoirs or compiling an archive, or both, so that our descendants inherit a fuller and more coherent picture than chance might provide. So, laptops or pens at the ready! Meanwhile, if any of the articles touches on your own genealogical interests or otherwise strikes a chord, do please let us know.

The theme for June’s edition will be ‘Animals’ and how they featured in our ancestors’ lives. As Suffolk is a predominantly rural county with a world-famous race course, quite a lot of our ancestors will have worked with or lived alongside animals, and so we’re hoping this will be a particularly fruitful theme. We already have some submissions and look forward to receiving more. There are a few ideas designed to encourage your inspiration on p.379 of this journal. But as ever, we welcome articles on any aspect of family history, whether Suffolk-related or otherwise – you don’t have to wait for the ‘right’ theme.

*Lesley Hall and Rob Ward*  
*Co-Editors, Suffolk Roots*

## 'TOM THE POSTMAN': A RURAL MESSENGER IN MID-VICTORIAN SUFFOLK

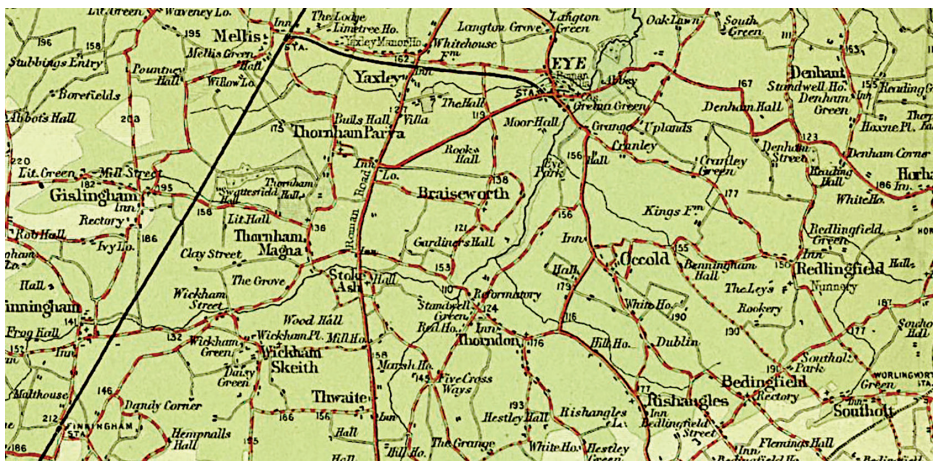
Take a stroll around Eye cemetery, and if you keep your eyes open you could well come across the grave of **Thomas Tuffs**. As his headstone records, Tuffs was



Tom Tuffs' headstone in Eye cemetery

'for 30 years rural postman from Eye to Gislingham', a career that earned him the nickname 'Tom the Postman'. Tom's mother **Hannah** (c.1802-1891) was the younger sister of my 3x great-grandfather, **William Harsom** (c.1799-1841), and following Hannah's marriage to **John Tuffs** (c.1800-1883), she and her husband reared 12 children to adulthood (three girls, nine boys). In recognition of their sizeable contribution to the rural workforce, John Tuffs was awarded two sovereigns by the North Suffolk and South Norfolk Agricultural Association at their annual show in 1849, the prize awarded to 'Labourers for bringing up the largest Families, without, or with the least, parochial relief'.<sup>(1)</sup>

In September 1862, a month before his 21st birthday, Tom joined the General Post Office as 'messenger from Eye to Gislingham'. In the 1860s, postmen in the GPO were appointed as either 'messengers' or 'letter carriers' depending on whether they worked in the country or the town.<sup>(2)</sup> Tom's appointment also specified his route, 'from Eye to Gislingham': unlike posties today, in the 1860s rural messengers worked only the route to which they were appointed; a new route or 'walk' would have required a new appointment. Which is why at 6am every morning for the next 30 years, Tom was to set out from Eye Post Office in his pony and trap with the mail for Yaxley, Thornham Magna and Gislingham. Then back to Eye in the afternoon collecting the mail.



Bartholomew's map covering the towns and villages of Eye postal district (including those on Tom's route), 1903 (reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)



## Eye postal district

Who were Tom's contemporaries in the Eye district postal service? Directing its business was **Richard Nurse**, Postmaster since 1842 and responsible for deliveries to Eye town and 10 surrounding villages.<sup>(3)</sup> Nurse operated the Post Office for a modest stipend alongside his main business as dispensing chemist and stationer in substantial premises on the corner of Broad Street and Church Street. As a freemason and Town Council Treasurer, Nurse mixed with the privileged and the powerful in the community: influential land owners like **Sir Edward Kerrison** and **Lord Henniker** could, and did, fill vacant positions in the Eye Post Office with their own nominees. In 1865 Nurse managed a budget of £102 to provide for four messengers – which meant that Tom Tuffs' wage was a little under 10s per week.<sup>(4)</sup>



*Comer & Phillips chemists beyond Hunt & Carter drapers, occupying the premises of the former Eye Post Office, c. 1905 (original postcard)*

On his round from Eye to Gislingham and back, Tom made daily contact with the GPO 'receivers' in the villages he served. Receiving offices, often in a village shop, were authorised to receive letters on behalf of the district's Main Post Office, some also delivering to nearby villages: so Rishangles receiving office delivered to Beddingfield and Redlingfield. In Tom's early years, the receiver at Yaxley was **William Copping**, a grocer; Thornton Magna's receiver was Waterloo veteran **James Hunt**; and another grocer, **Thomas Battrum**, was receiver at Gislingham.<sup>(5)</sup>

Tom's fellow postmen are less easily identified than the receivers who, as self-employed shopkeepers, were listed in directories. Some are named in the GPO appointments records and, of these, a handful appear in local newspaper stories. One such was

**Frederick Adams**, rural messenger from Eye to Diss Station who, one Sunday in 1869, set fire to a straw stack belonging to Richard Nurse; in addition to being Postmaster, chemist and stationer, Nurse farmed land on the Moor side of town. Nurse had reprimanded Adams the previous week for being drunk in the street and Adams had sought his revenge, ironically, after drinking heavily in the nearby Horse Shoes Inn in Castle Street. The 22-year-old Adams offered no defence and was sentenced to five years penal servitude for arson.<sup>(6)</sup>

Adams was replaced by **Frederick Evans** (1844-1891), a 27-year-old shoemaker who was to become one of Tom's longest-standing colleagues. Evans' older brother, **Samuel**, was already employed as rural messenger from Eye to Thorndon and in 1874, Frederick became the Eye town letter carrier on the death of **Robert Barker**, who had held the post for almost 30 years.<sup>(7)</sup> While his brother Samuel moved to Norfolk in the 1880s, Frederick Evans remained Eye postman for 20 years until his early death in 1891.<sup>(8)</sup>



*Thorndon Receiving Office, Suffolk, 1906 (original postcard)*

In addition to the Postmaster, the receivers and the postmen, there was one other essential role in the Eye postal service. Each evening, the outgoing post was carried by mail cart 18 miles to Attleborough railway station, via the Post Office at Diss, to meet the up train for London, with the incoming mail arriving in the early hours on the down train. The mail cart service was supplied by contract and for almost all of Tom Tuffs' life as a postman, the Eye mail cart driver was **Alfred Offord**. Offord was born in Thrandeston in 1843, the son of a miller. Having spent his early years as a stable boy at Ling Mills, Wortham, Offord gained the Eye Post Office contract

around 1870, when he was in his late twenties. Mail cart drivers provided their own horse and cart, so they were often also a carrier or innkeeper, the inn providing the necessary stabling. Sometime in the later 1870s, Alfred Offord became the landlord of the Black Swan Inn, which stood next to the Queen's Head in Cross Street, Eye.

In 1893, Offord was fined for drunk and disorderly behaviour in Crown Street,<sup>(9)</sup> and, though he kept his innkeeper's licence, it is difficult not to suspect his various mishaps while in charge of the mail were due to drink. In December 1890, Offord was thrown from his cart after hitting a pile of frozen snow outside the Town Hall and broke his left collar bone, while a year later he fractured his other collar bone when thrown from his cart in Diss; he was, as the press report noted, '*a man of great weight*'. Worse was to follow. On Friday 6 April 1894, having been waiting in the porter's hut at Attleborough station for the 1:25am down train, Offord stepped into the path of the incoming locomotive. He died a day later in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, and the following Wednesday his cortège through Eye to the cemetery was led by uniformed employees of Eye Post Office.<sup>(10)</sup>

### Transformation of the GPO

The GPO at the time of Offord's funeral was significantly different from the organisation Tom had joined in 1862, though the pressure for change had already begun when he was appointed. There was as yet no universal free household delivery, and Tom delivered only to households that lay within 70 yards of his route; those living further away had to pay a delivery charge or arrange to collect their letters from a receiving office or the Main Post Office.<sup>(11)</sup> Postal letter boxes, where they had begun to appear, were green. The first in the Eye district was the wall box in Occold '*near Mr Sherman's draper*' and, though cleared just once a day, the wall box at least made it possible for the residents to post a letter without having to listen out for the postman's whistle, which he was required to blow when entering villages. There were no letter boxes on Tom's walk, though he did sell postage stamps to enable letters to be handed to him.



*A Victorian post box at Burnt House, Hoxne Road, nr. Eye (Geographer, CC A-SA 2.0 Generic)*

In the 1860s, Tom would have carried only letters. Plain buff postcards were authorised in 1870, but the Parcel Post was not launched until 1883, at which point rural messengers and letter carriers were both re-graded as postmen. There were no women letter carriers in the Eye district, though there were women receivers, such as **Eliza Keen** who ran the village shop and receiving office at Rishangles following

the death of her husband in 1865. There were women clerical workers in London, but the big change in the GPO's employment of women came after 1870, when the GPO absorbed the commercial telegraph network with its established role for women as telegraph operators.<sup>(12)</sup> The first woman GPO employee with whom Tom worked was probably **Mary Scutts**, daughter of the Postmaster in nearby Scole and the Eye telegraph operator in 1881.

The transformation of the postal service in Tom's lifetime was driven by the introduction of the uniform penny post in April 1840, just six months after he was born. The consequent surge in the volume of mail (aided by increasing adult literacy, a more mobile population and an expanding railway network) was already stretching the GPO to its limits by the time Tom himself became a postman. The volume continued to grow throughout his career: from 564 million letters in 1860, it doubled to 1.2 billion in 1880, and doubled again to 2.3 billion by 1900.<sup>(13)</sup> The growth in plain postcards, introduced at a ½d rate in 1870, was even faster: from 75 million in their first year to 123 million in 1880.<sup>(14)</sup> This rate of expansion meant that by the end of the 19th century the GPO had become *'one of the most important institutions in the development of the modern British state, employing thousands of people across the country ... The workforce grew from around 22,000 permanent or "established" employees in the mid-1850s to over 88,000 by the end of the century'*.<sup>(15)</sup>

One marker of the transformation of the GPO was Tom's uniform, which rural messengers gained for the first time in 1872.<sup>(16)</sup> The new-style uniform, introduced in London in 1868, combined a dark blue tunic with a dark blue peaked shako cap; with its scarlet collar and piping, its brass buttons and GPO insignia, the outfit was similar in style to those already worn by the military and other servants of the Crown, such as the police. It was an outward sign that the postman was himself being transformed into a dedicated, self-disciplined public servant, one who would be punctual, decline gratuities and, above all, eschew heavy drinking.<sup>(17)</sup> A postman could be proud of wearing a GPO uniform.

Also in 1872, good conduct stripes, based (as in the military) on a combination of length of service and level of performance, were introduced for London letter carriers; this gave recipients not only a gold lace bar for their tunic, but also extra pay of 1/- a week for each stripe.<sup>(18)</sup> The scheme was extended to the provinces in 1882 and in February 1883 Tom Tuffs was duly awarded three good conduct stripes, with his colleague Frederick Evans awarded two.<sup>(19)</sup> The award was, of course, a stick as well as a carrot, and its withdrawal meant a loss of pay.<sup>(20)</sup> However, although it was a department of state, the GPO looked for its employment practices less to the military than to commerce. Like the railway companies, which had similarly expanding workforces, the GPO sought to cultivate self-discipline by emphasising the carrot rather than the stick, offering its employees enviable rewards for loyalty, such as a pension, paid holidays and free medical facilities.<sup>(21)</sup>



*Rural postman with four good conduct stripes, c.1905 (Postman **Henry Simpson**, Beckingham, Lincolnshire)  
(original postcard)*

## Tom the Postman

The job of rural postman was now a career, and Tom Tuffs' career was a model of dedication; he was evidently conscientious and self-disciplined, trustworthy and sober, and the GPO's regulations and routine appear to have suited him. Indeed, he went beyond his official duty by transporting goods and passengers along his walk, though as he owned his pony and trap, he was presumably entitled to do so. This earned him popularity and the occasional pint of beer. Yet although routine, a postman's lot was not humdrum, and in November 1882, while Tom was in the Bull at Yaxley on business, **Harry Howard**, a regular offender, went off with his trap, which was later found abandoned half a mile away. Three pounds of butter were missing from a consignment Tom was carrying from Gislingham to Eye (one of his 'commissions'), and Tom had to appear as a witness at Hartismere Petty Sessions. Howard was duly given six months' imprisonment with hard labour.<sup>(22)</sup>

In September 1886, Tom again appeared in the news with a report of a Tuffs family gathering at the Cherry Tree Inn at Ludgate Causeway to celebrate his 24 years as rural postman.<sup>(23)</sup> Tom's brother **Henry** was the licensee of the inn, and in response to his health being 'drunk in a bumper', Tom, according to the report, 'delivered quite an oration, and congratulated himself on his many years' service without a single black mark having been registered against him, and with pride pointed to his left arm, on which were three good conduct stripes'. Such reports were written to a formula and Tom may never,

in fact, have made that oration, but it does point to the GPO's success in presenting postmen not simply as employees but as loyal public servants who deserved respect for their duty to the community. It is hard to judge whether Tom was as exemplary as portrayed, but the available evidence suggests there was a good deal of overlap between Tom the man and Tom the dedicated and self-disciplined public servant. In fact, it is tempting to conclude they overlapped exactly.

There was a larger gathering a year later at the Cherry Tree to celebrate Tom completing 25 years' service, with many of his 11 siblings and their families making *'close upon 50 present, representing four generations'*.<sup>(24)</sup> Three months later, Tom's trap ran up a bank and overturned on a dark night in Yaxley – *'the first time he has met with such a misfortune'*.<sup>(25)</sup> But Tom was uninjured and survived to celebrate 27 years' service in September 1889, as reported once again by the local press:

*'On the 15th day of September, 1862, there started from Eye Post Office, at 6 o'clock in the morning, a young man named Thomas Tuffs, a letter carrier for the Gislingham district'*.<sup>(26)</sup> The report boasted that Tom had been absent for only one day in those 27 years, again reinforcing the GPO's model of the dedicated and self-disciplined public servant, a model, it might be noted, in conflict with repeated campaigns to give rural messengers Sunday off in order to attend church or chapel.



*Gislingham Receiving Office, 1908 (original postcard. Image attributed to Osborne, Photographer, Mendlesham: I haven't been able to find him in Kelly's Directory.)*

1891 was not a good year for Tom. In January, his colleague of 20 years, the Eye town postman Frederick Evans, died at the age of 46. Both men were members of the Eye Friendly Society of Oddfellows<sup>(27)</sup> and, with his (now) three good conduct stripes, Evans was praised for being *'a well-known and respected public servant of long standing'*, and as such was, like Tom, treated by the press as a role model. Such stories show the success of the GPO in transforming the image of the postman from that personified by Evan's predecessor, the drunken Frederick Adams, who had set fire to the Postmaster's straw stack in 1869. Evans, however, left *'a widow and five young children wholly unprovided for'*,<sup>(28)</sup> which today seems a high price for dedication to the GPO.

The following week, on 21 January 1891, Tom's mother Hannah, the sister of my 3x great-grandfather, slipped and fell in the same spell of frosty weather that killed Frederick Evans, fracturing her thigh, an injury from which she died on 1 March aged around 90.<sup>(29)</sup> A month after his mother's funeral, Tom suffered a second accident with his trap, catching his foot in the reins one evening in Gislingham and pitching himself onto the road. The gash in his forehead required stitching, though

the following morning he was again the model postman, “up with the lark,” and off again as if nothing had happened’.<sup>(30)</sup>

In January 1892, when delivering a parcel to the Horse Shoes Inn in Thornham Magna, Tom slipped on ice and fell heavily, as his mother had the year before. He carried on working the next day, but felt sufficiently unwell to call the doctor, who declared him uninjured except for a bruise. Over the next few days Tom remained unwell, yet, like Evans, he apparently carried on loyally until Sunday when he had to admit defeat and remain in bed. The doctor was again called and diagnosed pneumonia ‘of the influenza kind’; Tom had been suffering from a cough since December, but had passed it off as a cold, insisting his ill health was due to the fall.<sup>(31)</sup> He died six days later on 23 January 1892, aged 52.

Which leads us back to Tom’s headstone in Eye cemetery. Few working people could afford headstones, but Tom died comparatively well-off with an estate of £235, including property comprising, according to the auctioneers, ‘A range of brick-built and freehold cottages’ on the Long Green, Wortham.<sup>(32)</sup> Tom had no need of a house of his own as he lived with his parents until his father’s death in 1883, at which point both he and his elderly mother moved in with his younger sister, **Maria Bootman** (c.1842-1932), and her family at the Toll House, Lowgate Street. It was there that both Tom and his mother died.

To whom Tom left his large estate is unclear. We do know, though, that Tom’s walk from Eye to Gislingham passed to his nephew **Henry (Harry) Bootman** (1869-1958), the son of Maria who had nursed both Tom and their mother Hannah. Harry had evidently gained the confidence of the Postmaster while working in his Broad Street premises as a 15-year-old shop boy,<sup>(33)</sup>

and he remained an Eye postman for the rest of his working life. On Maria’s death, aged 90, in 1932, Harry seems to have moved with his wife back into the Toll House in Lowgate Street, retiring there in the 1930s. He died in 1958, still living in the house in which his uncle Tom died. It would have been appropriate had Tom left his estate to Maria and her family.



OS map of Eye, 1904, showing: A = Post Office 1841-1895; B = Black Swan Inn; C = Post Office 1895-2015; D = Horse Shoes Inn; E = Toll House (reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

While Tom's death marked the start of Harry Bootman's career in the GPO, it prefigured the resignation of **William Soulby Nurse** as Eye Postmaster. Tom had been appointed by William's father, the late Richard Nurse, and father and son had occupied the position of Eye Postmaster for over 50 years. But by the 1890s, the business of Eye Post Office had swollen to the point where it needed a full-time Postmaster, not one whose main business was as a dispensing chemist, stationer and printer. Where in 1865 there were four postmen, four receiving offices and just one wall box, in 1895 there was an outdoor staff of 12, eight sub-offices and 14 wall boxes, not to mention a telegraph boy.<sup>(34)</sup> On Nurse's resignation, **Arthur Till**, chief clerk at Wickham Market Post Office, was appointed full-time Postmaster, and Eye Post Office moved to bespoke premises further up Broad Street opposite the White Lion Hotel.<sup>(35)</sup> The move symbolised the transformation of the GPO over Tom's lifetime.

So should you chance to spot the grave of Tom the Postman in Eye cemetery, consider this. We know what people thought of Tom, but not what Tom thought of them; we can sketch out the details of his life, but of his private life, his inner life, we know nothing. We don't even know how he spent the eight hours each day between arriving in Gislingham and leaving for Eye. All we know is that Tom was the very model of a modern rural messenger. To that extent, with its *'thirty years rural postman'*, Tom's headstone is testament not only to Tom the man but to the successful remodelling of the GPO itself.

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## Appendix

Known Eye district rural postmen contemporary with Thomas Tuffs (dates given are those documented and may differ from actual dates of employment):

1843-1862	Henry Howard	Eye to Gislingham
1846-1874	Robert Barker	Eye town
1859-1861	<b>Robert Booty</b>	Eye to Thorndon
1862-1892	Thomas Tuffs	Eye to Gislingham
1866	<b>Thomas Farrow</b>	Eye to Diss Station
1866-1869	Frederick Adams	Eye to Diss Station
1866-1881	Samuel Evans	Eye to Thorndon
1870-1891	Frederick Evans	Eye town
1881	)	
1894-1901	) <b>William Tuffs</b>	
1882-1891	<b>Samuel Jackson</b>	Eye to Bedingfield
1891-1894	<b>Arthur Hines</b>	
1891-1911	<b>Ethan Mortimer</b>	Eye to Thorndon
1891-1921	<b>Alfred Oakes</b>	Eye town
1893-c. 1934	Henry (Harry) Bootman	Eye to Gislingham



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3. *Kelly's Post Office Directory* 1865.
4. *Ipswich Journal*, 27 May 1865, p.7.
5. *Kelly's Post Office Directory* 1865.
6. *Ipswich Journal*, 7 August 1869, p.9.
7. *Ipswich Journal*, 26 September 1874, p.8.
8. *Bury Free Press*, 17 January 1891, p.7.
9. Described as 'stripped to fight', Offord smashed the windows of a house in which his wife had sought refuge (*Bury Free Press*, 10 June 1893, p.7).
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19. *Ipswich Journal*, 10 February 1883, p.11.
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21. Duncan Campbell-Smith (n.12), pp.170-171.
22. *Ipswich Journal*, 16 December 1882, p.14.
23. *Bury and Norwich Post*, 21 September 1886, p.7.
24. *East Anglian Daily Times*, 17 September 1887, p.5.
25. *Bury Free Press*, 24 December 1887, p.3.
26. *Ipswich Journal*, 20 September 1889, p.3.
27. The Oddfellows were a Friendly Society that provided members with financial and social services in times of need; locally they acted as social clubs and undertook charitable activities. They still exist today: <https://www.oddfellows.co.uk/>
28. *Bury Free Press*, 17 January 1891, p.7; *Ipswich Journal*, 17 January 1891, p.3.
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## IVY'S POSTCARDS

Many of my ancestors lived in Lowestoft and the surrounding area, including Wrentham. They kept in touch using postcards and could send messages which they were confident would be delivered in just a few hours. The message on one postcard said: 'See you on the bridge at 3 o'clock', the inference being that the card was posted in South Lowestoft in the morning and received in North Lowestoft in either late morning or early afternoon, so the sender and receiver could meet at the appointed time on the bridge close to the town centre!

I have several albums of postcards generated by my grandmother **Ivy Tuttle née Boddy** (1894-1983), with the postcards containing interesting pictures on one side and equally interesting messages on the other, which can be difficult to decipher. To read the messages requires taking the postcards from the fragile albums and the pages are easily torn. Thus, I decided to scan in each postcard and generate a PowerPoint presentation with each slide showing both sides of the postcard together with the date, who it was from, to whom it was sent and the message. In total, I have scanned around 100 cards with many more still to go. A few of the more interesting examples are shown below.

1913 – Circus in Southwold

To Ivy from her sister **Maude**:

*'Dear Ivy. This is a photo of the circus riders that came here on Monday. Hope you are allright. Love from your Sister Maude.*

*If I am not at the shop at 1 o'clock shut up & go home to dinner as the bus starts at half past eleven'*



9 June 1915 – Zeppelin air raid on Southend

To Ivy Boddy from brother **Will** and his wife **Rose**:

'Dearest Ivy This is the best I can do for you, hope you will like it, let me know if Maude would like one, how are you dear a little bit excited I should imagine. I should like to see all four pretty things. I feel a bit worried that I have not heard from **Jack** for 3 weeks & I hear my sister (**Susie**) is coming to England untill after the war I don't know if its true.

With heaps of love to you dear & Maude from

Rose & Will'



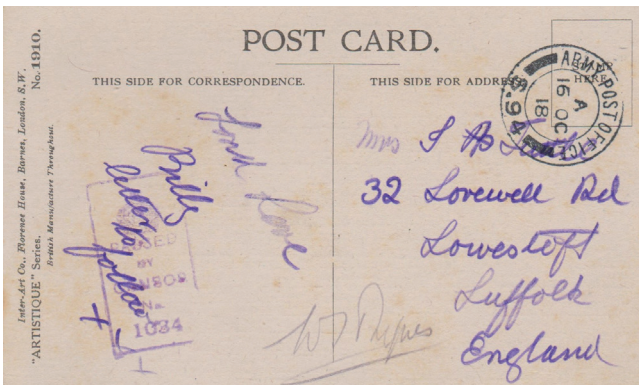
### 1918 – Card from France

To Ivy Tuttle from brother William Boddy serving in the army in France during WWI:

'Fond Love

Billy

Letter to follow xxx'



### Roydon Loveley Mb 3349

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**Editors' note:** A picture of Ivy, and more about her family, appeared in June 2023's Suffolk Roots (Vol. 49 No. 1 p.66). Also, Roydon sent a PowerPoint with a lot more examples than we had room to include. If any members are interested, he is willing to share.

## SAMUEL TURNER SMITH

My grandfather, **Samuel Turner Smith** (1873-1960), was born in Stanningfield to **John Chinery Smith** (1846-1926) and **Eleanor Mary née Turner** (1847-1933). At the time they lived at Little Saxes, a small farm run by Samuel's grandfather, **James Henry Smith** (1817-1856). By 1875 the family had moved to Peasenhall, where John Chinery Smith worked at Smyth's Seed Drill factory, and sometime between 1877 and 1883 they moved to Bulls Hall in Knodishall, where he became a tenant farmer.

Samuel attended the church at Knodishall where he met **Eliza Tibbenham** who played the church organ. They married in 1900 and Samuel's occupation was described as 'Engine Driver'. In the late 19th century, farming was in crisis, and with the expanding Empire opportunities clearly existed elsewhere. Samuel was the second of nine children and instead of taking over the running of the farm, he decided to travel to South Africa. It is possible that he first went in around 1897 before returning to marry Eliza. After the wedding he returned to South Africa where he worked on the Cape Railway. Eliza joined him in 1902 and they lived in Alicedale in the Eastern Cape province. Alicedale was a small town on the banks of the Bushman River and an important junction on the main line between Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. The town had a railway training facility and was named after Mrs **Alice Slessor**, the wife of the engineer in charge of constructing the railway.



*Samuel Turner Smith at Alicedale Railway Station*



*Samuel and Eliza Smith, with Samuel jr. in Alicedale*

Samuel may have travelled to South Africa with **John (Jack) Cotton** and was joined by his younger brother **James Chinery Smith** (1877-1962) who, it appears, was asked to join the South African Volunteers because he was able to shoot.

The Cape railway network played a significant part in supporting the British forces during the Second Boer War, and the Cape Government mobilised the colonial forces to guard the railways and formed the Colonial Defence Force (CDF), to which my grandfather belonged.

Whilst in Alicedale, Samuel and Eliza had two children: **Samuel Turner Smith** (1903-1978), named after his father, and **Robert Smith** (1904-1993). Apparently, it was because of the Boer War that the family returned to England sometime between 1905 and early 1906, with Eliza expecting their third child.

On his return, it might have been expected that my grandfather would have taken over the running of Bulls Hall, but instead he turned his attention to Canada. Canada was a young country and was asking for settlers to help develop its economy. So, leaving his young family at the home of Eliza's parents, at Wynn Cottage in Friston, Samuel sailed from Liverpool on the maiden voyage of the *RMS Empress of Britain* bound for Quebec. He departed on 5 May and arrived on 13 May 1906. The passenger list recorded Samuel Smith (31), married and a farmer from Suffolk. He was accompanied by **Alfred Chenery** (30) and they both travelled under the British Bonus Scheme, whereby a commission was paid by the Canadian Government Immigration Branch to steamship booking agents in the UK for each suitable immigrant who purchased a ticket to sail to Canada.

Having arrived, Samuel was granted land near Leslieville – Section 14, Township 40, Range 6 and Meridian W5. A 'section' was a mile square and the land uncultivated, covered by trees and scrub. The work was hard, but he was helped by **James Hamilton** and **Ernest B Chenery**.

Initially they lived under canvas, but the trees that were cleared were used to build a house and two barns. The records for the homestead show that they cleared and cropped 10 acres in 1907, cleared another 5 in 1908 and another 5 in 1909. A total of 20 acres was cropped in 1909 and 1910, with the farm supporting two cows and six horses. The house was valued at \$200, a stable 20 x 30 feet at \$150 and a smaller stable 18 x 24 feet at \$100, with the fencing for the property at \$200.



*Tented accommodation in Leslieville, Samuel Turner Smith standing right*



*Samuel Turner Smith  
in the CEF, 1916*

Samuel was not the only member of the family to travel to Canada. He was followed by his sister **Rose Eleanor Smith** (1883-1948) and his younger brother **Cyril Henry Smith** (1880-1916), who gave up his intention to build a new life in Canada to join the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1915, only to die from his wounds near Ypres in April 1916.

Was this the event that persuaded Samuel to enlist? On 24 June 1916 he joined the 187th Overseas Battalion at Red Deer, Alberta. His attestation papers record his birth date as 21 October 1877, when in fact he was born four years earlier, and there was no mention of the three missing fingers on his right hand, apparently lost in a sawmill accident. His occupation was '*Engine Driver (First Class)*'.

Samuel, with all the other recruits, embarked at Halifax on the *SS Olympic* on 15 December 1916, arriving in Liverpool 11 days later. He was transferred to the Witley Military Camp and was sent to France in March 1918 to join the 10th Battalion, Canadian Engineers. Having served in France for nine months, he returned to England and was finally discharged in June 1919.

There is no evidence that Samuel returned home to Aldeburgh before his discharge, although it is difficult to imagine that he was not afforded some leave to see the family he left in 1906. My aunt, **Eleanor Mary Smith** (1906-1995), claimed that she had never seen her father before 1919, which amounts to a remarkable separation from the family. However, the birth of further children to Samuel and Eliza – **Mary Eliza** in 1920, my mother **Josephine Bessie** in 1921 and **Eric** in 1923 – seems to bear out the story.



*Samuel Turner Smith with Bunny, carting for the Aldeburgh Gas Company*

Now 46 years old, Samuel took up work as a carter for the Aldeburgh Gas Light Company, using his horse, Bunny. In the early 1930s the family left Aldeburgh and moved to The Willows, a bungalow in Aldringham, and then Haven View, also on the Aldeburgh to Leiston Road, where Samuel had a smallholding cropping potatoes and rearing pigs and chickens. In 1954 they moved into a new bungalow on the Leiston Road next to Easey's shop, which still bears the name Alicedale.

As for communication between my grandfather and his family in their long years apart, I can only imagine that he wrote from time to time. It would be wonderful to have any letters that he may have written, but they were probably destroyed. I do have one that he wrote in 1934 to his daughter who was resident in America. He described it as '*his once yearly*' – so clearly not a prolific correspondent! He obviously had a fairly basic education, attending the school in Aldringham, where the master was stricter than at the school in Knodishall! His story just shows what can be done with a minimal education, perhaps not extending to the finer arts of letter writing.

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## A GERMAN UNCLE

In a previous issue of *Suffolk Roots*,<sup>(1)</sup> I wrote about my maternal grandmother, **Alice Youell**, who had been born in Shipmeadow, aka the Wangford Poor Law Union workhouse, which was well known to many families in the Beccles and Bungay area. Alice was one of six illegitimate children born to **Sarah Cole** and **Mark Turner**, and the article described how she became quite a well-known figure in Beccles, being a leading light of Beccles Labour Party and Fabian Society, and ironically a member of Shipmeadow's Board of Guardians.

Alice had a sister (my great-aunt), **Eleanor Rachel**, born in 1876, not in Shipmeadow but in Ingate Street, Beccles (*'daughter of Mark Turner and Sarah Cole of Ingate Street, labourer'*). I was reminded of Eleanor when I read that the Editors' theme for this edition related to communication. This is because in 1901 Eleanor married a German, **John Herman Kessler**, and her story raises issues of nationality, citizenship and the impact of war which have a familiar ring even today.

In the 1901 census, Eleanor was 24 years old and was working as a housemaid for a **Scales** family in Hornsey Lane, Crouch End, London. It must have been soon after this date that she married (at Beccles) a certain John Herman Kessler (the marriage was registered in the third quarter of 1901). A family joke later arose concerning a photo of John Herman and, presumably, his brother, which circulated round the family and was said to show the 'German uncles'. Over time their actual origin was forgotten and it was thought to be just one of those family stories. I decided to look into it.

According to the 1901 census, John Herman Kessler was born in Germany in 1876 and was working as a *'journeyman baker'*. He was living in Hoxton St, Shoreditch, together with a number of other German nationals who were also living and working for their German baker/confectioner employer, **John Hoppe**. We forget that prior to the First World War, there were large numbers of Germans residing in this country. They were a skilled population and no passports or visas were required for them to come and work in Britain, though this arrangement was curtailed shortly after the outbreak of war and was not to be repeated until the EU and freedom of movement! According to the 1911 census, there were some 50,000 German immigrants living in Britain, and a proportion of them, like John Herman, had settled down and started families in East London, where they formed a significant sector of the local community as the area's bakers, butchers, hairdressers and jewellers.

John Herman and Eleanor had five surviving children: **Olive** (b. 1902), **Ivy** (b. 1908), **John** (b. 1910), **Elsie** (b. 1914) and **Edith Mary** (b. 1916). Two children died in infancy, **George** (b. 1905) and **Margery Gladys** (b. 1907).

There seems no reason to suppose they were not a normal family – all the children were baptised and John Herman was always described as a *'journeyman baker'*.

Then the War came and everything changed. Immediately after its outbreak (August 1914), the Aliens Restriction Act was passed, and as a result Germans had to register with the police and could not move more than five miles from their registered address. The Act also eliminated all German newspapers and clubs, and a further series of measures closed down all the German-owned businesses in Britain and confiscated property and assets without compensation.

It is difficult to trace the effects of the war on Eleanor's family. However, I managed to find in (of all places) the Women's Library at the London School of Economics, a letter written by Eleanor in 1930 to **Mrs Oliver Strachey**<sup>(2)</sup> concerning her problems:

*'Dear Mrs Strachey*

*I listened with interest to your "Current Events" through the wireless.*

*I am mostly interested in Naturalization – I wrote you in April of 1929 and you kindly answered and gave me advice about going to Germany for a holiday. You spoke of Miss E Wilkinson<sup>(3)</sup> helping on the Bill – so a woman married to a German could if she wished keep her right to the country she was born in. My children are 5 and my eldest is 27 – when she was 16 she tried to get into the "Civil Service" she was refused because her father was born in Germany. My youngest is now 14 and is having the advantage of a good boarding school education. And she too is debarred in the same way. My husband was born in Germany in 1876 and came to England when he was 17 years old giving up his country altogether – by crossing off the registers (?) not a usual thing to do I believe. War came and he was interned nearly 4 years. He was sent to Germany – finding himself an alien there – he naturalized himself – in Germany – that bound me too. I went in 19(?) and came back in 1924 and I found I could not denaturalize myself unless my husband came off the list too – now I find as he did not come away from the country before a year expired, he is still considered a naturalized subject. But I came away at once and have only spent 3 months there for a holiday – I do not know how the law takes this in my case – I never married a German and I obeyed the law by coming away after asking to be denaturalised.*

*My life has been one long struggle this 6 years with my youngest child – and I find I cannot possibly live in Germany – I came back a physical wreck in 1924 – and after 3 Months in 1929 I was mentally and physically ill.*

*The younger women (I am 53) in this circumstance have a better chance. I feel the leaving of my children in England and my youngest need a mother. The only home I have is in Germany got together in the time when 4 children were young. My husband is settled in his selfishness and in debt and – never have – (?) sent any money toward his wife and child. He would not come to England if he could so he says. I have been a good wife and mother. Yet "worse than a widow".*

*Please press forward with the bill my family are all real British – EK. (Eleanor Kessler)'*



Using this letter and some family records, I managed to piece together a (far from complete) picture of what may have happened. It is unlikely that John Herman was immediately interned. This was because Edith Mary was born in January 1916 and her baptism record gives John and Eleanor as father and mother, their address as 21 Kilburn Park Road, and his profession as baker. This would reflect the political situation at the time: from November 1914 to April 1915 there were few internments of German nationals – indeed, large numbers who had already been interned were actually released during this period. But Government policy changed significantly when public anti-German hostility (which had been building since the previous October following reports of German atrocities in Belgium) surged after the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915. It was probably after this date that John Herman was interned.



*Rioters breaking windows of a German-owned shop in East London following the sinking of the Lusitania, 1915 (Courtesy Imperial War Museum, IWM HU 52451)*

It would be nice if his progress could be followed through official records. Unfortunately (and ironically) nearly all records of First World War German civilian internees were destroyed by German bombing during the Second World War. By far the largest civilian internment camp was at Knockaloe on the Isle of Man, responsible for some 20,000 internees between 1914 and 1919. There were a number of smaller facilities in London, at Alexandra Palace, Hackney Wick, Islington and Stratford, and one hopes that John Herman was located in one of these to be near his family, but there is no way of knowing.

A large number of questions immediately arise, the most basic of which is: how did Eleanor and the children manage during this period? The law at the time specified that British-born women who had married foreign nationals (who had not naturalised) acquired their husband's nationality. Many British-born women therefore found themselves to be enemy aliens during the war. However, except in a very few cases, women were not interned. Even so, employment would have been difficult. The eldest child, Olive, was born in 1902, and so would have been aged 14-17 during this period, and it is possible that she found employment and helped support the family.

However, from vague family memories and a few written records, it seems that the Beccles relatives came to the rescue, with some of the family taking up residence with their aunt (Alice Eliza – my grandmother) and cousins in Fair Close, Beccles.

Apparently, John (b. 1910) was enrolled into the same school as my uncle. Being the same age, they played together, and there is a family story of them ‘messing about’ somewhat dangerously on the top of Beccles church tower. Ivy (b. 1908) was also resident there and presumably, as a six-year-old, went to school there as well. As always, one wonders what the living arrangements were: there were already nine people in the modest three-bedroomed terraced house, and presumably two small extras didn’t make a great deal of difference. Elsie and Edith Mary were obviously too young to be farmed out in this way and probably remained with Eleanor and Olive in London. Whatever the exact arrangements, it must have been a very disruptive time for the family.

Unfortunately, things became even worse after the war ended in November 1918. John Herman was released from internment and deported to Germany in 1919. According to Eleanor’s letter, the four youngest children went with them to Germany. Olive, the eldest, presumably stayed behind. It was not a good time to be in Germany as the political situation was dire and German civilian returnees (known as ‘Auslandsdeutsche’) were not very popular. Unlike returned prisoners of war, their loyalty was a bit suspect, their legal status was complicated and they were largely destitute and hence a burden on the economy. To make matters worse, John Herman apparently found himself classified as an alien and had to be naturalised, which meant that Eleanor also became a naturalised German. There were food shortages and, from 1921 to 1923, the Weimar Republic had to contend with hyperinflation. This period in Germany must have been a supremely difficult time for any family to survive, especially one deported there from an erstwhile enemy country. It certainly explains the stories my mother told me of how, as a young girl, she helped pack food parcels for people in Germany, and how people there had to carry huge bundles of banknotes to the baker to buy bread. At the time, I didn’t realise that she was referring to stories about relatives, rather than people in general. It must have been around this time that John Herman and Ivy sent the adjacent photo of themselves to Fair Close.



*John Herman Kessler with daughter Ivy*

The pressures on the family must have been immense, so it is not surprising that Eleanor came away in 1924. She points a finger at John Herman, and he does seem to have been a bit of a problem. On the other hand, having committed himself to a hard-working family life in England, only then to be interned for nearly four years

and deported back to Weimar Germany where he found himself a stateless alien, he may perhaps be forgiven for feeling somewhat aggrieved.

Besides dividing husband and wife, John Herman's forced repatriation also seems to have divided the children. There is no evidence that Olive ever went to Germany. She would have been 17 or 18 when John Herman returned to Germany in 1919 and it may well be that she herself decided to stay in the UK. Eleanor refers to Olive in her letter of 1930 (above) as having trouble in getting a job in the Civil Service. Considering she was born in London and never left this country, this gives some idea of the effects that the nationality laws could have through no fault of one's own. Olive married a **James Dickinson** in 1939 and they lived in Worthing, Sussex. James died in 1945. There were no children. I can find no trace of Olive after that date.

John Kessler (jnr.) came back and stayed in England, marrying **Violet Oxborrow** in 1930 and having four children. The 1939 register recorded him working as a telegraphist at Woodbridge GPO. Violet died in 1970, a number of years after they had parted company.

As far as I can ascertain, Ivy and Elsie stayed in Germany. According to a family diary, they visited England in 1934, evidently for the first time since leaving in 1919: *'Ivy Kessler arrived last night. She has grown up to be a fine charming girl since I last saw her sixteen years ago ...'*. There were plans for them to stay in England, but these apparently came to nothing and they both returned to Germany that same year.

The youngest, Edith Mary, seems to have come back from Germany with Eleanor in 1924 and stayed here. Like Olive, she had trouble getting a job in the Civil Service, and in 1939 she was in London (Paddington) working as a shorthand typist. I have been unable to trace her progress after that date.

Eleanor herself died in 1940. In her original letter, she had mentioned that she was having problems with cancer and the 1939 register shows her in St Bernard's Hospital, Southall. It all seems a rather disappointing outcome. What appears to have been a happy and successful family until 1914 was suddenly divided by the war and didn't really recover. Few families would, under these circumstances.

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#### Notes

1. *Suffolk Roots*, Vol. 39 No. 3, December 2013, pp.166-7.
2. **Oliver Strachey** was the brother of the writer **Lytton Strachey**. He was a noted cryptographer, working for Military Intelligence in World War I and at Bletchley Park in World War II.
3. Ellen Wilkinson was MP for Middlesborough East (1924-1931) and Jarrow (1935-1947). She was an active spokesperson for women's interests and issues.

## 'DEAR GEORGE...'

My paternal grandfather was **Thomas (Tom) Sherlock** (1895-1969). Unusually for his time, he travelled widely. His parents moved from Kilburn in Derbyshire, where the family go back as far as I have yet traced, to Blackburn, Lancashire (they and many other men in the family worked in the brick-making industry). Tom and his younger brother **George** (1901-1996) were born in Blackburn. On 7 September 1912 the whole family took a boat to Australia. They travelled in the P&O ship *Ballarat* from Liverpool to Melbourne. The family did not stay. Tom and his older brother Fred (**John Frederick**, 1885-1959) travelled home on the *Orsova* in April 1915 and subsequently joined up. Tom was in the Royal Army Medical Corps (he apparently said he wanted to help people, not kill them). I set out below the text of a card he sent from France to his younger brother on his birthday. It does not state the year but is interesting because it is fairly mundane.

*'Dear George*

*Just a card as I don't think I can manage to fill a sheet up as there is nothing to write about. I received mum's letter yesterday and I am pleased to hear that RM got her money alright and hope there is no further bother with it. Things here are pretty much as usual a bit wet but not bad. How is the football going? Our team is going strong and taking all before them. By the way there is a pair of my football [pants?] somewhere about probably in my bag and if they are any use to you, you can make use of them. Hoping this find you all in the best of health and that [...] Love to you all. Wishing you many happy returns of the day, your loving brother Tom'*

'RM' is their sister Emily, 'our Em' (**Emily Sherlock/Brooks**, 1889-1979). One bit is indecipherable as it is written in pencil.



*The front of the card sent by Tom Sherlock marking his brother George's birthday*

Returning from the war, Tom lived and worked in Coventry where he met and married my grandmother, **Evelyn Mary Alexander** (1900-1990). They subsequently moved to Oxford and then to Stowmarket, where he worked for ICI Paints Division until he retired. He was a lifelong Blackburn Rovers fan.

When I was researching Tom, I looked at the 1939 register and found he was living in the same road as not only the Holmes family, but also a lady called Watson. What are the chances?

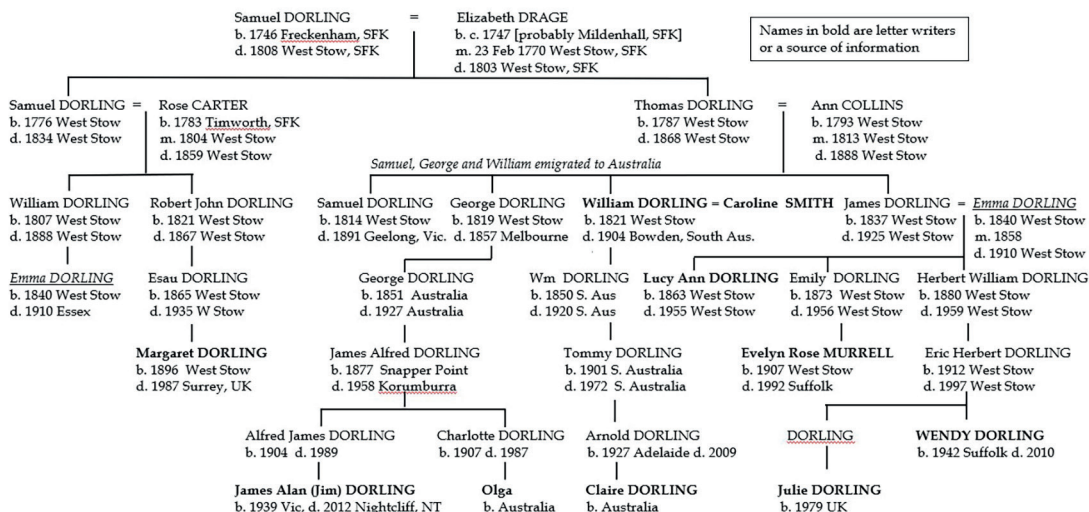
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## WEST STOW DORLINGS: LETTERS FROM TWO CENTURIES ACROSS FIVE GENERATIONS

The Dorlings first appear in West Stow, Suffolk, in 1770 when **Samuel Dorling** (1746-1808) married **Elizabeth Drage** there. They had four daughters and six sons, two of whom died in infancy. All their children, most of their 23 grandchildren and quite a lot of their 112 known great-grandchildren were baptised at West Stow or very nearby.

This article features the descendants of their eldest son **Samuel Dorling** (1776-1834), who married **Rose Carter**, and their youngest son **Thomas Dorling** (1787-1868), who married **Ann Collins**. Samuel and Rose had seven sons and one daughter, all but one son surviving into adulthood. Thomas and Ann had four sons and three daughters. Their three eldest sons left West Stow for South Australia, **William** in 1848, **George** in 1849, and **Samuel** in 1851; but **James**, their youngest son, remained in West Stow all his life.

### West Stow Dorlings in this article



When I started the Dorling One-Name Study in the early 1980s, I wrote to all the Dorlings in the UK telephone directories. **Wendy Mason née Dorling** of Culford, the great-granddaughter of James, youngest son of Thomas and Ann, replied. She was very interested in the Dorling family history and sent me a photograph of Drift Cottage, West Stow, which was the home of her 2x great-grandparents Thomas and Ann Dorling. We went on to have lots of correspondence, particularly about the sons of Thomas and Ann who went to Australia.



*Drift Cottage, West Stow*

Wendy said she would find out more from her aunt, **Evelyn Rose Murrell**, born 1907 in West Stow, the granddaughter of James Dorling whose three brothers had emigrated to Australia. Later Wendy told me that Evelyn had letters from Australia written by her great-uncle William. In 1939 Evelyn was living at 'West Stow Corner' with two of her siblings and their parents **Emily née Dorling** and **Edward Murrell**, a retired woodman, who in 1911 was working for **Earl Cadogan** of Culford Hall.

### The emigrating Dorlings

On 16 July 1984, Wendy wrote again with this information:

*I have been in touch with Aunt Evelyn. She is the daughter of Emily and granddaughter of James born 1837. She told me that William went to Australia about February 1848, he arrived in Australia on 15th June Government helped them to go. He took with him his wife 9 months pregnant and two children, daughters. The eldest called **Maria** the next one's name I can't find [**Rachel**]. The third child was born on the voyage and her name was **Mary Sophia**. When he arrived in Australia he worked for a man called **William Pike** making bricks, and he lived at Bowden, Adelaide. There was a man called **Clarke** from Culford on the same ship as him. He also knew a **David Harvey** and **William Howlett** and **George Driver** all of them had settled before him. Aunt said this was a Government Colony and the British Government helped them to go. They sailed from Tilbury to Plymouth then to Australia.*

*There is no mention of Samuel anywhere. Aunt thought that he went later with George. She is sure George went because he died of a broken heart pining for England. She said that they were only allowed to take two children with them, that is why William took **Caroline** his wife [**Caroline née Smith (1822-1912)**] in her condition.*

*The last person to receive a letter from Australia was Aunt Lucy [**Lucy Ann Dorling (1863-1955)**] she was the daughter of James [brother of William, Samuel and George]. She died in 1955 age 91. Aunt thinks Lucy finished writing before 1940, but someone from Australia came to see her during the Second World War, he was stationed in England, and had a great trouble finding her, this was about 1943.'*

Wendy also wrote in another letter that: *'Aunt Evelyn said Aunt Lucy went to Cambridge in about 1918 to see an Australian relation in hospital there. He was wounded in the First World War.'* It is lovely to know that the family in Australia and their West Stow relatives were still touch in the 1900s.

Returning to Wendy's 16 July letter, she requested *'... if you think this Dorling [Jim Dorling of Nightcliff, Northern Territories, Australia] who has written to you from Australia is a descendant of William's would you be so kind as to let us have his address so we can get in touch with him.'*

Wendy wrote to Jim Dorling and received a reply on 6 September 1984, and was clearly excited as she wrote to me the same day:

*'I have today had a letter from Jim Dorling of Nightcliff, Northern Territory, Australia ... It is without doubt that he is descended from George Dorling who went to Australia about 1850 and who great Aunt Evelyn said died of a broken heart pining for England.*

*Jim said in his letter that it is thought all three brothers, that is Samuel 1814, George 1819, William 1821 played in a quite well known dance band in Adelaide. He wanted to know if the brothers were in fact musical – I can confirm this with the help of Aunt Evelyn, she told me that Thomas their father was musical and he taught them to play a kind of pipe. Each day they were given a few bars to learn while they kept watch over the Lord of the Manor's sheep. It was a job given to the boys of the village on leaving school. There is a man living only a few yards from my home who did this job on leaving school at age 10 years in 1914.'*

It is unlikely that it was the three emigrating brothers who played together in a band in Adelaide. Although they all arrived in Adelaide between 1848 and 1851, George died in 1857 and Samuel had moved over 400 miles away to Geelong by 1859. However, it is known that **Thomas Benjamin Dorling** (1901-1972), a grandson of William, played, sang and managed a band in Adelaide. It is quite possible some of his brothers also played with him. His granddaughter **Claire Eyles née Dorling** has kindly provided the following photos and information about William's grandson Tommy.

Claire has posted a recording and photos of the orchestra on YouTube:<sup>(1)</sup>

*'The only known recording of my grandfather, Thomas Benjamin Dorling, with his Jazz orchestra circa 1938. He was the band leader, he's also on vocals here, and possibly the one playing the clarinet as well (he played clarinet, guitar, banjo, mandolin and piano). Tommy led several bands from the early 1920s until his death in 1972 (he died a few months before I was born), including the "The Red Hot Peppers", "Tommy Dorling's Good Companions", "The Plaza Boy" and "Tommy Dorling and his Orchestra". He is considered one of the pioneers of Jazz in South Australia ... they played a concert in celebration of the Queen's visit in 1954 [family oral history] & they were a popular hit radio act. Tommy is also considered to be one of the pioneers of the "hot jazz" sound in Adelaide.'*



Tommy Dorling's Orchestra, courtesy Claire Eyles



Advert for Tommy Dorling's orchestra, courtesy Claire Eyles

Wendy's letter of 6 September 1984 continued:

*'Getting back to the brothers they were educated first by their mother Ann and then their father paid for them to go to school which was a privilege in those days, they went to school in Culford. When they could play their musical instruments well, they were allowed to play the hymns for the services in West Stow church (no organ in those days). Their musical instruments are at this present time in the hands of the rector of West Stow. They were until a few years ago in Aunt Evelyn's possession. She passed them to her brother **Edward** who since has died. His wife gave them to the rector. I have seen them and they are in good condition. After Sam, Geo and Wm went to Australia some of James's children when old enough played them, my Grandfather **Herbert [Dorling]** didn't, he was not musical. One thing that all the generations of Dorlings have done is learn to ring the church bells even I had a go when a teenager.'*

In Wendy's letter to Jim Dorling she added: *'There are six bells and in my grandfather's day were rung by him and his five brothers each Sunday.'*



Thomas and Ann Collins' instruments, courtesy of Julie née Dorling, niece of Wendy Mason

Wendy's 6 September letter to me also added: *'Jim says his family is athletic and wondered what physical types his ancestors were. All I can find out is that they were a very strong healthy family with plenty of go and still have a very strong will ... It is wonderful to have contact with the descendants of the brothers. There are 4 letters which have survived for 136 years they are all from William and his wife Caroline ... one is a detailed log of the journey and very very interesting.'*

In another letter to Jim Dorling, Wendy said *'Aunt said George was so taken with what he read [in William's first letter] that he went [to Australia] as well ... Samuel must have gone after George because as you will see he was still in West Stow on the 1851 census. We do know that they had a big send off with a sing song which went on till four in the morning. Aunt can remember [her] Grandfather*



*James telling her about it. She said she asked why it was such a joyous occasion. Grandfather said times were very hard here in England at that time and they were sure that they would have a better life in Australia.'*

Wendy eventually got permission from her aunt to transcribe the letters sent from Australia, and she sent me copies. Three of these letters were published in *Suffolk Roots* in the 1980s. They can be seen in the Members' Area of the Suffolk FHS website, via 'Search past issues'.<sup>(2)</sup> The transcribed letters are also online in the Digital Collection of the State Library of South Australia,<sup>(3)</sup> including the two letters not published in *Suffolk Roots*, one written by William's wife Caroline and the other by William in 1863 to a friend in Suffolk, which was passed on to William's relatives in West Stow. To find 'Letters from William Dorling' on the Australian website, use the link from the reference and put 'Dorling' into the 'Explore' box.

The following is a slightly edited version of Caroline's letter of 1 August 1848, with the original spellings:

*'My Dear Fathers and Mothers, Sisters and Brothers, I am very happy to inform you that I am still in the land of the living and with good health. We are enjoying the fruits of our labour for which purpose we came so many thousands of miles, but we have no cause to regret that we left the shores of Great Britain ... I doubt not that you have been very anxious concerning my welfare in the situation I left home but you need not be unhappy about me for I had every possible attendance on board for both Doctor and Captain was very kind to me, and my family likewise ... On Sunday the 19th we christened our Ocean born daughter Mary Sophia by the proposal of our Captain who presented her with a pretty net cap and a pair of shoes. Likewise our doctor gave us a bottle of beautiful liquor to drink the good health of the child and likewise all present ... I was able to leave hospital in 15 days – so you see I done quite as well on the mighty ocean and better than I did with my former two ... all the women on board had good settings up and there was nine children born on the passage and one in port and one died on the passage 14 days old which was the only death we had the mother of which was only 16 years of age (but married). We arrived in Australia on 15 June. The 21st I had an old friend come to see me who was by name **George Driver** we was very happy to meet each other in this delightful country where he brought a letter which I gladly received ... it's contents which truely dear father we have revered that is set forth in the hundredth and seventh psalm. They that go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters these see the mighty works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. [Caroline's husband William's letter home is full of rich description of the journey, the places and wildlife they saw.] I should be glad for father to send me the date of his and mother's birth. I hope when you write all will write brother **William** and **Sarah** his wife, likewise sister **Rachel** we would like to see you here in Australia we hope to see brother George one day. Give our love to sister **Maria** and her husband and give us the boy's name. We desired to be remembered to our Icklingham*

*friends likewise our kind love to our uncle and aunt **Cotterell** and tell him his is a good business here. Our kind love to aunt **Charlotte** and **Mr R Jeffes** and tell him we found more pleasure in crossing the mighty deep than we had expected. Give our kind love to brother **John** and sister **Mary Miller** and tell them we met with sister **Goldsmith**. I am still dear father and Mother your affectionate Daughter C. Dorling. Our kind love to **Mrs Craske** our neighbour and Mrs Petch dressmaker **Ann Petch**."*

In February 1985 I received a letter from Wendy after Jim Dorling of Australia had visited her in Suffolk. Jim's wife had Irish roots and they were regular visitors to Ireland. Wendy wrote that: *'Jim took copies back with him to Australia and I have had a letter from his father who was thrilled to read them'*. Wendy also wrote that her son *'now 12 goes to Culford School which is at the Hall where the Lord of the Manor lived in the time of the Australian Brothers'*. Wendy visited me in August 1985 and we had a lovely afternoon talking about the Dorlings and the West Stow area. It is such a shame that Wendy died in 2010 before I received this wonderful photograph from Australia of William Dorling, his wife Caroline and all their children, possibly taken in June 1904 when William and Caroline celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

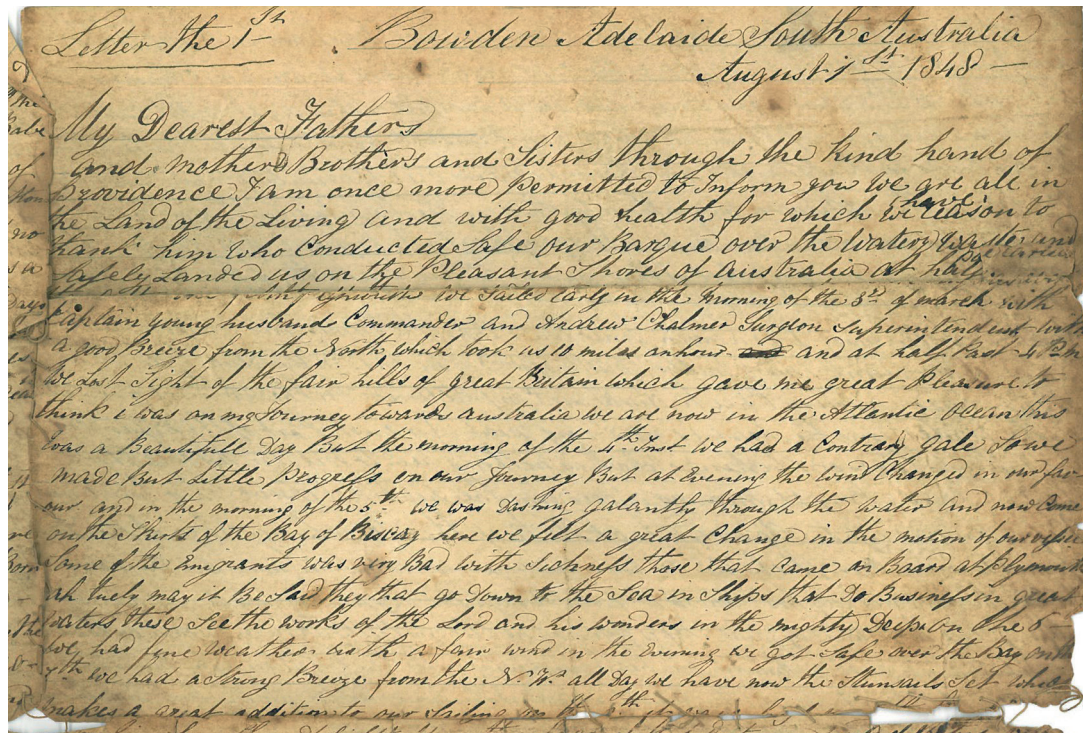
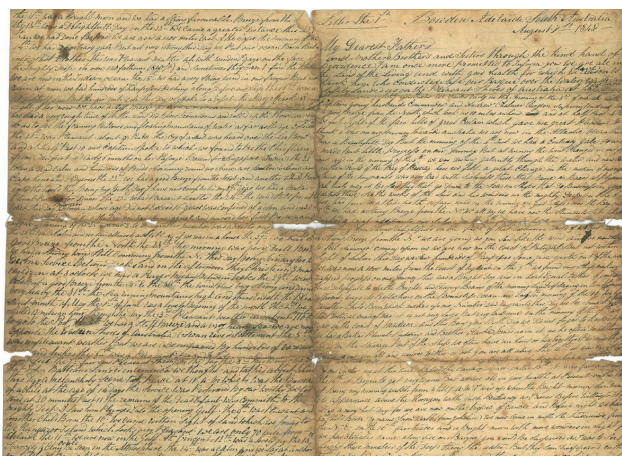


*William and Caroline Dorling and all their children*

Several newspapers published news of the wedding anniversary with various details about the couple, which can be found on the Trove website.<sup>(4)</sup> The *Australian Christian Commonwealth* used the heading *'A Unique Diamond Wedding'* and included the fact that William had attended the Brompton Methodist Church for nearly 50 years and had been a local preacher. The notice also said: *'the old couple who are in good health*

were married in June 1844 in Culford church, England ... arrived in South Australia ... by The Princess Royal ... and have resided ... in the Hindmarsh district... Mr Dorling went to the Victorian diggings in 1852 and was fairly successful... [but lost it all on a second trip, as revealed in other newspapers!] ... there are ... six daughters and five sons all of whom are living and married ... there are fifty-three grandchildren and ten great grandchildren...'.  
 1904 was in fact a year before their 60th wedding anniversary. Was this an accidental forgetting of their marriage year, or is it possible they deliberately celebrated it a year early? William died in the September, so although one newspaper said they were in good health, perhaps William's health was poor and they suspected he would not live into 1905.

In 2013 Julie née Dorling, now the keeper of William's letters, very kindly sent me a photograph of William's first letter. You will see the page is made from 8 small pieces of paper stitched together. Most of the letters are now too fragile to open.



William's first letter, 1848, and top right corner enlarged. Courtesy Julie née Dorling

## James Dorling's (b. 1837) family

Wendy née Dorling and Julie née Dorling are descendants of James Dorling, brother of the three emigrants to Australia, and his wife **Emma née Dorling** (1840-1910). James and Emma were first cousins once removed and married in 1858, 10 years after William and Caroline sailed to Australia. They had six sons and six daughters. Emma's second pregnancy resulted in twin daughters, baptised at West Stow in July 1861, one of whom was named **Mary Sophia Dorling**, no doubt after William's daughter born on the voyage. Sadly, the twins died aged nine months and were buried at West Stow in March 1862. They are commemorated on a headstone in St Mary's Churchyard, along with their parents.



*James and Emma Dorling and family, courtesy Julie née Dorling*

The photo above is believed to include their six sons and three of their four surviving daughters. The children's dates of birth, and the beard and moustache fashions, suggest a date of c.1898-1906. The older lady is possibly Emma's stepmother **Jane Johnson** (1829-1906), who brought her up after the death of her mother, **Susan née Mingay** (1814-1845), when Emma was about five years old.

James and his family lived in Drift Cottage, where his emigrating brothers and their parents had lived. In 1984 Wendy wrote in her letter to Jim Dorling in Australia: *'The little cottage is still there where they lived, almost the same as before they left... James inherited the cottage. Then his offsprings who never married lived on in it. Today it belongs to Aunt Evelyn's nephew. Aunt inherited it. She looked after **Martha, Arthur, Fred, Lucy** [her aunts and uncles] and her mother [Emily] in their old age. This is how she has all the*

information. She gave the cottage to her nephew **Peter** about two years ago, and his daughter lives their now with her American husband... I was very interested to follow on the map the places you [Jim] mention in your letter. You certainly have moved around a bit, and you seem a very long way from your father and your brother **Peter**. This to me is strange as my Grandfather lived all his life in West Stow, so has my father. My brothers and sister and myself have never lived more than four miles from the family home.'

Many thanks to **Cate Blum** and **Olga Ross**, both in Australia, for the following photographs and information. Jim's cousin Olga, daughter of '**Lottie**' (**Charlotte**) **Dorling**, has written a history of their Dorling ancestors, including information about her great-grandfather **George Dorling** (1851-1927, son of George and **Betsy Sparrow**) and two of his sons, **George Frederick Dorling** (1875-1939) and **James Alfred Dorling** (1877-1958, Olga and Jim's grandfather):



George Dorling (1851-1927),  
courtesy Cate Blum. Note: Olga names  
him as George Frederick Dorling but no  
documentary evidence lists a middle name



James Alfred Dorling (1877-1958)  
courtesy Cate Blum

'George Frederick Dorling [b. 1851] moved to Geelong (and) found work on one of **Sir John Grice's** farms on the Peninsula... In 1903 with his son James, George went sheep farming at Moyarra (Victoria). In 1907 he took over the management of **Archie Black's** station at Tarwin Meadows. The cattle and produce from the Station was carted to the rail head at Koonwalk... After his wife died George gave up managing Blacks's Station and with his eldest son George Frederick Dorling leased the Patersen Livery Stable on Korumburra for some years. They used to hire out horses and jinkers – also drove customers to where ever they wished to go in the town or district. Even access to Warrogul to catch the Gippsland train. It was a nightly scene at about 5 pm to see about twenty horses race down the main street of Korumburra to their paddocks

*in Victoria Street... Some time later they bought the Livery business in Mornington doing much the same as they did in Kurumburra. They also got the first Mail Contract to deliver the mail to various Post Offices on the Peninsula. When the motor age began George senior purchased the first motor vehicle – a Ford TT Charabanc, which was used to deliver the mail, and take the footballers to their matches!'*

### Samuel Dorling's (b. 1776) family

Many of the West Stow Dorlings remained in Suffolk, and in 1984 I received a letter from **Margaret Dorling**, daughter of **Esau Dorling** and **Margaret Turner**. She was the granddaughter of **Robert John Dorling** (1821-1867) a cousin of the brothers who emigrated to Australia and the uncle of Emma Dorling who married James Dorling, the son who didn't go to Australia.

Margaret's grandfather Robert John died in his 40s at West Stow and in 1871 his widow, Margaret, was living on parish relief at Heath Cottages, North Stow, with five of her 11 children, including the youngest, Esau. Esau married **Ellen Foreman** in 1890 and settled in Culford where they had five sons and a daughter, Margaret, born in 1896 and named after her paternal grandmother. In 1911 Margaret was living in a four-room cottage at Culford with her father Esau, a general labourer, her brother **Reginald**, who was working as a gardener, and her younger brothers **Clement**, **Allan** and **Frederick**, who were all at school. Her oldest brother, **Spencer**, was a gardener living in the 'Gardeners Bothy' in Culford, along with five other gardeners.



*Esau and Ellen Dorling*



*Margaret Dorling b. 13 Oct 1896, Culford*

The 1921 census reveals that Esau worked for Earl Cadogan, as did his son Clement who was then an electrician in charge of plant at the Earl's electric station. Margaret was also working for the Cadogan family, but at 33 Grosvenor Street, St George's Hanover

Square, Middlesex. Listed first is **Beatrice Cadogan** (7), then three younger Cadogan children, a governess, and lots of servants, including a butler, a footman, two kitchen maids, and a schoolroom maid. Margaret was one of the housemaids, aged 28 years and 4 months, born in Culford. By 1939 Margaret was a domestic servant in Devon, at Cadhay, Taleford, Ottery St Mary, the home of **Bartram William-Powlett**, a retired Major, whose household of 20 included his son **Peveril**, an officer in the Royal Navy.

Margaret's letter was written when she was about 88 years old and living in Suffolk. I'm sure she would have had wonderful tales to tell of her work for the Cadogans and the William-Powletts, but she wrote this lovely letter to me about her Dorling family, printed with its original spelling:

*'I can't tell you [of my] Grandfather as I don't remember either of my Grandparents ... the names of Grandmother Dorling's family, children of Robert & Margaret Dorling of North Stow, **Robert [Samuel Robert Dorling]** bachelor, **Walter** married, **Elijah** married, **James** married, Esau married, **Polly** (probably **Mary Ann**) married, **Margaret** married, **Caroline** married, **Elizabeth** married, with families all except Robert.*

*My father Esau Dorling was the youngest of 9 as you may already know, and his mother, Margaret was left a widow when he was I think about two years or so. She lived on North Stow Heath, which is very out of the way, I remember going there once. The cottages stood in the midst of heath land, a fine place I would think for rabbits! not many trees, as I remember it. Of course there are plenty of trees at Culford ... Culford has altered lately, since the Estate was sold in 1935, and the East Anglian School bought it, they have lately made other changes at the Hall, pulling down kitchen and Stillroom etc and building a large Assembly Hall to hold about 1000. Also, the girls' school is now at Culford. These schools used to be at Bury St Edmunds.*

*Well, the only Dorlings I know, are busy working people, interested in tilling the Soil and cultivating Gardens, wherever they are & so they are I think, by nature Countrymen. My Father was very busy with his garden and allotment in his spare time. His work was hard & meant often a long walk to and fro (oh, my poor feet), no byke and seldom a ride I think except, he sometimes was on the Engine which was used on the Estate for different things, to take the elevator & drum, for thrashing, the stacks, corn etc, no combined harvesters then and yet he could make a beautiful bouquet of flowers for the flower show, and 1st prize. I remember he said when making it, its for 1st prize, & it was.'*

**Karen Hemmingham Mb 11558**

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## CHARLES DURRANT (1869-1913)

### Part 1 – Beginnings and work

Towards the end of 1811, **Elizabeth Durrant (née Haward)**, the wife of **James**, gave birth to her fourth child. He was the third boy in the family and five or six months later was baptised **Charles** at St Peter's Church in Cretingham, Suffolk.<sup>(1)</sup>

Charles had two older brothers, **James** (b. 1805) and **George** (b. 23 Jan 1808), and a sister, **Mary** (b. 8 February 1809). James and Elizabeth would go on to have six more daughters and a son, **Sam**, who died before his first birthday. Like his father before him, Charles grew up to be an agricultural labourer, and in May 1836, aged 24, he married **Mary Ann Starks** in Brandeston, Suffolk.<sup>(2)</sup> Their first child, **Robert**, was born in 1842 in Cretingham, but died at about 12 months old.<sup>(3)</sup> On 19 May 1843 another boy was born, and on 11 June was baptised **Charles**. There were to be three more children, **Abraham** (b. 1845), **John** (b. 1847) and **Harriet** (b. 1851).

By 1861, aged 17, the younger Charles was an apprentice shoemaker.<sup>(4)</sup> His brother Abraham became an agricultural labourer and remained in Cretingham for the rest of his life. John became a wheelwright and by 1871 was in business in Sale Street, Paddington.

During the 1860s, many agricultural workers moved away from the countryside towards the expanding cities. By 1865, when he married, but possibly earlier than that, Charles had moved to London and was working as a shoemaker at 21 Circus Street, Marylebone. On Sunday 7 May he married **Charlotte Durrant** at St Mary's Church, Marylebone, after Banns. Charles signed the register but Charlotte made her mark; the witnesses were **William Turnbull** and **Emily Ann Turnbull**.<sup>(5)</sup> Charles and Charlotte were first cousins. She had been born in 1837 in Cretingham, the second daughter of James Durrant and **Anna Cudbard**, James being the elder brother of Charles (b. 1811). William Turnbull was the husband of Charlotte's elder sister, **Ann**. Emily Ann Turnbull was William's youngest sister.

On 9 February 1869, Charles and Charlotte's first son was born at 36 Market Street, Paddington, where Charles had his boot and shoemaking business. Twenty years later, **Charles Booth's** London Poverty Maps show this area, close to Paddington Basin, as *'mixed, some comfortable, some poor'*.<sup>(6)</sup> The baby was named **Charles**, but was often called Charlie or Chas and so I shall call him Charlie, if only to avoid confusion with his father, grandfather and cousins.

Charles and Charlotte had two more sons, **Frank** (b. September 1871 at 17 Bouverie Street, Paddington) and **Fred** (b. December 1874 at 12 Randolph Road, Kilburn). Fred was named and registered as Fred, though well-meaning people later entered his name as Frederick. All three boys attended St Augustine's School, Westminster. When Fred was registered at school aged 7 (as Frederick, of course), exemption was claimed from religious instruction.



Charlie was a bright scholar and by the time he was 20 in 1889 he had a good job as a postman, earning 18/- a week, with a 'round' in Hampstead. Like many young men of the period, he still lived with his parents, at 17 Andover Place, Paddington where Charles and Frank were running the shoemaking business. In October 1895 Charlie was appointed Sorter 2nd Class at the Chief Office; in 1899 he moved to Paddington District Office where he remained for the rest of his career. This was a better paid position; he was now 26 and wanted to get married. Charlie was a socialist and trade unionist, always concerned for the welfare of junior employees as well as the older men with family responsibilities. He was active in the Postmen's Federation in its early years and joined The Fawcett Association (FA), the sorters' union, as soon as he was appointed.<sup>(7)</sup>

**Emma Annie Baxter** was born on 21 September 1873 at 16 Bartholomew Square, the second daughter and fourth child of **John** and **Mary Baxter**. There would be another two girls and two more boys born between 1875 and 1883. John Baxter was a cooper, most likely working for one of the large breweries in the area. It also seems likely, from the cause of death given in 1898, that he was more than a little fond of the contents of his barrels. Charles Booth's London Poverty Maps show Bartholomew Square, just behind Old Street and not far from St Luke's Church, as 'Poor 18s to 21s per week'. The **Reverend G H Perry** of St Luke's stated that 'The number of "respectable, deserving poor" are less numerous in this district.'<sup>(8)</sup> At the age of 17, Annie Baxter was still living with her family but was employed as a 'domestic'.

How they met we will never know, but on 28 September 1896, Annie and Charles were married at St Luke's. In March 1899 their first daughter, **Winifred**, was born at 184 Portnall Road, and in 1901 their son **Herbert** at 271 Wharncliffe Gardens, St John's Wood.



*Wharncliffe Gardens (Westminster Archives). The flats were built in the late 19th century on the site of Edwin Landseer's house and garden, by the Great Central Railway (chairman, Earl of Wharncliffe) to house the workers whose homes had been demolished when the line arrived at Marylebone station. Each flat was designed so sunlight entered at some part of the day. The frontage was paved, with clipped hedges and huge carriage entrances in the middle of each block for horse-drawn vehicles to enter. A typical flat would have three bedrooms, a sitting room with an open fire, a kitchen and an inside lavatory, which was an innovation for 'model dwellings'. Laundry could be hung out to dry at the top of the buildings, and milk and coal were delivered. The residents were mainly in regular work with good wages and Charles Booth said it was the only model dwelling in London 'in which I conceive life as bearable'.<sup>(9)</sup>*

By 1901, Charlie was well established in his job as a sorter at Paddington and was elected by Fawcett Society members to the post of Editor of their fortnightly journal, *The Post*. This was a salaried position – £15 per annum in 1901. The first volume he edited was published on Saturday March 30, 1901, when he wrote:

*'In order to facilitate the punctual publication of THE POST, it is particularly requested that all contributions submitted for approval be clearly written on one side of the paper only. Notes, Correspondence, Sporting and athletic items, &c., should reach us not later than by first post on the Tuesday preceding date of issue. Address:*

*Charles Durrant, Editor of The Post, 271 Wharnccliffe Gardens, St John's Wood, N.W.'*

All editors can sympathise with that sentiment!

Charlie's first editorial discussed over two pages the Postmaster General's practice of dismissing a sorter for 'an alleged irregularity', without going to the trouble of investigating the 'alleged offence' and, where theft was involved, having the person prosecuted:

*'If the Department claim that they have a right to brand a man as a thief, to dismiss him ignominiously from the Service, and ruin his life, even though their case against him is not strong enough to bear investigation in a court of law; if they claim that as their right, and in defiance of all the most cherished principles of justice in this country, they act upon it, we have only to say that the position is scandalous and intolerable.*

*The life of a Sorter attached to the Inland Section is not an enviable one by any means. Before a young man enters the Service he has to satisfy the Department not only that he possesses a good education, but that he also possesses a good character. And yet it seems that the moment he sets foot in the office he is regarded as a person not above suspicion – a potential wrong-doer. The building is riddled with spy-holes so that he may be secretly watched; there is no privacy for him. Even the place to which nature compels him to occasionally retire is not free from observation. How appropriate that this place should have been built on the site of a disused prison!'<sup>(10)</sup>*

In November 1903, Charlie Durrant was one of the representatives of the FA to give evidence to the Bradford Committee. Industrialists and others with a special interest in the conditions of the working class were appointed to this Committee (without any representation for the Post Office). Charlie's role was to set before the Committee the reasons why the sorter's minimum wage was inadequate, and he summed this up as follows:

*'We base our claim for a higher salary than we are now receiving upon (1) the necessity for a high standard of comfort, owing to the arduous and exacting nature of our duties; (2) the value of our work to the community, especially the commercial section; and (3) the increased and increasing cost of house rent and living in London.'*

His deposition was printed in full in *The Post* in November 1903.<sup>(11)</sup>

Charlie explains in detail the Civil Service examinations a young man must pass in order to be accepted as a sorter, and the efficiency test he must then complete before he is paid the minimum salary of £1 a week, which is as follows:

*'He must be able to stamp legibly 100 letters per minute with a hand-stamp, and 120 per minute with a Pearson-Hill machine stamp. He must be able to sort 1,200 of town correspondence in thirty-six minutes, and 1,000 of county correspondence in thirty minutes. 2½ per cent of mis-sorts are allowed. He must pass a test in sub-dividing letters into two out of the ten railway divisions into which correspondence is divided. He must have a general knowledge of the way to perform despatching duties, including the labelling of bundles, bundle-tying, treatment of letter-bills, registered letters, express letters, unpaid and insufficiently paid letters, and re-directed letters; also a general knowledge of bag-opening duties.'*

He discusses the working conditions which lead to less than 5% of sorters living to the pensionable age of 60. The rarely-cleaned sorting offices, full of dusty mailbags, led to a particularly high rate of tuberculosis among sorters and this disease accounted for many of the premature deaths. The hours of work, 48 per week, which were irregular, meant a sorter never quite knew when he might be free:

*'In effect, a Sorter is never off duty. He can never be sure when he goes on duty that he will be able to leave the office at the conclusion of his normal duty. Should the exigencies of the service require it, he must prolong his attendance; or he may be required to make a second attendance in one day. He may go home and find a telegram summoning him back to duty.'*

The salary scale for a qualified sorter (£52 per annum if over the age of 19, rising by £6 annual increments to a maximum of £150 p.a.) was established by a previous investigation into Post Office wages, the Tweedmouth Committee, which reported in 1897. Charlie enumerates at length the rise in residential rents and the cost of living in the intervening six years. Rents rose in the suburbs of London as soon as public transport services, rail, bus or tram, extended into them. He cites several examples of colleagues who were struggling to pay their increased rent and rates, but I will quote his own example:

*'Take my own case. I married at the age of 27, and have been married over seven years. I am now nearly 35 years of age, and have three children. I rent a six-roomed house [at 26 Douglas Road, Kilburn] but I can only afford to keep three rooms for myself and family, and I have to let three. I contend that I should have at least five rooms – that is, three bedrooms, one for wife and self and two for the children, as they are not all of the same sex, a sitting room and a kitchen. I consider that at 35 years of age a sorter should be able to afford £1 a week for rent and travelling expenses. I view with bitter resentment the discomfort in which I have to live, owing to my present low salary – viz: £105 3s. per annum. My case is not an extreme one. There are other men worse off than I am ...'*

*But even I live from hand to mouth. There is no margin whatever. A doctor's bill means a debt that may take 12 months of self-denying economy to clear off; in fact one such bill did take me that time to settle. And on that account two successive periods of annual leave were spent in London.'*

Holiday entitlement after five years' service for a sorter was three weeks and three days. Charlie stresses the need for rest and recuperation and a change of air. However:

*'I cannot take my wife and three children to the seaside for three weeks and three days for less than £15. There is nothing very extravagant in that, I hope. Now, to get that £15 together I should have to put aside £1 5s out of each month's salary, and that, I may tell you, is an utter impossibility.'*

Charlie had asked for leave so that he could attend all the sittings of the Bradford Committee on behalf of the FA, but the Postmaster General would not agree. However, the Postmaster at Paddington did agree that Charlie could be transferred to a 'late duty' for the time being, and so he attended the Committee's hearings and then went to work.

The Bradford Committee's Report was sympathetic to the unions and caused consternation among officials – someone at the Treasury wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer: *'This is an amazing document and will, I fear, give us a great deal of trouble in the future'*. Most of its findings were shelved.<sup>(12)</sup>

Charlie Durrant, however, had other problems at home apart from money – his eldest daughter, Winifred, was ill and on 22 December 1903 she died from tuberculous meningitis at the age of four. He immediately resigned his editorship of *The Post*. His family needed him – Herbert was two and their second daughter, **Rosa**, just 11 months old. He sent a letter to *The Post* on 23 December:

*'My Dear Swift, I shall be obliged if you will afford me space to thank the many members of our own and kindred associations who have written to sympathise with me in my present trouble. Unfortunately the hopes they so kindly expressed have not been realised; my little girl has gone to her last rest. Yours fraternally, Chas. Durrant.'*<sup>(13)</sup>

**Swift**, in his editorial, is fulsome in his praise for Mr Durrant and hopes that in time he will take up the work of the Association once more.

He did, of course, return to work for the FA, but not to the editorship of *The Post*. In January 1905 another daughter was born to Charlie and Annie Durrant, and named **Emily**.

Early in 1906, a letter from Charlie to his fellow union members appears in *The Post*:

**WAGES QUESTION. A FEW PLAIN WORDS**

*I have been chosen to represent our case for increased wages to the Postmaster General, and I desire to say a few plain words on the matter. When I started preparing evidence for the Bradford Committee I inserted a notice in THE POST asking for certain information, and out of about 4,500 members only one man took the trouble to do as I asked.'*

He is again seeking information about increased rents and rates in and around London since January 1904. He continues:

*'I am also desirous of obtaining particulars of cases of young men on the minimum wage having to be assisted financially by parents or guardians. This is a matter in which members must pocket their pride...*

*Any other information likely to be of use to me in dealing with the Wages question will be welcome, but I want it at once.*

*Chas. Durrant, 78 Hessel Road, West Ealing, W.'*

This time he clearly got plenty of responses. In a Special Issue published on Saturday, 18 April 1906, *The Post* printed the full text of Charlie's evidence to a Select Committee; this, and the verbatim report of questioning by the MPs, extends to some 20 pages. The evidence is essentially a re-write of his evidence to the Bradford Committee of two years earlier, but with more examples from colleagues, particularly young men on the starting wage of 18s or £1 who were clearly still dependent on their parents. One young man, aged 22 and earning 22s 4d per week, provided an extremely comprehensive report of his expenditure which extends over three pages. Charlie, now 37 and earning 47s 11d, sets out his own budget:

*'I have had four children. One, unfortunately, died so that now my family consists of one boy and two girls. The boy goes to school. In order to find suitable housing accommodation, I have been forced right out of the neighbourhood of the Paddington Office, where I work, and live at West Ealing. I have a small five-roomed house, consisting of sitting-room, kitchen and three bedrooms; no bathroom. All these rooms are necessary, especially the three bedrooms. The rent is 10s 6d weekly. My season ticket between Paddington and West Ealing costs 2s 3d per week. Thus I dispose of 12s 9d before considering the question of living. This is my budget:*

	Per week		
	£	s	d
Food, gas, coal and housekeeping generally	1	7	0
Rent and travelling		12	9
Fawcett Association subscription and insurances of self, wife and children		2	5
Newspapers and periodicals			9
	2	2	11

*So I have 5s left to provide clothes, boots, &c, for wife, children, and self, occasional doctors' bills, amusements, recreation, renewals of household effects, annual holidays, and many other incidental expenses that will readily occur to the minds of those gentlemen present who have had to live on the wages of the worker. I have tried to put by half-a-crown weekly towards the expenses of a holiday, but that has been a miserable farce. The holiday fund is frequently broken into to meet some pressing need, and instead of a change of air once a year I am lucky if I can manage it once in two years. Even then it is a struggle.'*<sup>(14)</sup>

As well as wages and the cost of living, the Select Committee reviewed the complicated interconnections between pay scales which meant that someone like Charlie, who joined the service as an auxiliary postman and worked his way up to become a sorter, might well, at 37 years of age, be earning less than his colleague who had entered the service as a sorter. Terms and conditions of service were also discussed, including 'special leave arrangements' for postal service Army volunteers and the lack of such leave for union representatives to attend to their duties; the right to strike, or rather the obligation not to strike; and the right of the Post Office to dismiss one of its servants for inefficiency.

*'Postal servants cannot strike. If you look in the first page of the Rule Book, you will find that the penalty for delaying or causing to be delayed any of the correspondence of the public is penal servitude for life. It does not look as though we are in a position to strike. Anyhow, I do not think I should like to try it.'*

*'But the conditions of Government service are such that the Government cannot turn away one of its servants for inefficiency.'*

*'In the case of the sorters, that is far from being the case. A high state of efficiency is demanded and is enforced by tests secret and open. There is an annual sorting test, and there is an efficiency barrier.'*

A man who failed these tests did not receive his annual increment nor could he pass through the efficiency barrier on the pay scale.

Charlie's lengthy statement and his careful answers to the MPs' questions are something of a tour de force. But in April 1906, Charlie must already have been in pain and had difficulty walking and being on his feet at work. Only 10 months later he was forced to leave the postal service.

## Part 2 – Family, retirement, death and its consequences

Charlie Durrant's pension statement indicates that he was absent from work on 24 days during 1906; he was suffering from what was referred to as 'rheumatic gout', but later as rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis. He must have been in constant pain as he walked from home to the tube, from the tube to the office, and was then on his feet for some of his shift sorting mail. With little understanding of how to treat this disease, he no doubt just soldiered on – he had a young family to support.

His condition must have worsened quite quickly, because in February 1907 he was no longer able to work and was on sick leave for 167 days until, on 25 July 1907, he was officially retired due to ill-health. He was 38. His annual pay at retirement was £137 1s 1d, and his pension would be £38 17s 2d per year. His pension statement concludes:

*'Mr Charles Durrant has discharged his duties with diligence and fidelity to the satisfaction of his superior officers.'*

The Paddington Letter Branch reported in *The Post* (February 23 1907):

*'The annual supper and reunion of the "Old Crocks" took place last Saturday at the Albert Hotel, Craven Road. I understand a very pleasant evening was spent ...*

*Mr C Durrant, the invited guest, was unable to be present owing to a severe attack of rheumatic gout. Needless to say, we hope for his speedy recovery.'*

With Charlie unable to work, his wife Annie now had to become the breadwinner. They moved to the South Coast, perhaps thinking that the climate would be better for Charlie than the dirt and fog of London in winter, but mainly because there was the potential for Annie to run a boarding house.

The Fawcett Association was quick to respond in several ways: a collection was begun among members; the Executive Committee recommended that Charlie be given a free advertisement in *The Post* and a free copy of each magazine; and the Committee also agreed:

*'... to place on record the Committee's regret at the early retirement of Mr Durrant from the Service, on ill-health, and to present to him an illuminated address, as a mark of appreciation of the services he has rendered to the movement.'*

The Chairman (**A J Mosedale**) wrote a fulsome appreciation of Charlie in the 7 September 1907 edition of *The Post*, where Annie's first advert also appeared:

*'BOURNEMOUTH – Comfortable Apartments, with or without board. Moderate terms. Cycle accommodation. Near Central Station. Mrs Durrant, "Maydene", 225 Holdenhurst Road.'*

Similarly worded adverts appeared every fortnight through to the end of November 1907 and then picked up again on 7 March 1908.

Mr Mosedale's appreciation of Charlie Durrant concludes:

*'At the commencement of this ... appreciation of our friend's achievements, I spoke of his earnestness. This, I think, is the dominant feature in his work, but it is always supported by most clever and brilliant advocacy, and accompanied by extraordinary clearness of expression. Whether speaking or writing Durrant always touches the spot, and in this aspect I venture to say that the Postal movement never produced a more incisive protagonist.*

*Charley was never frightened by difficulties, but the smallness of his pension is obviously insufficient to keep him and wife and three little children. It behoves us, therefore, to devise some means of adding a permanent sum to his pension every week, and I hope that within the next week or two something tangible will be started to help along the road one of the bravest and most magnificent workers that the Post Office employees have ever known.'*

At the FA Committee meeting, held on 23 October 1907, a letter from two members of the Inland Section was read:

*'... calling attention to the helpless and pitiful physical condition, through illness, of Mr Chas Durrant, late Editor of The Post, and suggesting that some action should be taken to render him financial assistance. The matter was referred to the Executive, to take immediate action, if possible to organise the suggested voluntary effort, by which members would volunteer to subscribe one penny per month to a Durrant Maintenance Fund, to ensure him against absolute want, his pension being entirely inadequate to obtain the bare necessities of life.'*

In October 1907, Charlie would have heard from his father or perhaps one of his brothers that their mother had died, at the age of 71. Charlotte Durrant was in Otley, Suffolk at the time, with her sister-in-law **Emma Durrant**, the widow of Charles's brother, Abraham. Charlotte had chronic bronchitis, so maybe returned to Suffolk in the hope that the country air would enable her to breathe. This left her husband, Charles, to fend for himself in London. Until recently I could find no reliable trace of his other two sons, Frank and Fred, beyond the censuses when each is recorded as employed by his father (1891 for Frank, aged 19, and 1901 for Fred, aged 26). However, in March 1899 a Frank Durrant (b. 25 August 1871) emigrated to Canada. In 1901 and 1911 he was farming in Alberta and died in British Columbia in 1935.<sup>(15)</sup> I have also found a Frederick Durrant, of the correct age, occupation '*Shoe repairer*', who was arrested for begging on six occasions between 1913 and 1915 and committed to Wormwood Scrubs; the magistrate's comment is '*incorrigible rogue*'!

Maybe Charles quickly found himself a housekeeper? One year later he remarried. **Fanny Murray Bromley** was 35 at the time of her marriage; Charles was 65. Fanny had been born 'out of wedlock' to **Esther Murray** in 1873. Bromley was the surname of her stepfather and she didn't always use it. She appears to have spent her working life in domestic service. In February 1910, a daughter, **Edith**, was born to Fanny and Charles and two years later, a second daughter, **Esther**.

In Bournemouth, the paying guests were perhaps not as frequent as hoped, but in November 1907 the FA paid Charlie £35 6s 6d, being the amount raised by a fund set up by the Paddington Branch. On 13 November, Charlie wrote to the Editor of *The Post*:

*'Dear Sir, I desire to express my sincere gratitude to the members generally for the splendid manner in which they have stood by me in my misfortune.*

*The fund recently closed has been of the greatest possible assistance in meeting the expenses of my long illness. I only wish I could prove my gratitude by helping in the fight that is to come; but I fear that is as far as I shall get.*

*with kind regards, believe me, Yours sincerely, Chas Durrant.'*

Charlie Durrant wrote regularly to the Editor of *The Post*, always about his health and the various treatments he tried, and always with gratitude for the support of his



former colleagues. He did not mention his wife or his three children. Sadly, in July 1908, Annie and Charlie lost their second daughter, Rosa, to tuberculous meningitis; she was just five years old. At the end of September, E J Nevill, Chairman of the FA, visited Charlie in Bournemouth to present him with the illuminated address on behalf of the Association. He found him 'wheeling himself about in an invalid chair, a helpless cripple', which, he felt, made an illuminated address a poor consolation.



The illuminated address presented to Charlie Durrant in 1908 (photo courtesy of Brian Roberts)

A letter from Charlie dated 30 April 1909 to the Treasurer appears in *The Post* on 26 June 1909. Charlie encloses a receipt, so presumably more funds have been sent. He says he was too ill to write earlier, but now he is able to do so he hardly knows what to say and what to leave unsaid, '*for I don't want my tale of woe printed*'. But print it they did, in full. It is quite a harrowing story.

In November 1908 Charlie went to the Royal Mineral Water Hospital in Bath to see if treatment there would help to straighten his knees so that he could stand. He was there for eight weeks during which time he was '*stewed in hot mineral water, drank hot mineral water, was massaged wet, was massaged dry, blistered and the rest of it*'. He was told that to straighten his legs he would need a surgical operation, so he went home, and about 10 days later was admitted to the Boscombe Hospital.

There he was injected with a new drug called Fibrolysin every other day for two weeks, then he was given an anaesthetic and his legs were straightened by force and put in splints to prevent the muscles from contracting again. When Charlie came round, the agony he suffered was beyond description. After five days the splints were removed to give him massage. Blisters on his legs were dressed, and after the massage the splints were replaced. Fibrolysin was injected again, 18 times, and the masseur visited every day. The whole process was extremely painful. But then Charlie realised that his body was covered in thousands of small purple spots, and one evening found he had blood in his mouth. He suffered a continual loss of blood for nearly a week. He was given nothing but milk and became very weak. All treatment was stopped and the muscles in his knees contracted again. He began to wonder if he was about to die. When the bleeding stopped he made up his mind to go home as soon as possible. This he did, and slowly began to regain some strength.

During all these weeks, poor Annie must have been desperately worried, not just for Charlie but for herself and their children. In March 1909 she was eight months pregnant. Their fifth child, **Nancy**, was born on 28 April 1909 at 3 Ophir Road, Boscombe.

In December 1909, Charlie writes a rather cheerier letter saying that he has decided to do what he can himself to straighten his legs and for £2 has bought a tricycle which he rides around Bournemouth, avoiding the steepest hills! He feels this exercise is doing some good and says the riding is fine, it is afterwards that he feels the pain. He concludes:

*'Acute rheumatism is a most depressing ailment. Had there been added the depression of anxiety as to how I and my family were to make both ends meet, I should never have made this progress. The generous support accorded me by my old colleagues has enabled me to "keep my pecker up" to an extent that would not otherwise have been possible. I wish them all a Happy Christmas – as happy as "the duty" will permit – and a Prosperous New Year.'*<sup>(16)</sup>

There is little news of Charlie Durrant in *The Post* after this, except the balance sheet of The Durrant Fund published in 1910 which shows that in 1908 and 1909 the fund paid him a total of £108 15s 6d. Then, on 19 December 1913, *The Post* publishes his obituary.<sup>(17)</sup> Written by Charlie's friend and colleague, **A J (Ted) Mosedale**, it is fulsome in its praise and sentiments. Charlie died on 27 November, at 34 Carlton Road, Bournemouth, the cause given as 'Osteoarthritis (7 years), bedsores, general debility and exhaustion'.<sup>(18)</sup> He was 44, and left a widow, a 12-year-old son and two daughters, aged 8 and 4.



Charlie Durrant (1869-2013)<sup>(19)</sup>

Annie Durrant continued to advertise 'Apartments with or without board. Ten minutes sea and central station' in *The Post*, in 1913 at 34 Carlton Road, then in 1914 back in Ophir Road, at No. 14. After the summer of 1915 the adverts cease. In June 1914, *The Post* publishes a letter from Annie dated 17 May:

*'Dear Mr Fitzgerald, I beg to acknowledge the receipt of cheque for £126 3s 2d, the residue of the fund which the members of the association so kindly instituted on behalf of my husband. I need hardly tell you that I greatly appreciate, and will never forget, the kindness of you all to my husband, my children, and myself, and I would be glad, dear Mr Fitzgerald if you would kindly convey my heartfelt expression of thanks to those who have done so much.'*

*Believe me to be yours very sincerely, Annie Durrant.'*<sup>(20)</sup>

So the FA's funding, and perhaps the free adverts, had come to an end, and presumably so had Charlie's pension, so that Annie had to provide for her family by herself.

Bert, aged 12, would have been able to leave school and find work of some kind to help the household income. He was too young to be called up for WWI, but in May 1919, aged 18 years and 2 months, he joined the Royal Tank Corps and served until 1931. He gave his trade in 1919 as 'Motor (Improver)'. His mother's address at that time was 157 Capstone Road, Bournemouth. In September 1939, Bert was on the RAF Civilian Staff as a fitter.

Emily, aged 8, would have been at school and Nancy, 4, at home with her mother. Nancy told me that she and Emily were sent to a boarding school. I regarded this with scepticism because I could not see how Annie could have afforded it, but in the 1921 census Nancy (aged 12) is indeed a pupil and boarder at a small private school in Great Clacton. Essex Record Office has no record of this school, but the two ladies who ran it had previously run a similar enterprise in Islington. It may be that the Post Office provided some support towards the fees. By this time Emily, 16, was at home with Annie at 8 Harrison Avenue, Bournemouth, and had a job as a junior

clerk at Hunt & Co., Motor Engineers. Annie, who knocked six years off her age on the census form, was working as a cook at the Wharncliffe Hotel in Boscombe. Nancy contracted rheumatic fever while away at school, and was put in hospital where she was wrapped in cotton wool. The illness affected her heart and years later this limited the size of her family, something she very much regretted.

Then, in 1927, Annie Durrant remarried. **Osborne Arthur Anthony Lewis** was born on 28 December 1868 in Raglan, Monmouthshire. His father, **Sidney**, was a Post Office rural messenger. In 1888, Osborne (or Arthur as he preferred to be known), aged 20, married **Clara Annie Sophia Morris**, aged 26. His occupation was given as 'Smith's Striker'. They lived in Monmouth, then Bristol, and had four children. By the 1901 census, Clara (36) was in Bristol with the children; she had no occupation, but there was no sign of Arthur. In 1911, Clara (49), still in Bristol but now with only two children, indicated she had been married 23 years and had had five children, but two had died. An Arthur Lewis of the correct age and birthplace was working as a coal miner in the Rhondda. Ten years later in 1921, Clara (now 53) and her two children, **Edgar** and **Bessie**, were still in Bristol – she described herself as widowed, but an Arthur Lewis of the correct age and birthplace, married, was in lodgings in Devon and working for the National Builders' Labourers' and Constructional Workers' Society.



*Nancy Durrant in 1936*

In January 1927 Clara Lewis died at home in Bristol from chronic bronchitis, and so a few months later, in June, Arthur Lewis was able to marry Annie Durrant with a clear conscience. His address at the time was in Exeter, but he moved to Bournemouth, and in 1928 and 1929 both he and Annie were on the electoral role at her address, 50 Victoria Road. Yet by 1930 he had gone. The marriage failed and family rumour had it that Arthur went to Canada. However, in September 1939, an Arthur Lewis (b. 28 December 1868 and married) was living or lodging with a widow in Wimborne, Dorset. He was 71 and gave his occupation as Mental Male Attendant.

In 1929, at the parish church in Oadby, Leicester, Emily Durrant married **William (Bill) Roberts**. Also from Bournemouth, Bill was employed by the Post Office; he began his career at 14 as a telegraph

messenger and then became a postman. His move to Leicester with the Post Office was presumably a promotion that enabled him to marry. Nancy was a witness at this wedding, and it was not long before she too moved to Leicester. She was not happy at home with her new stepfather and years later told me she had been 'orphaned' at the age of 18. Nancy was estranged from her mother until Annie died in 1953, aged 79; Annie spent the last years of her life living in Birstall, Leicester, with Emily, Bill and their three sons.

Herbert Durrant married in 1931 after he left the army; he and **Gwen** had a son and five daughters. Nancy married in 1943 and had one daughter. Charles (senior) died in March 1921 and in June Fanny and their two daughters were living in Crayford where Fanny ran a confectioner's shop. Edith, their eldest daughter, married **Edgar Hutchinson** in 1933; he was a Leading Aircraftman in the RAF. They had one son. Edgar was killed in action in 1945 and Edith later remarried. Esther sadly died in hospital at the age of 22 from tuberculous meningitis.

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19. This rather poor photo was photocopied from *The Post* (n. 16) and later scanned.
20. *The Post*, 19 June 1914, p.279.

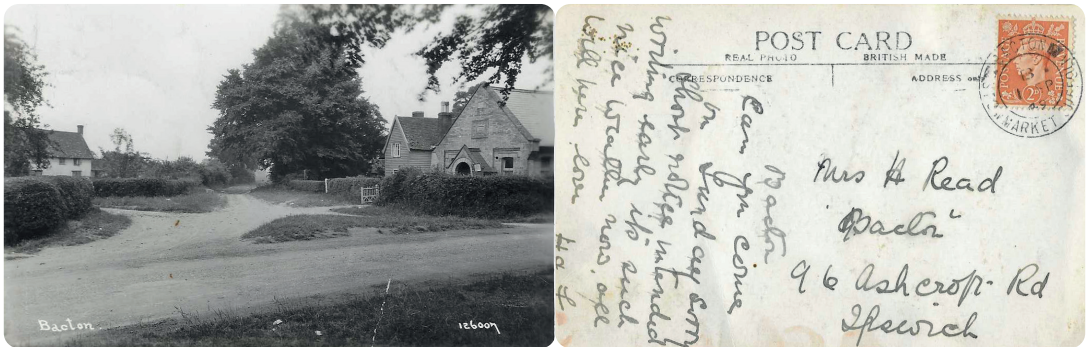
## POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST

This is only the smallest of contributions to the theme of communication, but it demonstrates one of the ways so many people communicated before telephones became commonplace.

My grandparents **Harry** and **Lily (née Dorling) Read** lived in Ipswich, but she came from Bacton. The postcard below is from her sister-in-law, **Frances Dorling**, wife of Lily's brother '**Hap**', with an invitation to visit. The cost of the stamp was 2d and the card was posted on 1 September 1949. It's a mundane keepsake, but shows how it was perfectly possible to keep in touch at short notice. Frances writes:

*'Bacton. Can you come on Sunday sorry short notice intended writing early its such nice weather now, all well here love H & F'*

1 September was a Thursday, so Frances was confident my grandparents would receive the card in time for a Sunday visit.



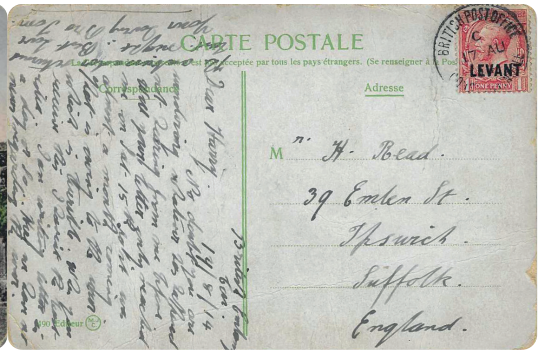
The postcard shows Bacton village hall, but the redeeming feature was that the house on the left was where Lily, Hap and their siblings were born and brought up – it's still there today.

The other postcards are rather more unusual. My grandfather Harry Read had a younger half-brother, **Thomas Trenter**. Tom was born in Ipswich in 1890 and in 1911 was a footman in London, but he then moved to work in the British Embassy in Constantinople. In August 1914 he sent a card to Harry in Ipswich:

*'British Embassy, Con. 14/8/14*

*Dear Harry,*

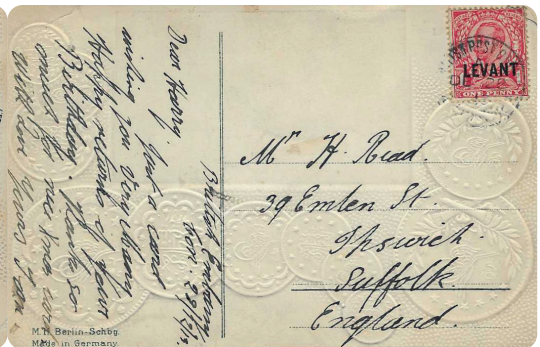
*No doubt you are wondering whatever has happened not hearing from me before. Well your letter only reached me on Sat. 15th so it was almost a month coming. That is owing to the war which is terrible. When you receive this I haven't the least idea. I am writing letter in a day or so. Here we have no news regarding the war. The ambassador returned last night. Best love Your loving Bro Tom'*



Turkey entered the war two months after Tom wrote this postcard, and the staff returned to Britain where Tom enlisted in 1915, joining the 10th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. By 1919 he was back at the Embassy and writing again:

*'Dear Harry*

*Just a card wishing you very Many Happy returns of your Birthday. Thanks so much for nice Xmas card. With love Yours Tom.'*



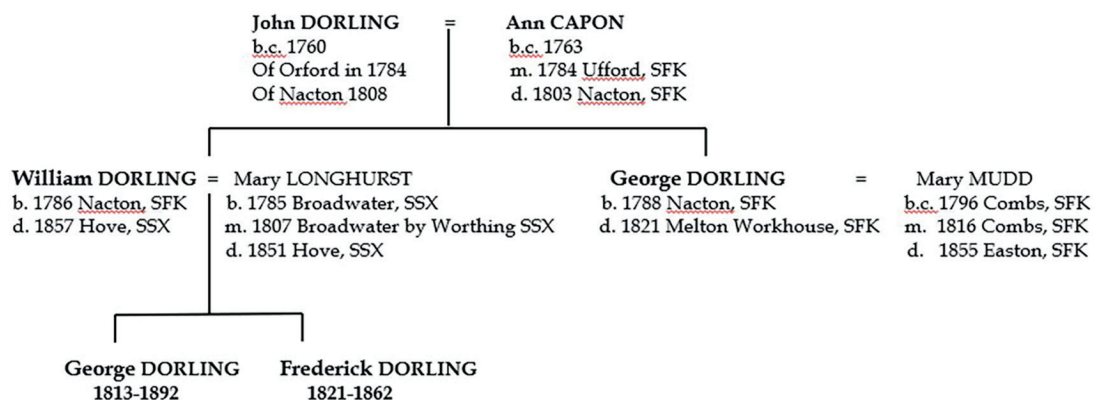
The photographs opposite show Tom in his uniform at the British Embassy in Constantinople and in a formal studio portrait taken in Turkey – another way of keeping in touch with family. How I wish he'd kept a diary while he was there!



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## ESCAPING POVERTY? A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS

The brothers are grandsons of **John Dorling** of Nacton, Suffolk, who was born around 1760 but whose parents are unverified, as there is more than one possible baptism for him. John Dorling was 'of Orford' when he married **Ann Capon** in August 1784 at Ufford, Suffolk. Their 10 children were baptised between 1785 and 1803 in Nacton, six surviving to adulthood. In 1785 John Dorling, resident at Nacton, was provided with 'sundries' from Easton parish.<sup>(1)</sup> John's wife Ann and baby daughter died in 1803, and from December 1804 widower and pauper John Dorling and four of his children were supported by Melton workhouse. John is not found in records after this, possibly dying in the workhouse, though no record of his burial has been found. Two of his sons moved away, probably trying to earn a better living after experiencing the poverty of their family in Suffolk.



William and George, sons of John and Ann Dorling

**William Dorling** was about 17 when his mother died in 1803, after which his father and younger siblings lived on parish relief from 1804. William was a gardener in Sussex when, aged 21, he married **Mary Longhurst** on 3 August 1807 in Hove, near Brighton.

William's brother **George** was a labourer and left Suffolk when he joined the 43rd Regiment of Foot in January 1808. Eight months later he suffered 'a gunshot wound of hand at Vimeiro in Portugal',<sup>(2)</sup> and he was finally discharged after 1 year and 40 days as unfit for further service. He was back in Suffolk by 1816, when he married **Mary Mudd** at Combs. The following month they began receiving parish relief from Easton. In 1819 their twin boys were baptised in Kettleburgh, where they also received parish relief. They were back in Easton by December 1820, when they were admitted to Melton workhouse. George died there on 9 March 1821, leaving his widow and sons receiving relief for another four years.

Meanwhile, brother William was doing better in Sussex. Between 1809 and 1828 he had nine children, seven surviving into adulthood. However, although he had work as a gardener and his two daughters married, his five sons had a harder time or



were unlucky. His eldest son **John** died in 1826, aged 19. Son **George** was arrested for stealing aged 20. Son **Frederick** left England aged about 23. These are the two brothers of the title – see further below. Son **Edward**, a merchant seaman, deserted his wife and family leaving them *'destitute and chargeable to the parish for 5 years'*,<sup>(3)</sup> costing the parish £10 7s. In 1848 he was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for deserting his wife, with another six months for stealing. There is no trace of him after this. Youngest son **Henry**, a seaman, married in 1849, made pay allotments to his wife, and then disappears from the records, perhaps dying at sea as his wife is recorded as a widow in 1851.

William was not at the family home in Hove Garden Cottages in 1841, when his wife Mary and sons Frederick and Henry were listed in the census returns. By 1851 he was in the Steyning workhouse at New Shoreham, while Mary was a live-in housekeeper for a master gardener in Hove. Mary died later in 1851, and six years later, in 1857, William died of bronchitis in Steyning workhouse, recorded as a gardener, aged 73.

### George Dorling (1813-1892)

On 10 February 1833, George, aged about 19, and his wife Abigail baptised their son, **John Dorling**, at Hove, Sussex. This must have been a difficult year, not only for George and Abigail but also for his parents and younger siblings, because that July George was arrested and gaoled for stealing *'apparel'*. We will never know for sure, but perhaps the birth of his son and poverty were the reasons for his crime. George was charged with: *'Stealing at Brighton 2 coats 1 pair of trousers and divers other articles the property of Charles Juniper: also stealing at Brighton, 1 pair of trousers & divers other articles the property of Gideon Juniper.'*<sup>(4)</sup> One newspaper report referred to *'£15 worth of fancy clothes'*.

In July 1833 a plea for clemency was made in a letter, now at The National Archives,<sup>(5)</sup> which states that it is: *'the humble petition of George Dorling, of Hove in the county of Sussex, gardener, now laying in Horsham Gaol in the same county, for felony'*. The letter makes this appeal: *'[Y]our petitioner has a wife and child now left in greatest distress ... [H]e has never been convicted of felony but always bore an honest character as the undersigned Gentlemen can testify, and they therefore petition on this account, and on account of his youth that the severity of the punishment may be mitigated.'* The letter is signed by 21 men, including the curate of Hove, **Rev Charles Townsend MA**.

The petition failed, and on 27 July George was sentenced at Lewes, Sussex, to transportation for life. The heavy sentence was likely due to the fact that George had committed a subsequent crime not mentioned in some of the newspaper reports. The *Brighton Herald* of 3 August 1833 gave fuller details. On Friday 12 July, George stayed the night with **John Lee**, innkeeper of the New Inn, Arundel, Sussex, about 20 miles from Brighton. In the morning George went upstairs to shave and left without seeing Lee again. Lee then discovered that over £16 was missing from a desk upstairs. George

was subsequently *'apprehended and given into the custody of the Brighton police, by his brother-in-law Gideon Juniper, of whom he had stolen a considerable quantity of clothes, and to an indictment for which he had, on being arraigned, pleaded guilty ... About £7 was found on the prisoner when apprehended, and he had a horse in his possession, which there was no doubt he had purchased with the money taken from Mr Lee's house.'*

Charles and Gideon Juniper (likely baptised as Samuel Juniper) were born in Cuckfield, Sussex, but by 1833 they were living in the Brighton area. Their sister, **Abigail Juniper**, was baptised in 1808 at Cuckfield. The identity of Abigail, mother of George Dorling's son, is not verified by any documentation other than the newspaper report naming Gideon Juniper as George's 'brother-in-law'. This sole clue, and the fact that no marriage has been found for them, makes it likely that Abigail Juniper was George Dorling's partner, mother of his son, and that they were not legally married.

George is next recorded in the register of the hulk *Hardy* moored at Portsmouth: record number 4557 is for Geo Dorling, from Horsham gaol, convicted of stealing from a domestic house, convicted at Lewes on 27 July 1833, received on the hulk on 19 August 1833, and *'disposed of'* on 24 September 1834.<sup>(6)</sup>

On 27 May 1834, four months before George left England, his son John George Dorling was buried in Brighton at the Hanover Chapel General Burial Ground (Independent), aged 1 year 3 months. Just over two months later, on 4 August, George's 'wife' Abigail married **William Tattersell** in Brighton, her name given as Abigail Juniper and her marital status as single. She and William were recorded in the 1841 and 1851 censuses of BRIGHTHELMSTONE (Brighton), along with their three children, with Abigail given as born in Cuckfield. She died in Brighton in 1859.

On 27 September 1834, after over a year on the hulk, George sailed for Tasmania on the *Augusta Jessie*, arriving on 22 February 1835.<sup>(7)</sup> By all accounts conditions for convicts in Tasmania were harsh, but George survived and appears in Tasmanian convict muster lists. Finally, after nine and a half years as a convict, he is named in *The Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tasmania) in a list of *'prisoners of the Crown'* who are granted a *'Ticket of Leave'* on *'the occasion of Her Majesty's birthday'*.<sup>(8)</sup> This conditional pardon, granted in May 1843, enabled him to work and live a free life provided he remained in the area and obeyed rules.

Three years later, George and Elizabeth 'Deorling' have a daughter, **Jessie**, born 26 July 1846 – perhaps named for the ship that brought him to Tasmania? George's marriage is unverified, but he may have married **Elizabeth Doran** on 10 April 1843 at Brighton, Tasmania.

In 1848 George was finally pardoned<sup>(9)</sup> after *'having behaved well during 11 years and a half that he has been in the Colony and having undergone a Probation of three years as a Ticket of Leave holder.'*

Four years later, in January 1852, George left Hobart for Melbourne as a steerage passenger on the *Victoria*. He seems to have returned by September, when his three children were baptised together in Hobart: Jessie (b. 1845), **Alfred** (b. 1849), and **Isabella Agnes** (b. 1852), children of George and Elizabeth 'Deorling', gardener. Daughter **Charlotte** was born in 1855. It is highly likely that George went gold prospecting in 1852, but whether he came back a wealthier man is not known. At some point he became a farmer. It is not known whether he owned his own land, but perhaps he did find the means to buy some.

George's death notice was published in *The Mercury*, a Hobart newspaper, on 27 May 1892: 'At Argyle St Deorling George, Death 26 May 1892'. Eight years later, his widow Elizabeth's death notice was also published in *The Mercury*: 'Dorling: on Tuesday, August 28 1900, at her daughter's residence, 203 Murray Street, Elizabeth, relict of the late George Dorling, in the 86th year of her age'. Their daughter Isabella then administered George's estate, giving his occupation as 'farmer'.

George's four children born in Tasmania all survived into adulthood, three remaining in Tasmania and the other settling in New Zealand. His son had no children, but his three daughters had 26 children between them. Isabella and Charlotte remained in Tasmania and at least two of George and Elizabeth's great-grandchildren were born there, others moving to New Zealand and Australia.

George's daughter Jessie married in Tasmania, lived in Australia for a short period, and then settled with her family in New Zealand. I owe many thanks to Jessie's great-granddaughter **Melanie**, with whom I have been in contact since 2008. Some years ago, Melanie and her family visited Tasmania to explore their family roots and sent me the information that George and Elizabeth's family had erected headstones for them in Hobart: 'George Deorling: Died in 1892 aged 76 years Hobart' and 'Elizabeth Deorling: Died in 1900 aged 86 years Hobart'.

### Frederick Dorling (1821-1862)

In 1841, Frederick was living with his mother and youngest brother Henry, with no occupation given. His older brother George had been transported to Tasmania seven years earlier. Perhaps Frederick had learnt a lesson from this, as, unlike some of his brothers, he managed to earn an honest living.

In June 1844, aged 23, Frederick was recorded as a merchant seaman of Hove on the ship *Magnet*. However, he obviously decided that a seaman's life was not for him, as by August he was in London. Perhaps Frederick decided to follow in his uncle George's footsteps, as he then joined the Army, enlisting in London on 15 August 1844 in the Royal Horse Artillery, Regimental Number 2324.<sup>(10)</sup>

By 1850 Frederick was in India, where on 5 January, at the age of 29 (but lowering it to 26), he married **Mary Atkinson**, aged 16, at St Thomas Mount, Madras (now

Chennai), on the east coast.<sup>(11)</sup> He was a Gunner in 'A' Troop, Horse Artillery, the son of William Dorling, gardener. She was the daughter of **John Atkinson**, Sergeant, Madras.

The following year, on 13 February 1851, Frederick's son **William Dorling** was baptised at St Thomas Mount. Son **Henry** was born two years later, and daughter **Jessie Rebecca** in 1854, both at St Thomas Mount. It is interesting that both Frederick and his brother named their first daughter Jessie, though I know of no other family members with this name. It could perhaps have derived from someone in his mother's family, or may just be coincidence. But I have come across cases of migrants naming their children after the children of their siblings back home. Is it possible that news travelled across the oceans and that Frederick knew of George's children?



*William Dorling (b. 1850) and Jessie Rebecca Dorling (b. 1854)*

A few years later, 'Bombardier' Frederick Dorling took part in the suppression of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-1859 and received the Indian Mutiny Medal. He had done well and progressed since 1850, as the rank of Bombardier in the Royal Artillery is the equivalent of Corporal in the army.

By 1862 Frederick was in Wellington Barracks, Madras, 312 miles west of St Thomas Mount. On 26 May, aged 41, Frederick, '*Bombardier in the A Battery Royal Horse Brigade Artillery*' was ill or injured, as he made and signed his will, leaving everything to his wife Mary Dorling residing at St Thomas Mount, '*for her sole and separate use*'. The will was witnessed and signed by **E L Grant**, Major Commanding Depot Wellington, **James Faulkner**, cantonment (temporary) Sergeant Major, and **W Busted MD**, Assistant Surgeon.

Frederick died on 9 June 1862, 30 years before his older convict brother George. His will, credits, debits, and the sum raised from an auction of his personal property, are recorded in the British India Office Probate and Account Books.<sup>(12)</sup> The auctioned items are all listed with buyers' names and ranks and what they paid. As a boy growing

up in Hove, I cannot imagine Frederick would ever have believed he would have so many possessions. It does seem ironic that his brother George was transported for stealing clothes and that many of Frederick's auctioned items are also clothes.

Frederick's clothes ranged from handkerchiefs, socks and braces to jackets and trousers. His eight pairs of white trousers sold for over £5 2s, his nine white shirts for £12 16s, three pairs of long boots for £4 11s, and four flannel waistcoats for £3 18s. His two blue jackets (*fatigues*) raised £5 6s, a blanket £3 14s, his two pairs of cloth regimental trousers £9 3s, and his regimental dress jacket £4. Other items included a mattress, pillows and pillowcases, towels, crockery, cutlery, combs, various types of brushes, three lead pencils, a book on cricket, a drill book and other military books, an ink stand, cotton reels, a ruler, a portfolio, and two pairs of spectacles. The final balance from the auction sale was £116 13s 6d.

After all his debits and credits, Frederick left his wife, Mary, £157 4s 5d. What a pity he didn't live longer to enjoy a much higher standard of living than his father, uncle and grandfather, who all needed poor relief and ended their days in the workhouse. Mary remained in St Thomas Mount, dying in 1887 aged 54. She and their three children would have benefited from the money Frederick left, and the children appear to have been well educated.

Many thanks are due to descendant **Ted Dorling**, who, around 40 years ago, sent me copies of Frederick's marriage certificate and his son William's baptism record, along with a family tree of some of Frederick's descendants and some photos.

Frederick and Mary's daughter Jessie Rebecca married in India, and her son **Bertran Haller** (1883-1964) trained as a doctor in England, appearing in the 1901 census in London as a medical student. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps in WWI, worked as a doctor in the UK, and died in Scotland in 1964. Jessie and her surviving daughters eventually moved to Southampton, where they were living in 1939 and stayed until their deaths.

Frederick and Mary's sons William and Henry both stayed in India. Eldest son William, likely named for Frederick's father, became Postmaster at St Thomas Mount. Henry had no known children, but William's two surviving sons **George** and **Robert Dorling** remained in India, though some of their children and their descendants eventually moved away, to the UK, the USA, and Germany, some working as engineers, clerks and doctors.

George and Frederick's father, uncle and grandfather died in the workhouse in Suffolk in an era when many people were poor with little opportunity to improve their situations. Their Sussex family also struggled. But the convict and the soldier who left England did better, as is often the case for those who 'uproot' and find themselves transplanted in other places. However, the descendants of the families left at home in Suffolk and Sussex eventually benefited from the improvements in health, work

and education that came about in England over the years. The descendants of John Dorling and Ann Capon born with the Dorling surname number around 160, some remaining in Suffolk, others eventually moving to other English counties, including Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Lancashire and Worcestershire, and a few emigrating to Australia, New Zealand, and America.

**Karen Hemmingham Mb 11558**

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## INVENTED IN SUFFOLK: THE PRISON TREADMILL

Member **Julian Turner** has drawn our attention to an article by **Mildred Cookson** about the prison treadmill, recently published by the Mills Archive. It appears that the idea for this brutal instrument came to **William Cubitt** (later Sir William), the civil engineer and millwright, whilst he was working as chief engineer for Ransome & Son of Ipswich and saw inmates loitering aimlessly in Bury St Edmunds prison. A Cubitt-designed treadmill was installed at the prison in 1819: does any member have an ancestor who may have trodden it? The idea quickly caught on and treadmills were soon built in other prisons.

Cubitt was, of course, a Norfolk man, and so this dark invention can perhaps be ascribed to our northerly neighbours. If anyone is interested to read the article in full, the Mills Archive have kindly provided a link: <https://us10.campaign-archive.com/?u=9d64a153eca398c0235ff23b5&id=699fe0de91>.

*The Editors*

## THE OUTRAGE UPON HUMANITY AT ELVEDEN

*'Can the startling narration we have from Elveden be true? Is it a malicious invention? Is it the painful dream of some overburdened Christmas reveller?'* Such was the reaction of the *Norfolk News* on 3 January 1863 to events affecting my then 11-year-old 2x great-grandmother **Clementina Cornwell** (or **Cornell**) and her family, which over the following weeks would come to be known as 'The Elveden Outrage'.

Clementina's father, **Samuel Cornwell**, was born in Elveden in 1803, the son of **John Cornwell** and **Susannah Rice**, and like many of the village's residents worked as a farm labourer, employed by **William Newton**, MP for Ipswich, on one of the three farms on the Elveden Estate. In 1836 he married **Ann Leeks**, also of Elveden, and together they had a total of nine children, living in a cottage on the estate owned by the Newton family. Their troubles began in 1862.

At Christmas 1862, the Elveden Estate was between owners, William Newton MP having died in early November, and **Maharaja Duleep Singh** not taking up residence at Elvedon Hall until later in 1863. About five years earlier, the Newton family had leased the farm on which Samuel worked and lived to **George Cracknell**, for whom Samuel continued to work as a yardman. Shortly before Michaelmas of 1862, Mr Cracknell had given Samuel notice to quit the cottage, which he had occupied for over forty years, planning to give it to a younger man whom he was employing as a horse-keeper. Samuel, believing that his lease was still held from the Newton family, refused to leave, and two days after Christmas, on Saturday, 27 December, Cracknell sent two police officers to turn the family out of their home.

What furniture they had was removed from the cottage and deposited by the side of the London Road *'in a bleak open spot'* about a quarter of a mile away. And there, a week later, on 3 January 1863, despite the terrific gales that had beset the area, the *Bury Free Press* reported that Samuel, Ann and their six youngest children, aged between 4 and 13, were still living, *'with nothing but the broad canopy of Heaven for a covering, except what has been supplied them stealthily by their poor neighbours'*. The parish curate, **George Wood**, had offered them £2 to leave, but Samuel had opted to remain in place.

For workers on the Elveden Estate, 'leaving' meant going to live in Thetford, a prospect that Samuel is said to have viewed with horror. At the age of 62, the prospect of an eight to ten-mile round-trip walking to and from work each day was not enticing, and he did not know how it would be possible to survive in Thetford, paying its high rental and rates out of his nine-shilling weekly wage. Local papers reported that a number of Elveden workers, including Samuel's brother **Thomas Cornwell**, had been forced to relocate to Thetford while continuing to work on the estate. The *Bury Free Press* circumspectly stated that at the end of five years the exiles *'might get work where they could'*. The *Norfolk News*, however, more forthrightly explained that after

five years' residence, the financial responsibility for their welfare would be passed from Mildenhall to Thetford Union, and they would no longer be able to be legally removed back to Elveden. The fact that the Cornwell eviction proceedings had been conducted at the Mildenhall County Court was presented as evidence in support of this as the motive behind the removals.

An anonymous correspondent, in a letter to the *Bury Free Press* the following week, reported that at that time there were at least eight families, *'some of them large ones, and closely verging on pauperism'*, who had been driven from Elveden to Thetford, with several members of one family currently inmates at the workhouse. He also cited the case of a young married man named **Turman** (or **Firman**), whom the Elveden authorities had advised the Thetford police to keep an eye on, and the comment made by a Thetford resident that *'If the Elden police and keepers have been unable to detect him in any offence, what reason can there be to suppose that the Thetford police will be more successful?'*.

In the interim, in its 6 January edition, the *Bury and Norwich Post* had nominally refuted the accusations, stating that *'we do not find it to have been a frequent practice to throw the poor of Elden into Thetford'*, and that the real reason behind the family's eviction was *'in consequence of some offence committed by [Ann Cornwell] towards Mrs Cracknell'*. It only further fanned the flames of conspiracy, however, when it pointed out that despite the eviction and the offence, Cracknell, surprisingly, still continued to employ Samuel, and because of this continuing employment the family were unable to apply to the Mildenhall Union for shelter in the workhouse, their only alternative to relocating to Thetford. The *Norfolk News* later reported that *'there is a rumour amongst some of the villagers that Mrs Cracknell and Mrs Cornell have not been the best of friends, and that Mrs Cracknell is alleged to have said unpleasant things about Mrs. Cornell, for which it is thought she had no foundation. It is not believed, however, that this has led in any way to the ejection'*. The timing of the eviction, leaving the family homeless after dark on a midwinter's Saturday evening, was also highlighted as evidence of the cruelty of its perpetrator.

The press coverage led to such interest that it was reported that upwards of 300 people travelled to view the family's plight on Sunday, 4 January. **William Whistler** of Thetford provided the family with a waterproof covering with which they were able to fashion a tent, draping it over their furniture, using chairs and tables as walls, with their bedding in the centre. **H C Gayford**, the Elveden Estate's other tenant farmer, reported that further sightseers had visited the family on Monday and Tuesday, and they had received donations of money and food amounting to three or four pounds, leading to one local cynic remarking that Samuel would *'not want to work much more if he laid there long, as he would soon be an independent man'*.

After two weeks by the roadside, the family were visited by **Mr R M Newton** of Cambridge, son of the late William Newton, who intervened, and accommodation



was found for the family on Saturday, 10 January in a hayloft above an outhouse of the village inn. The *Bury Free Press's* anonymous correspondent had visited the family and described the loft as '*a superlatively miserable hovel*', expressing outrage that 13-year-old **William Cornwell** was forced to share a bed with 11-year-old Clementina and 7-year-old **Emily**. He painted a vivid picture of the living quarters:

*'The goods are arranged as well as the space will admit: but in one place is the food, and close by is the ferret box; at one corner is the bedstead occupied by Cornell and his wife, at the foot of which is another bed, occupied by three of the children... And if it happens to be moonlight, the poor creatures can lie in bed and watch the passing clouds. In this miserable place, without fire, or the means of lighting one, they eat, drink, and sleep.'*

A reporter from the *Norfolk News* said that he had tried to count the number of holes in the roof and had given up when he reached a hundred.

Of the other three children, 19-year-old **Martha Matilda**, described as being '*afflicted with hysteria and deafness*', had been taken in by **Edward Deeks** of the Grafton Arms in Barnham, four-year-old **Esther** by **Mr Nunn** of Barnham (a cousin of Ann Cornwell), and 15-year-old **Sarah Augusta** by Wood the curate, for whom she was working as a maid.

By late January, the story was being carried by newspapers as far afield as Wales and Ireland. *Reynolds's Newspaper* in London, a radical newspaper founded by leading Chartist supporter **George W M Reynolds**, suggested that '*the author of this most revolting piece of inhumanity... deserves to be gibbeted as high as **Haman**, and held up to the everlasting loathing of the whole human race*'. The Irish press took a more ironic perspective on the situation, with the *Dublin Weekly Nation* labelling it '*A Novelty in England*' and, while asserting that the laws supporting the eviction '*are a disgrace to our civilization*', also pointing out that '*In Ireland the peasantry are accustomed to this sort of treatment*'.

The final report on the family's circumstances appeared in the *Norfolk News* on 14 February. At that time, they were still living in the hayloft, although they had now been provided with a stove for heating and cooking, the smoke of which '*may be seen by passers-by issuing through holes in the roof*'. Cracknell had assigned Samuel, still working for him, the task of picking stones off the land, a job other villagers said was intended to degrade him and tire him out. Samuel himself said that '*he will do whatever his master sets him after, so long as he can get a piece of bread*'.

Indeed, throughout their reporting, the press emphasised the stoicism with which the family faced their tribulations. '*The public are loud in their denunciation of so cruel a wrong, but what appears most remarkable is the utter absence of any retaliatory expressions on the part of the family*', said the *Norfolk News*, while after their move to the loft, the *Bury and Norwich Post* reported that '*after all their hardships and deprivations... the children, though of tender age, are still sprightly and well, apparently; and although the old*

*man looks jaded and worn, he does not complain of indisposition*'. The respect in which Samuel was held in the village was mentioned frequently, with fear and already overcrowded accommodations being given as the reasons for other villagers feeling unable to offer the family shelter.

The antipathy between the Cracknells and the Cornwells continued into 1864, when the *Bury and Norwich Post* recorded a case heard at Mildenhall Petty Sessions on Friday, 15 January:

*'Samuel Cornwell... was placed at the bar charged by Mr Cracknell, his master, with stealing a rabbit, value 1s., out of a trap. Prosecutor stated that he was out walking on the warren, and noticing a rabbit caught in one of the traps, he took it out, killed it, and then replaced it in the trap and went away. Being afterwards told that the rabbit was missing, he went to the stable and saw prisoner's bag hanging up. Looked in, and found the rabbit that he saw that morning in the trap. Prisoner was on the heath near the spot at the time gathering brake. Prosecutor replaced it and went away, and on his return prisoner was there. Prosecutor went to the bag, and found that the rabbit was gone. Asked prisoner where it was, and he said he threw it in the yard to the pigs. Prisoner denied putting the rabbit in the bag, and said he didn't know it was there till he looked in the bag; he then threw it out into the yard. **Inspector Parker** stated that the prisoner owned that a rabbit was in his bag, but said he had never put it there himself.'*

Was Samuel guilty, or was he, as he professed, the victim of planted evidence? The Bench thought the former, and sentenced him to one month in Bury Gaol. I wonder if he recalled that barely a year earlier, talking about his living conditions, he had said that *'he and his family would be better cared for either in prison or the workhouse'*.

History doesn't record exactly when the Cornwells were able to return to a reasonable standard of living, although by the time of the 1871 census, Samuel and Ann were living in Newmarket Road, Elveden, with their son William, grand-daughter **Eliza Cornwell**, and a lodger, **David Ruffles**. They lived out the rest of their lives in the village, Ann dying there in 1879 and Samuel in 1887. Clementina married my 2x great-grandfather **William Palmer**, a servant at Elveden Rectory and later gamekeeper on the estate, in 1877, and by 1901 they were living in Thetford, where she passed away on 9 November 1933.

**Adrian Nebbett Mb 12638**

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## MEMORIES OF INFANT SCHOOL

A visit to a local history evening, when a past headmaster spoke about the history of his school and the memories committed to paper by some of the pupils, has prompted me to submit this article.

I was born in 1947 in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Although I did not know it at the time, I was the middle child of **Cyril** and **Lesley Airey**. My older brother had died aged two days in 1942 and my younger sister was **Susan**.

We lived in Westley Road. The earliest memories I have of school life are of walking along Westley Road to Blenheim Barracks, a WWII army camp. The buildings were either Nissen huts or, like the school, constructed of wood. My parents never walked with me, or later with Susan and me, to take or fetch us, and there was only a footpath on one side of the road – not ours.

Judging by school photos of the time, there were about 30 children in the class. The photos of each sex were taken separately!



*Blenheim Barracks school, early 1950s (author's own). I am second row from the back, 2nd from left, next to the teacher, Miss Parfitt. I think the lad rear left may be Richard Cracknell, who lived in Risbygate Street*

The schoolroom was divided into two sections, the classroom and the activity area. There was no playground. In the middle of the classroom was a coke fire. On a winter's day, the  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd pint milk bottles delivered at the bottom of the steps would freeze and the contents would expand. It was the job of the nominated child each day to bring in the crate of milk and place it close to the fire to thaw out. There was only one teacher, **Miss Parfitt**. I can't remember any of the lessons, or indeed much about life within the school.

On transferring to the junior school, St Edmundsbury, half a mile in the opposite direction, we still walked to Blenheim Barracks for some games, as they had a large football pitch and the school did not.

The children of today don't know how lucky they are to have the facilities they have!

**Brian Airey**

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## CONSTABLE CONNECTIONS

No, not a reference to an obscure member of the Suffolk constabulary! Readers may remember that in June 2022's edition we carried a piece referring to member **Brian Lott's** descent from the Lott family of Flatford, whose Willy Lott's Cottage featured in several paintings by **John Constable RA**, most notably *The Hay Wain* (see Vol. 48 No. 1, p.34, *Harry Chickall Lott MC*). Brian's book about the Lott family is reviewed on p.369.

We have now heard from member **Geoff Smith** of a similar Constable connection. Geoff has traced his paternal line back to a **William Smith**, who was born c.1400-1420, lived in Stratford St Mary, and died c.1492 in Erwarton, on the Shotley Peninsula. An account of his research appears on p.370. Stratford St Mary is, of course, very close to East Bergholt, the Suffolk village where Constable was born and spent his youth, and in 1827 he sketched and painted in Stratford St Mary itself. One of his sketches was of the house, now called Ravenys, that Geoff's ancestor William Smith had built in the 1400s. The sketch, *Water Lane, Stratford St Mary, Suffolk*, is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It provides a direct link between Geoff's family and one of our greatest landscape painters.



*Constable's 1827 sketch of Ravenys,  
Stratford St Mary*

We wonder, are Brian and Geoff the only members of the Society with a Constable connection, or does anyone else have one lurking in their family tree? If so, then whether the connection is through Constable's work or something else, please write and tell us about it.

**The Editors**

## MY JOURNEY INTO THE 1940S WITH ERNEST HUGH BARKER

It all kicked off in 2014 when my aviation friend **Colin Durrant** posted on Facebook that he had a 12-month subscription to Ancestry and had exhausted all his research. He wanted to know if he could help anyone research their past.

I requested that he look into mine, and was pleasantly surprised to receive 10 A4 sheets with my family history. I shared the information with the existing members of the **Barker** family, including the Canadian branch in Alberta. One of my UK cousins, **Angie**, Google-searched one of the characters mentioned (Grandad **Reggie's** brother **Nelson**) and reported that he had a son called Ernest who was killed in World War II near Eye in Suffolk. This took me back to the late 1960s when my father received a message from Grandad to ask if he could visit his brother Nelson who was in hospital in Ipswich. I accompanied him and met Nelson for the first time, a real character with a big bushy beard.



*The Barker family in 1919, showing Reggie in the back row (2nd from left) and Nelson seated in the front (far right)*

Nelson was a lovely chap. When the doctor asked him if he drank and suggested a couple of pints of beer, Nelson replied that it wasn't worth going out for less than 15 pints. He also smoked Churchman's Counter Shag, a very rough course tobacco.

Eventually Nelson was ready to return home to Bacton near Stowmarket, and I visited him with my father and my wife-to-be, **Sundra**. Nelson lived in a cottage which he kept in a lovely condition. We had long discussions about his family and generally put the world to rights. He had a son but I don't think they saw each other often, and his wife had died some years previously. But he never mentioned having another son who was killed in the War. Eventually Nelson passed away and that was the end of that chapter, or so I thought.

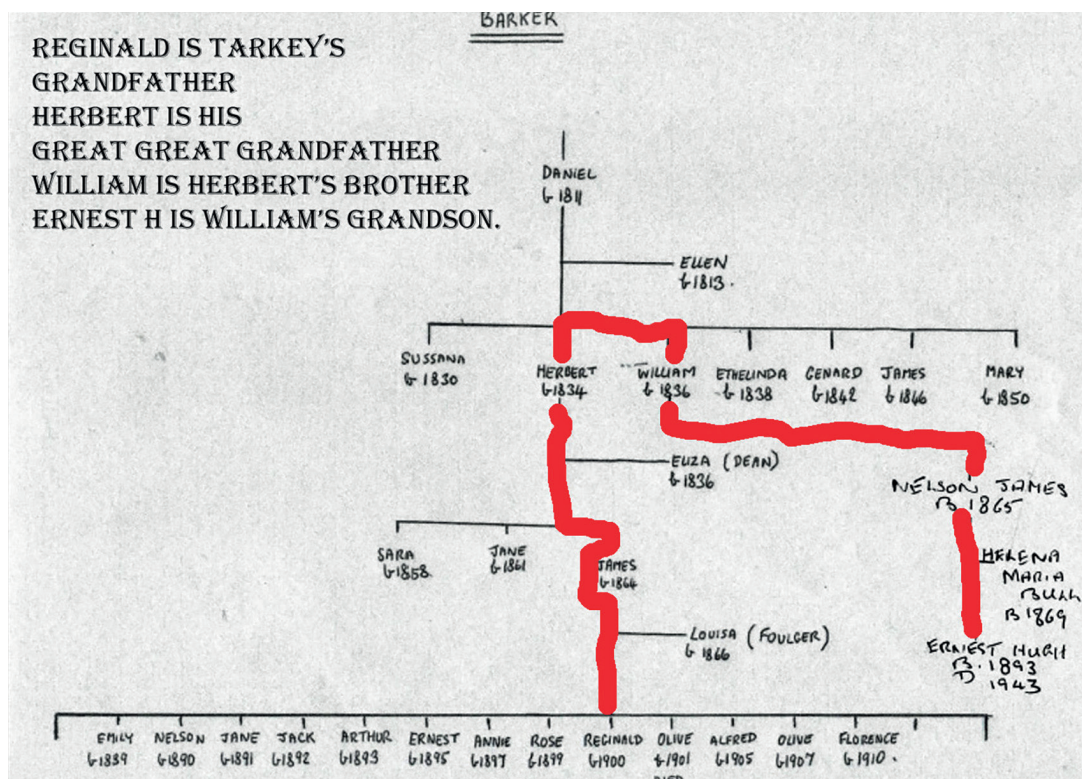
Following my cousin's apparent discovery about this son, I contacted some of my circle of friends asking for any information, but drew a blank. Then, in 2016, I attended the WWII living history event at the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Museum in Brockford, dressed in the USAAF Major's uniform I sometimes wear to such events. After a good day, on leaving the site I noticed the village war memorial about 50 yards down the road and decided to investigate. To my absolute amazement, the very last entry on the memorial was '**Ernest H Barker** Civil Defence'. What a coincidence!

I once again asked my friend for help and was amazed to find this Ernest's death was related to one of the most horrific accidents in Suffolk during WWII. A friend, **Ian McLachlan**, writes about it in his book *Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories* (1991) – in fact, it's the very first story in the book, called *Pathfinder*, about the USAAF B17F Bomber 42-5793, called 'Stinky'. The bomber had travelled to Thorpe Abbots air base in Norfolk from Alconbury in Huntingdonshire on 9 November 1943 to take part as a pathfinder in a raid the next day. The raid was cancelled, and the plane took off to return to its home base the following morning. On take-off it encountered problems. It tried to land at nearby Eye air base, which was under construction, but crashed at Brome in Suffolk killing all 13 crew and four British road workmen and their horse. B17s normally had 11 crew, but this one had 13 highly experienced men as they were carrying a top secret experimental H2S ground-to-air radar. One of the British men killed was Ernest Hugh Barker. As we shall see, he turned out to be not Nelson's son, but my 2nd cousin twice removed.

The next twist in the story came in November 2021, when my long-time friend **Maggie Aggis**, historian and journalist/author from Wattisham Station Heritage Museum, contacted me to see if I had a suitable story for a newspaper article she was writing for the Remembrance Day edition. Of course, my tale was just up her street. We then had the idea of a memorial at the crash site to remember the deceased. I put Maggie in contact with **Clive Stevens** (aviation historian) and Ian McLachlan (aviation historian and broadcaster). I had already spoken about the crash with Clive when he gave a talk at Martlesham Heath Aviation Society: he knew the details very well as his office was just over the field from the crash site. Clive and Ian were both interested, and then it was discovered that a memorial project had already been discussed by **Steve Andrews** and **Wendy Rust** from the US, whose father had been a very close friend to the co-pilot of the bomber. Our suggestion acted as a

catalyst to the project and on 10 November 2023, exactly 80 years after the crash, at the Oaksmere Hotel, Brome, which had been the Vicarage in 1943 and was adjacent to the crash site, the newly-constructed memorial was dedicated.

In advance of the event, I decided to check out my exact relationship with Ernest H, as I call him. This was difficult as my family use a few names many times and Ernest, Nelson, Reginald and James made regular appearances. This made life very difficult, but Wendy Rust was a genealogy researcher and helped me no end. In fact, she found lots of information about all 17 deceased and their resting places (see Appendix). We started with Colin Durrant's lovely family tree and progressed from there. It was very confusing, but we eventually found that Ernest H was the great-grandson of **Daniel Barker**, my 3x great-grandfather, born in 1811. Ernest had been born on 23 February 1893, and lived at Park Green, Wetheringsett with his mother **Helena Maria Barker (née Bull)**, born 1869. His father, **Nelson James Barker**, born 1865, had died on 10 May 1929, aged 64. Helena died on 19 February 1956, aged 87.



The Barker family tree

It turned out that Ernest H wasn't killed outright in the crash but died of his injuries two days later, on Friday 12 November 1943, at Hartismere Emergency Hospital. He was buried at Wetheringsett, All Saints Church. The funeral service (held on 16 November?) was conducted by the vicar, **Rev F W Lambert**, and included the hymns *Jesu Lover of my Soul* and *Rock of Ages*. Present were **Mr and Mrs Frank Barker**

(brother), **Mr and Mrs Reginald Barker** (brother), **Mrs Rowe** (sister), **Miss E Barker** (sister), **Mr and Mrs Parnell** (sister), **Miss A Barker** (cousin), **Mrs S Barker** (cousin). His mother was unable to attend the funeral because of health problems.

So it was that at 10am on 10 November 2023, about 200 people gathered at the Oaksmere Hotel in front of the new memorial, the money for which had been crowdfunded through the GoFundMe website. The families of some of the deceased



*The Barker family next to the new memorial, 10 November 2023*

attended and addressed the gathering. I was there to remember Ernie and lay a wreath.

Ernie had been an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Warden and the Civil Defence Association did him proud. They attended with their standard, a few members in uniform, and provided the Parade Marshal.

I was interviewed by Anglia TV. I loaned the Hotel an original oil painting by **John Bott** of the crash scene.

Two days later was Remembrance Day, and the date that Ernie actually died. My family attended the village memorial at Ernie's home village of Wetheringsett. I presented the same wreath, helped by my two grandchildren, **Isla** aged 8



*The new memorial*



and **Albie** aged 6. I was asked to address the gathering and this produced several comments, especially *'We will know next time we pass the memorial who Ernest Hugh Barker Civil Defence was.'*

It was lovely also to meet two members of the Barker family previously unknown to me, who had with them some wonderful documents about the family and a lovely photo of my Grandad Reggie when he was about 20.

It all started with Colin Durrant researching my family and finished up with a memorial to 17 men and a horse, involving people from the USA, Canada and Great Britain.

**Tarkey Barker**

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Appendix – Names of deceased

### ***United States Army Air Force***

Pilot, **1st Lt Arthur J Reynolds** (24), Camas, Washington.\*

Co-Pilot, **2nd Lt John (Jack) E Russell** (23), Baldwin, New York.\*

Navigator, **2nd Lt Sheldon V McCormick** (21), Jacksonville, Florida.

Ball Turret Gunner, **Sgt Leslie N Boling** (21), Dayton, Ohio.

Waist Gunner, **Sgt Laurie C Evans** (29), Arcadia, Florida.

Radio/Gunner, **T/Sgt Robert B Holmes** (23), Salt Lake City, Utah.\*

Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner, **T/Sgt Amos H Behl** (20), Ortonville, Minnesota.\*

Tail Gunner, **Sgt Andrew J Allison** (19), Indio, California.\*

Bombardier, **2nd Lt Albert L Rolnick** (22), Baltimore, Maryland.

Radio/Radar Operator, **Sgt John D May** (24), Alexandria, Virginia.

Waist Gunner, **Sgt William H Landers** (21), Madison, Alabama.

Radar Mechanic, **M/Sgt Robert G Levi** (28), Zirconia, North Carolina.

Radar Mechanic, **Cpl Herman J Kolousek** (22), Orland, California.

\* Interred at the Cambridge American Cemetery, Madingley, Cambridgeshire.

### ***British civilians***

Ernest Hugh Barker (50), ARP, Park Green, Wetheringsett Suffolk.

**William Charlie Burridge** (48), Langton Green, Eye Suffolk.

**Walter Clarke** (50), ARP, Priory Bungalow, Stradbroke, Suffolk.

**William Dixon** (42), Home Guard, Chapel House, Finningham, Suffolk.

And we must not forget the horse, a brown gelding, name unknown.

## WHERE DID THEY GO? – DNA FOLLOW UP

I recently received my DNA results and they make an interesting follow up to and confirmation of the information in my *'Pastures New – My Hughes, Hatten and Cooper Families'* article in December 2023's *Suffolk Roots* (Vol. 49 No. 3).

My ethnicity was surprising – England 45% (East Anglia plus North West England from my Dad), Scotland 29% and Scandinavia 26%!

The Ancestry maps and tools showed that of the Scandi DNA, most of my Dad's came from Norway, while all of my Mum's came from Denmark/Sweden. The occupation of Eastern England by Scandinavian tribes has resulted in people with a long family history in this area having a higher percentage of this DNA than those from some other parts of the UK, but it would be interesting to know if other readers with East Anglian heritage have this much Scandi DNA.

My mapped Ancestry DNA matches confirmed the destinations of my relatives described in the article.

Interestingly, the one result in Sweden is English and estimated as a 4th cousin, who just happens to

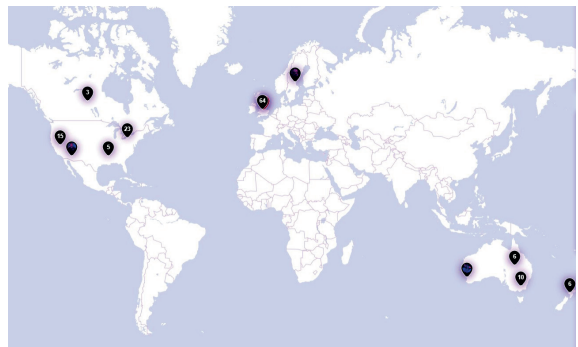
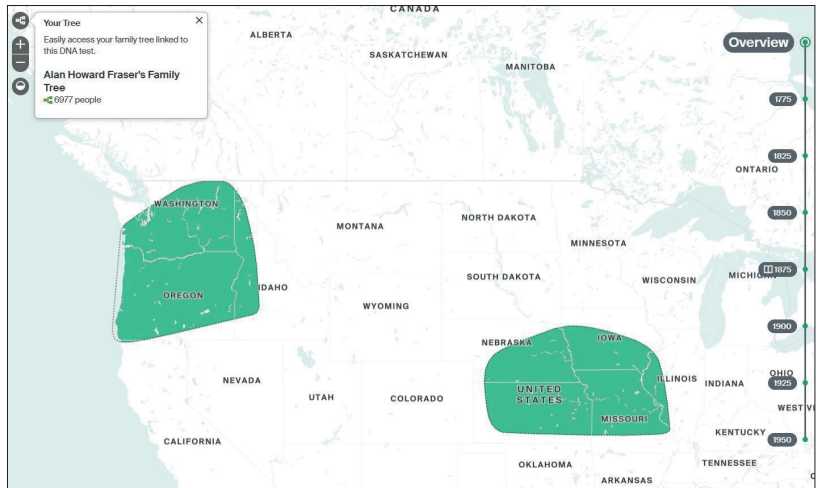
live in Sweden. My next project is to contact them to find our relationship.

My DNA matched to four communities worldwide: East Anglia, as you would expect, North West England from my Dad, plus the Midwest and Pacific North West of the USA. This will be the Hattens in Missouri and Coopers/Hattens in Washington and Oregon.

The hits in Australasia can be connected to other Suffolk ancestors who emigrated there.

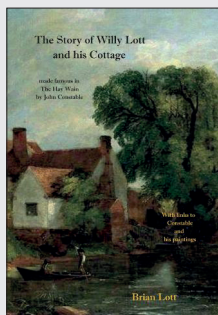
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## BOOK REVIEW

### The Story of Willy Lott and his Cottage by Brian Lott



Last October, while on a walking holiday in Suffolk, I was lucky enough to actually stay in Willy Lott's Cottage (which is now part of the Field Studies Centre at Flatford Mill). Other group members were roomed in the Valley Farmhouse opposite. It felt like living in a part of history and I wanted to know more.

This recently published book by Brian Lott, a descendant of the Lott family who lived in both the Cottage (which was then known as Gibeon's Gate Farm) and the neighbouring

Valley Farm, is a mine of information – not only for those with links to the family, but also for anyone interested in Suffolk country life in the late 17th to early 19th centuries, and in other families living in the area.

The history is based on the account books and journals of Willy Lott's brother and nephew. It has also sourced information from contemporary newspaper clippings amongst the family papers, and books about the area written by contemporaries and family descendants.



*Willy Lott's cottage, 2023.  
Photo – Lesley Hall*

It tells the story of the Lott family, from Willy Lott's grandfather through to when the family sold the properties, and includes names of family and neighbours, including farmers, gentry, tenants and farm workers, people they sold produce to and their suppliers. It gives insights into the type of farm, the work in various seasons, and the weather conditions and their effects in the early 19th century, which help explain why farming became so difficult. There are interesting comparisons of

the prices of seed and produce between then and today. The book also outlines the relationship the Lott family had with their neighbours, the **Constables** (who owned Flatford Mill), including the artist **John Constable**, and contains many reproductions of scenes he painted of that area.

In addition, the book details the history of the ownership of Willy Lott's Cottage right up to the time when it was purchased by the National Trust in the 1940s, and contains interesting inventories of the cottage and farm from Lott wills, and also a diagram of the original cottage layout.

**Lesley Hall**

*Co-editor Suffolk Roots*

## NEIGHBOUR HISTORY

We have been contacted by **John Cass** of New Hampshire about a book he is writing that may be of interest to members. John asks:

*'Have you ever had a brick wall in your family history research? Well, one of my brick walls had me trying every approach, and helped me develop a strategy I call "neighbour history". It's the process of conducting historical research on a community of neighbours to assist in unravelling mysteries from the past.*

*To show how neighbour history works, I'm writing a book: Finding Family Connections through Neighbour History. It focuses on the town of Hampton, New Hampshire and explores historical data about neighbours between the 1640s and 1680s. The book also covers Suffolk, England because of the connections of settlers to New England from the county.*

*I'm looking to feature in the book other family historians who have used the technique of neighbour history to add context or find facts about their family. I'll include the family story, giving you credit and links.'*

If you would like to know more and/or to have your research featured in the book, you can contact John at [genejohncass@gmail.com](mailto:genejohncass@gmail.com).

### *The Editors*

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## SUFFOLK SMITHS

The 'Constable Connections' article in this issue explains that I can trace my Smith ancestry back to a **William Smith** who, in the late 14th or early 15th century, built Ravenys, a house featured in a sketch by John Constable. For a long time I had a brick wall connecting my ancestry to this gentleman, but modern communication methods have made information more widely and readily available. I thought the sources I used might be of interest to other readers.

I found information on the website of the Stratford St Mary parish church stating that a William Smith, together with **Robert Mors**, was responsible for much of the work in the nave (pillars and arches) from around 1430. I emailed the churchwarden who supplied a longer history which revealed that **John Smith** (a clothier), grandson of a William Smith, built the north porch, completed in 1532, with the help of a small legacy from **Thomas Mors'** widow, **Margaret**. John's merchant's mark is above the porch's west window. He was either father or grandfather to a **John Smith** who is buried in the central aisle (although the commemorative brass has long since disappeared).

On the *Empty Branches on the Family Tree* blog<sup>(1)</sup> I found an article about the family of an **Elizabeth Smith**, who with her husband **Samuel** was part of The Great Puritan Migration (1620-1640). Several US presidents are said to be descended from this Smith couple, and they have been well researched by American genealogists in search of Puritan immigrant forebears from England. The blog stated that Elizabeth (daughter of **Philip Smith** and **Elizabeth Grymwade**) was a sister of **Thomas Smith**, my direct ancestor, who married **Alice Colman** in 1632. I had long been searching for a connection between my Thomas and this Elizabeth and Samuel Smith couple (who married in 1624 and emigrated in 1634), and this article also referenced articles by **Myrtle Stevens Hyde** published in the New England Historic Genealogical Society's Register.<sup>(2, 3)</sup>

The Hyde articles were crucial to tracing my ancestry to 15th century William Smith and further back. They describe a will dated 1586 for a 'William Smithe, gentleman, of Stratford St Mary, Suffolk', as requesting burial in the middle 'Alley' of Stratford church, and instructed his executors to place a stone of marble and brass over him, with the inscription: 'here Lyeth the corpses of William Smithe sonne and heire of John Smithe sonne and heire of John Smithe sonne and heire of William Smithe sonne and heire of John Smithe all which in this Alley Lyethe'. Hyde's research, which includes many family wills with other family names, connected Elizabeth Smith (and thus my ancestor Thomas) to this family.

The William Smith of the will is probably the one who built Ravenys in the Constable sketch. If anyone is interested, I can send access to my family tree as it now stands that includes all this information, including numerous other Smith ancestors in Suffolk.

**Geoff Smith**

*geoffreysmith41@gmail.com*

#### References and Sources

**Note:** The spelling of Smith is somewhat fluid in the early documents. William Smith of the 1586 will refers to himself and ancestors as 'Smithe', but immediately preceding ancestors in their wills use the spelling 'Smyth' for themselves and William.

1. Stufflebean, Linda, *Ancestry of Elizabeth Smith, Wife of Lt. Samuel Smith of CT & MA, 1600s*, <https://emptybranchesonthefamilytree.com/2021/05/ancestry-of-elizabeth-smith-wife-of-lt-samuel-smith-of-ct-ma-1600s/>
2. Hyde, Myrtle Stevens: The English Ancestry of Elizabeth Smith, Whose Husband Was Samuel Smith of Hadley, Massachusetts, Vol 174 2020, *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, <https://www.americanancestors.org/publications/register>
3. Hyde, Myrtle Stevens: The English Ancestry of Samuel Smith of Hadley, Massachusetts, Whose Wife Was Elizabeth (Smith) Smith, Vol 174 2020, *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, <https://www.americanancestors.org/publications/register>

## LOST CHURCH OF ST AUGUSTINE: UPDATE

In a previous article published in *Suffolk Roots* in 2021 (Vol. 46 No. 4, p.319), I talked about the lost parish of St Augustine, Stoke, Ipswich, and how the church had been discovered in 2012 by the archaeological dig at Stoke Quay. Well, the report is now available as a free download from <https://eaareports.org.uk/publication/report172/>.

This shows that the church was located near the northern tip of the site, across the Orwell from St Mary-at-the-Quay but even closer to the river. It was a simple rectangular structure with a semi-circular apse at its east end. A modern block called Avalon Court now stands on the site.

**Jeff Cousins Mb 5076**

*jeffrey.cousins@btinternet.com*

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## UFFORD AND THE GREAT WAR

Member **Andy Pritchatt** has kindly allowed us to put his book *Ufford and The Great War*, about the village of Ufford and its men who served between 1914-1918, onto the Members' Area of our website. Andy says:

*'I started with the names of the 22 men on the Memorial who had lost their lives in the Great War and finished with the names of some 124 men from the village who had served King and Country. All of the men have a connection to Ufford having been born, lived, worked or had a family connection to the village; all are individually profiled in this book.'*

Andy self-published the book back in 2015 and we reviewed it in *Suffolk Roots*. The money raised from sales of the book was for village projects and was used to place three benches in Parklands Wood in Ufford for the general public to use.

**Andy Kerridge**

*Chair, Suffolk Family History Society*

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## GREAT-GRANDPARENTS IN COMMON

We are still receiving submissions for this series, which has proved popular as a potential means for Suffolk FHS members to make contact with other members with whom they share a great-grandparent. A subsequent direct exchange of information about those ancestors-in-common will hopefully enable one side – or possibly both – to expand their knowledge of the shared great-grandparents and even, perhaps, to add new branches to their family tree.

If your published data lead to such contact, please be sure to let *Suffolk Roots* know. Whether or not there is a story to publish, we shall be glad to hear of your success: knowing that families find connections through this or any other section of the journal helps to ensure that best use is made of the available space.

Great-grandparents of:

Julian Turner

contact: [larlingturner@gmail.com](mailto:larlingturner@gmail.com)

**Charles Robert Turner**

*b. 1852 Croydon, Surrey  
d. 1912 Battersea, London*

&

**Georgiana Springett**

*b. 1850 Appledore, Kent  
d. 1927 Battersea, London*

**William Alfred Robertson**

*b. 1834 Sprowston, Norfolk  
d. 1909 Ipswich, Suffolk*

&

**Alice Julia Newman**

*b. 1850 Great Bentley, Essex  
d. 1921 Ipswich, Suffolk*

**John Edward Bradford**

*b. 1839 Bottisham, Cambridgeshire  
d. 1911 Bottisham, Cambridgeshire*

&

**Jane Bowyer**

*b. 1848 Cowlinge, Suffolk  
d. 1918 Bottisham, Cambridgeshire*

**Edward John Peachey**

*b. 1847 Newmarket Union Workhouse  
d. 1914 Bottisham, Cambridgeshire*

&

**Mercy White**

*b. 1851 Bottisham, Cambridgeshire  
d. 1922 Bottisham, Cambridgeshire*

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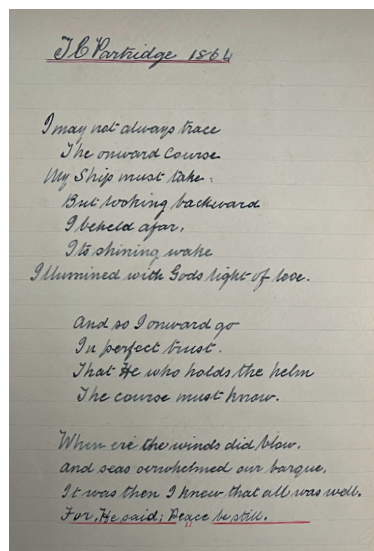
## HELP WANTED – THOMAS COWLE PARTRIDGE

### SEAFARING JOURNALS

I have acquired two fascinating unpublished journals written by **Thomas Cowle Partridge**, who was a merchant seaman from the 1860s to about 1880, after which he set up a photography business and practised in a studio in North Street and Sepulchre/Gainsborough Street, Sudbury.

I am sharing extracts on my Facebook page: 'Addicted to Diaries' <https://www.facebook.com/www.AddictedtoDiaries.co.uk>.

I would love to know more about Thomas. He had a wife **Sarah** and a daughter **Frances**, but I have very little other information for him, including where he lived, let alone an image of him, his family or his photographic studios.



If anyone is interested in the journals, or has more information to help me flesh out Thomas' life both before and after his seafaring adventures, I would love to hear from you.

Val Smith

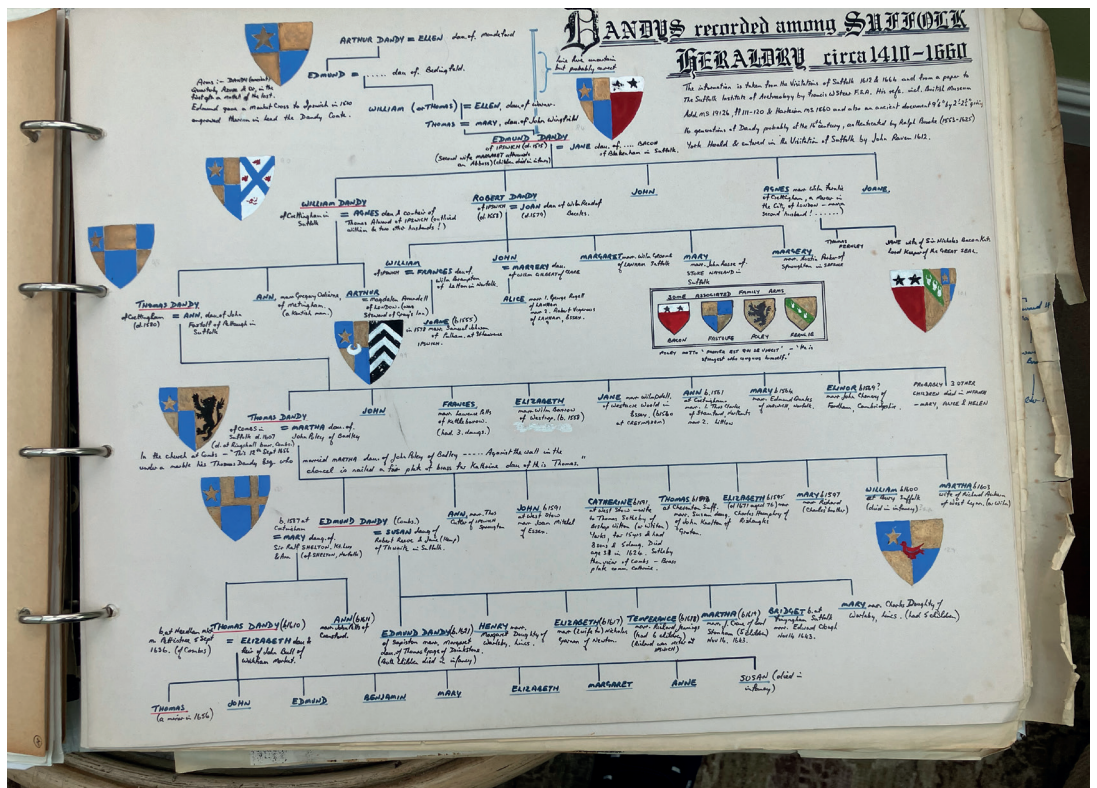
valerie.smith196@icloud.com

## HELP WANTED – DANDY FAMILY

Having spent some 50 years in research, I have found Dandys of the 1300s in three places in the UK, but have been unable to link any of them together nor to my own direct ancestors (the earliest of whom is found in 1599 in the Midlands). In the 1300s, the Dandys were mainly in Preston, Suffolk and Cornwall. The latter two have coats of arms, and I believe one **Edmund Dandy** gave Ipswich its Market Cross in the 1300s.

I think DNA may help find the relevant connections, and so am asking if any members are descended from the Dandys and if so, whether they are interested in helping me, especially if, like me, they have had a DNA test. Or, indeed, I would welcome hearing from any other member who may be interested enough to help.

The following photograph is of a page about the Dandys constructed for my family book.





The information is taken from the *Visitations of Suffolk* by members of the College of Heralds in 1612 and 1664 and from a paper '*The Dandy Pedigree*' by **Francis W Steer FSA**, published by the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology in 1957. Steer's references include British Museum Add. MS 19126, ff 111-120 (a collection of Suffolk pedigrees) and Harleian MS 1560, and also an ancient document, 9' 6" by 2' 3", giving 16 generations of Dandys.

This document, probably of the 16th century, was authenticated by **Ralph Brooke** (1553-1625), York Herald, and entered into the *Visitation of Suffolk* by **John Raven** in 1612. I noted this after a considerable time studying Dr Steer's paper many years ago. If I remember correctly, the ancient document was discovered by one **Mr Bullivant** in a Minehead attic in the 1950s. In a serious state of deterioration, it required infra-red photography to determine some of the colours on the coats, but essentially traced the Dandy line back to one of the kings (I think Henry II or III, through a female line at one stage).

It was believed to have been drawn up at the request, and presumably at the expense, of one of the Dandy family, probably Edmund's grandson **Arthur**, who I believe disliked the original coat so much that he asked the College of Arms to create a new one which included four stags, passant. I learnt a lot about heraldry at that stage, but regretfully a lot of my understanding of it has been lost in old age!

*Alan Dandy*

*alanbodandy@hotmail.com*

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## FORTHCOMING FAMILY HISTORY FAIRS AND EVENTS

As *Suffolk Roots* goes to press (February 2024) there are both physical and online events being organised. These are often advertised on the Family History Federation's website at <https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com/events>

We also aim to bring Suffolk a little closer to those members living outside the county by attending a variety of events across the country, but as yet, unfortunately, not overseas! Below are details of out-of-county Family History Fairs at which Suffolk FHS will be present, with all available publications and up-to-date, searchable information on our database. Do come and make yourself known to us when we visit your area.

**FHF Really Useful Family History Show**

**20 April 2024**

*The Society is involved with organising this event, and will also be exhibiting there.*

*See poster below.*



We're going **LIVE** on ...  
**Saturday 20th April 2024**



**FHF REALLY USEFUL**  
**Family History Show**

**LIVE**  
**in 2024**

Friendly **FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES**  
Knowledgeable **SPEAKERS** and **MORE!**

**BURGESS HALL, Westwood Road**  
**St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 6WU**

**LEARN MORE** at  
**[www.fhf-reallyuseful.com](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com)**

In addition, there are the following Family History events:

**Family History Show (Midlands) 16 March 2024**

**Three Counties Showground, Malvern**

Details: <https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/midlands/>

**East Surrey Family History Study Day 23 March 2024**

**with Kathy Chater, Julian Pooley and David Annal**

**North Cheam Baptist Church, Free**

Details: <https://www.eastsurreyfhs.org.uk/index.php/events>

**Wiltshire FHS Family History Fair 15 June 2024 10am-4pm**

**Swindon, Free**

Details: [https://www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk/images/News\\_Images/WFHSFamily\\_History\\_Day\\_2024.pdf](https://www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk/images/News_Images/WFHSFamily_History_Day_2024.pdf)

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## GROUP PROGRAMMES

All Society members are entitled to attend any or all Group meetings.

**GROUP MEETINGS START-TIMES VARY – PLEASE CHECK  
THE GROUP CONTACTS PAGE. ALSO CHECK THE SOCIETY WEBSITE  
FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION**

TBA = To be arranged : TBC = To be confirmed

AS WE GO TO PRESS, GROUPS HAVE CREATED PROGRAMMES OF  
INDOOR PHYSICAL MEETINGS, AS LISTED BELOW. IN ADDITION,  
A NUMBER OF ZOOM PRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN ARRANGED

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### MARCH

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LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	14	Growing Old Disgracefully	<i>Rex Freeman</i>
Ipswich	06	Hidden Stories – of Ipswich's 12 Mediaeval Churches	<i>John Field</i>
Lowestoft	05	Charlotte High, a Victorian Prostitute – Mad, Bad or Sad?	<i>Trudie Jackson</i>
Sudbury	26	Harvest Time & Horsemen's Memories – Rural Life in 1900	<i>Ashley Cooper</i>

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### APRIL

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LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	11	Winifred Challis, Morals, Marriage & Mass Observation in WWII	<i>Terry O'Donoghue</i>
Ipswich	03	The Rope and Jolly Family of Kesgrave, the story of St Mary's Catholic Church	<i>Chris Brighten</i>
Lowestoft	02	Lowestoft Beach Village	<i>Colin Dixon</i>
Sudbury	30	Through the Green Baize Door – A Butler's Story	<i>Bryan Thurlow</i>

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MAY

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LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	09	AGM <i>8-10 min talks by members – any subject</i>	Group
Ipswich	01	Voices from the Workhouse	Janette Robinson
Lowestoft	02	AGM followed by Film & Research	Group
Sudbury	28	AGM followed by Early Motoring in Suffolk	Chris Turland

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JUNE

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LOCATION	DATE	EVENT	SPEAKER
Haverhill	13	Tea for the British – with a Suffolk Twist <i>The story of the tea trade in Britain</i>	Miriam Stead
Ipswich	05	An outside visit – details TBC <i>(note: this is a Friday)</i>	
Lowestoft	04	My Army Ancestors, Sources and Resources	Damon Rogers
Sudbury	25	Quiz – General, Teams of 6	Group

Please check latest arrangements and details of the meeting topic on the Suffolk FHS Website

**Organisers: Please inform *Suffolk Roots* of your upcoming Group Programmes**

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## ZOOM TALKS

Zoom talks for members from March 2024 onwards are listed below. Please put these in your diaries and/or your computer-based calendars.

Further talks, prior to the next edition of *Suffolk Roots*, will be publicised via Facebook and in the News area of the website. Please check regularly for updates regarding upcoming talks, and any future talks.

We are continuing our very popular Zoom talks even now our Groups are meeting again, as a bonus to members both at home and abroad.

Members will receive an email **shortly before each talk**, notifying them of the event and giving a link to register. If you do not receive such an email, please contact Andy Kerridge at [chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk).

Please ensure that prior to watching your first Zoom presentation you have downloaded and installed the Zoom software, which may be found at <https://zoom.us/download>, onto your PC, phone or other device.

**Monday 11 March 2024 at 7:30pm**

*Baby Farming in Victorian Times*

*Dr Mark Carroll*

**Monday 8 April 2024 at 7:30pm**

*The History and Story of Dunwich Heath*

*Richard Syme*

Monday 13 May 2024 at 7:30pm

*Boom and Bust in Lavenham*

Jane Gosling

TBC June 2024 at 7:30pm

*Ag Labs/Farming*

Ashley Cooper

We will make recordings available (when permitted) in the Members' Area of the website as soon as possible after the talk. Typically, they are then available for two weeks.

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**FUTURE THEMES FOR *SUFFOLK ROOTS***

The theme of June's edition will be '*Animals*'. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the RSPCA, and this country is known as a nation of animal-lovers. Our ancestors are likely to have had far more involvement with animals in their daily lives than we do now. Did your ancestors work with animals, breed them, coddle them, process them? Did they suffer accidents as a result of animals, or were their livelihoods threatened by outbreaks of disease on their farms? Or on a more light-hearted note, perhaps you have an animal/fish/bird-related surname?

Below are the provisional themes for other upcoming editions, to seed ideas for future contributions (although we do welcome articles of Suffolk interest on any subject).

<b>STATUS</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>THEME TITLE</b>	<b>DATE TO THE EDITOR</b>
Final	Jun 2024	<b>Animals</b>	<b>Deadline 20 Apr</b>

*How did animals feature in our ancestors' lives?*  
 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the RSPCA. Our ancestors' lives may have been intimately entwined with animals. Did your ancestors work with animals, e.g. on a farm, in transport or in a circus, or did they breed them?  
 Perhaps they had a favourite pet, or worked with animals in a war? Was your ancestor a butcher or purveyor of fine meats, or a leather-worker?  
 Did outbreaks of animal disease affect your ancestors' livelihood? Perhaps your ancestor had an animal/bird/fish-related surname?!

<b>Provis'nl</b>	<b>Sep 2024</b>	<b>All at Sea</b>	<b>Deadline 20 Jul</b>
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*Shipwrecks and Lifeboats, Mariners and Shipbuilders*  
 2024 marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of the RNLI. The treacherous seas off the East Coast have meant that many of our ancestors may have volunteered with the RNLI or been involved in shipwrecks.  
 Was your ancestor a lifeboatman or rescuer of shipwreck victims? Did they campaign for safety at sea? Raise money for lifeboats? Were your ancestors mariners or passengers? Were they shipwrecked? How did losses at sea affect the families and communities involved? Were your ancestors shipbuilders, or did they work in shipyards? Did your ancestors serve at sea in the armed forces?

**Provis'nl Dec 2024 Poverty and the Workhouse Deadline 20 Oct**  
*How did poverty affect our ancestors' lives?*  
 Just as today, in the past many people found it difficult to make ends meet.  
 Has your research led you to believe that your ancestors were poor or less well off? How did this affect them, their health and prospects?  
 Have you found ancestors in the workhouse? What were conditions like there?  
 What were the circumstances that forced your forebears to need out-relief or enter the workhouse?  
 Did any of your ancestors have a benefactor?  
 Was your forebear employed by the Poor Law Union, or on a Board of Guardians?

**Provis'nl Mar 2025 Suffolk Women Deadline 20 Jan**  
*Notable women ancestors?*  
 This year marks the 50th anniversary of Margaret Thatcher becoming the first female Conservative Party leader. We can't all have such well-known ancestors, but they do say '*Behind every great man...!*'  
 In your research have you found remarkable women?  
 Were they known for charitable work? A pillar of the community?  
 Did they manage and raise large families?  
 Did they suffer unimaginable heartbreak?  
 Were they involved in war work?  
 Did they lead protests, or were they Suffragettes?  
 Or maybe they had a more chequered life?

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES

### Subscriptions for the Membership year beginning 1 April 2023:

A – UK Full postal membership/joint <sup>(1)</sup>	£12.00
B – UK Full electronic membership/joint <sup>(1)</sup>	£10.00
C – UK Senior citizen or young person/joint <sup>(1)</sup> : Postal or electronic (over 60 on 1 April, or under 16)	£10.00
D – Overseas membership (air-mail)	£25.00
E – Overseas electronic membership	£10.00
F – Life membership <sup>(2)</sup>	£120.00

<sup>1</sup> If joint membership is applied for, all members must reside at the same address

<sup>2</sup> Life membership is not available for overseas postal

Anyone joining during the membership year will receive or be granted access to copies of *Suffolk Roots* for that membership year. To enquire about membership, please contact the Membership Secretary whose details are in the list of Officers, below.

# SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Member of the Federation of Family History Societies : Reg. Charity No. 1087748 : Company Reg. No. 4191740

## PATRON

Douglas A Howlett

## TRUSTEES

Kenneth J Finch, David Horton, Joan Horton, Andy Kerridge, Jean Licence,  
Brian Thompson, Carolyn Alderson, Kevin Pulford, Julie Johnson

## OFFICERS 2024

Chair:	Andy Kerridge 8 Wyvern Close, Broughton Astley, Leicester, LE9 6NH Tel: 07858 775171	e-mail: <a href="mailto:chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk">chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk</a>
Vice Chair:	Post currently vacant	
Membership Secretary:	David Horton 26 The Crescent, Slough, SL1 2LQ Tel: 01753 537673	e-mail: <a href="mailto:membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk">membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk</a>
Publicity Officer:	TBA	e-mail: <a href="mailto:publicity@suffolkfhs.org.uk">publicity@suffolkfhs.org.uk</a>
Secretary:	Kenneth J Finch 65 Churchill Avenue, Ipswich, IP4 5DT Tel: 01473 423870	e-mail: <a href="mailto:secretary@suffolkfhs.org.uk">secretary@suffolkfhs.org.uk</a>
Treasurer:	Carolyn Alderson	e-mail: <a href="mailto:treasurer@suffolkfhs.org.uk">treasurer@suffolkfhs.org.uk</a>
Editor <i>Suffolk Roots</i> :	Co-editors Lesley Hall and Rob Ward can be contacted by e-mail Tel: 01276 679747	e-mail: <a href="mailto:editor@suffolkfhs.org.uk">editor@suffolkfhs.org.uk</a>

If you are interested in taking up a vacant post or becoming  
a member of the team, please contact any Trustee.

Please address your queries, letters and e-mails  
to the appropriate officer at the corresponding address.

## GROUP CONTACTS FOR 2024

### ***Haverhill:***

*Meet 2nd Thursday of the month, at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated, at:*

*Old Independent Church Hall, Hamlet Road, Haverhill, CB9 9EF*

**Contact – Secretary: Charmian Thompson, 5 Hadrian Close, Haverhill, CB9 0NH**

**Tel: 01440 712652**

**e-mail: [haverhill@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:haverhill@suffolkfhs.org.uk)**

### ***Ipswich:***

*Meet 1st Wednesday of the month, at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated, at:*

*The Salvation Army Citadel, 558 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, IP4 4PH*

**Contact – Secretary: Jenny Rawlinson, 10 Carlford Court, 112 Parliament Road,  
Ipswich, IP4 5EL**

**Tel: 01473 902367**

**e-mail: [ipswich@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:ipswich@suffolkfhs.org.uk)**

**or Chair: Howard King, 11 Bodiam Road, Ipswich, IP3 8QP**

**Tel: 01473 274300**

**e-mail: [IpswichChairman@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:IpswichChairman@suffolkfhs.org.uk)**

### ***Lowestoft:***

*Meet 1st Tuesday of the month, at 7:30pm (doors open 7:00pm), unless otherwise stated, at:*

*St Margarets Church Hall, Hollingsworth Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4BW*

**Contact – Chair: Janis Kirby**

**e-mail: [lowestoft@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:lowestoft@suffolkfhs.org.uk)**

### ***Sudbury & District:***

*Meet last Tuesday of the month, at 2:30pm unless otherwise stated, at:*

*Long Melford Village Hall, Long Melford, CO1 9LQ (Opposite Bull Hotel)*

**Contact – Chair: Sheila Piper – Preferred contact is by e-mail**

**Tel: N/A**

**e-mail: [sudbury@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:sudbury@suffolkfhs.org.uk)**

### ***Bury St Edmunds:***

This group no longer meets. If you would like to help with restarting this group please e-mail: [chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:chair@suffolkfhs.org.uk).

### ***West of London:***

This group no longer meets. If you would like to help with restarting this group please e-mail: [westlondon@suffolkfhs.org.uk](mailto:westlondon@suffolkfhs.org.uk).



# SFHS DATA CO-ORDINATORS AND SEARCH SERVICES

## BAPTISMS

**Index Co-ordinator** Alan Bumpstead **Phone: 01440 704157**  
*baptisms@suffolkfhs.org.uk* 71 Downs Crescent, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 9LJ

**Search Service** Arthur Bird **Phone: 01904 793884**  
*baptismsearch@suffolkfhs.org.uk* Search = 1 surname up to 30 entries  
*Please send your request by e-mail*

## BURIALS

**Index Co-ordinator** Arthur Bird **Phone: 01904 793884**  
*burials@suffolkfhs.org.uk*

**Search Service** Arthur Bird **Phone: 01904 793884**  
*burialsearch@suffolkfhs.co.uk* Search = 1 surname up to 12 pages  
*Please send your request by e-mail*

## MARRIAGES

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**Search Service** Arthur Bird **Phone: 01904 793884**  
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