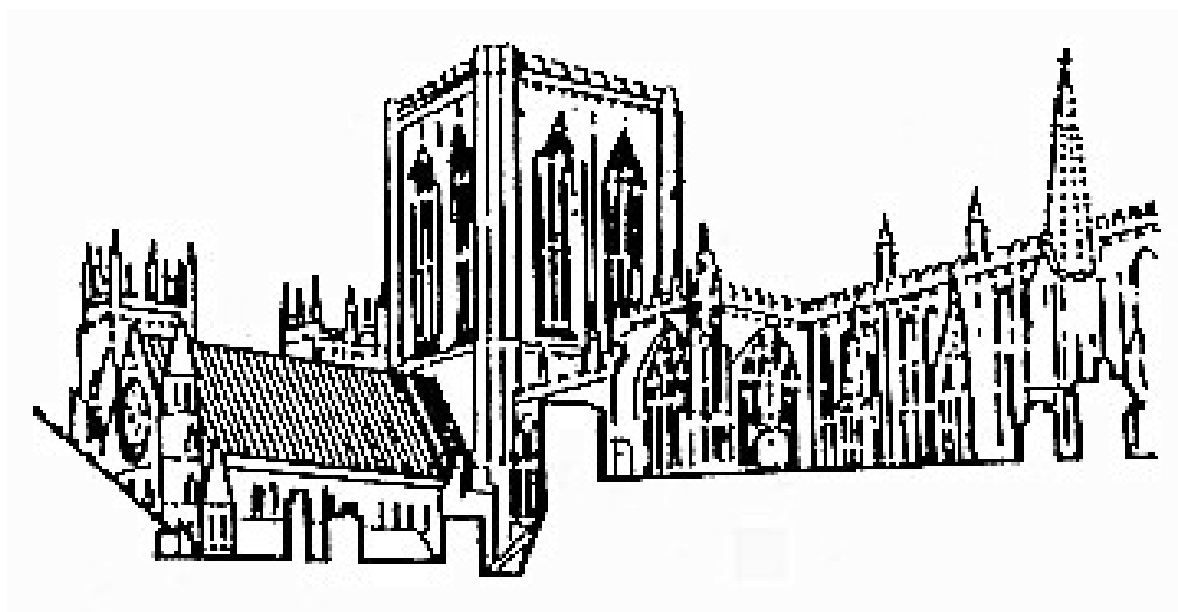

THE

City of York & District

FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY



JOURNAL

February 2024

Vol.25 No.1

THE *City of York & District* FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
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Affiliated to the Family History Federation

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THE
City of York & District

FAMILY- HISTORY- SOCIETY

Journal

February 2024

Volume 25 No.1

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Programme Spring 2024; Society Copyright.	inner back cover
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Please note we have unfortunately found it necessary to increase admission to meetings: members £2.00 and non-members £4.

JOURNAL DEADLINES

The Journal is published in February, June and October each year and is issued at meetings or posted to those members who are unable to attend. For those members viewing the Journal on-line, it is now available in pdf format. Guiding deadlines for the three issues are the end of December, the end of April, and the end of August, and but material is welcome at any time.

An index of last year's Journal is published on the Society website; members wishing for a printed copy should contact the Research Room. The cost of back copies of journals to a UK address is £1.25 per issue, including p&p. For overseas orders, a single copy is £4.00 including p&p. For cost of multiple copies to be sent overseas please contact the Membership Secretary.

DATA PROTECTION

All articles submitted will be published under the contributor's name and membership number, enabling interested readers to identify the source.

Contributors who wish their contact details to be published alongside must state this in writing. Readers may otherwise make contact with the contributor via the Editor or the Membership Secretary (see inner front cover).

YOUR SOCIETY NEEDS YOU !

As can be seen on the inner front cover, several committee posts are vacant:

Research Room Manager & Archivist

Bookstall Manager

Monumental Inscriptions Co-ordinator

and two other posts will become vacant at the AGM:

Treasurer

Journal Editor

Please step forward if you can fulfil any of these, which are urgently needed.

=====

Harrogate & District FHS

Having closed their own society, members of Harrogate & District FHA have voted to join our society . . . and our publicity officer Steve has twice broadcast talks on Radio York.

THE

City of York & District

FAMILY- HISTORY- SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
to be held at
7.30 p.m. on 3rd April 2024
Friends Meeting House, New Earswick

The attendance of as many members as possible is crucial if the Society is to reflect the needs and wants of the membership.

A nomination form for election to the Committee is given below. All posts are technically vacated each year. Please ensure that anyone you nominate is willing to stand for election. Posts are as follows:

Chairman	Vice-Chairman	Minutes Secretary
Membership Secretary	Publicity Officer	Publications Officer
Programme Secretary	Journal Editor	Website Manager
Research Room Mgr.	M.I. Co-ordinator	Treasurer
Project Co-ordinator		

Please make yourself known if you would like to join the committee as an ordinary member, or volunteer to fill the now vacant posts of:

Project Co-ordinator, Treasurer, Journal Editor
Research Room Mgr., M.I. Co-ordinator

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Year commencing 4th April 2024

Please return nominations forms no later than 27th March to the Secretary:

(secretary@yorkfamilyhistory.org.uk):
Family History Research Room
The Raylor Centre, James Street,
York YO10 3DW

Nomination for the post of: _____

Name of Nominee: _____

Proposed by (signature): _____

Seconded by (signature): _____

I agree to be nominated for the above post on the Committee:

Signed: _____

FISHERGATE SCHOOL IN THE 1940s

Phyllis Johnson (née James) (member 183)

p.johnson@bt.internet.com

Re. the article by Geoff Stocks on p.75 of the October 2023 *Journal of The York Family History Society*, the picture below is of Fishergate School, York, somewhere in the late 1940s.



I knew the Headmaster as **Mr. Wilfred Stocks**: I wonder if this is the same chap as Geoff's great uncle?

The other master was my father, **Mr. M. J. James**.

Fishergate School was then both a secondary school and primary. It is now a primary school.

The secondary element moved out first to Danesmead School and then to Fulford School.

I am now 83 but my memory is fine and I remember Mr Stocks quite well.

From Pearson to Pearson-Gee

& from Crambe to Huttons Ambo, via New Zealand and Bishop Burton

John Bibby (member 2501); johnbibbyjohnbibby@gmail.com

Summary: *This impromptu article merges the author's personal odyssey researching the famous mathematician Karl Pearson (1857-1936) with the ancient odysseys of two Pearson ancestors around Yorkshire, London and Edinburgh between 1830 and 1910, with surprising interludes from India and New Zealand. It is a tale of great mobility coupled with surprising name-changes and worldwide links.*



Figure 1: *A trio of Pearsons: Arthur, Karl and William on painted porcelain plates, 1882, by F. Gileto after unknown artist (National Portrait Gallery NPG D42244)*

In January 1896, just two months after his fortieth birthday, the lawyer **Arthur Beilby Pearson-Gee** died of syphilis in London. He was descended from a modest Yorkshire family whose story is told in biographies of his much more famous lawyer/mathematician brother, **Karl Pearson** (1857-1936) (e.g. Porter 2004) and more generally in Bibby (2012).

Arthur's name contains three surnames: those of his paternal grandmother **Elizabeth Beilby** (1800-1882); of his father **William Pearson** (1822-1907); and of a wealthy benefactor **Thomas Gee** (1791-1884), "a childless client of William Pearson" who bequeathed his name, coat of arms and a legacy worth some £15 million today to the young Arthur Pearson/Pearson-Gee. The legacy was originally offered to Karl, but he turned it down on the basis of Gee's "lack of culture" - Gee was "the worst specimen of the Englishman abroad", he wrote to his mother: see Porter (2004:19-20).

The Pearsons and Crambe

I was aware of some of the above when I moved to York in 1989. As a lifelong statistician I was well-marinated in Karl Pearson's innovations as "the founder of modern statistics": the Pearson correlation coefficient and chi-squared test are well-known and used today by most empirical scientists. From his memoirs I also knew of Karl's proud claim of paternal descent from Yorkshire Quaker yeomen. Such claims were features of the times and have led many biographers astray e.g. Porter (2004:16) who claims that William "had grown up among Quaker relatives in York". But this is false.

Original documents are also fallible. For example, in the 1871 census (Figure 2), William and Carl/Karl Pearson were visiting Thomas and his wife **Judith Gee** in Wadhurst, Sussex. Judith and William are both shown as born in Bishop Burton near Hull. In William's case at least, this also is false.



Figure 2: The 1871 census shows Thomas and Judith Gee at Dewhurst Lodge, Wadhurst, hosting William and Carl/Karl Pearson as visitors
(NB: William's birthplace is shown as Bishop Burton: he was actually born at Crambe)

But if not brought up in York, and if not born in Bishop Burton, where was William from?

I did not know until one day in 1993 when the answer suddenly stared out at me. On a family countryside walk I had stepped briefly into St. Michael's Church in Crambe near Castle Howard, about 10 miles north-east of York. The north wall of this delightful little church includes a plethora of Pearson memorials, shouting out their history to any historian who might be passing. Outside in the graveyard, the Pearson monument was the largest and grandest by far. I find it surprising that historians of Karl Pearson (of which there are many) had not linked with local historians to connect with the Pearson family of Crambe. Even the Pearson Archives at University College London had not made this connection (although they have now).

Further research (Bibby 2012) has shown that William and his parents were born in or near Crambe, and several earlier generations of Pearsons also came from that area although they originated some 30 miles further north, across the moors in Danby.

Later, in 1908 after his father's death, Karl was to write lyrically from Danby to Francis Galton, his father-substitute, that

*"one of my ancestors of 1680 says in his will "Let my son Henry take my black mare and ride across the moor." That meant he was to go and seek his fortune south. ... Four miles up on the moor is the solitary hut which used to be a meeting-house, whence **Gregory Pearson** was taken to York Gaol in 1684, where he died. My other forebear, **George Unthank**, came back alone a year afterwards across the moor. You will understand why I like the smell of the moor."* (Karl Pearson to Francis Galton, 1908jul6; UCL archives:KPF 3/342).

In this plaintive excerpt, Pearson merges historical fact with nostalgic myth *cum* ancestral victimhood about Quaker "sufferings". This is the voice of a parentless child (both parents had recently died), seeking to replace them with a father-substitute. We become truly adult, it is said, only when we are orphaned – and this was the period of Karl's orphaning. (Bibby 2012 develops this theme that Karl regarded Galton as a "father-substitute".)

From Crambe to London via Edinburgh

Karl was orphaned in 1907 at the age of 50; his father William's "orphaning" may have happened when he separated from his parents around 1832 at the age of 10. However the 1830s form a gap in our knowledge and understanding of William Pearson's development. It was also a period of great unknowns in the life of his parents and siblings.

A family odyssey: William was the oldest son of Thomas (1790-1859) and Elizabeth (1800-1882) Pearson *née* Beilby, and the second of eleven children whose births spanned the years 1820-1841. The first six were born in Crambe. However around 1830 the family seem to have gone on an odyssey around the Derwent, as the final five Pearson children appeared in Newton-upon-Derwent (1832), Waplington (1834), Dunnington (1836), and finally in Norton (1838, 1841). Also, Thomas was recorded on the Electoral Roll of Allerthorpe in 1834. He is also recorded in an earlier article I wrote for the York Family History Society (*Journal*, June 2022:51-54).

By the time that his grandfather died in 1831, William’s schooling would have begun. His entry in *Who’s Who?* (1900:791), states simply “Educ: Private schools”. He was born too early to attend the Cholmeley school in Crambe which was founded in 1841 – another symbol of changing times – but later he wrote that “*My schooling had begun at the village dame school where I learned my a, b, c. ... Then I had my teaching at schools in Easingwold and Malton*”. So when the Pearson family odyssey commenced around 1831, William might have moved to Easingwold and Malton, staying with friends or relatives while he continued his education. This is a pattern we observe today in developing countries. Perhaps it used to be equally common in England – one of the costs of poverty, perhaps.

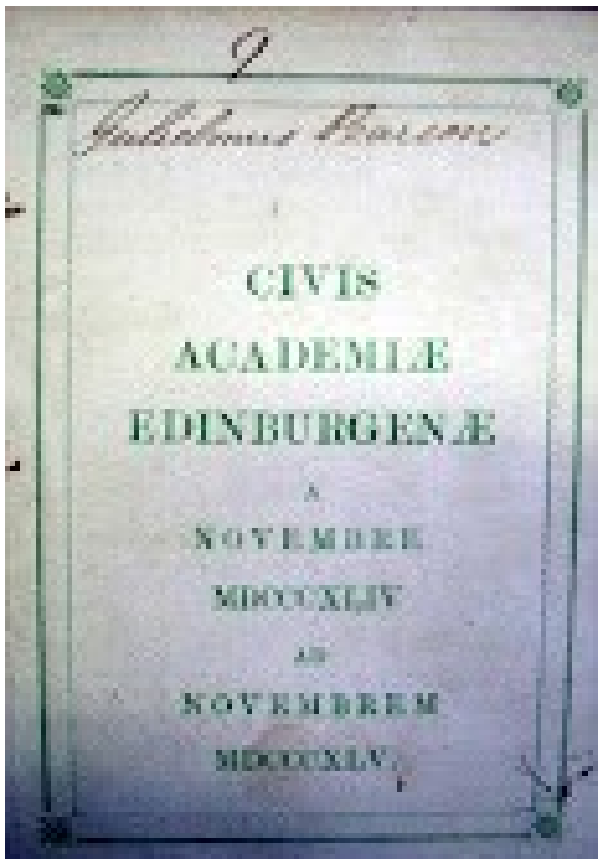


Figure 3:
Edinburgh student card 1844-1845 for William ('Gulielmus') Pearson.

Edinburgh and Student Days:

Whatever the reason, the next we know about William is that before he was nineteen he had moved into law. The 1841 Scottish census recorded him as “Writer, Lodger” in Broughton Street, Edinburgh, in the household of **Jane Grant**, a 40-year old “druggist”, a household unique in Broughton Street in that all its members were born outside Scotland.

Jane’s husband Alexander was not present at the census. He is described elsewhere as “druggist, surgeon, and *accoucheur*” (midwife). The census household consisted solely of **Jane**, **William**, and **Margaret O’Conner**, a 20-year old “F.S.” (female servant) born in Ireland. It was unique in Broughton Street in that all its members were born outside Scotland. The only other such household nearby was that of **William Doherty**, a 25-year old physician, who with his wife and F.S. were all Irish-born.

William's occupation of "Writer" has strong legal connotations – he was probably placed with a local solicitor - and sure enough by 1844 William was attending law classes at the University of Edinburgh. We do not know what led him to study law (but see *n.4*): he seems to have been the first in his family to do so. But he was not the last – even today there are solicitors around York with "Pearson" in their company titles: these date back to William's brother Robert who remained in the area. Other relatives near Hove named **Killick** were also in law.

In Edinburgh, William did well. He won several class prizes: "Prizeman in Roman Civil Law, 1845; in Scots Law, 1847; Gold Medallist, Edinburgh University, 1847" according to "*Who's Who 1900*". However, following three years of apparently successful study, something seems to have gone seriously wrong, for William's university record terminates abruptly early in 1848 with an enigmatic note in the Pearson Archives hand-written by the extremely deaf Professor **Allan Menzies**: "*I certify that Mr Pearson attended with perfect regularity until 28 January 1848, when he left Edinburgh, & that in all the Examinations he was highly distinguished by the extent and accuracy of his knowledge*".

Thus at the age of 25 years and 3 months, William Pearson mysteriously abandoned the law course which until that moment he had been completing excellently, and "left Edinburgh". One can only speculate what triggered this sudden departure. Was there a crisis of some sort - a scandal perhaps? Could he have been sowing wild oats as we know he did the following year (see below)?

We do not know the answer to these questions. But if the reasons why William came to Edinburgh are inscrutable, those underlying his departure seem even more mysterious.

London and Respectability: After 1850 William entered a life of apparent complete Victorian uprightness and respectability. But his past may have started catching up with him towards the end of his life. This is suggested by a cryptic and possibly self-incriminating letter which was signed "Wm. Pearson" and published under the heading "*An Angry Q.C.*" in either 1892 or 1898. It reads:

"SIR, - Someone has kindly sent me a copy of your issue of the 4th, containing some statements and observations with respect to myself ... I am at a loss to conceive why the concerns of private individuals ... should be made the subject of statement and comment in the public press; unless, indeed, it be that newspaper columns must be filled, and that hungry penny-a-liners must have bread ... I beg leave to say that your statement concerning myself, that I 'started life forty odd years ago on a stool in a Lincoln's Inn Fields solicitor's office' ... (and that I am) 'self-educated' ... (is) inaccurate and misleading"

He continues by remarking tersely that

"Many of your other statements are also inaccurate and misleading, but, as they do not relate to matters of public interest, I do not occupy my valuable time by entering on a detailed correction of them ..." (*The Stock Exchange*, 11 May of 1892 or 1898; Pearson Archives, UCL).

Unfortunately the offending *Stock Exchange* of 4 May and the “inaccurate and misleading” item which worried William so much remain unidentified. But his feathers had clearly been ruffled by some allegation or other. This may relate to his private life, or perhaps to his time in Edinburgh, or may be something unrelated entirely. It does however suggest that William Pearson was not a man at peace with his past.

Figure 4: Email from New Zealand suggesting Frederick Mockett is illegitimate son of William Pearson QC:

```
=====From: "Margaret Armstrong" <margaret@megadyne.co.nz>
Subject: STEVENS Contact Sought
Date: Mon, 7 May 2001 11:06:43 +1200

Contact sought of any descendants of the following:

Thomas STEPH(V)ENS marr Sophia GEORGE in 1828, St Mary Abbots,
Hammersmith,
Middlesex.
Children: James bn 1829, Abraham & Elizabeth (twins) bn c1834, Henry bn
1836. All in Hammersmith.

James marr Eliza MOCKETT in 1854, Hammersmith.
Children: Frederick MOCKETT bn 1849 (illegitimate son of Eliza MOCKETT and
William PEARSON QC), Eliza bn 1856, William James bn 1859, Emma bn 1861 &
Ellen bn 1862. All in Kensington, Hammersmith.
```

An unbelievable allegation from New Zealand

William Pearson’s letter to *The Stock Exchange* quoted above sounds very much like a man who had something to hide. This could have been a professional matter, for example if the qualifications he had claimed throughout his professional career were not in fact genuine. Or it could have been a personal matter.

This latter possibility had not occurred to me seriously until one day about 2010 when I idly googled “William Pearson QC” on the internet. This led me to a surprising email written in 2001 to a New Zealand family history discussion group (see Figure 4) which mentioned

*“Frederick MOCKETT bn 1849
(illegitimate son of Eliza MOCKETT and William PEARSON QC)”.*

Fortunately **Margaret Armstrong** who wrote this letter still had the same email address and told me she was descended from Frederick’s son who had emigrated to New Zealand, However, she had no evidence about the alleged illegitimacy except ‘family folklore’. So, due to the lack of any strong evidence about the illegitimacy I remained unconvinced by this hearsay rumour.

I learned from *ancestry.com* that Frederick Mockett was born on 5 August 1849 in Fulham Workhouse and I must have retained his name in my subconscious memory, for several years later I was in the Pearson Archives in London, studying and skimming through some remarkable bank books in which William Pearson recorded all his financial incomings and outgoings over many decades, when I noticed that one

payment of £5 had “Mockett” pencilled in beside it, barely legible in William’s hand. Curiously, the date of this payment fell a few days before Frederick Mockett’s birthday on 5th August. I then found several other similar payments in other years at the same time of year. More peculiarly still:

On August 4th 1870, William withdrew £150 (worth about £15,000 at today’s rates). His usual withdrawals were in the £20-£30 range. The following day was Frederick’s 21st birthday.

A similar coincidence occurred in August 1875. Frederick was married on the 1st, and on the 3rd, William withdrew £225 cash – worth £25,000 today.

One payment, dated 10 May 1866 is surely William’s “smoking gun”: it is described in William’s own handwriting as “Bastardy fee”.

The Pearson Archives in London have recently been recatalogued and they now acknowledge the existence of Frederick Mockett, who also re-appeared after William’s death, when he wrote to Karl to see if he could get part of William’s inheritance. He didn’t succeed. Karl gave Frederick short shrift: without questioning the allegation of illegitimacy at all, he merely stated that William had made no provision for Frederick in his will:

“The question of whether you are or are not the son of the late William Pearson is irrelevant. ... He neither left any written information with respect to you, nor expressed any wish in his will or elsewhere about you. ... I think if you understand this once and fully you will save yourself unnecessary trouble I am etc. KP” (KP to Frederick 1907dec19 UCL:PP and JB:CIMG1148).

The enigmatic Mr Gee

We referred in the opening paragraphs to Thomas Gee, the “childless client of William Pearson”, who was also a friend of the family and bequeathed his name, coat of arms and legacy to the young Arthur Pearson/Pearson-Gee. Thomas and William must have been acquainted before 1863, for then Thomas had legal problems regarding his marriage to a rich, elderly heiress, **Elizabeth Gee** (who then died), and William helped with the legal side. This is a separate story but it is worth noting that Thomas started life named Thomas **West** after his mother. He then changed his name to **Thomas Castle**, after his father. Then in 1863 he became Thomas **Gee** on marrying Elizabeth Gee, whose footman he had been. Finally, as we have seen, he bequeathed his name to Arthur Pearson/**Pearson-Gee**.

However, Thomas may also have been related to Eliza Mockett, the mother of William’s illegitimate son Frederick. For as stated, Thomas Gee was formerly Thomas Castle, and in 1849 someone of this name had a sister **Charlotte Castle** who married a **Stephen Mockett** which was the name of Eliza Mockett’s brother. Hence Gee could be the brother-in-law of Frederick Mockett’s uncle. If so, presumably he was complicit in bringing William and Eliza together. This could explain also why William was so diligent in caring for Frederick and maintained such a close relationship.

However, ‘Castle’ and ‘Mockett’ are common names around Canterbury where Thomas and Eliza were born, so may all be a case of mistaken identities – for further details see *n.2* (Bibby 2012).

William's time in London, and his parents' time in Yorkshire, ending in Huttons Ambo

1848 and 1849 must have been torrid years for 27-year-old William. He left Edinburgh in a hurry and spawned an illegitimate child in London. But then for a half century or more starting about 1850, his life resembled that of a fairly normal, distinguished, respectable and successful lawyer and family man in London, as the following skeleton timeline indicates:

- 14mar1850: William is admitted to Inner Temple, aged 27
- 26jan1853: William's "Call Date", when he became a barrister
- 29dec1853: William marries in Stepney, London. His wife Fanny Smith came from a Hull family but had lived in London since childhood.
- 2nov1855: Birth of Arthur: recorded in William's "Day Book" (UCL 1/7/2/5) as "Fanny was brought to bed at 1am of a boy"
- 27mar1857: Birth of Carl (not recorded in William's Day Book). He later changed his name to Karl.
- 4oct1858: Birth of Amy (also not recorded in the Day Book)
- 10may1859: William's father Thomas dies (born 1790): two of his children died the same year – one in childbirth, the other *en route* from India after the uprising. These three and mother Elizabeth are all commemorated on the Pearson memorial, the largest and grandest in Crambe churchyard
- 15may1860: The note "Fannie brought to bed of a boy" appears in William's Day Book. This son is unrecorded elsewhere so we assume he died as an infant.
- 12june1874: William's Bench Date at Inner Temple ("Benchers" governed the Inn)
- 1874: William becomes a Queen's Counsel
- 4may1882: William's mother Elizabeth dies (born 1800)
- 24april1884: Thomas Gee dies. His fortune goes to Arthur with considerable sums to his executors. These were William Pearson and Ernest Hatton, Amy's husband and son of William Hatton, colleague of William Pearson.
- 28nov1891: "Mr. William Pearson, Q. C., has been elected Treasurer of the Inner Temple for the ensuing succession to his Honour Judge Bristowe, Q.C." (*The Morning Post*, p.5)
- 9jan1896: Arthur dies
- 8aug1905: Fanny dies "of a very slow-growing cancer of the pancreas"
- 15oct1907: William dies.

The marriage between William and Fanny was fraught and unhappy; he was a "stern, egotistical *Pater*"; she was a "vulnerable *Mère*" (Porter 2004:18, 29). This may have been part of Fanny's intrinsic personal temperament. However her childhood friend **Eliza Raines** is far less sympathetic: she spells this out in a long letter to Karl written after Fanny and William's deaths:

"If I am to write / truthfully I must say that after / she married she became very pettish. She had married a rising man determined to get on / his profession but

she grudged / him the time necessary for such / study and complained that he / never took her to any social / functions and indeed that all his evenings and late into / the night he was hard at work. / It was doubtless a little hard / for her, but then she could not possibly / have it both ways. This little / failing was the chief thing that / soured her but of course it was / inevitable that Mr Pearson must / burn the midnight oil and give / up social pleasures if he was to / succeed. She had very indifferent // health, indeed in her later years / she had much suffering, but of / course the time I have referred to was the early married life and / it somewhat marred her character. / She was I consider very self-centred / and warm-hearted & constant in / friendship. She was also refined / in her mind and tastes.” (Eliza Raines to Karl Pearson, 12 August 1912, UCL:PP and HP/8 - Porter (2004:19) cites this letter but mis-spells Eliza’s surname; he also calls her a “Yorkshire neighbour” whereas in truth Eliza and Fanny were childhood friends in London.)

How did Fanny get on with William’s parents? We do not know, but there may have been some estrangement. Karl, it is said, never met his grandmother although he was 25 when she died in 1882. This was some 23 years after the death of her husband Thomas and over 50 years since the “farm dispute” and the family’s peregrination mentioned above. The peregrination lasted from about 1831 to 1838 when their tenth child **Richard** was born in Norton near Malton.

In 1838 Thomas was still under 50 and retained responsibility for his large family. In 1840, White’s *Directory for Norton* lists him as (the only) “Relieving Officer” for the new Malton Poor Law Union (est. 1837), and he retains the same job-description in the 1841 census living at Scarbro’ Road, Norton with Elizabeth and the four youngest children. (**Ann** and **Robert** are with the Beilbys in Crambe and as we have already noted, **William** is in Edinburgh.)

The 1840s was a decade of massive railway expansion with its attendant speculation and scandal. This affected Malton and Crambe, not least because of the great **George Hudson** born in nearby Howsham. His York-Scarborough line snakes its way along the River Derwent between Howsham and Crambe and through nearby Huttons Ambo. Its 42 miles were completed in under 370 days, opening in July 1845. We must remember that railways in the 1840s were the latest cutting-edge technology – they were the internet or the ‘information super-highway’ of their day. Getting a job on the railway must have been rather exciting and *avant garde* – as **Daphne du Maurier** (1972:116) put it in the pre-internet era, referring to **Branwell Bronte**’s post at Luddenden Foot in West Yorkshire: “A clerkship on the railway must have seemed as promising to a young man then as a position in an atomic energy centre would today.” Along with their contemporaries, the Pearsons and Beilbys must have felt excited by the novelty of the railway, anxious about what it might bring, and mournful at the passing of an era of innocence. Thomas however must have been seduced or at least not terrified by the new technology, for the 1851 census records him, aged 60, working as “Station clerk” at Huttons Ambo station, some 3 miles upstream from Crambe. His work at the Poor Law Union might have been a good preparation for this. About the same time, William refers to his father as a “gentleman” of Huttons Ambo (Inner Temple Archives), thus illustrating the upward mobility and optimism bias in job-titles which we still experience today.

Thomas died in 1859 and Elizabeth is still in Huttons Ambo in the 1861 census. Thus, we assume, she and Thomas remained there until his death, and our story which started in Crambe in 1822 ends some four decades later just three miles up the Derwent in Huttons Ambo, having passed via New Zealand (for information about Frederick Mockett) and India (where Richard Pearson had been serving at the time of the Indian Uprising). Huttons Ambo was far from being a remote Yorkshire hamlet – its contacts encompassed the entire world!

Acknowledgements: My first thanks are to my darling family, **Shirley, Kevin** and **Matthew**, who accompanied me on that fateful day when I unwittingly entered the church in Crambe, and have stuck with me ever since as I tangle through the historical thickets of the Pearson family and my parallel investigations into Elmfield College. Secondly, I thank Eileen Magnello, the *doyenne* of Pearson studies, and Ted Porter who has courteously accepted the tiny darts I have aimed at his magnificent Pearson scholarship; also Sam Noel who helped me immeasurably by delving into a recently-found treasure-trove of Pearson family photos (see tinyurl.com/BibbyNoel). Beyond that, I also thank the many individuals and organisations who have helped me in larger and smaller ways. These include: Yvonne Clarke, Pam Elliott, Rita Freedman, Sarah Pearson, Margaret Tadman and Will and Georgia Pearson-Gee; and libraries, archives and other facilities at Inner Temple, the Royal Statistical Society, Universities of York and Edinburgh, York Explore, York Family History Society and York Tang Hall Library; and local and family history societies at Bishop Burton, Brighton, Canterbury, Frant, Hove, Ryedale and Wadhurst.

Meeting a previously unknown cousin who lives a mere 10 miles away!
Holly Firth-Davies (member 3410)

In last year's February edition of this Journal I wrote about discovering my connection with members of the Stirk family who emigrated to Australia in 1876. Another member of York Family History Society, Reg Chambers, read the article and realised he, too, was related to **John** and **Frederick Stirk**.

I went to visit Reg and it transpires that we are 2nd cousins 1 x removed as his grandmother, **Mary**, was the sister of my great grandmother **Alice Stirk**. We have had several lovely afternoons looking at our family tree together and passing information to each other. I now have copies of photographs I would never have seen, including one of the cottage where my great grandmother was born in Bramham.

Reg has now seen photographs of the descendants of Frederick and John Stirk and of Stirk Cottage taken on my recent trip to Australia to meet these far-flung members of our family - more of that later...

The moral of this story is - share one of your stories in the Journal as you never know where it might lead!

Here is a photo of me and Reg . . .



*and another of the cottage where my great grandmother
(and his grandmother – her sister) were born*



THE STIRKS – YORKSHIRE TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Holly Firth-Davies (member3410)

Further to my previous article on finding relatives in Australia I can now summarise the visit my husband and I made ‘down under’ in September/October.

To say we were made welcome is an understatement as four of my newly found 4th cousins 1 x removed met us at Perth Airport and took us to our accommodation.

Having settled into Australian time we then had two wonderful weeks of meeting family members over various meals hosted by family in Kalamunda, a district just outside the city in the Perth Hills, including the obligatory barbecue!



We were taken out on day trips to various sites of interest nearby, including the town of York! Well, that had to be done...

The highlight was a private visit arranged by the family to Stirk Cottage, situated in Stirk Park, now a heritage site and part of Kalamunda History Village. Stirk Cottage was the house built by my 1st cousin x

4 removed, **Frederick Stirk**, and his wife **Elizabeth**, the first white settlers in the Perth Hills. The park is where their market garden used to be. It was quite emotional touching the fabric of the building and items in the cottage they will have used and to see buildings and streets named after them. Volunteers who run the museum laid on morning coffee and cake for us in the History Village, which was incredibly kind of them.



Stirk Cottage and the sign for Stirk Park



Me and my cousin Ian



Cousins under the Morton Bay fig tree



We visited the grave of Frederick and Elizabeth and their first son, **Robert**, who tragically died trying to save a neighbour overcome with fumes in a well.

In addition, we paid homage to my 3rd cousin 2 x removed, **Arthur Lindsay Stirk**, who died when *HMAS Perth* was sunk having been torpedoed in WW2. There is a memorial for him in both Stirk Park and King's Park in Perth; as well as being named on the war memorial in Plymouth over here in the UK.



Photo of the memorial plaque to Arthur Lindsay

We got on so well with my new-found family that we have open invitations to go back and stay with them. We very much hope we will be able to do so.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Carol Mennell

Data Protection Law

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GPDR) any member who does not wish their personal details to be held by the Society should please inform the Membership Secretary. We use this information to record payments and send out the Journals.

Please remember to update your email addresses and changes to telephone numbers with the Membership Secretary (see inner front cover).

New Members

3477	Mr. Chris Wise
3478	Mrs. Eileen Richards
3479	Mr Norman Lambert
3480	Mr. Peter Cloudsdale
3481	Mrs Angela Wheatcroft
3482	Mr Alan Furby
3483	Mrs Cathleen Levie

In Memoriam

Mary Patterson, who had been a member for a long time and came to the Meetings with me until a few years ago, died earlier in the week. She was 100 years old and had been ill for a while. *Dorothy Lecker, 23 November 2023*

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No Members' Interests have been received since the last Journal.
Contact with members may be made via the Members' Interests Secretary, Roy Evans (see inner front cover).

YFHS-TREASURER-Job Description

The Treasurer is a member of the Executive Committee, responsible for the effective management & control of the Society's financial affairs & insurance of the Society's assets. Duties include:

1. Dealing with Income & Expenditure on a day to day basis.
2. Maintaining a record of all income & outgoings, checking bank statements & dealing with the PayPal account.
3. Giving a regular financial report to the Committee.
4. Preparing the annual accounts.
5. Arranging the Independent Examination of the Annual Accounts prior to the AGM.
6. Completing the Annual Return online for the Charity Commission after the AGM.
7. Preparing the annual Gift Aid claim from info supplied by the Membership Secretary (and holding that info for 6 years).

The Groves in the Regency Period 1811-1820; PART 3.

Steve Barrett (member 3006); stephengbarrett@gmail.com

The 1820 Election

The election was called at the death of George III. He had reigned over 59 years.

It was a time of political unrest, economic depression, the Luddites, the Cato Street conspiracy (extreme, violent Republicans), just five years after the Napoleonic Wars and a year after the Peterloo massacre. The election was a public affair with voters openly stating who they voted for.

York was entitled to elect two members and the election was held on Tuesday 7th March at the Guildhall, each voter having two votes.

There were three candidates: Lord Howden (**Sir John Cradock**) a Tory who had supported the principles of the previous MP **Sir Mark Sykes**, who had a bad reputation for corruption and bribery. He withdrew his candidacy after strong opposition by the York Sheriff . . . on grounds of ‘bad health’. That left Lord Howden (of the Blue interest) as the Tory candidate.

The other two remaining candidates **Marmaduke Wyvill** and the **Honourable Lawrence Dundas** were both Reformers allied to the Whig (Liberal) party even though Dundas was from a family of slaveowners.

It was clearly known that Lord Howden was prepared to pay double the ‘fee’ to freemen in York than his opponents but it had no significant effect on the outcome.

The election was started on the 7th of March and lasted a week ending on the 13th March 1820.

Dundas and Wyvill won despite a massive outlay of money to voters by Lord Howden with people being openly bribed. The *York Gazette* wrote about the ‘corruption of York Electors’. It described the ‘interference of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood with the suffrage (voting intentions) of their tradesmen.

The routine bribing of electors through the payment of ‘fees’ was being challenged and a ‘Purity of Election Society’ was proposed by **Sir George Cayley**. The statement that ‘If representatives have to buy their seats they will be ready to sell themselves’ was a powerful message heralding change which did happen some twelve years later in 1832.

The morning after the election both Wyvill and Dundas ‘proceeded through the city together in superb chairs placed on a car drawn by six horses’. A dinner was held at the Assembly Rooms and both the elected members gave speeches.

The Tories won the election however with Lord Liverpool leading the very conservative and reactionary government.

Below is a record of the way the electorate of the Groves voted in the 1820 election and since there was no secrecy about their voting decisions – they had to openly claim their preference – we can see who voted for whom. Any two out of the three candidates could be elected. Only **Sylvester Reed** the landlord of the Black Horse voted for two opposing candidates which effectively cancelled his vote out. There is no evidence that he was drunk at the time.

Freemen Voters in the Groves 1820
(reference York List of Freemen in York Library)

Robert Rigby Labourer Apprenticed 1785. Voted: Lord Howden (Tory)
Thomas Jackson Labourer Apprenticed 1785. Lord Howden
John Fountain Farmer Awarded 1789. Dundas Wyvill (Whig/Liberal)
Mark Abbey Corn Factor or Oatshiller Awarded 1811. Howden
Charles Robinson Coal dealer Freeman 1810. Dundas Wyvill
Stephen Dixon Inn keeper (Unicorn Coaching Inn Monkgate) 1809. DW
John Surr Confectioner residing in Liverpool 1787. Howden
John Wainwright Shoemaker 1807. Dundas Wyvill
Robert Cattle Groves House Silversmith 1807. Howden
William Lee Aledraper 1808. Howden
Robert Stabler Laceweaver 1811. Dundas Wyvill
John Harrison Jeweller 1811. Dundas Wyvill
Sylvester Reed Bay Horse Monkgate. Dundas Wyvill
John Clark Printer 1805. Dundas Wyvill
Robert Tatham Cooper/Huckster 1812. Dundas Wyvill
John Ellison Plasterer 1793. Dundas Wyvill
James Parker Bricklayer 1807. Dundas Wyvill
John Cowling Gentleman Gardener 1816. Dundas Wyvill
Charles Pearse Pipemaker 1818. Dundas Wyvill

Of the Tory voters – two were described in the 1811 census as ‘Labourers’ (**Robert Rigby** and **Thomas Jackson**) who were essentially voting to keep the electoral system as it was. It does bear consideration that they may have been susceptible to a ‘fee’ for their vote from Lord Howden – but it made no difference – the Whigs and their political reform policy won out in York. **Mark Abbey** a ‘corn factor’ counted in the 1811 census and as a householder in 1820 though he actually resided in Manchester.

Two of the wealthiest inhabitants of the Groves also supported Lord Howden – **John Surr** a confectioner who was residing in Liverpool at the time of the 1811 census and **Robert Cattle** – a silversmith who lived at Groves House in 1820. Strange pairings with two of the district’s poorest inhabitants!

Election Results 1820

Lord Howden (Tory) votes: 1201
Dundas (Whig Reform) votes: 1647
Wyvill (Whig Reform) votes: 1527

The corruption of the electoral system of 1820 was no more evident than here in York, and the St. Maurice’s parish offers us a small insight into what was so bad about it. Bribery (fees) and absentee voters were part and parcel of the unreformed electoral system at that time.

RETREAT CONNECTIONS

I was interested to read Susan Gough's account in the October journal of her ancestor **Thomas Clifford** who worked at The Retreat in York in the 19th century and was buried there.

My three times great grandfather, **Nainby Kitching**, a Quaker was also buried there in 1857. He was born at Waltham in North Lincolnshire in 1775 and after serving an apprenticeship with **Christopher Geldart** a prominent Quaker in Beverley he spent his adult life as a successful businessman in Hull. His final days were spent in The Retreat where his son **John** was the Medical Superintendent from 1849-1874.

Nainby's wife and the mother of his eleven children was **Sarah Reckitt**, the elder sister of **Isaac Reckitt** who followed her to Hull and with help from his family founded Reckitt & Sons, now Reckitts, the international manufacturer of pharmaceutical and other products.

Nainby's grandson **John Nainby Kitching** was born in 1845 and in addition to a career as an engineer became Treasurer of Bootham School after being a pupil there.

Nainby inherited his unusual Christian name from his mother, **Phoebe Nainby**, a member of the Nainby Quaker family of Brigg in North Lincolnshire. Another member of this family, **Mary Nainby**, was the mother of **Benjamin Hunstman** the Quaker Clockmaker who invented the crucible steel making process in Sheffield to obtain the high quality metal he wanted for his clocks and this was later taken up by other Sheffield steel producers.

Nainby's great grandfather, **Joseph Langley**, a Quaker from Elloughton near Hull was buried in the Quaker Burial Ground at Bishophill in York in 1722 after he died in York Castle Debtors Prison as a result of his committal there for his refusal to pay the Anglican Church rate.

I was concerned a while ago to learn that The Retreat had closed and the premises had been taken over for housing so I hope that the cemetery there has survived unlike so many of the Quaker burial grounds alluded to by Susan.

I hope you find the foregoing interesting the result of me having thoughts after reading Susan's article.

*Richard Elgey Walgate (member 219)
richardwalgate@talktalk.net*

An Unusual Baptism?

When searching for an ancestor's baptism bear this story in mind.

I recently found my husband's great-great-grandmother's baptism when she was aged 67! Selina was born in 1841 in Dublin and was raised and married in the Church of Ireland. However, the day before she died she was baptised as a Roman Catholic. Strangely too her second eldest daughter acted as her godmother.

Jo Barnett (member 2771)

Hannah SHOLL

Borthwick Institute, ref. RET 6/5/1/24 – p.187, no.2588

Attached to the medical notes of this patient in The Retreat, held at the Borthwick Institute, is a cutting from *The Yorkshire Herald* of Wednesday 6th February 1924:

DROWNED IN A POND

MENTAL PATIENT'S TRAGIC DEATH

GARDENER'S DISCOVERY

The Deputy Coroner (Mr. **A. Procter**) conducted an inquest at The Retreat, Heslington-road, York, last night, on Miss **Hannah Sholl**, aged 67 years, a patient at the institution, whose body was recovered from a pool at Millfield, Hull-road, a mental home run in connection with The Retreat.

Elizabeth Payne Sholl, Yatton, Somersetshire, a sister, gave evidence of identification, and said her sister had been a patient at The Retreat almost 12 years. Witness had visited her several times, and in September last she was of the opinion that she seemed somewhat better.

Dr. **H. J. Mackenzie**, assistant medical officer at the institution, told the Deputy-Coroner that Miss Sholl was admitted in 1912. She was suffering from primary dementia, and had been ill for some time. The woman was not regarded as being of a suicidal tendency. She had been going about freely in the grounds. Physically she was feeble and ill, being very frail. At the time of the tragedy she was at Millfield, Hull-road, where she had been since October 9th last. Witness had seen her frequently there, but noticed no appreciable change in her condition. The woman had been transferred to Millfield for a change of treatment and surroundings. As the result of a post-mortem examination made yesterday atheroma of the heart arteries was found. This might result in a sudden fainting fit.

AN ATTEMPT ON HER LIFE

The sister of the woman (recalled) said that she attempted to take her life 11 years ago.

John Sherwood Wise, gardener at Millfield, described the pond in which the woman was found. He said it was in the north-west part of the gardens, and was partly in the grounds and partly in a grass field. There was an island in the middle, but at present there was nothing to attract attention on it. About one o'clock on Monday witness found Miss Sholl in the water. She was lying full length, her face pointing to the island. The mouth and nose of the woman were covered with water. There was an umbrella sticking in the mud. The body was recovered. Life appeared to be extinct. The highest depth of the water in the pond, added witness, was 1 ft. 7 in.

Nurse **T. Bilworth** said that Miss Sholl was missed about 12.50 p.m. on Monday. She helped the previous witness in the search for the woman. Miss Sholl seemed happy and contented in her surroundings. Dr. Mackenzie expressed the opinion that death was due to drowning following the shock from the immersion. The Deputy Coroner recorded a verdict to the effect that Miss Sholl accidentally fell into the pond, and was drowned.

STORIES FROM THE STREET

York Castle Museum YO1 9RY : www.yorkmuseumstrust.org.uk : Tel 650330

If you can help York Castle Museum in their project to expand and re-display Kirkgate with any further information about the people, business or areas mentioned in the following article, please get in touch. All the shops on the street are being displayed to reflect real York businesses in the period 1870-1901, telling the story of the Victorian age through the lives of the people who lived and worked in the city.

MILLINERS

The term “millinery” is believed to date from the 16th Century and means a supplier of fancy goods, gloves and accessories, the word being derived from Milan in Italy as the premiere exporter of such fashionable apparel and clothing items, most dealers being native “Milaners.” Over the centuries hats came to the forefront of the trade, and by the 19th century most such businesses were in essence ladies’ hat shops with gloves and other fine accessories on the side, but the term did not exclusively refer to hat making until the end of the 19th Century.

It is estimated that 95% of millinery and dressmaking businesses were run by women as it was deemed respectable and needed relatively little capital to set up. The milliner differed from ‘the jobbing sempstress’, as one designed and made, or had made, individual garments, whilst the other worked by the piece, either for the milliner or stitching pre-cut ready-made clothes.

The Times in its editorial of 11th February 1857 commented that, ‘It is a terrible incident of our social existence that the resources for gaining a livelihood left open to women are so few. . . At present, the language practically held by modern society to destitute women may be resolved into “Marry – Stitch – Die – or Do worse!” In his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, Friedrich Engels commented on ‘the extraordinary barbarity with which they [milliners and seamstresses] are exploited by the greedy middle classes’; whilst in 1862 a female journalist wrote, ‘All who are wise will avoid this profession, because such numbers crowd into it, that the competition drives the payment down to a point below that at which life can be sustained’.

Dressmakers and milliners were often women living with family (daughters or sisters) or widows, so although it is possible to identify their trade, the place where they lived was not necessarily where they worked, either for themselves or for a business run by someone else. Below are some of those who traded in York, with comments from *The Retail Trades’ Review* of 1897 and *York & District Directory*, 1898.

Misses A. E. & S Clark
Millinery & Fancy Drapers
15 Colliergate, York

One of the most popular establishments of its kind in this city . . . The shop, which is an attractive one, is well suited to the requirements of this particular business and there is every facility for completing any orders at a moderate cost.

A Special Department is that devoted to Millinery . . . many elegant specimens of the Milliner’s art on view, at once proclaiming that the establishment is thoroughly up-to-date, and the principals of no mean talent in their particular line.

The Misses Clark also do a considerable business in Dressmaking, and are skilful Costumiers, thoroughly conversant with all the latest fashions, both in Paris and London. . . The house already enjoys the patronage of some of the leading families in the district, while the proprietors are everywhere highly esteemed and respected.

Mrs. Curran

High Class Millinery Establishment
2 St Sampson's Square; moved from 21 Davy Gate

This lady carried on her high-class millinery and fancy drapery for a considerable period at 21 Davy Gate. The increase of business, and consequent need for greater accommodation, compelled her a few years ago to remove to the large and very handsome shop in St Sampson's Square . . . It gave Mrs. Curran a far better opportunity to show a most attractive selection of 'ducks of bonnets' and 'gems of hats' but it really drew a clever artist in ladies' headgear out of an obscurity which must always have been an hindrance to the growth of her trade.

The display in the fine plate-glass windows of No 2 St Sampson's Square is always a very noticeable one, and draws great and admiring crowds on market days and whenever the locality is busy. It is evident that Mrs. Curran is a regular student and customer in the London and Paris houses, for the goods she shows are characterised by the charms and excellencies of both, combined with the happy faculty of adaptation to local needs and tastes . . . Good quality and correctness of style.

Moderate prices are studiously adhered to, as is freely attested by the large and daily increasing number of her patrons, amongst whom are many of the local aristocracy and members of the highest and local circles in the city and country.

The spacious and handsome double-fronted shop is fitted up in a very superior style; the fixtures are at once elegant and substantial and the appointments are in good taste and in excellent keeping of the general high tone of the establishment.

Hazell & Miles (1905 – took over Grey-Cliffe Drapers)

Fancy Drapers and Trimming warehouse
20 Coney Street, also 11 & 12 Bridge Street; 15a Coney Street

The premises of Messrs Hazell & Miles in Coney Street, one of the main thoroughfares, are admirably adapted to the requirements of the business. They are four storeys in height, and the large plate glass windows are well suited for the display of choice specimens of the valuable stock held.

Trimmings are supplied to dressmakers at a special discount. . . Cash purchasers will find it the cheapest house in York for all these classes of goods . . . established but a short time, the measure of support which has been accorded them speaks volumes for the popularity of their methods of business, the courtesy extended to customers and the high quality and sterling value given. . . . Connected with leading houses in London and the provinces'.

Makins & Sons

Milliners & Drapers
33, 34, 36, 37 Parliament Street

The cheapest house for silks, mantles, costumes, millinery, dresses, household linens, underclothing &c., &c. The Mourning Warehouse, 34 Parliament Street, is devoted exclusively to Family & Complimentary Mourning, Terms Cash.

Levi Lapper Morse
Milliner

*This indenture witnesses that **Lilian Rosaline Dodson** doth put herself Apprentice to Levi Lapper Morse to learn his Art and with him after the Manner of an apprentice to serve from the Third day of July One Thousand Eight Hundred & Ninety unto the full End and Term of Two Years from thence next following to be fully complete and ended DURING which term, the said Apprentice her Master faithfully shall serve his secrets keep his lawful commands every gladly do. She shall do no damage to her said Master nor see to be done of others but to her Power shall tell or forthwith give warning to her said Master of the same. She shall not waste the Goods of her said Master not lend unlawfully to any.*

She shall not contract Matrimony within the said Term nor play at Cards or Dice Tables or any other unlawful Games whereby her said Master may have any loss with own goods or others during the said Term without Licence of the said Master shall neither buy nor sell shall not haunt Taverns or Playhouses nor absent herself from her said Master service day or night unlawfully. But in all things as a faithful Apprentice she shall behave herself towards her said master and all his during the said Term AND the said Levi Lapper Morse doth bind himself to teach his said Apprentice in the ART OF Millinery which he useth by the best means that he can shall teach and Instruct or cause to be taught and instructed ~~Finding unto the said Apprentice sufficient Meat Drink Lodging and all other Necessaries during the said Term~~ Paying unto the said Apprentice One Shilling per Week during the said Term of Years AND for the true performance of all and every the said Covenant and Agreements either of the said Parties bindeth herself unto the other by these Presents.

THE Witness whereof the Parties above named to these Indentures interchangeably have put their Hands and Seals the Twenty Fourth day of October [December?] and in the Fifty Third Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria by the Grace of God of the united Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen Defender of the Faith and in the Year of our Lord One Thousand eight Hundred and - [Signed]

*Levi L. Morse Master
Lillian Rosaline Dodson Apprentice
Zephaniah? Dodson Father
William Davis Witness*

Note on reverse (undated): This is to certify that Miss Lilian Rosaline Dodson did serve as an apprentice according to the terms of these indentures during which time she was faithful to her Employer and discharged her Duties to his entire satisfaction, N. Davies Manager

Emma Merrick

Milliner

5 Coney Street

Census 1871

Emma Merrick	Shopwoman Milliner	age 29	b. York
Louisa Lavington	Milliner	age 31	b. Devizes
Irene Salt	Dressmaker	age 26	b. Lambourne
Sarah Major	Milliner	age 21	b. Rudston
Emily Howell	Milliner	age 18	b. Islington
Mary Ann Lines	Milliner/Straw plait worker	age 33	b. Luton
Mary Summerfield	Milliner/Straw worker	age 20	b. Luton
Ada Lawson	apprentice	age 18	b. Fulford
Anne Smith	apprentice	age 18	b. Jersey
Margaret MacDougall	apprentice		b. Durham
Sarah Whitelock	Housekeeper	age 44	b. Coxwold
Hannah Hodgson	Gen. Servant	age 19	b. Scarboro

This seems an unusually big establishment to be run by a woman. It combines millinery and dressmaking supporting the point that the trades were not separated until around the end of the century.

The presence of the two straw hat makers from Luton is highly significant as Luton was a notable centre for straw hat making.

E.? A. & A. PLUMMER

Millinery Establishment

Stanley House 17 Feasegate York

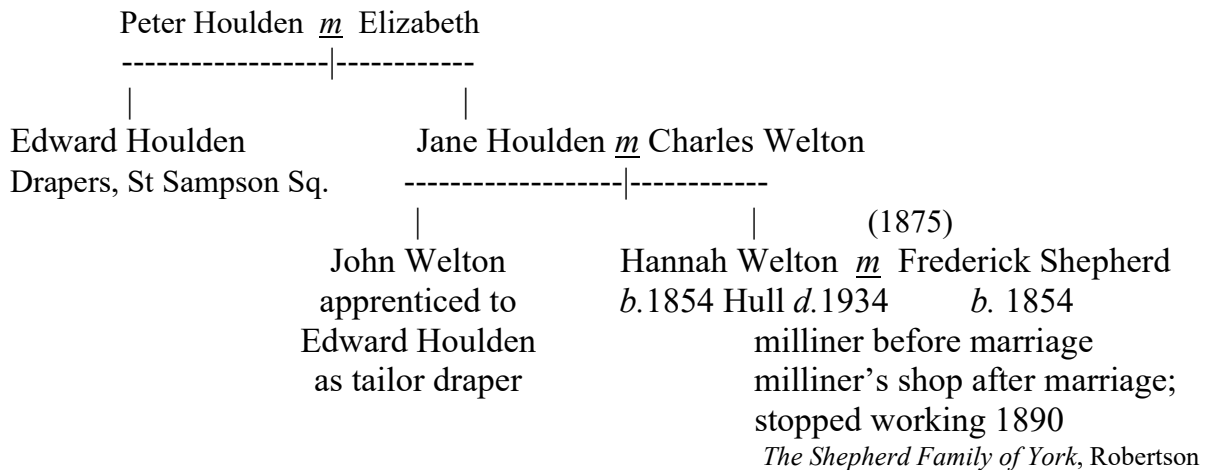
Yorkshire Gazette, 12th August 1893, marriage. On the 7th instant, at St Mary's, Gate Helmsley, by the Rev. **S. B. Craif, Walter Henry**, fourth son of David **Plummer** to **Ellen**, eldest daughter of Mr.

Tattersall, Gate Helmsley

Yorkshire Gazette, 10th September 1904, marriage. On the 5th latest at Newstreet Chapel York, by the Rev. **George Robinson, Thomas Henry King** of Stockon-on-Forest to **Adela** (Dilla), youngest daughter of David **Plummer**, St. Alban's House, Penley's Grove Street, York

Presumably Ellen and Adela are our milliners. It is possible but not proven that they were the daughters of **David Plummer**, St. Alban's House, Penley's Grove Street, York, a retired clothier who at one time carried on successful business in the city, having shops in High Ousegate and Church Street, and was also well-known commercial traveller.

Hannah Shepherd (*née* Welton)



In 1871 Jane (Houlden) and Charles Welton were living at 49 Stonegate. Charles, aged 53 was a Bootmaker in part employment, born in Suffolk. The eldest child John, aged 20, a tailor's cutter, and his sister Hannah, aged 16 and already a milliner, were born in Hull. There were five more children: William (14), a marble mason apprentice, Robert (12), an errand boy, Anne E. (10), a scholar, Charles (5) and Emma (2).

In 1881 Hannah (Welton) and her husband Frederick Shepherd were living on East Parade, he a joiner aged 27 and Hannah at 26 having no profession or occupation, being at home with their son William, aged 5.

In 1911 Frederick (47) and Hannah (46) were living at The Laurels, Hannah again shown as having no occupation. William at 20 is a joiner & carpenter like his father, and a younger brother Frederick W. (16) is a brickmaker. Also in the family are Nellie (17), Gertrude (14), Reginald V. (9), Oline M. (7) and Doris (4).

Miss K. Stanley
Practical Milliner
14 Gillygate

Millinery naturally forms a very important consideration in a fashionable city as York.

This business, although recently established, has already gained a name for first-class millinery. The premises face the busy thoroughfare of Gillygate. The window display is particularly attractive and many elegant specimens of the milliner's art are always on view. The proprietress is a specialist of the first order, possessing the highest credentials, and with her means of information and experience, Miss Stanley is able at all times to keep in touch with all the latest movements in the world of fashion.

The show is as charming as anything to be seen in leafing through West End London establishments.

ARMY ANCESTORS

FHF Really Useful Bulletin, May 2021

Whether you are new to family history research or have been researching for a while, this brief overview with some ideas for researching army ancestors will provide useful background. There are many sources available.

Army Records Prior to WWI

If you wish to research your ancestors' records prior to the Great War, there are a number of sources you can use. The National Archives (TNA) have comprehensive research guides including army research: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-soldiers-up-to-1913/

Some of these records are available to download from TNA catalogue. These can also be viewed on subscription websites such as www.findmypast.co.uk and www.ancestry.co.uk but please check to see which records they may hold about your ancestor.

Service records before World War I are often not as detailed so you may need to use regimental histories to discover what your ancestor was doing while on service. However, some service records could hold a wealth of information about your ancestor as they will include their name, where they were born and their occupation before they enrolled into the army. It will include their age on enlistment but some also have other facts such as your ancestor's height, colour of hair and eyes and if they had any distinguishing marks such as scars, moles or tattoos, so you can visualise the appearance of your ancestor.

Army records can also include the next of kin of your ancestor. There is often information about marital status and some of the later records may include details of where they were married and how many children they had, plus when and where the children were born. If they weren't married, the record may provide details of their parents and any siblings. The records could include where they served and if they were commended - or ever in trouble!

Various forms were used and some provide more information than others. As with all records they have different survival rates and condition. Some are in excellent condition and can be read very easily while some are of very poor quality.

If you are not sure if your ancestor served in the army, this may have been included as their occupation in a birth, marriage or death certificates for family members.

If your ancestor is missing from the family group on the census, this can be an indication that they are in the military. In 1901, if they are missing from the England and Wales census have you considered that your ancestor could be serving in the Boer War? Or if they are missing on another census, could it be they were serving in the military and out of the country at the time?

World War I Army Ancestors

The army service records for World War I are known as the "Burnt Records" of "Burnt Series". The storage facility in Bermondsey was bombed in World War II with a resulting fire and damage to the records; some have survived but not many. If you are very lucky and find those for your ancestors, they will probably have burnt edges on them!

If you are unable to find military records for a World War I soldier, try using the Medal Index Cards as most serving soldiers were awarded at least one medal. The card will confirm what regiment your ancestor served in along with what medals they were awarded. You can search these at TNA and please find below a link to the page where you can search.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-medal-index-cards-1914-1920/

Also, any remaining pension records are available online via <https://www.fold3.com/> (part of Ancestry, but requires a separate subscription). There are many websites where you can search for war memorials where your ancestors were commemorated in the UK – see further on in this bulletin.

War Diaries World War I

Some of the war diaries have been digitised by TNA. Although these don't usually provide soldiers' names, you will find out where your ancestor was serving in the war and in which campaigns the regiment was involved. For more information and help with your research, please view the guide by TNAs:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-operations-first-world-war/

You may also find that if your ancestor was a regular soldier prior to the First World War and had left, he may have re-enlisted for the WWI and you may find both records or a combined record. This should provide you with the regiment they served with prior to WWI which is normally on the front page of the service record. It will include the regiment served in during the War, and can be a valuable resource to help you with your research and enable you to find more information about your ancestor by viewing other records.

Army Ancestors after 1923

For army ancestors in the UK from 1923 you will need to apply for the records at the Ministry of Defence if you are the next of kin. There is a fee for this service.

<https://www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-service-records/apply-for-someone-elses-records>

Other records to view

Not all of the following records survive but if you are lucky enough to find them there are pension records, regimental description books, regimental registers and muster rolls, paylist

Army Museums

The Army Museums' Ogilby Trust provides a list of all the army museums in the UK:

<https://www.armymuseums.org.uk>

It may be possible to visit and discover more about the regiment and where your ancestor served along with any campaigns in which they may have been involved.

Books: available: *www.familyhistorybooksonline.com*

World War I Army Ancestry (Fourth Edition), by Norman Holding revised and updated by Iain Swinnerton Published by the Family History Federation.

My Ancestor was in The British Army, by Michael J Watts & Christopher T Watts. Published by The Society of Genealogists.

MEETING TALKS REPORTED

Audio-recordings of talks can now be accessed through the Society website

October – Tee Bylo (*The Polite Tourist: politetourist.com*) The Darker Side of York

As organiser of walking tours around York and a volunteer guide at York Cemetery, Tee Bylo based her talk around five cases of unnatural death in the city in the 19th and 20th centuries.

- Beginning the first case we were shown a photograph of Hungate's rooftops in 1890. In October 1879 the *Yorkshire Gazette* in describing the area spoke of "filth, misery, drunkenness, disease and crime", around Water Lane and Bedern. **Sarah Ann Casper** died of starvation there aged 5 weeks in December 1884. Her father **Peter** being loath to work her mother **Mary Ann** had no money with which to adequately feed the baby and therefore worked as a prostitute in Dundas Street, whilst carrying the baby in her arms. The inquest was widely reported in the news, the Coroner, Mr. **Wood**, being appalled by the mother's situation. There were some 23 or 24 brothels in the Walmgate/Hungate area at the time.
- The second case was that of a murdered body of unknown identity found in Black Horse Passage in February 1877, being a newborn male child who had been hit around the head. Such cases of the deliberate killing of babies was not uncommon in the area where prostitute mothers were unable to look after their child, father unknown.
- Thirdly were **Sarah** and her 2-year-old son **Stephen Bell** of Hungate who died by drowning in August 1902. On Thursday 14th August two men leaving the Bonding Warehouse heard splashing but couldn't find anything. Sarah's sister meanwhile had a letter from her saying Sarah was going to kill herself, and the bodies were found with the mother's arms around her son. The Coroner called for sympathy at the suicide and murder, Sarah's note saying "We have nothing good here". Sarah couldn't see a way out as her husband offered no support. The Coroner asked that the city's clergy do more to help such unfortunates. Sarah's other children left behind were cared for by other members of the family. The case left a real impact around the city.
- Fourth was the case of **Mary Bell** of Asylum Lane with 10-week-old **John Couch Stanley Adams** killed in a train accident in October 1879, crossing the railway line. Whilst Mary recovered from her injuries, her baby died: was it a suicide attempt? The baby's father was the Reverend **Thomas Adams**, a clerk in holy orders. There is now a bridge where the accident happened. It was widely reported in the press as "shocking", "distressing" and "frightful". Mary's brother **William Bell** (1844–1919) was an architect on the North Eastern Railway.
- The final case was that of **William** and **Isabella Hewitt** of The Crescent, Blossom Street, he being the 74-year-old Headmaster of St. Peter's School. They were murdered in December 1904 and are buried in a public grave in York Cemetery. A double murder like this was very rare. They were found in their home, lying in blood, Isabella being almost unrecognisable due to a battering. They were quiet people living in a quiet area.

Their son **Harry Hewitt** had been seen looking round the cottage by police officers on patrol and appeared indifferent to what had happened to his parents. He was known to have threatened his mother, and was eventually charged with the murder. Described as their adopted son, he was born in 1869 with a completely different name, and believed they owed him money, which had been stopped by his uncle when he reached 21. The Jury found Harry 'not guilty' which left the police outraged, and he was named as the murderer on the death certificate!

Money or sex were generally the motive for murder.

November – Philip Newton Heritage Hunters

To take part in Heritage Hunters, please email Philip at participation@ymt.org.uk, or call, text or leave a voicemail for him on 07730 642909 or philip.newton@ymt.org.uk

Philip introduced himself as Community Participation Manager with York Museums Trust which is responsible for York Castle Museum, Yorkshire Museum and Gardens, York Art Gallery and York St. Marys. Holding 1.5 million items of interest, they are looking to find out what interests people, and connecting people with the items in the collection from their local area, his talk being about York residents finding stories. The pandemic led to a fresh start and a well-being aspect.

The Hunters are working with Hull Road and Tang Hall history group encouraging people to find out about their local history, having librarians as members. The talk started with Romans on the Hull Road, which is not as straight might be as expected of a Roman road. This road into Eboracum, as York was then known, was part of conquering the north of England, the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Foss being very important, and flooding being what led to the Hull Road 'kink' as the road took to raised ground. They are hoping to find a villa along the road.

In 1831 there were 26,000 people in York, which boomed with the coming of the railways and with Irish immigration. Housing on Walmgate and Fossgate was bulldozed to make way for more modern housing and for traffic. All this involved family history research.

The Hunters have a 'project format' of how to approach the research, starting by contacting as many other organisations as possible with press releases to such as Local Link magazine for publicity. They are a social group, talking about their research in the given area, and using York Explore and the Art Gallery for information. They have their own magazine putting together their findings. Whilst focussing on areas they may move on to, say, gypsies or the disabled.

They are supported by the Groves Association, including York St. John University which has done a lot of historical research. Groves Terrace was built in 1824, though quite a lot of houses in the area have since been demolished, and research there led to an interest in servants.

They are also researching the history of a house on Huntington Road. One member researching **Charles Hardacre** a greengrocer sought information, some from the Castle Howard Ox public house, and found that in 1873 he was taken to York Lunatic Asylum as pauper patient, there being a detailed report of his condition. The disease was apparently hereditary, running in the family. In 1874 Charles was moved to the North Riding Asylum where he eventually died.

The current History Hunters project is based in Acomb and Westfield, and is the first to involve a local history group. In future, say 2024/25, the project is looking to the Clifton area and then proposes to explore further afield. They also hope to have local history days at Castle Museum and will eventually have an exhibition of their findings. The Borthwick Institute holds photographs of mental hospital patients, and many groups on Facebook have photographs of these areas.

December – Christmas Special Show & Tell

There were two speakers for our pre-Christmas meeting, with a short break between for tea and mince pies.

The first talk was by society member David Rigby, entitled *The Sea Wolf* and being about the life of his 1st cousin twice removed, **James Rigby** (1902-45), a colourful character. There had been a split in the family after a row in 1950 so David knew nothing about his relations, who were originally from Shropshire before moving to the north-east where they were miners, labourers and iron workers, and were in trouble for assault in 1872, then again in 1877, and again in 1881; then 1887 for pigeon stealing.

James had a grandson also called **James**, born 1902, who was a captain in the army and involved in important and dangerous missions in WW11, dying in Malaya.

Hartlepool, where the Rigbys lived and where James grew up, was bombarded in WW1. James became a marine apprentice joining the merchant marine, and in 1932 was married to **Ada Mellanby**. Records of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), which he joined in Singapore in late 1941 and which operated in the Far East including Burma and India, give a lot of background information. He spoke Hindustani, Malay and Siamese, and was in the Institute of Marine Engineers as a member of the Dredging Association. After taking part in demolitions against the Japanese advance, in 1942 he returned to India as a civilian.

By 1943 the Germans were losing the battle in the Atlantic so moved their U-Boat operations to the Indian Ocean, where Allied shipping was more vulnerable. The U-Boats were using intelligence transmitted from a radio on a German ship *The Ehrenfels* which was located in the neutral Portuguese port of Goa in the west of India. Civilians with military experience were recruited by the SOE to attack *The Ehrenfels* as a direct attack by the Royal Navy would violate Portuguese neutrality. James became the chief engineer of the mission called 'Operation Creek'. The covert mission was successful and *The Ehrenfels* sunk. No official recognition was given to the participants as they had operated as civilians rather than military. The operation was later turned into a film called *The Sea Wolves*, with famous actors Gregory Peck, Roger Moore, David Niven and Trevor Howard.

In 1943/44 James was chief engineer of the Bombay section of SOE Para Naval Section. In February 1945 on home leave he met his daughter for the first time, before returning to Malaya on his own, only to die in an accident in November 1945. David subsequently made contact with James' family to share his research about the brave actions of their grandfather.

The second talk of the evening following the refreshments break was by the society's programme organiser Steve Barrett, under the heading '*My ancestors were transported*' being the story of the **Canhams** from Norfolk.

Mary Canham, who had brothers **William** and **John**, were all illegitimate children, fathers unknown. John was accused of stealing a watch as his first crime. In 1831 aged 16 William was accused of the rape of a 12-year-old girl. Given 'mercy' he was banished "to be a slave for the rest of his life".

Mary's brothers had already been transported to New South Wales in 1835 when Mary married Sam Barrett and we were shown a photograph of the wooden ship used for their transportation along with 200 other transportees. Records are highly detailed. Some ships carried only women (apart from the crew), transportation being given for relatively minor crimes of theft.

John Canham had built up a record of theft which led to transportation. William was eventually seen as reformed and has since been known as a Constable Canham – a police officer.

Rosetta Barrett, their niece, was an assisted immigrant in 1857 aged 16, probably sent to care for her uncles, and travelled on an immigrant, rather than a convict, ship which was a much sleeker vessel, though 56 people died on board, and the ship was put into quarantine on arrival. Rosetta met crewman Thomas Elford and was happily married. Rosetta died aged 60 in an accident when a horse bolted and she was dragged along the ground. William died a year after her arrival in NSW.

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January – no meeting
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This issue is my final one, it being my 25th year as Journal Editor.

Please step forward to take over!

Margaret Tadman

—THE—

City of York & District

FAMILY- HISTORY- SOCIETY

PROGRAMME Spring 2024

**Meetings take place on the first Wednesday of the month at
New Earswick Quaker Friends Meeting House
White Rose Avenue, New Earswick, York YO32 4AD
Doors open at 7 pm for 7.30 start. -**

Prospective new members and visitors are welcome.
Advice and help from other members.
Bookstall. Library. Disabled access. Free car park.

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|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| March 5th | York's Preservation Tradition -
the 20th century | Jonathan French |
| April 3rd | AGM followed by:
The Impact of the Baedeker Raid
On York Families | David Poole |
| May 1st | Faith and the City of York – the influence
of the Church on the Development of York | Neil Moran |
| June 5th | The Current Work of
York Civic Trust | Andrew Morrison |

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Subscriptions	Annual membership (home)	£20
	Annual joint membership (two persons; one copy of jurnal)	£ 25
	Annual membership (overseas)	£ 15

A renewal form is sent. Payment, preferably by standing order,
otherwise by cheque, should be made to the Membership Secretary.

* * * * *

Monthly Meetings	Members	£ 2
	Non-members	£ 4

The work done by members over the years for the Society has made it what it is today, a thriving and energetic Society. We are extremely grateful for all their hard work and dedication, and hope that members will continue to support the Society in the future. It should, however, be noted that all work carried out on Society Projects by members is the property of the City of York & District Family History Society. The Society owns the copyright so that we are able to use, publish and display that material in any way that the Society feels appropriate.

City of York & District

—FAMILY - HISTORY - SOCIETY—

**Family History Research Room
The Raylor Centre, James Street
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YO10 3DW**

RESEARCH ROOM

All Society resources available for use, including
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