



Family Roots

Family History Society for Eastbourne & District

www.eastbournefhs.org.uk



St. Mary's Eastbourne Clock

Vol. 39.2 November 2024



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We have four vacancies. Why not join us?

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

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(With s.a.e. Please)

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CONTENTS

FAMILY ROOTS IS LOOKING FOR A NEW TREASURER.....	42
EAST SUSSEX WOMEN AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR.....	42
A FINE DAY IN HURSTPIERPOINT –	48
IS YOUR SURNAME ‘RIDGE’?.....	51
ELIZABETH BROCKHURST.....	51
LOOKING AT THE GRAFFITI IN ST MARY’S CHURCH, OLD TOWN	52
ERNEST AND THE CLOCK CASE	53
WHERE DID YOUR SURNAME ORIGINALLY COME FROM?	59
“OUR SECOND HOME - THE STORY OF BUSHY WOOD”	61
REGINALD HARROLD (BOB) BROWN RE.....	63
MILK BOTTLE TOPS.....	66
STAGECOACH ROUTE 701.....	66
COLLECTING POSTCARDS	67
IT AIN’T NECESSARILY SO.	74
FORTHCOMING TALKS.....	78
ONLINE RESOURCES AND EVENTS.	79

The cover image © Rosalind Hodge



LEST WE FORGET
Hampden Park Memorial

Image © John Tyhurst.

**R H Brown,
RE.**

*See my article
page 63 Ed.*



Editorial

A busy time in respect of producing a new CD and updating the 'Index of Names on CD' for the website.

Family Roots produced a booklet back in 1995 transcribed by Len Medhurst 'The Parish Records for St. Mary's Parish Church, Hailsham, Sussex.' it has now been revised and updated by John Tyhurst for CD. It will be available at meetings or from our online shop.

This has now resulted in my updating our online database, removing all (I hope) duplicate records and inserting the details of the new CD; the database now has over 69400 data lines, I can say this was no mean feat.

John Crane and some members transcribed records from the Eastbourne Chronicle over a number of years at the Eastbourne library these were on microfich, I hope to with the help of John Crane see if there is enough information to produce a CD. There is another CD that needs to be included in the database, 'BMDs from the Eastbourne Gazette' which I have been putting off due to a website database table issue which has now been resolved.....watch this space.

Thank you to those of you that pointed out my error saying the cover image for the last edition was St. Elizabeth's Church, it was in fact St. Mary's Church.

Till next time John Titmuss

FAMILY ROOTS IS LOOKING FOR A NEW TREASURER

Jenny Wootton, who has been Treasurer of Family Roots for 30 years, announced at the last Annual General Meeting that she wishes to retire in April 2025. Could you take on this role? Basic bookkeeping skills would be an advantage, but the main responsibilities are handling money from the meetings and paying it into the bank, as well as paying the bills, most of which are now done by online banking. If you are interested and feel this is something you could do, please speak to Jenny or one of the other committee members.

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EAST SUSSEX WOMEN AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Family Roots Zoom meeting – Thursday, 6th June 2024

Speaker: Chris Kempshall

By: Jenny Wootton

Chris's talk aimed to dispel the popular image of life for women in the First World War, as portrayed through the media, where at the start of the war women were expected to wait patiently at home, keep house and look after the family, as 'the war would be over by Christmas'.

Life was hard, unless you were rich enough to have servants, especially for working-class women, juggling the double burden of home and work. The main women's occupations in 1914 were in service, in the textile industry, banking and cleaning, and all were low paid. It was the time of

the Suffrage Movement when women were fighting for the vote and equal rights, and it was a time of social change.

There are photographs on women in the early days of the war handing out white feathers to men who had not enlisted. “Little Mother” pamphlets were issued imploring men to join the army. These were probably issued by the War Office and they produced a backlash of animosity from men against women, but as the war progressed and more men were sent to the front, women started to take on the jobs of men who had gone off to fight.

World War 1 saw profound changes in society especially for working class women. Britain began losing the war because of the lack of armament production. Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force, reported a desperate shortage of shells during the battles on the Somme and suggested the need for more labour in the munitions factories at home. As hundreds of thousands of men were called up women were drawn in to fulfil some of their roles in vital industries to keep the country going, including dangerous work in the munitions factories. Allen West & Co in Brighton was one company that was taken over by the Government and turned their manufacturing over to producing artillery shells and fuses.

Queen Alexandra’s military nurses worked alongside doctors behind the front line to give immediate medical aid to wounded soldiers before they

were returned home. The work was exhausting and dangerous but they were a very small unit and it soon became obvious that more nurses were needed. Thousands of young women joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) to provide nursing care though many had little medical training.

Women were already employed as nurses at home, but their medical skills were now needed to look after the wounded returning from the front. Their work was much needed at the Summerdown Camp in Eastbourne. The Almeric Paget Military Massage Corps was started during the First World War, offering physiotherapy treatment in the form of massage and electrical stimulus to aid recovery, and once fit enough to fight men were returned to the battlefields in Europe.

More and more women were employed to support the infrastructure at home as the men were taken off to fight. They took on the role of post women, making regular postal deliveries several times a day. Post men were particularly targeted for army recruitment as they were young and fit. Rail ticket operators, tram drivers, forestry workers were all areas women were employed to take over from men. There was a Women's Forestry Corps which were tasked with the heavy manual labour of chopping down trees, as wood was a vital material needed in industry. Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps was formed in 1917 as a non-combatant service and worked in France behind the lines, freeing up

men from administrative roles to allow them to fight.

There was a huge increase in the employment of women in some occupations at home such as government establishments and finance, but there was also a decrease in the numbers of women going into service. Women found they had more time for recreation, and football became a very popular sport.

Did women enjoy war work? The woman's role had always been identified as looking after the home and the fact that they were taking over factory work from men was not popular with the male-dominated labour unions. Women were paid less than their male counterparts and in many cases the work was diluted so that often three women would take on the task of one man. Trade Unions shut the door on women employees, so they did not receive any of the benefits of union solidarity.

Many girls found working in industry liberating and having more freedom and money to spend often led to 'giddy' factory girls spending their money in pubs. A Women's Police Service was formed to help keep order among women in the factories and persuade them not to fritter away the money they earned.

Those working in the munitions factories became known as 'canary girls', as the use of cordite in the work tended to turn their skin yellow.

The work was mainly done by lower class girls which made them easy to identify and they were often shunned by middle-class women. It was

very dangerous work. There were several explosions in these factories which killed many women, but these were never reported as the Defence of the Realm Act closed down any negative publicity.

In the late Victorian and early Edwardian period large families were normal and it was not uncommon for mothers to send three, four or even more sons off to the war. Mothers of more than three fighting men became recognised as 'Mothers of the Empire'. The Carey family from Bexhill had six serving sons in the First World War, two of whom were killed in action. The Battle of Boar's Head on 30 June 1916 became known as "the Day Sussex Died" because of the loss of over 350 men from the Royal Sussex Regiment who had fought in that battle, including 12 sets of brothers and three sons from one family.

Everyone in the local communities would have known the families. By then the post deliveries had been taken on by women, and women would have had the sad task of delivering death letters to those families, when they would also have mourned with those mothers.

As wounded soldiers were passed through clearing stations abroad and were sent home to recover, they would have returned through Sussex to be cared for in military hospitals up and down the country.

Just as the war was ending in 1918 the influenza pandemic, known as the 'Spanish 'flu', started. It came across in three waves, and the second wave in July 1918 was the most dangerous and killed hundreds of

thousands. Nurses already caring for the sick and wounded were particularly badly affected, especially in Brighton where they suffered an acute shortage of nurses during that period.

When the war finally ended in 1919 and men returned home 775,000 women were given the sack to allow men back into their civilian jobs. Many other activities that women had taken part in also ceased. Women's football was banned and female teams were not allowed to play on men's pitches, so women's football became extinct.

One of the positive outcomes for women following the war was that they were allowed to vote. The Suffragette Movement had been promoting the rights of women and raising popular support in 1914, but their more militant action had caused problems for the government. Changes in society meant the war allowed a new degree of organisation. Middle-class and upper-class women began to bind together to support suffrage, which led to the passing of the Representation of the People Act 1918 giving women over 30 the right to vote, if they met the minimum property qualifications, but it was not a complete success.

In 1918 8.4 million women got the vote, mainly older middle-class women. The huge swathe of working-class women, who had worked in factories and on the land during the war to 'keep the home fires burning', got nothing. The Government did not want a resurgence of militant action if the vote was given to all classes, especially as women's

suffrage was still very active in the East End of London supporting working class women throughout the war.

To many it seemed that women were not thought useful even after all their efforts during the war, and it was not until the new Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act of 1928 that the franchise was given to everyone, male and female, over 21 years of age.

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**A FINE DAY IN HURSTPIERPOINT –
the diary of Thomas Marchant 1714 -1728**

Published by the Hurst History Study Group 2005

Editor Anthony Bower ISBN 1-4116-4566-9

Contributed By: Peggy Westwood

Think your ancestors can only be found in Parish Records or maybe a will, they may also appear in someone's diary and it is worth looking to see if there are any diaries in their area.

In the early days of researching my Sussex family I found one of my ancestors was Ann Marchant (1788 to 1867). She lived in Hurstpierpoint and was married to a miller Henry Pierce. My daughter and I started to look for Marchant ancestors. One day my daughter was in the East Sussex Record Office in Lewes, when a man asked if she was researching the Marchant family from Hurstpierpoint. He turned out to be Anthony Bower the editor of The Marchant Diary. At this point in time the diary

wasn't complete and it was believed the other part was at Yale University. This was incorrect and was found to be owned by Mr R H M Kelsey. Mr Kelsey agreed to lend his copy to the West Sussex Record Office, Chichester for a few weeks and two independent copies were made of it. Thomas Marchant, a yeoman farmer, kept his diary from 29th September 1714 until 7th September 1728. Thomas died on 14th September. It is an amazing record of life in rural Sussex. Every day he records the weather. He describes the daily life of running a farm in detail through the work carried out on his land complete with names of the workers.

A typical example is:

“The 18th January Fryday A fine day but cold, a frost last night. George West thrasht wheat, John Gun barley, John Edwards pease.’

One of my ancestors James Pierce, a cooper, is mentioned: 17th December 1714 Thursday “Paid James Pierce 1shilling in the morning”. Thomas also had stew ponds containing fish that he checked regularly. It is possible he may have sold fish to nearby communities as well as keeping fish for his own use.

The diary also provides an image of the life of a man of Thomas' status. He was a sidesman at church but he is inclined to have headaches on a Sunday. When he goes to church he records the name of the preacher. He visits Petworth House to have a meal and also visits another important house in the Hurstpierpoint area, Danny House. In a time without easy

means of communication, he travels to many places in the area including Brighthelmstone, now Brighton. These are quite social occasions and involve much eating and drinking. These journeys are also necessary for the payment of debts and the collection of dues.

On the 10th August 1715 he records “Paid my cousin Peter Marchant £1 7s 6d for a wig.” so we know that he wore a wig.

Visits to Lewes were also social occasions when he met up with other men and often stayed over night. The road he would have taken to Lewes still runs below the North side of the Downs through Ditchling, Westmeston, Plumpton to Cooksbridge. It is tarmacked now but little has changed.

There is also a political reference. On the 12th January 1714 Thomas writes “I gave Mr Dodson 1s for which he is to give me 10s if both the Tory candidates are chosen at the ensuing election. Mr Healy took a shilling of Mr Richard Whitpaine upon the same terms.”

One task was to find out how or if Anne Marchant was connected to Thomas. It turned out Ann's 3x Great Grandfather was John Marchant who was a cousin of Thomas Marchant. He is mentioned in the diary:
23rd April 1721 Sunday.

“My cousin John Marchant of Lox and I at the Swan”.

The 'Lox' is significant because my Mum knew her great grandmother and she could remember being told that Locks Farm (Lox) by

Hurstpierpoint had been in our family.

There is a Marchant's Cottage in Motcombe Road, Eastbourne and I have often wondered if it is connected to the Marchant family from Hurstpierpoint. I have a record of one reference to Eastbourne, Cousin Henry Marchant's son of Bourne (Eastbourne).

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IS YOUR SURNAME ‘RIDGE’?

Contributed By: Brenda Kenward

If there is anyone amongst our members with the surname of Ridge or has someone of that name in a family tree, I have a book which I would be happy to pass on. It is the story of the Ridge family in Sussex from 1500 to 1975 and may be of interest.

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ELIZABETH BROCKHURST

Contributed By: Brenda Kenward

This item is a follow-up to an article previously submitted by Helen in May 2021 Volume 35 issue 4. It concerns Miss Elizabeth Brockhurst and her research in the Old Town area. Sid and I were next door neighbours to Elizabeth when we were first married - no. 42 Brightland Road was our first home together - and we knew her as ‘Betty’. Apart from the research detailed in the article, I thought that readers might be interested

to know that Betty also wrote a book called ‘The Grand Parade Murder of 1860 and subsequent events there’. It was published by the Eastbourne Local History Society in 1984. I have a copy if anyone wishes to look at it.

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LOOKING AT THE GRAFFITI IN ST MARY’S CHURCH, OLD TOWN

Family Roots outdoor meeting – Thursday, 4th July 2024

Speaker: Jo Seaman

By: Jenny Wootton

For our outdoor meeting in July we met in St Mary’s Church, Old Town, the parish church of Eastbourne. Jo Seaman gave us an illustrated presentation of the graffiti decorating the walls and pillars of the church and described it as having more graffiti than any other cathedral or church in England. St Mary’s had not suffered ‘restoration’ in the late Victorian period as so many other churches in the area, which covered up any interesting marks, and most of the graffiti was still clearly visible.

Nearly every pillar and wall had some form of graffiti marks, the chancel in particular was covered all round the pillars and heads of the arches with symbols of dolphin-type fish. The fish is an ancient symbol of baptism, but possibly Eastbourne’s proximity to the sea may have had something to do with why there are so many. In other places in the nave of St Mary’s

there were other symbols that were possibly to ward off evil, such as daisy-wheels or hexafoils and crosses, or marks made by craftsmen who had worked on the church. On one pillar there is an arrangement of seven geometrically interlaced circles, and in other places names or initials could be identified.

After his presentation Jo encouraged us to walk round the church looking for some of the graffiti, and with the aid of torches and mobile phones he helped us find some of the most interesting ones. It was a fascinating evening

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ERNEST AND THE CLOCK CASE

Contributed by: Rosalind Hodge

At our July meeting held in Eastbourne Parish Church Jo Seaman gave us a fascinating presentation on Church graffiti. He explained that this isn't always medieval or of a great age as relatively modern examples are also of historic interest.

Bellringers are fortunate to have the chance to see areas of the church generally not open to the public. So, I always look for any interesting inscriptions when climbing up in different church towers. The tower of St Mary's Eastbourne not only houses the eight bells but also the turret clock. Situated on the 2nd floor between the ringing chamber and the belfry, the clock weights are still wound by hand,

likewise the chiming mechanism. It is dated 1820, made by clockmakers Thwaites & Reed who can trace their company back to the first decade of the 1600s. Still in business, the company claims to be the oldest clock manufacturing company in the world. Thwaites made the clock in Horse Guards' Parade, which strikes during the annual Trooping of the Colour. The Eastbourne clock is housed in a wooden case with hinged doors and written on the inside of the doors are numerous facts mostly associated with the Second World War. The inscriptions of what are now considered historic graffiti are the work of Ernest Gordon Roland Lee.

I photographed and started looking at these inscriptions and was curious to try and find out something about this young man.

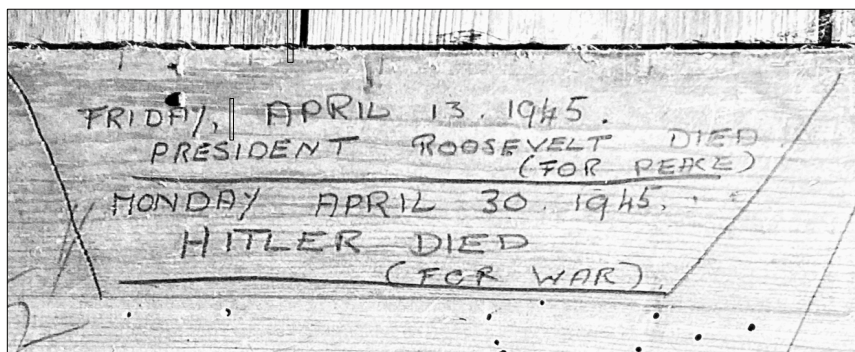
Ernest was born in Victoria Drive Eastbourne on 27 March 1926, the third child and second son of George William Lee and Winifred Jane née Baker who married at St Mary's Eastbourne on 5 Dec 1920. George Lee worked for the railway and the family moved around living at a number of different addresses in Eastbourne and Polegate: Hut C 19 Victoria Drive, 87 & 93 Royal Sussex Crescent, 127 West Close Polegate, Naseby Villa Pevensey Road Polegate, 4 Gilda Crescent Polegate and 17 Church Street Eastbourne before moving to 8 Wharf Road in 1946.

In the 1939 register Ernest aged 13 is recorded as a patient, incapacitated, in the Newhaven Public Institution and Infirmary. At the same time his father George was recorded as a patient in St Mary's Hospital Eastbourne.

Ernest married Denise Peggy Blanch Budgen of 'The Hermitage' Berwick in the summer of 1950 and they set up home in Portsmouth where four children, two sons and two daughters were born between 1952 and 1959. Ernest's death aged 65 years was registered at Eastbourne in July 1991. Ernest had two older siblings Robert William b. 9 Jan 1922 who married Constance Windsor in 1944 at Hendon and his death was registered in Eastbourne 1996. A sister Winifred Hilda b. 13 Dec 1923 married Ronald Stares 1945 in Eastbourne and died in Chichester 1994 where it seems she lived following her marriage

On the clock case doors Ernest covered events that took place between 1939-1950. It seems he wrote most of the facts in 1947 and not at the time the events occurred. He identified himself by writing: "Dates recorded by E. G. R. Lee 1947, 8 Wharf Rd. Eastbourne" and also recorded his twentieth and twenty-first birthdays on 27 March 1946 and 1947 and Christmas for the years 1946, 1947 & 1948.

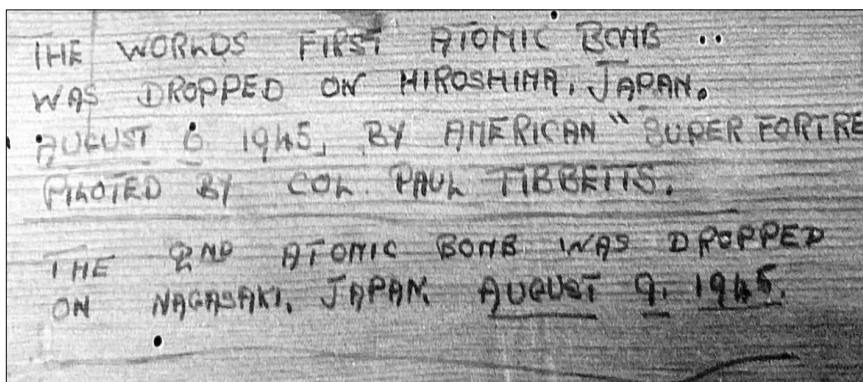
Ernest used pencil to list events one below the other but not in chronological order. Top of the list he writes: "Sept 3 1939 World War No.2 declared". The next event jumps to the end of the war, 1945, as he records "April 13 1945 President Roosevelt died (For Peace), Monday April 30 1945 Adolf Hitler died (For War)". Those two facts are recorded twice, once on each of the doors. I found he made errors with some dates, as Roosevelt's death should read the twelfth.



Another error is in his next entry “June 6 1945, Second Front opened in France”. This was of course ‘D Day’ and should be 1944. Working down the list: “Monday April 23 Soviet Army reached Berlin, Thurs April 26 Berlin surrounded by Soviets”. Next inscription: “Dec 7 1941 Pearl Harbour Bombed by Japs”. Below this on the list is, “March 4 1944 Eastbourne was bombed by 16 German Fighter Bombers”. There is no record of bombing in Eastbourne on this date so I can only assume he must be referring to the bombing raid of 7 March 1943 when 15 Messerschmitt and Focke-Wulf bombed the town killing 14 including two women in Ocklynge Cemetery, injuring more than 50 and destroying many buildings, among them Barclays Bank in Terminus Road. He records “Monday May 7 1945 Germany Surrendered, Friday May 11 1945 First German U-Boat to surrender arrived at Weymouth”. This event is recorded in several other sources as happening in Weymouth Bay on Thursday 10 May. Ernest then goes back to 1942, “November 22 1942 The first convoy passed along the Alaskan Highway, took 4 months

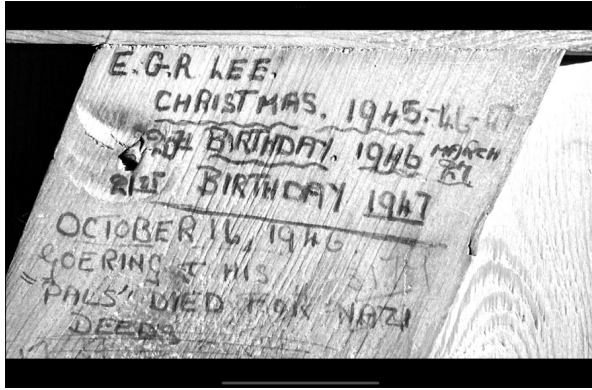
to build". The Highway took 8 months to build and was opened on the twentieth not twenty-second. These inscriptions all appear to be written with the same pencil and look consistent so probably written at the same time, as they are not in date order. Added beneath the list in an obviously different pencil and slightly smaller writing is: "First bomb on British soil Orkneys 13 Nov 1939". The date is correct but the island is wrong as the first bomb dropped at Sullom, Shetland Isles not Orkney.

He wrote above the list of events in a different darker pencil, "The World's First Atom Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan August 1945, by American "Super Fortress" piloted by Col. Paul Tibetts, the 2nd Atomic Bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan August 9, 1945".



Ernest records a number of deaths on various areas of the doors including that of Lord Haw-Haw - "William Joyce British Arch Traitor hung Wandsworth prison at 9am Jan 3 1946 for High Treason"; "16 Oct 1946 Georing & his Pals died for Nazi deeds". Georing committed suicide on 15 October 1946. "Count Foulke Bernadotte murdered by the Jewish

Stern Gang Sept 11 1948". Again the date is wrong as Benadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem on 17 Sept 1948. "January 9 - 1949 Tommy



Handley died, ITMA".

Ernest added the interesting information about Simon the famous ship's cat that was awarded the Dickin Medal in August 1949, commonly referred to as the Animals' Victoria Cross. He died suddenly twenty-eighth November, not the twenty-ninth as recorded on the clock case.

"November 29 - 1949 'Simon' the V.C. cat from HMS 'Amethyst' joined his immortal friends, His name liveth". The last date recorded is, "George Bernard Shaw died 2-11-50 R.I.P."

I just wonder how Ernest came to write all these facts on the clock case.

In going to so much trouble to record all these events I find it very strange that he made a minimum of ten errors with the dates and locations.

Jo mentioned the writing on the clock case had been the work of the Verger but Ernest was never Verger. It is recorded that the Verger at St Mary's Eastbourne at this time, for 12 years living in the Old Parsonage,

was Mr Albert Percy Fancutt Lofting. Ernest obviously had access up into the tower but my research into his connections with St Mary's have drawn a blank as no one at the church has any knowledge or information about him.

Possibly there are relations living in the area and Ernest's children born in the 1950s probably still survive. I wonder if any of his relatives know of his writings on the St Mary's church clock case.

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WHERE DID YOUR SURNAME ORIGINALLY COME FROM?

Contributed by: Helen Warren

Have you ever wondered about the origins of your surname? We have the Norman Conquest to thank for the introduction of the family name. They brought with them a passion for administration, the cataloguing of individuals and places for tax purposes, legal documents and the transfer of property. Norman landholders and their households were increasingly referred to not only by their given name, which we would call their first name but also by a surname.

A surname could indicate a person's place of origin, or a nickname based on a personal trait, or appearance. Others were given a name that denoted their high office or even their part in a mystery play!

During the twelfth and eleventh centuries most people lived in the

countryside. The place where someone lived or worked often became a surname. For example wood, green, lane and kirk (church). Directions such as west or east were also used, e.g. Westwood. Prepositions such as ‘under’, ‘at’ or ‘atte’ (at the) were added to words describing landmarks to distinguish between local people, creating surnames such as Underhill and Atwell.

Rural occupations also provided a useful way to mark out a person’s identity. Smith, for example, was a well-regarded trade and is still the most common surname in Britain along with other stalwarts such as Taylor, Wright (a carpenter or joiner) and Clark (a cleric). Other ‘job’ names are: Sadler, Glover, Butcher, Baker, Miller, Shepherd, Fletcher, Chandler, Tanner, Turner and Potter. Less obvious are Skipper (basket maker), Kellogg (pig butcher), Pinder (person in charge of the village livestock pound or pinfold) and Hoggard (guardian of young sheep or pigs). Long forgotten rural trades also live on in names such as Arkwright (someone who makes chests), Clower (a nailmaker) and Palfrey (someone in charge of saddles).

Every stage of textile production is found in names such as Webb, Webster, Webber (all meaning weaver), Spinner, Carder, Comber, Kemp and Kempster. There is also Fuller and Walker jobs involved with fulling or shrinking cloth by tramping it in water. Dyer, Dexter and Lister all refer to textile production.

When we moved to Sussex I learnt about William De Warren, Earl of Surrey, who was one of the Norman lords serving William the Conqueror and living in Lewes Castle. I wrongly surmised that this was the origin of our Warren surname. Unfortunately, the truth is probably that John's ancestor was employed in another rural trade popular with the Normans, a rabbit warren keeper!

Look into the origin of your surname and you may be surprised.

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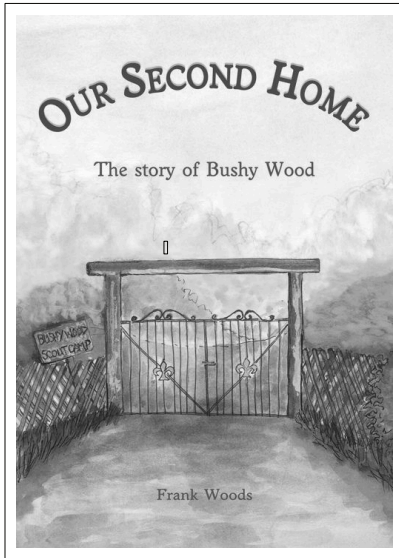
“OUR SECOND HOME - THE STORY OF BUSHY WOOD”

by Frank Woods

Book Review by Helen Warren

This recently, self-published book by Eastbourne resident Frank Woods is not about family history but it may be of interest if you have family that were part of the local scouting fraternity.

All visitors to Bushy Wood, near the Hailsham turn on the A22, soon discover what a delightful place it is and what great facilities it offers. But how did it come about? Who were all those people who transformed this woodland into a campsite commemorated with photos, plaques and memorials? This book gives a complete record of the site's development with reports about the important events that took place combined with much associated history of Eastbourne District Scouts.



Frank's book is a labour of love which has taken him 20 years to write, it is also a mighty tome of 356 pages and weighs over 1 ½ kilos! It tells how in 1959, Eastbourne Scouts purchased the woodland as a campsite, after many years of searching. Improvements, landscaping and new buildings continued over the years. Now well

maintained with modern facilities it welcomes groups of young people from far and wide.

The book is not only a record of the site's development but also includes many colour and monotone photos of people and events. It retails for £20 (or more if you wish) with all proceeds going directly to Bushy Wood. Copies can be purchased from the Bushy Wood shop either in person or online via the website www.bushywoodtreetops.co.uk.

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REGINALD HARROLD (BOB) BROWN RE

Contributed By: John Titmuss



My late brother had been researching our family history for a good many years but, one piece of information eluded him.

He was unable to find out exactly how our uncle died in WW2, the information he had in the family tree was -

'Enlisted into Royal Engineers as Boy on 7 January 1924 at Guildford. Army Number is 1866030. Trained as a Carpenter & Joiner. Posted to Gibraltar 9 Oct 1931. Return to UK 25 Apr 1934. Transferred to Reserve on 25 March 1935. Re-engaged on Reserve for further 4 years on 26 March 1939. Mobilised and recalled 15 June 1939. To Reserve 14 Aug 1939. Mobilised 1 Sep 1939. Joined 7 Field Company RE, to BEF France 19 Sep 1939. To UK from France 1 June 1940, Promoted Lance Corporal 28 Jan 1941, Corporal 12 July 1941, Sergeant 10 March 1943. Embarked from UK 3 June 1944 with 17 Field Company RE. Killed as the result of a Battle Accident at Caen on Tuesday 27 June 1944. . La Deliverande War cemetery, Douvres, Calvados, France. Grave VIII G8.'

Now this was a lot of useful information but only showed 'death was the result of a battle accident'.

To find out more I joined WW2talk.com forum that had been talking about 17 Field Company in WW2, I posted a request asking for help to find out what they were actually doing on the 27th June 1944 but got no replies.

I attended my brother's funeral on 12th July this year and got talking to a family friend, we were talking family history as you do; I said we were having trouble finding out how uncle 'Bob' was killed he said he knew someone that could help.

A couple of weeks later up popped an email with the following -

'In a nutshell... 17th Fd Coy RE were posted to France/Belgium with the BEF in September 1939, where they remained until the retreat to Dunkirk in May 1940. They were then training and preparing for 'the invasion', wherever or whenever that was to be. In fact they were due to take part in the Italy campaign but missed out as the Canadians didn't want to be overshadowed by the Americans, so they got selected instead...

After training and preparation in Britain (Scotland - Fort George) they took part in the Normandy landings on D-Day, landing on Sword Beach. It landed from LCTs in three groups at H+2hours, H+4hours and H+6 hours. Its primary task was to establish a route to 6 Airborne Divisions

area by clearing a two way wheeled vehicle route to the River Orne at Benouville. Constructing and operating Class 5 Ferries over the River Orne. Constructing and maintaining Class 40 Bailey Bridges over the River Orne and Caen Canal.

17 Field Company June 1944 War Diary covering their actions around Benouville including laying minefields and Bailey Bridges. National Archive Reference: WO 171/1518.

26 Jun The Bde (Brigade) area was once more shelled and the Chateau De Beauville was once more set on fire.

The D+11 vehs (vehicles) arrived and were immediately dug in.

All veh loading was adjusted from assault scales to G 1098.

Enemy aircraft took advantage of low clouds to make sneak raids.

27 Jun In an accident during mine clearance experiments with German Schu mines Lieut RALPH was slightly wounded L/Sjt BROWN was killed and 6 ORs were wounded.

Lieut E W SPARK took over 1 Pl and Lieut W H EDWARDS took over 3 Pl.

Bob's Granddaughter has since found this

'17th Field were the 6th/7th group to land on Sword beach. It is not possible to say how many of the original group survived WW2 as many would have moved into and out of the 17th during the duration of the war'

Well that's one brick wall less!

MILK BOTTLE TOPS

This from the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital

We're very sorry to say that we are currently no longer able to accept milk bottle tops for recycling, either at the Friends Shop or at the residential address where many of you used to drop bags off. Please do pass this message on to anyone you know who would normally send their bottle tops our way.

We will update if we become aware of somewhere else that can do this recycling. Or, if anyone reading this would like to volunteer and play a vital role in recycling these and fundraising for us then please do make contact with the Friends Office: esh-tr.friendsdgh@nhs.net

PLEASE NOTE

Thersa will still be collecting your bottle tops at meetings in the hope someone will take over this worthwhile task.

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STAGECOACH ROUTE 701

The new bus route 701 which was announced in March this year and went from Eastbourne to Brighton via Falmer (for the Keep) is being suspended until the New Year.

Brighton and Hove Route 28 will get you to Falmer. Leave Eastbourne stop G2 (Gildredge Road) at 09.36 will get to Falmer at 11.06.

So you can still use your bus pass.

COLLECTING POSTCARDS

Speaker: Kevin Gordon

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 5th September 2024

By: Jenny Wootton.

Kevin divided his talk into three sections: the origin of the postcard as a means of communication; the ‘golden age’ of picture postcards 1904-05; and details of some of the publishers and artists.

The Factory Act in 1802 aimed at improving conditions for factory workers, including basic education for young workers, teaching the compulsory three ‘Rs’, which meant more people were able to read and write. The introduction of the penny post in 1840 made the writing of letters cheaper to post. With several deliveries a day writing a quick note in the morning to announce your arrival later that same day guaranteed that the letter would arrive before you did.

In 1869 Dr Emanuel Hermann, an Austrian professor, introduced a plain pre-paid card with space for an address and a short message. They were an immediate success and sold over a million in three months. In 1870 the British postal system introduced a plain card pre-stamped with a halfpenny stamp, and that same year saw the production of the first cards containing pictures.

When the Eiffel Tower opened in 1889 picture postcards of the tower were issued for tourists and posted from there. Other attractions and exhibitions produced picture postcards to commemorate the event, such as the Royal Naval Exhibition in 1891. Strict regulations governed the use of these early cards as you were only allowed to write the address on the plain reverse, with the picture on the front but no space left for writing a message. Some pictures were slightly offset allowing space at the bottom or side of the picture for a short message. In Germany larger cards were produced which gave a larger blank space for writing on the front. Millions of postcards were imported from Europe because the printing was cheaper there until the start of the First World War.

Raphael Tuck started producing postcards in Britain in 1899 with an undivided back which could only be used for the address and showing artist's views of London and other places in Britain on the front, some with a space beneath the picture for a message.

The 'golden age' of postcard collecting began in 1904 when people started collecting the cards as a hobby rather than just using them as a means of communication. Collections of local views became

very popular, as did photographs of family members produced as a postcard, for example of family weddings and bar mitzvahs, which could then be sent to other members of the family. Whenever there was a major event or exhibition hundreds of commemorative postcards were rapidly produced. Postcards from the turn of the 20th century can be very valuable. The condition of the card is important, but sometimes the subject depicted can make it even more valuable.

There are many different types of postcards – real photographs, art cards, sepia cards, multi-view cards, silk cards. Local photographers often produced cards in small numbers just to see if they were saleable.

Art postcards are not very valuable and are often reproduced from artist paintings. Multi-view cards have very little value as they show several small images of a view and are produced in thousands for the tourist industry. Silk cards show brightly coloured embroidered images produced mainly in the First World War, usually made on the Continent for soldiers to send home to their sweethearts. If the image includes the name of a regiment this can make the card more valuable. Originally the images were hand-embroidered, but later

they were mass produced.

Kevin also showed us examples of HTL (hold to light) cards, which are pierced with holes and when held up to the light show illuminated scenes such as the night sky or Christmas tree with lights. There were stereoscopic view cards showing two images of an almost identical view, which when fitted into a holder showed a 3D image of the scene.

Of the many early postcard producers Kevin showed us examples from James Bamforth, Francis Frith, Judges, Louis Levy and others.

James Bamforth started producing postcards in the early 20th century and became well known for his saucy seaside cards. Many contained innuendo and some were rather rude and had to pass the Blackpool Censorship Board before they could be printed.

Francis Frith was an established Victorian photographer who embarked upon a huge project to photograph every town and village in the United Kingdom, particularly any interesting landmarks or historic buildings. Frith started out taking the photographs himself but as the project progressed, he employed other photographers to

help and he set up his own postcard business, which became the largest photographic studio in the world. All of Frith's postcards are numbered and the Francis Frith Collection was established as an archive, where it is possible to look up the number and find out when and where the photograph was taken.

Fred Judge was a Hastings photographer who took landscape photos of his local area and produced small quantities of the pictures in sepia. They proved so popular he produced them in larger quantities and went on to develop the postcard business Judges, which is still trading and based in Hastings.

Léon & Lévy was a French printer and photographic business based in Paris. They took pictures of every town in France before coming to the United Kingdom in 1904-05. Mistakenly known as 'Louis Levy' cards they are more easily recognised by the official 'LL' logo. They produced thousands of scenes around the UK and the USA.

James Valentine set up a photographic studio in Dundee and was appointed royal photographer to Queen Victoria, who commissioned a series of Highland photographic views. By the early 1900s the company Valentine & Son was producing Christmas cards and

children's books, and in 1908 became the official postcard publisher for the international Franco-British Exhibition. They became a worldwide producer of high-quality Christmas and greetings cards.

Many artists became well known through postcards:

Mabel Lucie Atwell (1879-1964), known for her charming illustrations of children's books, also produced them as postcards. She lived in Eastbourne at one time.

Bruce Bairnsfather (1887-1959) was a prominent British cartoonist, best known for his cartoon character 'Old Bill' which appeared on many WW1 postcards.

Donald McGill (1875-1962) was a water colour artist. He produced over 12,000 different designs for postcards. Most were light-hearted and humorous, but some were considered too saucy and obscene. On occasions he fell foul of local censorship committees and the cards had to be withdrawn from sale.

Louis Wain (1860-1939) is best known for his drawings of cats and kittens, and even after he was committed to an asylum with

schizophrenia he continued to draw.

A.R.Quinton (1853-1934) was an English water colour artist known for his paintings of British villages and landscapes, many of which were produced as postcards.

Anything and everything have appeared on a postcard and can therefore become collectable. Photographs of disasters such as train crashes are popular, and postcards of early 20th century exhibitions are very collectable. So-called 'dirty' postcards of scantily clad ladies were produced in thousands in France and sold to the troops over there during the war. Military postcards also sell well, especially if they mention a particular regiment. A lot were produced in WW1, but WW2 military postcards can be very rare and are therefore more valuable. Postcards featuring suffragettes and the Suffragette Movement are also valuable.

There are regular postcard fairs around the country where you can browse dealer's collections by county and by theme. Postcards are also sold on eBay but one must factor in postage costs. The Picture Postcard Annual lists postcard fairs and details of dealers, as well as articles about collecting.

Sussex Postcards.Info gives a lot of helpful information about collecting Sussex postcards.

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IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO.

Contributed by: John Crane.

Re printed from an earlier edition

In our genealogical searches, we all have experienced that moment of relief and pleasure when we actually find written evidence, be it a document or an inscription, confirming details of a birth, marriage or death. This, we feel, is the real thing – not what we remember Grandma saying, or what Auntie Emily thought she understood her father to have said – but the genuine historical record.

But is this really so? I've come across a number of cases, where these supposedly reliable sources have been wrong on matters of fact.

For instance.....

When tracing my grandfather, John Daniel Jenkins, through the censuses, I was frustrated for a time by his non appearance in 1901. I had discovered him in his home town of Ystalyfera, Glamorgan in 1871 and 1881 and in Jersey in 1891 and I knew that between the 1892 and 1898 he

had lived in Aberystwyth. I was sure he was in Cardiff by the turn of the century, but couldn't find him there or anywhere else. Putting his name into the search engine didn't find him. Eventually, I gave up for the time being on this name and moved on to another branch of the family; his mother's family, the Reeses.

In 1901 I found his uncle, William Rees, who was shown as the head of household at the Cardiff address where I was expecting to find John Daniel. And indeed he was there – but in disguise. An inspection of the family listed showed that every other person (Uncle William and his family and a visiting cousin) had the surname Rees and the enumerator had simply placed a ditto marks after all the Christian names, ignoring the fact that in the middle there was a Jenkins. He was therefore indexed as John Daniel Rees – no wonder I couldn't find him.

Another error I have come across in the census records, is that of my great-aunt, Cecilia Perks, who appears in 1891 as 'Cerelia' Perks. I am convinced this is the correct person as everything else ties in and there is no Cecilia Perks as such recorded in that census. Moreover, the name 'Cerelia' doesn't occur anywhere else in any census. I assume this was bad handwriting and/or careless copying from the enumerated records onto the final version.

And cemetery memorial inscriptions are also sometimes economical with the truth. For example, there is the record of the death of Jacob Rees, a distant great uncle of mine, on a memorial in Llanarthne Churchyard in Carmarthenshire. He is recorded as having died in 1865 when he was aged 51 years. Oh no he wasn't: he was 54. I have seen the original parish records in Carmarthen Archives showing that he was baptised in 1811 – two years before his father first married. In fact, his natural mother is shown in the records as Elizabeth Morgan, who then leaves the family record permanently. The reason for this obfuscation is surely that during the Regency period at the time of his birth in the early 1800s morals were pretty lax and the odd extra-marital offspring was unremarkable, whereas by the middle of the 19th century when he died it was unacceptable (at least to the people who arranged the inscription on the monument) to admit that he was born out of wedlock, so his age was altered to allow him (so to speak) to have been born at the right time.

Another graveyard inscription which I have very recently discovered to be wrong is that on the tablet on the grave of my great-grandmother, Betsy Hull, in Calcutta. Set in stone is the statement that she was born on the 16th of July 1866. But it is wrong; I have her birth certificate showing that she was born on the 16th of June that year. The error here may have

been because she was either never shown her birth certificate or was ashamed of it as it does not include a father's name, showing that she was born illegitimate. And this would certainly be an unwelcome stigma in the second decade of the 20th century in India.

As for certificates of entries, apart from the poor copies sometimes produced from Southport, handwritten or typewritten copies of registers can also produce faulty information. A case in point here is the marriage certificate of my grandparents, Walter James Crane and Mary Ann Hull. I have been caused great difficulty by the fact that the certificate shows Walter's father's name as James and the name of one of the witnesses as James Evelyn Crane. After considerable efforts – including a visit to India – I am convinced that both these names have been wrongly copied, but in this case I do not yet know what the correct versions should be. (To reinforce this view, the officiating cleric's name is shown as 'P. Hipp'. Surely that should be 'Phipp'?)

And while researching my wife's tree, I find that her grandfather on his marriage certificate had stated that his father had been 'David Meredith'. No, he wasn't; I doubt that he knew who his father was; I certainly haven't been able to find him. That parent's name is omitted from his birth certificate and has the name Meredith from his (unmarried) mother.

He seems to have just made up ‘David’ – a name, which actually doesn’t figure in the family tree. But, if you were working backwards from the present to the past as we usually do, this whiteish lie would have caused no end of trouble.

So, we come close to the philosophical question of what is truth? And the answer, in genealogical terms, at least, seems to be that we really can’t be sure. I suppose the moral of all this is that, whatever the information you have, check it against least one other source – and then be prepared to find that it is wrong anyway.

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FORTHCOMING TALKS

Meetings 7pm for 7.30 start, members £1.00 visitors welcome £2.50.

Dec 5th Christmas meeting – share your findings on any aspect of family history including oral histories and family heirlooms. Members are invited to bring along artefacts that have a story to tell or simply items of historic interest. We hope that this will be a light-hearted, informal meeting with a chance to chat to fellow members and visitors, sharing research, photographs and keepsakes.

Jan 2nd Crime on Record: Prison and Criminal Court Records. Gill Blanchard. Zoom meeting - 'Prison and Criminal Court Records.

How to find and use records of criminal ancestors and their victims locally, nationally and online.'

Feb 6th Adding Social History to your Family Tree. Penny Walters. Zoom meeting. 'Adding Social History to your Family Tree.

Social history is concerned with the lives of ordinary people. This talk will help you insert your ancestor or relative in a specific time period and place them with local, national, and world events which had impacts on their lives.'

Mar 6th Back to Basics Family History Helen Rimmer. More details to follow.

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ONLINE RESOURCES AND EVENTS.

Family Tree Magazine have some very good webinars available from £10.00,

From the Family History Federation.

‘Welcome to Explore Your Genealogy

Explore Your Genealogy is a unique educational website developed by the Family History Federation that relates to every aspect of tracing your family history from the very first steps to more complex research.

Its main objective is to promote the study and interest in family history (and associated disciplines including local and social history) in a free-to-access, easy-to-navigate website.

We hope you enjoy your visit to our new website and find it useful. Please revisit regularly because new articles and topics are being added all the

time! <https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com>

West Surrey FHS Family History Fair Saturday 16th November 2024,
10:00-16:30 Woking Leisure Centre, Kingfield Rd, Woking, GU22 9BA

Research Area - Specialist Help Desks - **The following organisations**

have reserved tables: East of London FHS • East Surrey FHS •

*Hampshire Genealogical Society • London Westminster and Middlesex
FHS • Somerset and Dorset • Suffolk FHS • West Middlesex FHS •

*Wiltshire FHS - AGRA (Association of Genealogists and Researchers in
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Publications • The Crafty Genealogist • This Way Books & Cassini

Historical Maps.

More information at <https://www.wsfhs.co.uk/pages/openday.php>

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 *
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* Westham * Willingdon * Wilmington.

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The following titles are obtainable from:

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P & P will be added at checkout and rates will change each time the Royal Mail postage changes.

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