Family Roots

Family History Society for Eastbourne & District
www.eastbournefhs.org.uk

Transcribing at St. John the Baptist Ripe.

Vol. 37.2 November 2022

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Copy deadlines for articles please.

January 15th, April 16th, July 16th & October 16th.

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£14.00 Individual £16.00 joint (2 people at same address)

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The cover image © John Titmuss

Editorial

Well that has been a very odd few months what with the passing of Queen Elizabeth Ц in September and the turmoil in Westminster, petrol prices up, down and now up again.

I caught up with a nephew back in April and we were talking family history, he asked if I had taken a DNA test and I had not, so a couple of my children paid for the Ancestry test for Father's day.

The results came back, I uploaded to Ancestry, My Heritage and My Living DNA and I have apparently relatives all over the place.

I realise the TV programmes do a lot of researching in the background but I have not yet figured out who is person 1 and person 2. From their DNA It seems my brother is my half brother and my nephew is my half nephew on my maternal side. More researching my DNA may provide me with answers but, I am not holding my breath. I am still me but who is me?

A fellow committee member has offered help which I will gladly accept.

Does DNA stand for Do Not Ask?

On a more positive note we had my son and his family over from Australia and all eight of the Grandchildren were able to meet again. A nice family meal at the Rainbow. *Till next time John Titmuss*

FORTHCOMING TALKS

1st December Kevin Gordon - Bessie's Diaries - A lifetime in Eastbourne.

5th January 2023 Anne Krisman Goldstein Via Zoom - Eastbourne Jewish Entertainers of the Past.

The Mint House, Pevensey

Family Roots visit

By: Helen Lucas and John Warren

There were 26 members of Family Roots present when we visited the Mint House in Pevensey, in July. Firstly, Harriet Tait gave us a general overview. when we gathered in the Oak Room, this was followed by a tour of the Mint House which lasted about two hours. She was on her own so took us round as one group, it was much bigger than most of us expected.

Most exciting was new information from a document of 1490 suggesting the possibility that the original building may have been used as the Hospital of the Holy Cross, a sort of hostel and convalescence home for sick sailors, Pevensey being a busy port in Medieval and Tudor times. This is supported by David and Barbara Martin who made a thorough survey of the building, which they originally thought may have been intended for a Guild Hall, or even a merchant's warehouse. The original single hall fronting the road had an almost contemporary three-bay service range which was too large to support a dwelling for a single family, so was most probably to cater for a relatively large number of inmates. The three-bay service range is incidentally, the most intact of its age in Sussex.

It is surmised that the original building reused timbers from Pevensey

Castle, which was known to be in a poor state of repair and abandoned by 1530, the speculated time of the first build, reused blocks of masonry forming alterations and insertions also feature throughout. By 1600 the centre bay of the service range, which would originally have had a central open cooking fire exhausting through the roof, (note the carbon encrusted timbers), had been filled in with a large, new-fangled cooking fireplace with chimney, and by the late 1600s, the original single hall and yard had been converted into two cottages, fireplaces added, with a third dwelling added to the range, now the privately owned Mint Cottage next door, where in the 17th & 18th centuries, the curate lived. In the Medieval period there would also have been a back lane to the north, running parallel to the main street, matching that to the south which runs behind the Old Court House and the pub, and which provides access to the parish church. This Northern back lane was later blocked at the west end by the Priory Court building with the Mint House orangery built adjacent to it in Victorian times when it was a market garden.

In 1907, Henry Allen took it over, converted the original hall back to a single property and started his antiques business. He was very creative with his marketing, and many of the myths and legends associated with the place turn out to be pure fiction! In 1952 the building was listed as Grade II, and this has been upgraded to II*.

Jo Seaman has been doing some investigative excavations and has

reached and identified the medieval soil surface and discovered that what were thought to be wells are in fact cess pits. Most of the finds so far have been Victorian, but earlier material is coming up too.

Harriet led around the bewildering labyrinth of rooms. In the oldest part of the building, now called 'The Parlour', the fireplace and paneling were inserted by Henry Allen taken from another building. The style of carving appears to be 17th century depicting a slightly Italianate mermaid and merman, orientalist lions, and a panel depicting what could be Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey.

'The Oak Room' is paneled, with a carved over mantle to the fireplace depicting a fish with leaves coming out of its tail and carved lozenges. The fish is a depiction of the Biblical Leviathan. (Ref: Job 41). A merchant lived here at one time, so this could be associated with sea trade. In the West wall of the room a privy closet, or inner toilet, is set into the paneling, and the East wall has a trace of a door leading to Mint Cottage next door. This cottage was bought as a holiday home in 1972; the present owners cannot afford to renovate it, so it is now in a very poor state. "The Friends of the Mint House" are hoping to receive Lottery grants which will enable them to renovate and buy all the properties, so that the three cottages can be reunited.

The first service room is called The Haunted Chamber', and apparently refers to an incident of 1575, when a man was supposedly hanged, then

roasted over a fire after his tongue had been cut out! This all seems to have been a Victorian or Edwardian invention. The stairs were all inserted when the buildings were split into three properties. The old kitchen contains a big fireplace, the most intact in East Sussex, with behind it 'The Minting Chamber'. This room name is another Allen invention as minting had ceased in Pevensey at least 200 years before the house was built, it is more likely to have been a brewing room and would have had a malting chamber attached. In this range we had the apotropaic, or ritual protection marks pointed out to us. The most common being a leaf shaped burn scar in the timbers.

Upstairs we were told of a guard-de-robe or toilet, but the priest-hole or 'secret room' and the Edward VI room are both Allen invention, as the boy king had died at least 40 years before the room was made. However, the 'Painted Room' does contain some remarkable original wall paintings of between 1580-1600 and would have been a high-status room in the Tudor period. Shelly House in Lewes has very similar painting from the same period and may well have been completed by the same hand. Excavations will continue so volunteers are welcome to assist with this and can also help in other ways. The visit was greatly enjoyed by all who attended. A visit can be thoroughly recommend to this fascinating place. Contact Harriet at Friends of the Mint House ('friendsmint@mail.uk') if you would like to visit or help with volunteering.

Digitised Sussex Parish Registers for Sussex

Contributed by: Rosalind Hodge.

The collaboration between East and West Sussex Record Offices and Ancestry to digitally record all Parish Registers is proving incredibly popular. There have been over 800,000 viewings of these Sussex parish records in just the first two months, since going online and searchable in May of this year.

Registers covering 457 years of baptism, confirmation, banns, marriage and burial have been digitised. The earliest registers dating 1538-1812 for baptism, marriage and burial have proved the most popular. This information is invaluable for researchers who, in most cases, can now see the original written entry; always more reliable than a transcription.

I had seen but not photographed the entry for the marriage of my 10x great grandparents at Willingdon 22 October 1622, four hundred years ago this year. It was great to see the image online and save it, even though handwriting at that time can be challenging if you are not familiar with the somewhat strange styles. That's half the fun though. By coincidence there was a wedding at Willingdon 400 years to the very day 22 October this year for which I arranged flowers but sadly there is now no longer a marriage register in churches as the law changed recently and all are recorded digitally and not by hand as it was for over 400 years. Do

remember you do not have to subscribe to Ancestry to access these records. All Sussex registers are free to view on the Ancestry site at The Keep and all libraries in East and West Sussex.

—OOO—

Finding Gypsy Ancestors

Contributed by: Peggy Westwood

The first time I had an indication that I might have gypsy ancestors was when I attended a Family Roots talk by Janet Keet Black from the Romany and Traveller Society. I learnt that gypsies were found in censuses because they over-wintered on farms, adopted names and Cooper was a favourite one, when they were on the road they often had their children baptised in a number of churches because the vicars would give them money or other rewards. I had found ancestors on Loxwood Common, Wisborough Green who were named Cooper. In the 1841 Census their address was Pig Bush, Second Tent. When I asked about their address, Janet thought it would indicate they were travellers/gypsies. That was when I joined the Romany and Traveller Society.

For a while I continued to look for more information in the Wisborough Green area but could find nothing more.

The next stage in thinking about gypsy ancestors was when my

hairdresser kept using my hair for trainees to blow dry because it is gypsy hair and doesn't stretch like European hair. I found this interesting but I was still unable to find a gypsy ancestor.

Eventually my suspicions turned to some of my ancestors in Cuckfield.

In the 1841 census Thomas Saunders and his family were over-wintering at Lyes farm near Cuckfield. Their accommodation was described as 'In a detached building but not considered a dwelling house.' I then bought the birth certificates of his two oldest children, Angelina born in 1840 and William born in 1842. On Angelina's certificate his occupation is rat catcher, on William's it was iron bottomer. There was no address on both certificates just 'Cuckfield, Sussex.' Thomas had died by 1861 but his wife, Sarah, was described as a widow of a rat catcher and basket maker. These occupations indicated that he could have been a gypsy.

In 2016 I had my DNA tested by Ancestry. The mystery was where had my 16% Germanic DNA come from? Having researched my family tree extensively I had no idea. Earlier this year Ancestry updated our DNA results and they now show which parent they belong to. I was surprised to find the Germanic DNA was on my Mum's side as I previously thought she was Sussex and Hampshire for many generations.

I turned my attention back to Thomas Saunders and I realised I had very little information on his wife, Sarah Sageman. Sageman is an uncommon name mainly found on the Surrey/Sussex border. Sarah was born on March 7th 1810 in Burstow, Surrey to Thomas Sageman and Anne Harlett. I decided to contact a man who was connected to me by Sageman DNA. He replied to me very quickly to say he had Sarah Sageman on his family tree. His 3x great grandmother, Susannah Sageman, was a 1st cousin once removed to Sarah Sageman my 3x great grandmother. I looked at his family tree and discovered that Susannah's father, William, was run down by a stage coach on January 2nd 1816. His occupation was knife grinder. This information is in the burial register for Merstham in Surrey. I have been unable to find a coroner's inquest but another descendant lists him as a gypsy.

I have looked at other family trees on Ancestry including the name Sageman and there are people researching it from the Netherlands and Germany. Two German spellings of the name are Segeman and Siegemend. I think I have found my gypsy ancestors and where my Germanic DNA came from.

Romany gypsies have been in Britain since at least 1515 after migrating from continental Europe during the Roma migration from India. (The Traveller movement). Looking at my DNA, I find it interesting that DNA

from distant ancestors is found in me whereas DNA from some more recent ancestors seems to have disappeared.

—OOO—

Thank you to those of you that contributed to this edition.

If you have something you think would interest the members please send it to me editor@eastbournefhs.org.uk.

My Cornish Great- Great Grandfather, James Bray, 1798 – 1853

Contributed by: Ailna Martin

James Bray was one of my paternal great-grandfathers. His life has been traced by using the standard sources available to family historians, each fact being confirmed in documents and records such as the early nominal censuses of 1841 and 1851 and the marriage certificates of two of his daughters. His death in 1853 was recorded by the Registrar of St. Austell in Cornwall. He was the son of James and Philippa Bray (née Brown), of St. Austell, and was baptised in the parish church of this small Cornish town on 26th December 1798. The baptism is recorded in the International Genealogical Index section of FamilySearch in which James's mother is named as "Philopa". This will be the way in which her name was written in the parish register of that time. James was almost

certainly the eldest child as his parents' marriage at Lanteglos by Camelford on 16th October 1797 is also recorded in the IGI.

It is interesting to speculate what might have brought James Senior and his new bride to St. Austell, as Camelford lies to the north across the legendary Bodmin Moor. Today, St. Austell is known as the centre for the china clay industry, which took over from the earlier tin mining industry that had been the life blood of the Cornish economy in earlier years. We cannot know if this was the draw for James Senior and Philippa, but by 1841 Philippa is recorded as head of the household employing her grandson, James Hore, who was listed as a male servant (M.S.), and we know that by 1851 the widowed Philippa was listed as a farmer of 11 acres continuing to employ her grandson as a farm labourer.

There are baptisms for four other children recorded in the IGI, all of them born in St. Austell. Maria was baptised on 23rd February 1800, Mary on 24th February 1805, Elizabeth on 20th April 1810 and Phillis on 2nd August 1812. As there are quite large gaps between some of the births it is not known whether there were any other children born to the couple. The main occupations in Cornwall in the early 19th century were mining, farming and fishing. All the civil records describe James Junior as a yeoman farmer. It is probable that James was brought up to farming, as Tithe records for the 1840's record his widowed mother, Philippa,

farming not far distant from her son, she on the Trevissick Estate and he at Blackhead House, to the south of Trenarren, near St. Austell.

James's married Mary Trestain, of Pelynt, at St.Austell, on 28th December 1819, probably when James reached his majority, and their first child, also named James, was born the following summer, when his baptism was recorded in St. Austell Parish Register on 17th September 1820.

The Census of 1841 gives us our first "snapshot" of James, the family man. He is enumerated at Blackhead, in the parish of St. Austell, where, according to the tithe records for the parish, he was working a small farm. Enumerated with him are his wife, Mary, and their eight children. Unfortunately, the 1841 census is less informative than subsequent ones, so we cannot be precise about whether the older children, particularly the girls, were in paid employment locally but continuing to live at home. Certainly, the Censuses of 1861 and 1881 record that Elizabeth was a dressmaker. The 1871 Census records that she was a milliner, living with her married sister Sarah, my great grandmother, in Liverpool.

1841 Census for The Blackhead, St. Austell, Cornwall.

(PRO. Reference HO 107/146)

BRAY	James	Head	Married	40	Yeoman	Born	Cornwall
	Mary	Wife	"	40			"
	James	Son	Unmarried	20			"
	William	Son	"	15			"
	Mary	Dau	"	15			"
	John	Son	"	15			"
	Hannah	Dau	"	13			"
	Sarah	Dau	"	11			"
	Frederick	Son	"	2			"
	Elizabeth	Dau	"	1			"

It is thought that the age given for Frederick in the above census record should really read "7". Elizabeth's birth certificate confirms that she was born on 29th July 1839, and that she would have been almost 2 when the 1841 Census was enumerated.

All eight children were born and baptised in the parish. Their baptisms are recorded in the I.G.I. and these dates give a better clue as to the years of their birth than does the 1841 Census, which rounds down all the ages above 15 to the nearest five years. We know from his baptismal record that James, the father, was at least 42 and his wife, Mary, a year younger, having been baptised at Pelynt on 4th April 1799.

The first-born child was named James, after his father, and was baptised at St. Austell on 17th September 1820, William Trestain on 2nd June

1822, Mary on 14th June 1824, John on 1st January 1827, Hannah on 1st January 1830, Sarah Brown (my great-grandmother) on 16th October 1831, Frederick on 1st January 1834 and finally, Elizabeth Trestain on 22nd September 1839. It was usual to baptise a child about a month after birth, though of course this is only a rule of thumb. Mary would have been just forty when her last child was born.

The tithe records, which can be found at the National Archives, enable us to pinpoint the location of the farm precisely as the map can be compared overlaid on the current Ordnance Survey map. The tithe map gives some indication of the type of farm that was supporting this large family. James paid tithes to the Vicar of St Austell and to Mr. John Hearl Tremayne, the then owner of Heligan. Today there is no trace of a farm building on the land. The S.W. Coastal Path crosses the land, which lies on a rocky headland

In 1851 the census enumerator names the property as "Blackhead House". The farm was a mere 12 acres. All but two of the children had left home, those remaining being James, the eldest, who was obviously still helping his father to work the farm, and Elizabeth, still too young at 11 and probably still at school, although the census does not record this fact. Sarah Brown, my great-grandmother, was by now married to Thomas Henry Rowse, a seafarer, and on census night she was visiting (or

living with) her widowed aunt-in-law Emma Trestain, at Higher Porthpean, nearby. Emma's husband, a farmer, had been a younger brother of Sarah's mother, Mary. Emma was much closer in age to her niece; she had been left a widow with three very young children, Elizabeth, James and William, aged four, two and one respectively. The fact that Sarah was awaiting the birth of her first child was a good reason for a bond of common experience to have developed between them, albeit Sarah was but a "grass widow" owing to her husband's occupation as a seafarer.

There is a clear picture of a close family network, evidenced by the constitution of the different households on census night. Emma's daughter Elizabeth was staying with relatives at Lower Porthpean and James Bray's mother Philippa, now widowed, was still farming at Trevissick, assisted by her grandson, James Bray Hore, her daughter Maria's son.

The recording of Mary Bray as a widow in the 1861 census led me to search for her husband's death at some time in the previous decade. James's death was indexed by the General Register Office as having occurred at St. Austell during the June quarter of 1853. When I obtained his death certificate it recorded that he had been "Found dead" at Trenarren on 14th June 1853. The Deputy Coroner of Bodmin, E. Gilbert

Hamley, informed the registrar on 21st June, suggesting that an inquest had been arranged to establish the cause of this sudden and unexpected death. Unfortunately, no records survive, either amongst the papers in the Cornish Record Office, or in the local newspapers of the day. A sudden death at the age of 55 would nowadays be considered premature, but no doubt the hard conditions that James endured in the fields contributed to his death, possibly from a stroke or a heart attack.

—OOO—

Some Local History about Motcombe Gardens, Farmhouse and a Mysterious Needlework Picture

Contributed by: Helen Warren

Some time ago Chris Searle, Chair of "Friends of Motcombe Gardens" asked me to give a short talk on the history of Motcombe Gardens. Although I know quite a bit about the history of Old Town, Eastbourne, I realized after I had said "yes" that I knew little about the history of Motcombe Gardens! So, I started my research by looking at old maps, old photos, the web and local history sites on social media.

I also remembered a walk led by Lawrence Stevens, font of all knowledge on local history, many years ago which started by the pond at Motcombe Gardens, the source of the Bourne stream which gave Eastbourne its name. Or was it the start of the Borne stream? If you

visited the Gardens during this long, hot summer you could not help but notice that the grass was not brown and parched like our lawns but green and verdant showing that several springs are flowing through this ground not just the spring rising in the pond!

Old maps clearly show that the water stretched over the whole of the flat area of what is now the Gardens, it was not until 1857 that it was contained in a rectangular shaped pond. This pond was part of Motcombe Farmhouse, which like the Gardens were all owned by the Duke of Devonshire, now the Chatsworth Estate. You can still see the slit in the bowling green wall, which was used as a hide by the gentry when shooting waterfowl on the pond.

The rectangular pool became a reservoir providing a piped water supply to the town. However, this water supply could not meet the needs of the expanding population so fairly soon Bedfordwell Pumping Station was opened.

Probably dating from the 14th century, the Dovecote is a picturesque feature of the Gardens and once provided young birds as meat for the lord of the manor. Recently discovered in archaeological digs at the Dovecote, are water troughs and a well, all fed by underground springs, these would have been part of the Victorian farm.

At the beginning of the 20th century, with a tenant farmer and his family living in the farmhouse, the land opposite including the pond and Dovecote were gifted by the Duke of Devonshire to the town of Eastbourne, becoming Motcombe Gardens.

The cobbled flint faced Farmhouse which still stands remained part of the Duke's domain with the tenant farmer grazing his sheep on the Downs. The farmhouse had probably been built in the 1840s on the site of an earlier building. The Waters family were the tenant farmers who lived and farmed here from the beginning of the 19th century until at least 1881. Benjamin Waters was baptised in Warbleton, Sussex 18 Feb 1787 but was farming in Eastbourne from the beginning of the 19th century. He is recorded as Church Warden at St Mary's Church although he was often reprimanded for not doing his job properly! In 1841 he and his family were living at Long Barn Cottages, probably the site of the farmhouse. By the 1851 census John Waters, Benjamin's son, was living at the farmhouse and farming 600 acres. He and his wife Louisa Catherine nee Pagden, son Benjamin, daughter Edith Sarah plus two female servants were all listed as residing in Motcombe Farmhouse. The Waters family continued to live in the farmhouse but by 1891 there was a new farm bailiff, George Homewood and his family and by 1901 another tenant John Burgess and his family!

The farmhouse continued to belong to the Chatsworth Estate until it was sold to Albert Field in 1956. It was then extensively renovated by the new owner. Marian Bourne, Albert's daughter, kept some documents and photos pertaining to the farmhouse, these were passed through the family and eventually posted on Facebook by Graham Davy in July 2019. These mementoes included a newspaper cutting about the renovations Albert undertook, an estate agents advert for the house and a postcard showing the house when it was a guest house offering rates of 4 guineas per week including two good meals a day! But most exciting for me a photo of a piece of needlework which clearly depicted Motcombe Farmhouse together with its new west wing added in 1864 plus a parade of soldiers pulling a canon together with other figures including one wearing a farmer's smock.

Unfortunately, there is no indication of a name or a date on the sewing.

I set out to find out more about this mysterious needlework picture. The west wing was added in 1864 so it could not date from before this. I then discovered an obituary for John Waters (1819-1866) published in the Sussex Express. John died at the early age of 47 just two years after the west wing was built. In his obituary it says he was a much-respected local farmer and stock breeder. It continues to say that in the rear of his funeral procession was a detachment of the Eastbourne Volunteer Artillery (of which the deceased was an hon. Member). So not only does it depict the funeral it may also show John himself as the large figure in a smock with maybe his son standing in the middle distance.

Here is the piece from the Sussex Express describing the funeral on 10th August 1866:

The late Mr John Waters – In recording the death of this gentleman which took place at his residence at Motcombe on Saturday week, we do not think we can do justice to his memory better than by quoting the following from the Sussex Advertiser: - "Mr Waters had attained considerable eminence as an agriculturist and was well known as a successful breeder of stock. He was also a member of the Local Board and one of the vice-chairmen of the Board of Guardians. The latter office he held for several years. His services as a guardian were highly

appreciated by the Board, his attendance being consistent and his knowledge of the duties thoroughly practical. On Friday afternoon his remains were interred in the churchyard attached to the parish church of St Mary; they were borne to the grave by his workmen who wore white round frocks, black gloves and hatbands. The coffin was followed by the relatives and immediate friends of the deceased; next came men and lads who had in his employ; then a numerous body of the farmers, tradesmen and others of the parish and neighbourhood, and in the rear a detachment of the Eastbourne Volunteer Artillery (of which the deceased was an hon. Member). Under the command of Captain Commandant Darby. The funeral service was very impressively performed by the vicar, the Rev. Thomas Pitman. The inhabitants of the Old Town testified their respect to the memory of the deceased by closing their shops and drawing down the blinds of their windows." Deceased was but 47 years old.

We can only guess about who designed and worked this needlework picture. Was it his widow Louisa or his 21-year-old daughter Edith Sarah? Whatever the answer I believe the embroidery was made to remember John Water's funeral procession which would go from the Farmhouse to St Mary's Church where John was buried. After Prince Albert, Consort to Queen Victoria, death in 1861, Queen Victoria made mourning a way of life so it would not be unusual for the women in the family to commemorate a death and funeral in this way.

Louisa Waters continued to run the farm for a few more years but sadly by 1871 Louisa and her daughter had moved to Victoria Place (now Terminus Road) where she ran a lodging house leaving son Benjamin to run the farm for just a few more years. Edith Sarah Waters later married and had a son.

I would love to hear from anyone who knows more about the Waters family, Motcombe Farmhouse or where the original needlework picture is. Afterall this is a piece of Eastbourne and the Waters' family history.

—OOO—

From Banoffi Pie to Fish Bananas

Speaker - Ian Dowding

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 4th August 2022

By: Jenny Wootton.

Our speaker in August was Ian Dowding, who for twenty years was chef at The Hungry Monk restaurant in Jevington, a small village near Eastbourne. He gave us a very entertaining talk on his long life in the catering industry, but is perhaps best remembered as one of the inventors of Banoffi Pie.

Ian does not believe he 'invented' Banoffi Pie as he does not believe dishes can be invented, but that most recipes are tweaked over time and

that is how food evolves. It has all been done before, but over a long slow process Banoffi Pie 'happened'. Banoffi Pie was created in the 1970s, appeared in a recipe book in 1972, and this year is its 50th anniversary.

Ian's career started in cooking because he was not very good at school and went on to catering college, because he was told if you can wear chef's whites you can knock on any door and get work. He trained at Swindon College in Yorkshire and was taught to cook from the bottom up based on Escoffier cuisine. He had to learn the French names for precisely-cut vegetables, how to cook basic French sauces, fillet fish, bone out meat and received a very good grounding in fine cuisine. In his second year he progressed to preparing meals for the teaching restaurant and learned how to work in a restaurant kitchen and wait at tables. "We work with civility not servility" was the teacher's motto.

To work up through the ranks of chefing it is best to start in a big hotel like the Savoy, which will enable you to get a job in hotels anywhere in the world. If you want to own your own restaurant start working in a small restaurant. Ian chose the latter and applied for a job at The Royal Oak, Yattendon, Berkshire, which was a small hotel. When he went for the interview he was invited to dine in the restaurant. He chose 'saumon caprice' – fresh salmon with fried bananas baked in a tomato and mango

sauce. He got the job. The hotel was known for its desserts, but everything was made from scratch in those days. The chef made Coffee Toffee Pie, a recipe brought over from America, consisting of a pastry base topped with toffee and whipped cream. It was difficult to make perfectly.

While working at The Royal Oak Ian met a young couple, Nigel and Sue MacKenzie, who visited regularly, who had just bought the Monk's Rest Tea Rooms in Jevington and planned to turn it into a restaurant. Ian wrote and said he would like to visit, and they offered him the job as chef. Nigel worked for Birds Eye and neither he nor Sue had any background in catering. The Hungry Monk restaurant opened in May 1968, and by 1969 it was recommended in the Good Food Guide.

Ian's sister worked for a Greek chef in Devon and told Ian how he had discovered you could boil a tin of condensed milk in a pan of water for four hours which turned it into perfect soft toffee every time. Ian tried it and introduced Coffee Toffee Pie on the menu at The Hungry Monk, which became an immediate hit.

Nigel MacKenzie was always looking to make changes to the menu and wanted to add something extra to Coffee Toffee Pie to make it different. They tried adding a layer of strawberries, apples, but it worked best with bananas, but how to describe it on the handwritten menu board. The girls

said Coffee Toffee Banana Pie was too long a description, so Banoffi Pie was born. Banoffi Pie went into the Hungry Monk cookery books and became a hit at home and abroad. Margaret Thatcher served it at No.10, and it is even a favourite with the Royal Family.

Ian worked at The Hungry Monk for 20 years, from 1968 to 1988. He married Dawn, one of the girls working at the restaurant. They lived in Seaford and went on to have two children. Ian and Dawn wanted to open their own restaurant and when they left The Hungry Monk they opened Quincy's in 1988 in an old Victorian building on the High Street in Seaford. The building had lost its chimney in the 1987 hurricane and Ian bought it with an insurance claim still outstanding for the damage. The whole family worked hard to get the restaurant ready, and it ran successfully until 1991 when the recession hit. They started to prepare takeaway meals to keep going until things improved. As the children grew up they started to help in the restaurant, until they went off to university.

Ian and Dawn got bored with the restaurant and decided to buy a pub, but that fell through, so they bought a shop instead and sold the restaurant. The shop was not a great success, so Ian decided to go freelance as a chef. He approached Sussex Downs College in Eastbourne and offered to do evening classes in cookery. He was eventually invited

for interview and was employed to undertake chef training courses at the college as well as evening classes, a job he really enjoyed for seventeen years.

Colin Capon, a freelance colleague, approached Ian and asked if he would like to work on a television programme as he was unable to take it up himself. Ian started working on as chef adviser on the 'Regency House Party', about a group of ten people living the Regency-style life in a period house and dining on Regency-style meals. Ian had to learn how to cook historically accurate food and was taught by Ivan Day, the well known authority on historical food, living in the Lake District, where Ian went up to meet him. He had to cook a banquet every night for the ten weeks of the programme, as well as breakfasts and luncheons. Ian said it was like 'Big Brother in corsets'. The menus included very rich food, and before the series started Ian had to prepare a meal for the producers as a dummy run, to make sure it was edible as they weren't sure how good a cook Ian was! He said it worked brilliantly, but over the weeks he did have to prepare excessive amounts of food. As a result of this success, Ian was offered work on other historical food programmes such as 'Turn Back Time' and 'The Diets that Time Forgot'.

Ian developed a website to promote freelance chefing. He started writing as he has over 400 recipes on his computer and has produced

several recipe books. He also wrote an article telling the true story of how Banoffi Pie developed, to counter the outrageous tales Nigel MacKenzie had told about how it was created, and the article was printed in the Guardian. His latest book is called 'Fish Bananas', in recognition of the dish he ate when he went for his first interview after college – Saumon Caprice.

At the end of his talk Ian told us of a surprise revelation about his own family history that his son had uncovered after he had received the results of his DNA test. Ian's mother's maiden name was Biggs and he knew that she had had three brothers – uncles Victor, Jack, and Terence who died young. His son's DNA result also revealed a fourth brother Ronnie – Ronnie Biggs, the Great Train Robber! Ronnie was evacuated during the second world war and then turned bad, and the family never spoke about him again. A true story.

—OOO—

Contributed by: Bob Maynard

Dear mother and auntie. I am just writing a short letter this time to catch post. I have been dreadfully worried as I have not heard from you for so long. Nearly sent a cable to see if you were alright Thank goodness I heard from you and Dib this AM . Your letter was the letter telling me about your Christmas, . I feel glad you were not just the two of you Isn't Alice good coming up so near Christmas .

I want to get this off as there is going to be a strike. If you hear about it on the wireless don't get too worried. There have been a lot of talk about it they are prepared if worse came they would take women and children to the barracks big ones just wrap *[sic]* near us I am really only writing this now in case letter gets delayed later on . One thing I was in the general strike in London our own countrymen and that wasn't so good . We are quite excited as the Takoradi palm is in and we can see from the window . We thought she was being diverted and so perhaps she will be out again quickly I hope we see some of the crew's etc we have been having quite cool evenings and nights and even had a blanket on our bed I want to go to the store before it closes and get in one or two extras. Now don't

Only I thought it better to write off. Nice getting all the things from V&G .There is not much we are allowed to send except fruit which would perish. Hope you get the parcle from South Africa alright.Expect Auntie must be very tired, I think alot about her .Lots of love from us all to you both

Girlie,

—OOO—

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Shepherds of the South Downs – their lives and times

Speaker: Ian Everest

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 1st September 2022

By: Jenny Wootton

Ian is a familiar speaker to the members of Family Roots and has given us talks on a wide range of topics from the First World War to farming history.

Tonight his talk was about local shepherds and how their livelihood over hundreds of years has been vital to maintaining the economy of the South Downs.

Ian was brought up on a farm. His uncles and father worked on farms in Sussex and Ian himself started working on a farm before going on to agricultural college, but when he developed an interest in his family history in 1983 it changed his career. Many of Ian's ancestors worked on farms but as far as he could find out none were shepherds. Census enumerators tended to write 'ag lab' if a man said he was a shepherd.

The earliest record Ian could find of a shepherd was Cuthman in the 9th century from the Bosham area of West Sussex. Cuthman wanted to become a shepherd, but was very religious and he felt his Maker told him to head east, so he made a cart on which to transport his ailing mother and

they went together. After many mishaps they came to a village where he stopped and built a wooden hut to live in and eventually built a church out of wood. And that is the story of how St Cuthman's church at Steyning, West Sussex came about, which dates from 857, now known as St Andrew & St Cuthman.

Shepherding often has connections with religion, depicted in paintings and stained glass, and it is also a popular theme in the names of pubs, such as The Lamb in Eastbourne, and the Shepherd & Dog at Fulking, West Sussex. Postcard manufacturers in the 19th and 20th centuries also like to have sheep and a shepherd and his dog featured on cards showing rural scenes. The lone shepherd had an air of independence, ruling his own little kingdom up on the Downs.

Philip Baker was an old shepherd from Bishopstone. He started work on a farm at Beddingham at the age of eight, and moved from farm to farm until he was too old to work and ended up in the alms house in Bishopstone, where he died. He insisted that some wool be placed in the coffin with him, preferably on his chest, which was the tradition with many old shepherds, as they believed when they met their Maker they could hold up the wool as a reason why they had not attended church regularly. Even today some shepherds have it written into their will that they should have wool placed in the coffin with them. Philip's headstone

can be seen in Bishopstone churchyard.

It is reckoned that the Downs between Eastbourne and Shoreham 200 years ago was the most heavily populated area of sheep anywhere in the world, with flocks totalling about 200,000. Prior to 1700 the shepherd was the most important servant on a farm as there was a lot of wealth in sheep. He had to be intelligent, responible and trustworthy. He also needed to know how to treat ailments in sheep as they were very prone to all manner of diseases, but a shepherd could easily be tempted to sell a dead sheep for meat, so the farmer had to know he could trust his shepherd and a good shepherd was worth his weight in gold.

Ian showed some wonderful photographs of local shepherds. One showed David Breach in the typical clothing of a shepherd of smock, great coat, crook and bowler hat, called a chumney. Hill shepherds felt they were the best shepherds and far superior than other farm shepherds, and they rarely came off the Downs.

Stephen Blackmore was a well known shepherd from East Dean. He was born at Falmer in 1832, and as a young child lost his arm in an accident with a chaff cutter in a barn at Stanmer Park. Despite his handicap he became a skilled shepherd and by 1896 he was looking after a flock of 500 sheep on Beachy Head. He married and lived in a cottage on Frost Hill on the Downs. Over the years he also accumulated a huge

collection of ancient worked flints found on the Downs and became quite an expert. He was pestered to sell them, but was very distrustful of "furriners" so he left about 775 of his flints to the Sussex Archaeological Society. When he was no longer able to work he was given a place in the alms house in Seaford, and he eventually died in Steyning workhouse in 1919 at the age of 87.

It took a long time to train as a shepherd. They would start young, as a shepherd's boy, doing mundane jobs on the farm, then moving up to become a teg boy looking after the young ewes, all the time learning self-reliance and devotion to duty. He would then become an under-shepherd until the full-time shepherd retired and he could take over his flock.

Downland shepherds regarded themselves as a cut above the rest because farming on the South Downs was very different to farming on the Weald or low land. The sheep would be taken up onto the Downs in the morning to graze on the nutritious downland turf and each evening brought back down and packed tightly into folds on land that was going to be used to grow corn, where their droppings would help to create the best possible growing conditions for the following year. It was all part of sustainable farming. If a farm changed hands the manure still inside the sheep had a value that was accounted for in the agreement and was called 'fold tail'. It was very valuable as it could increase the crop yield up to

four fold.

The shepherd's year started at tupping time in November when the rams were introduced to the ewes, which usually meant the lambs were born in April, five months later.

The shepherd relied on his dog and his crook when watching his sheep. There were different types of crook, but the Pyecombe crook transformed the look as the narrow neck could catch the sheep by the back leg to trap it. The shepherds called their dogs 'beardies', often bearded collies but not necessarily a recognised breed. They just needed a dog they could train to do the job. Another item they needed were sheep's bells. They were put on the lead sheep so if the flock strayed from his view in the fog he could still find them by following the sound. A piece of his personal equipment was the smock, made out of linen and soaked in oil to make it waterproof, shepherds in Sussex were still wearing them between the wars.

The most important time for the shepherd was lambing in the spring, because it was the one time of year he could earn a few bonuses. The shepherd would stay out in the fields with the sheep during lambing and there were simple shepherd's huts on the Downs.

The next big job was sheep washing after lambing, as the sheep became

very dirty all the while they were on the Downs so they were brought down to be washed in clear water streams. Once the sheep fleeces were nice and clean the next job was shearing, when the valuable crop of wool was taken off their backs. Shearing was usually done by shearing gangs who would go from farm to farm. They would sell themselves for piece work, and the working conditions were strictly agreed beforehand so everyone knew exactly what was expected. It was reckoned that the wool from 500 sheep would pay the rent on the farm for a whole year.

After shearing the next job was sheep dipping. The sheep had to be dipped to prevent a parasite that lives on their skin causing a lot of damage that then attracts flies. They were submerged in a closed tank containing water with arsenic and creosote, which killed off the parasite. This was something that had to be done by law, and often the local policeman would come to observe the process. Later organophosphorous was used, which was highly dangerous and could cause mental illness in farm workers. It is no longer used.

Towards the end of the year the shepherd and his boss would decide where they were going to sell the sheep. If they were to be sold for meat there were many markets around Sussex they could take them to – Hailsham, Heathfield, Chichester, Battle and many others. The best money could be made in selling the animals for breeding stock, and then

the sheep would be taken to the much larger sheep fairs, such as the one at Lewes. In one day 40,000 sheep were sold at Lewes, and farmers would travel long distances to bring their animals to this lucrative market. They were also big social occasions for all the family. The biggest sheep fair was at Findon, just north of Worthing, which is still going today and has kept many of the old traditions but it is now more a demonstration for the different types of sheep, of which there are 68 breeds in this country.

Barclay Wills visited the fairs and befriended the shepherds. He was a Londoner who came down to Sussex and though he had no connection with farming the shepherds accepted him. He wrote many books about shepherds and often when one died he left his equipment to Mr Wills, and when he died he left his collection of crooks and bells to Worthing Museum.

John Ellman was born in 1753 and moved to Place Farm in Glynde, East Sussex with his family in 1761. He devoted his life to selectively breed sheep and eventually produced the Southdowns sheep. He died in 1832.

—OOO—

The October meeting report will be published in the February edition.

My Time Transcribing M Is.

By: John Tyhurst

In early 2000 at a committee meeting it was mooted that perhaps we should transcribe more of the local churchyard memorial inscriptions, bearing in mind transcribing had already been carried by members as far back as 1986 when the Zoar Chapel at Lower Dicker was originally transcribed, albeit mainly just the names on the monuments and their dates of death, nothing else.

With Ken Alderton and myself having been volunteered to coordinate the proceedings we started by having data sheets printed which gave spaces for the date, churchyard being transcribed and the main area on which to physically record verbatim everything on the headstones.

We decided that the first area to complete would be Ocklynge Cemetery so on a Tuesday evening in May 2001 with a volunteer group of I believe 10 we started on transcribing section Z, mainly because it was nearest to the Eldon Road entrance and also it was one of the smallest sections, (so as if any major mistakes were made we had a smaller section in which to rectify them) We decided to gather all day on Saturdays and Tuesday evenings, by the time we arrived at the second Tuesday we only had four volunteers and that was the trend until the cemetery data was completed in 2009. If it had not been for Frances Muncey, Theresa Hancock, John Crane, Jenny Wootton and Barbara Budd the whole project would have

had to be abandoned. Over the nine years it took to complete the project, this little group has now been responsible in addition to Ocklynge for transcribing more than 16 Churchyards and one other cemetery within Family Roots catchment area. I have decided to retire from being the coordinator after 21 years mainly due to having a replacement knee which has restricted kneeling and getting that little bit over 21.

The days of physically writing verbatim the wording onto paper sheets has now passed, we now photograph each stone digitally, then transcribe onto a database from the photos. Having transcribed onto the database, printed copies are made and this is where the volunteers come into being by checking each memorial against the datasheet and correcting any wrongs, adding data that could not be seen on the photos.

I would like to thank the long standing team from 2001 to 2022 who have survived hot weather, showers and sometimes in October frost. Sitting on the churchyard seats eating our sandwiches on a Saturday and discussing anything that is happening at the time. Sadly Barbara Budd and Frances Muncey were unable to be with us the past four years due to ill health.

The following volunteered one or more times in transcribing Ocklynge Cemetery.

K. Alderton; B.Budd; J.Crane; K.Cook; M.Cook: T.Hancock;

J. Haugham; D. Ireland: J. Johnson; I. Martin; P. Martin; D.Morgan-Smith; D.Morphew; F.Muncey; M.Parker: M.Piper-Smith: P. Piper-Smith;

M. Simpson; P. Stent; L.Thomson; P.Turner; W.Turner; J.Tyhurst;

B. Wilkinson; E. Wilkinson; J.Wootton.

The cemeteries / churchyards already transcribed and now available on CD are:

Alciston, Alfriston, Bodle Street Green, East Dean, Friston, Upper Willingdon, Lower Willingdon Cemetery, St. Mary's Parish Church, Eastbourne, Herstmonceux, Westdean, Jevington, Chalvington, Ripe, Folkington, Litlington, Lullington and The Zoar Baptist Chapel.

Left. John Tyhurst at Ocklynge 2002 Right John Crane, possibly the same date. © J Tyhurst

John Crane has also decided to put down his scrubbing brush and water spray bottle, he has been on his hands and knees since early 2002.

The last outing for these two was transcribing at Ripe and Chalvington

on Saturday 27th August 2022 The other "Graveyard kneelers" were Linda Hayler Theresa Hancock, Jenny Wootton, and myself.

Ripe 27th August 2022

Now that's dedication, Jenny getting down to it.

On 10th September. Linda, Theresa, Jenny and myself revisited Ripe to check some omissions.

The CD for Ripe and Chalvington is currently in production and will be available early November. The price will be £5.00 plus p&p

I would personally like to thank John Tyhurst and all those engaged in this monumental task Ed.

There are still church yards in our area that have yet to be visited, if you feel this is something you would like to help with please contact us.

Cartoon by Helen Warren

News from Find My Past

FindMyPast have revealed their new Premium subscription, which includes unlimited access to the 1921 Census of England and Wales.

The cost of this subscription is £199.99 which equates to £16.67 per month.

Could this be you?

The next Annual General Meeting will see John Crane standing down as Secretary of Family Roots. If you feel this is something you would like to do for our society please contact John who would be only too pleased to discuss this with you.

Janet Savage will be retiring from the role of Bookstall manager and will be able to guide you through the processes. You would not need to update the website as this is taken care of elsewhere.

—OOO—

It was good to see David Maynard at the October meeting along with his partner Diane Hooper (visitor) from Canada.

David and Diane will be relocating to Canada in March 2023 we wish them well.

Lets hope David will join us on our Zoom meetings, I am sure Bob Maynard will guide him through the process, Bob has been in Canada for a number of years.

—OOO—

A very happy Christmas to one and all

MAP OF "DISTRICT"

Showing parishes for "Family Roots" local research.

Map reproduced by kind permission of East Sussex County Record Office.

Alciston * Alfriston * Arlington * Berwick * Bishopstone * Chalvington * Chiddingly * Dallington * East Blatchington * East Dean * East Hoathly * Eastbourne * Folkington* Friston * Glynde * Hailsham * Heathfield * Hellingly* Herstmonceux * Hooe * Jevington * Laughton * Litlington * Lullington * Ninfield * Pevensey * Ringmer *Ripe* Seaford* Selmeston* Warbleton * Wartling *Westdean * West Firle *Westham * Willingdon * Wilmington.

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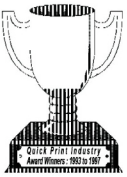

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