



# THE JOURNAL



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VOLUME 29 : 1

SPRING 2023

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

**PRESIDENT: ELIZABETH STAZICKER MA (OXON), DIPL ARCHIVE ADMIN, FRSA**

**HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS: NED WAYNE & CAROL NOBLE**

**A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION  
REGISTERED CHARITY No. : 278815**

The Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society exists to encourage the study of genealogy, heraldry and family history within the old counties of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, and Huntingdonshire. We reformed on 1 January 2020 when the separate family history societies representing Cambridgeshire (est.1976) and Huntingdonshire (est.1984) amalgamated into a single organization.

We actively support established guidelines for good practice and aim to promote considered, informed and quality research. Our projects teams continue to work to scan, transcribe and index name-rich resources of genealogical interest, to enable researchers to pursue their county ancestors wherever they happen to now live. Volunteer researchers will offer their collective opinion on almost any query.

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*At the time of writing, we've been unable to reopen all public meetings and research surgeries as we'd hoped to do—please look out for updates—we will see you soon*

*In the meantime, stay safe—carry on researching, keep in touch, follow us on facebook & instagram, and contribute your progress, thoughts & queries to the journal*

***For latest news, and updates as the situation further evolves (& resolves)***

***WATCH THE WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER & FACEBOOK***

**CONTACT US (for additional contacts/services see p52-3)**

**All general correspondence via the Secretary, please :**

**secretary@chfhs.org.uk or by post to**

**CHFHS Secretary, 15 Castle Hythe, Ely, Cambs., CB7 4BU**

**(we also have an answer phone 01223-853273—& leave a message)**

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# CAMBS & HUNTS FHS JOURNAL

VOL 29 : 1

SPRING 2023



Welcome to the Spring edition of the CHFHS Journal—this issue opens with— a piece on St Neots Rowing Club from Ian S, prompted by the talk “Tales From The Riverbank” last November. Diane C from Australia describes inheriting photo albums and other memorabilia from her husband’s late Cambridge-born mother, and the quest to identify people depicted. A fascinating account of bakers in Little Downham from Robin P, is followed by a further contribution from Ian S where a chance DNA match leads to an ethical dilemma. Colin A describes identifying a hitherto unacknowledged WWI casualty, and his work to get the man recognised by the CWGC. Using Exning Workhouse (Suffolk!) as an example, CJ reminds us not to forget about what might get overlooked in apparent out-of-county records, especially where the area covered crosses a county boundary. Caz takes a further look at records transcriptions, and how good faith interpretations of squiggles on the page are not an exact science—and therefore often unfair to say a record is “wrong”.

All the regulars features are to be found dotted throughout—projects updates, research surgeries and meetings’ diary (zooming of talks is to continue, to enable a wider participation at meetings); reports of talks; book reviews—& much more

Print too small ?? Try the e-journal—it can be **enlarged** to suit all vision !!

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**cover photo : wedding photo of Robert Willers & Ellen Fordham, 1907**

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## A WORD FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN



### **Nicholas, Lord Hemingford**

It is with great sadness that I learnt of the death of our Patron, Lord Hemingford, on 17 December. I last heard from Nick, as he preferred to be called, in October. When the Huntingdonshire FHS closed at the end of 2019, he kindly agreed to be the CHFHS Patron, and I met him at his home a few times during the handover period. He had a great personal interest and enthusiasm for family history, but I will leave the appreciation to other members, who knew Nick far longer than I did [see next issue].

### **2023 Meetings**

I am very grateful to the 145 members who responded to my email about the future pattern of our meetings and surgeries. I must also thank John Bownass for analysing all the responses. The appreciation of belonging to CHFHS was a consistent message along with the pleasure of reading the journal.

The most significant response was the strong preference for zoom meetings, not just by our overseas and distant members, but also by many local members. This is a common outcome shared by many organisations, as we adjust to life post-Covid. It is clear that zoom is here to stay, even though there are many people who much prefer the face to face and social contact at meetings.

We discussed the results in a committee meeting, and will have the following pattern of meetings for 2023:

Cambridge: these will be a hybrid meetings, both face to face and zoom on the second Saturday of each month at St Andrews Church. We are aware of the technical challenges that hybrid meetings pose, some of you mentioned this in your responses, but we moved to St Andrews because the wi-fi works better than in the library.

March: will continue as a face to face only meeting in the library on the first Tuesday of the month. Numbers attending have returned to a higher level than at our other venues, helped by local members and by refreshments.

Huntingdon: will cease to have face to face meetings because of very low numbers, so on the third Wednesday in the month, we will now have a zoom

only meeting.

All this means that we have one face to face meeting; one hybrid meeting; and one zoom meeting each month. Many of you commented on the timing of meetings and your own commitments. It is clearly not possible to time meetings to suit everyone, but we have one evening meeting; one weekend; and one midweek, so a good mix is provided for different time zones. Many of you were not aware that most meetings apart from face to face are recorded, so, you are able to see the speaker's talk and questions at a convenient time for you, even if you cannot attend. There are now a significant number of talks on our website, and these also provide the opportunity to watch again if you want to think further about the topic covered.

Many subjects were suggested for future meetings. If you know someone who is able to give a talk on one of these subjects, or are able to give a talk yourself, please contact Muriel Halliday, [secretary@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@chfhs.org.uk). Speakers' fees and expenses are paid.

### **2023 Surgeries**

The responses had less to say about our research surgeries as fewer people have first hand experience of these. There were several people who asked for zoom surgeries, as they are unable to come to any of the surgery venues in either Cambridgeshire or Huntingdonshire.

We held what was effectively a zoom surgery on 10 December, when everyone had the chance to submit questions in advance so the topic could be researched, and all those taking part could then share ideas for further work. Although there were only a small number of people attending this zoom session, there were many ideas put forward about finding a baptism or other details for someone who married in 1790. Although some had been investigated by the enquirer and other family historians, others had not, so there were several further sources to check for clues.

The second enquiry was raised during the session, about the parents of somebody born around 1840, only known through her marriage. She had been found in several censuses after marriage, but not before. Behind the scenes checking during the zoom session found the family in the 1841 census, showing her parents and siblings. This had been missed because the transcription was for a slightly different name; the first letter was different, so it would be missed by most search engines. Again, there was a discussion from those present about further avenues to search, and, as with many such discussions, related issues were raised. The benefit of Irish 19th century dog licence records to fill gaps caused by the loss of census returns was new to me.

Although we are no longer holding face to face talks at the WI Hall in

Huntingdon, we will be starting a surgery at a new venue in Huntingdon in January, the Library and Archives Office. The first session will be held on Wednesday 25 January from 13.30 to 16.00, and then monthly, initially for a trial period of three months. This will be an opportunity to visit the Archives Office and the library as well as bringing your questions to committee members at this new surgery venue. The other surgeries will continue, details are on our website.

Coffee Corner provides what is effectively a zoom surgery, but is not well used. The zoom meeting I mentioned suggests you are missing opportunities we already provide to break down some of your brick walls. Why not post your enquiry on Coffee Corner?

### **Newsletter, social media and publicity, help needed**

Marie Whittick, who compiles our monthly newsletters, and posts news about the Society on social media, has had to step down from this role, as her career commitments have increased. Many of you commented in the meetings and surgeries responses that you appreciate the work of committee members, Perhaps I can quote from what Marie wrote, " I have enjoyed very much being a closer part of the society helping it to grow rather than just a member and would recommend it to anyone. It's not until you are involved in the committee that you realise what is undertaken for the society to produce the fantastic journals, website and data."

Please can you all think carefully about what you can do to help your Society. I know many of you already do this, but the rest of you are missing the enjoyment Marie mentions. Publicity is vital for the Society to recruit new members, to share what we are doing, so please contact me or any committee member if you would like to discuss this further without any obligation.

### **Cataloguing the Manchester Collection**

The Duke of Manchester's papers held in the County Archives Office is the most significant uncatalogued collection in their repository and has long been a priority to address. The Society has now provided funding, as have other local organisations, so that the collection can be catalogued; work started in December. Many local residents living near Kimbolton will have worked for the Duke, met his family, or had other links, so the catalogued collection will be an opportunity to find out more about this important local family as well as your own ancestors.

### **Email addresses**

All the committee now have a @chfhs.org.uk address in place of @cfhs.org.uk. Details are in the journal, please update your records. Mail sent to the old addresses will be auto forwarded for a while.

*David Capsey*

# Cambs & Hunts Family History Society

CHFHS is in the process of upgrading our website to, in particular, provide improved access to the society's database of millions of records for Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire research and to introduce a number of new features.

We have also taken the opportunity to adapt the web address and emails to reflect our name since 2020.

The current web address and emails will remain live for a period of time, but we ask you to note that going forward

**the new website / emails will be in use :**

**[www.chfhs.org.uk](http://www.chfhs.org.uk)**

**<email>[@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:email@chfhs.org.uk)**

**an overview of the key features & facilities of the new website  
will follow once we go live**



**The Society offers condolences to the families of :**

**Ann MANNING 6353**

**Alan CLARIDGE 5531**

**Malcolm BYE 5043**

**David MODEN 1054**

**The Lord Hemingford, Patron Cambs & Hunts FHS**

# On the Origins of St Neots Rowing Club

Letter to CHFHS Journal  
from Ian Stephenson—  
re November 2022 talk:  
“Tales From  
The River Bank”

On 16 November Liz Davies, curator of the St Neots Museum, provided a fascinating presentation at the Huntingdon Meeting (and on zoom) about the life of the Great Ouse at St Neots. During the talk Liz stated that whilst St Neots Rowing Club (SNRC) was traditionally considered to have been formed in 1865, that was disproved by a copy of the club's rules dating to 1860 which had been found in the Norris Museum archive.

It is an inevitability that historians (be they family, local, or those dealing with national and international events and personalities) will have to curtail their research at some point and draw conclusions from the available evidence. As such, for those of us who put pen to paper there is always the possibility that new evidence will emerge that brings into question the assumptions that were made and the conclusions drawn. This is such a case. The 1865 formation date is recorded in Eric Davies' excellent 1986 book: 'The History of St Neots Rowing Club'. Eric<sup>1</sup>, as he identified in that book's introduction, had few sources to rely on for the early years of the club; those being newspaper articles and collective memory. His statement that SNRC was formed in 1865 is not supported in his book by reference to any newspaper article (and neither have I found one) and we might therefore conclude that it derived from club tradition. Documented 120 years after the event, it should be no surprise for that tradition to be found wanting. Back in the 1980s researching 19<sup>th</sup> century newspapers for articles for mention of the club would not have been easy and we might imagine that to make his task manageable Eric limited his research to trawling the pages of the St Neots Chronicle and Advertiser. Now, however, with archive document indexes and newspaper publications available online, and searchable for keywords, it is possible to relatively quickly research a broader range of documents and publications.

The St Neots Chronicle and Advertiser of 1 Sep 1860 includes a short report: *'The Rowing Club, - Four of the Gentlemen members of the St. Neots Rowing Club contested the Silver Cup in the four oared match, in the Bedford Regatta, on Tuesday last. Their opponents in the match were the crew of the Cambridge United Servant's Club, and notwithstanding the celebrity of these gentlemen, they only won the race by about half a boat's length. The manner in which the St. Neots crew acquitted themselves was the theme of general admiration.'*



That corroborates the earlier (1860) date for the existence of the SNRC. The regatta was also recorded in the Bedfordshire Times and Independent of 21 Aug, 25 Aug, and 1 Sep 1860, and in the Hertfordshire Express and General Advertiser of 1 Sep; each provides some additional information. Unfortunately none name the SNRC crew members, though it was reported that the St Neots crew had only been in training for a short time. Bedford Regatta, which was held in conjunction with the Bedford Horticultural Show, was open to amateurs from 'all England' and trains were laid on from London and Leicester to cater for the public. In total there were said to be 3,000 visitors to the town of Bedford for the events. Racing was in 4-oared, pair-oared boats and single sculls. Despite the regatta being open to 'all England' there were only entries from Bedford, Cambridge, St Neots, London and Derby,

A year later the Cambridge Independent Press of 3 Aug and 10 Aug 1861 reported on a race between crews from St Neots and Huntingdon Boat Clubs at Offord Reach (a stretch of the Great Ouse between the two towns); whilst the boat type was not identified, it would probably have been four-oared. The first report stated that St Neots won by (a very substantial) 400 yards, but that was corrected the following week after the SNRC secretary had advised the newspaper that the winning distance was (still a significant) 5 or 6 boat lengths. Again, unfortunately, the competing crew members were not named. A final mention of SNRC that I have found from the 1860s is in the 31 May 1862 St Neots Chronicle and Advertiser which reported:

*'... as the Rev H Blagden<sup>ii</sup> was passing Eynesbury Rectory in his boat, and when opposite the hovel under which the boats of St Neots Rowing Club are sheltered, he was startled by a loud crash, and on proceeding to the spot was surprised to find that the hovel itself, which had only been recently erected had fallen in. The fall unfortunately smashed three of the boats, viz, a four oared, a pair-oared outrigger, and a four oared cutter'.*

Perhaps that crisis precipitated the temporary demise of the club, for there seems to be no mention of it in the press until its reformation (as recorded by Eric Davies in his book) in 1873. Then, the St Neots Chronicle and Advertiser (of 11 Oct 1873) commenced its report, thus:

*'Proposed Boat Club.- It has always been a matter of surprise that, with great facilities for aquatic amusement afforded by the splendid river at St Neots, the town has never been able to establish and maintain a first-class boating club ...'.*

Perhaps that statement had helped to reassure Eric Davies of the veracity of the tradition of town rowing commencing in the mid-1860s.

But that is not all. As I mentioned in the Q and A after Liz Davies' presentation, there is evidence of the existence of both St Neots and

Huntingdon Boat Clubs in the 1840s <sup>iii</sup> . In 1843, the Cambridge Chronicle and Journal of 15 Jul reported on a race between the two clubs <sup>iv</sup> from Houghton to Hartford, on the Huntingdon stretch of the Great Ouse - a distance of a mile and a half. The crews are named: for St Neots, F Day, T Amos, H Towgood, E Robinson and cox Logan; and for Huntingdon, BH Puckle, HA Baumgartner, C Veasey jun, E Maule and cox R Margetta. The race on Friday 7 July commenced at 6:30pm with St Neots getting the better of Huntingdon winning by a reported three lengths; the Huntingdon crew losing some of that distance at the start when they were (or allowed themselves to be) blown into the rushes. A letter in the following week's newspaper, from an anonymous St Neots' correspondent calling himself 'Fairplay', suggested that the original report was skewed in a number of respects in favour of Huntingdon, not least that that the winning margin was nearly twice that reported. Regardless, we do learn that the Huntingdon club had only been established that summer, suggesting that the St Neots club was at least a little older.

Of the St Neots crew the stroke, F Day, can be identified from census records: he is probably Francis Day aged 24 at the time of the race, the son of John Hill Day the owner of Days Brewery located close to the river in the town. The name Toogood is also associated with the river; Edward Toogood being the proprietor of the paper mill located on the river just north of St Neots. A possible H Toogood is Henry, Edward's brother, aged 49 at the time of the race (and a stock-broker living in London at the 1841 census); but whilst there seems to be no other candidate, whether it was him is not established. I have not been able to identify either Amos or Robinson. However, *Bell's Life* (see endnote 4) identifies the St Neots cox as Logan, boat-builder of Cambridge - that would be Samuel Logan, then aged about 40; although, how he came to be involved is unexplained <sup>v</sup> . The Huntingdon crew has been easier to identified. Benjamin Hale Puckle and Henry Algernon Baumgartner were both undergraduates at Cambridge, the former graduating in 1843 and the latter the following year. Benjamin was the son of the of Benjamin Puckle rector of nearby Grafham, where Benjamin junior would later become curate and then follow on from his father to be rector. Henry, who was the son of John Thomas Baumgartner MD of Godmanchester, would also go into the priesthood. The newspaper report noted that:

*'The rowing of Mr Puckle and Mr Baumgartner was particularly admired, their practice on the Cam having made them quite au fait with the business'*

Charles Veasey jun was aged 27 at the time of the race and like his father, Charles snr, was a Huntingdon merchant. Edward Moule, aged 26 at the time of the race, was a solicitor's clerk (to his father) in Huntingdon. And, the

coxswain was Robert Margetta a Huntingdon wine merchant and maltster.

There was to be a family connection between the two competing crews, for later in the year in October Charles Veasey jun would marry Catherine Day, sister of Francis Day, in St Neots. It seems reasonable to suppose that this connection was the catalyst for the match. That then raises the question of whether there existed rowing clubs in the two towns at that time, or whether the race was no more than a challenge between two groups of friends. Two years later, in Oct 1845, there was a re-match reported in the 11 Oct Cambridge Independent Press in a substantial one-third column-length article. That article stated that the Huntingdon crew had wanted to have a rematch soon after the original race, but for unspecified reasons was unable to do so; the 1845 race was the rematch. Only Francis Day from the ten competitors of the 1843 race competed in the rematch - which tends to support the case for the existence of town rowing clubs (rather than just races between groups of friends). There was also another Toogood in the St Neots crew (F Toogood, presumably Frederick, the brother of the aforementioned Edward and Henry, who at the 1851 census was also a paper manufacture at Little Paxton). This time the race was held on a mile and a half stretch of the Great Ouse at the Offords. For much of the race the two crews were side-by-side with Huntingdon having the advantage, but as they approached the finish the St Neots crew was able to pull ahead to win by a margin of just one length.

Thus we might say that SNRC can trace its origins to as early as 1843, and probably earlier. Of course, there is no evidence (as yet) to suggest that the club continued in existence from the mid-1840s to late-1850s, and there may well have been a hiatus at that time. Indeed, 19<sup>th</sup> century rowing at St Neots appears to have had a chequered history with periods of inactivity probably from the mid/late-1840s to late-1850s; the early/mid-1860s to 1873; and 1884 to the early-1900s (that is more inactivity than activity during the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Regardless, in 20 years' time the St Neots and Huntingdon clubs will be able to celebrate 200 years of competitive rowing between the two towns - that is unless, in the meantime, evidence of an even earlier challenge is uncovered.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- i Eric Davies had a long, over 50 year, association with SNRC; he had been club chairman and at the time of publication of his book was club president.
- ii Rev Henry Blagden, curate of St Neots between 1860 and 1862.
- iii Note, Huntingdon Boat Club's website records its formation to be in 1854.
- iv The race is also recorded in '*Bells Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*' of 7 Jan 1844 in its Aquatic Chronology of 1843.
- v Perhaps it was Logan who provided the detail of the race to '*Bell's Life*'.

# Family History Found In The Attic (pt 1)

by *Diane Clark*

Many of us are fortunate to have ephemera and memorabilia from past generations—typically books, photos, albums, medals, inscribed books, once-treasured souvenirs and ornaments. Our having these objects is, however, often tinged with sadness, and the loss of the previous owner. No less so, here ...

After my mother-in-law was admitted into residential care my husband, Chris, and I had the less than pleasant task of going through her belongings. We had not been in the house, especially the attic, for many years because she lived in England and we in Australia. After all, you don't tend to rummage about in the attic when visiting family you haven't seen for a long time! This time, though, exploring the attic was a must.

Hidden among all the odds and end like the old bird cages, a fireman's helmet and piles of old newspapers were two photograph albums, a postcard album, several framed family portraits and a medal. "Granddad Willers", Chris's maternal grandfather, had been a budgerigar breeder and it appears that he had won the medal for "The Best Budgerigar" in the 1939 Crystal Palace "National Challenge Show for Cage Birds".



The medal was not the best of our finds though. These were the photograph and postcard albums and the framed portraits. Among the formal portraits was one showing a small girl with her parents and grandparents. Chris recognised his grandfather as a young man so we realised that the child was his mother aged about two years. This was the first time either of us had seen a photograph of Chris's great grandparents or his grandmother. She had died when Chris's mother was eight years old, in about 1916, during the influenza pandemic, leaving daughter Grace to mourn her forever.

*Grace Clark (nee Willers)  
with her parents and grandparents c1910*

The frames for the formal photographs were ornate and heavy, so we removed the photographs to bring back to Australia. Since then, these photographs have lived between the acid-free pages of a photograph album but, nonetheless, they have deteriorated as Grandfather and Grandmother Willers's wedding photograph shows [see front cover photo]. Sadly, we do not know the names of the wedding party other than those of the bride and groom, Robert Willers and Ellen Harriet Fordham. The facial resemblance between all the ladies in the photograph suggests that they are related to the bride and may well be her sisters. The man standing to the left of the groom shows some resemblance to the groom and may be his brother. As I write "may be", I am reminded that researching my late husband's family tree is fast becoming a priority [\*\* see note at end of article].

As well as the photograph albums and the portraits there was an album of postcards, birthday and Christmas cards. Many of the postcards were in mint condition and had never been posted, whilst others had been posted to the recipient, a Miss Gertie Cracknell, who lived at various addresses in London. One wonders if Gertie Cracknell was in service in London. An even bigger puzzle is her relationship to my mother-in-law – Grace Clark (nee Willers).

The postcards were of tourist attractions throughout pre-WWI England and Scotland as well as a small number from the Continent, suggesting that whoever collected them and/or sent them to Gertie had sufficient income to allow them to travel. Some of the later ones were coloured like the one showing the pier and promenade at Rhyl.

The earliest date that I found from the small number of cards I carefully removed from the album was 17 August 1908. Whilst many date from the



First World War years, one card carries the notation "Best wishes Blossom" and is postmarked Egypt 17 December 1912. As well as the cards, there were a small number of photographs of men in uniform, including one with "Erny March '17" scrawled across the bottom, leaving one to wonder if he was the person who sent the postcard from Egypt



during WWI. As to the others, once again their identity has disappeared with the passing of my mother-in-law.

The photograph albums themselves are leather bound and one of them can be closed with a clasp. They are in good condition. The covers of the postcard album, however, had deteriorated and fallen off, leaving the pages exposed. The book itself has been sewn so the pages are holding together. A friend from university days is also a conservator. She did a wonderful job reattaching the covers and tightening them up thus preserving the integrity of the album. She felt that it well worth while making an effort to save the album and its contents.

Our find in the attic had a positive side in that my husband and our son know what their Willers and Fordham ancestors looked like. The sad part of this discovery for my husband, however, was that his mother had never showed him these photographs and albums whilst she was well enough to identify them or tell him the family stories; neither will we ever know why she kept them secret. By the time we found them, her Alzheimer's disease was too far advanced for her to recognise the photographs. As she was an only child and her aunts and uncles had died, there was no-one that Chris knew for us to ask about the Willers – Fordham family history.

*\*\* Diane adds that since writing this article in 2015, some further research has been done, with surprising results as will be revealed in future "Found in the Attic" articles—part 2 will appear in the next issue.)*

	<b>2-4 MARCH 2023</b> <a href="http://www.rootstech.org">www.rootstech.org</a> <b><i>It's not too late to register</i></b>
<p><b>What is RootsTech</b>—the world's largest genealogical conference that brings learning and innovation to all people. Hundreds of classes (both online and in-person) offer something for all family history enthusiasts, from beginners dipping their toes in the water to experienced genealogists going for the deep dive</p> <p><b>Online</b>—RootsTech is a global online event that is provided FREE. The experience will include these opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Connect with millions of people from around the world, and get to know them through the chat feature</li><li>* Choose from over 200 online classes from experts in the field</li><li>* Explore the Expo Hall online, and connect with products and features to help you in your genealogy journey</li><li>* Watch inspiring keynote speakers on the virtual main stage</li></ul> <p><b><a href="https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/rootstech-2023-registration">https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/rootstech-2023-registration</a></b></p>	

# The Lost Bakers of Little Downham

*a contribution from  
Robin Pearl*

A further insight into the history of Little Downham and its residents of the past



In the medieval period baking was a luxury few were able to enjoy. But those who could afford a wood-burning stove (and to heat it) would start with bread. Ovens were not a standard fixture in any household, so breadbaking never really entered the home.

Little Downham court rolls in the early 1300's name a number of bakers, Alan le Baxter, John de Bredenham, Agnes Hasteler, Joanna Hasteler (sister of Agnes), Robert Hasteler, Alice Morris, Robert le Smyth and Christiana Sweyn. Ale and bread, both rich in protein, were important parts of the medieval diet and it was important that when sold they should be up to standard in quality and quantity. The assize of bread and ale was held at every leet court and presentments were made for 'breaking the assize', making or selling bread or ale that was substandard or insufficient in quantity. There were only twenty presentments for poor baking or for selling light weight loaves compared with 258 presentments of brewers or alewives for their various offences.

In 1365 Stephen Frost took over a half land, cote and bakehouse from Robert Rote to rent for six years at 40d a year. In the course of these six years he was twice in court for stealing bread. This suggests that he not only baked the bread himself but that some villagers who made bread at home brought it to him to sell and that in two cases he returned fewer loaves or less money than he should have.

There is then something of a gap in records until the census of 1841 when there are two bakers listed in Little Downham; James Griffiths of Cannon Street and Etches Crawley of Main Street. Etches Crawley became a baker and licensed victualler in the 1861 census and was just listed as a licensed victualler in 1881 just before his death in 1882. He was landlord of the Fox and Hounds on the corner of Main Street and Eagles Lane. The gravestone of his wife Ann is one of the best preserved in St Leonard's churchyard.

In 1861 William Fretwell from Wereham, Norfolk appears in Pymoor (he

married a local girl) as a master baker and grocer, which suggests that he had a shop, but by 1871 he was listed as a miller. In 1891, his son Henry had taken on the business as baker and miller, with an assistant, Henry Eno from Lincolnshire. Also in 1861 Steven Blunt of Haddenham is listed as a baker and miller in Pymoor (he too married a local girl), but by 1871 he had moved to Ely.

By 1891, there were several bakers living in the parish. As well as the Fretwells there was a John Cooper living next door to them and presumably working with them in the mill. Also in 1891 Frederick Taylor was living in Main Street, Little Downham. He passed the business on to his son George who died in 1961 age 70. George was described as of a most cheerful disposition, and a retired master baker who will be best remembered for his regular delivery service over a period of 50 years.

In 1901 there were several new tradesmen: James William Palmer, Frederick Seth Woodward, George Fuller (at 14 was a bakers assistant) and Arthur Sennitt who had an assistant called John Wiseman. Also, in 1910 there was Frederick Warren from Islington, baker and miller, who married local girl Margaret Stevens and lived in Pymoor.



*Holding the horse is John Wiseman, and on the cart are Ben Fuller, Victor Golding and Alfred Saberton. Standing are Olive and Laura Sennitt, with Lily Baker holding Fred Sennitt*

The Fuller family feature above but their business came to an unfortunate end with Horace Fuller as reported in 1928:



"Keen competition, bad debts and illness of self and family, were among the reasons given for his failure by Horace Fuller, lately carrying on Business at Main Street, Little Downham, at his public examination at Cambridge bankruptcy court on Wednesday. In reply to the Official Receiver, debtor said statement of affairs showed liabilities amounting to £486 6s 11d. He estimated his assets would produce £119 18s 1d, leaving a deficiency of £367 8s 9d. He had been employed in the bakery trade most of his life. For two years before the war he served in the regular army and was called up as a reservist when the war broke out. He served until January 1919. He received a small gratuity on demobilisation, but no pension. He went back to the bakery trade after the war and worked for a short time at London, Grimsby and Dereham, and afterwards went into the egg collecting business, but this was never a success. In May he agreed to buy a bakers shop and premises at Little Downham for £900. It was sold as a complete going concern. The amount of business at the shop was always very small, the weekly taking averaging about £15. He took over two horses and a cart with the business. One horse had colic, the other had a stroke and had to be shot. He did the baking when he was able, when he was ill he had a man in from Ely. He also had boys occasionally in the winter to help him on the fen droves. He attributed his failure to keen competition, "there were four of us, much too many for the size of the place". Mr Taylor, another baker in the village, helped him at times."

**SEPTEMBER 22, 1922.**

**BREAD PRICE IN ELY.**

**Down to 8½d. : Another Reduction Probable in a Month.**

**THE BAKERS' POSITION.**

The farmers' announcement relative to opening a bakery aroused considerable interest in the Ely district. During the week bakers have reduced the price of bread by a half-penny per quarter loaf, and at Little Downham a reduction of a penny has been made. It is a singular fact that this latter reduction followed the appearance of an advertisement in the "Ely Standard," in which a farmer sought the services of a baker!

The old windmill at Pymoor Lane was the home of Darby's miller and baker. The Darby family were primarily millers and farmers who employed bakers which may account for the many bakers recorded in the census as living in Pymoor. The Darbys started baking in the 1890s and they first appear in the Little Downham census records as millers in 1891, and in the 1896 street

directory for Pymoor, George Darby is listed in as a miller (steam and wind). George was succeeded by his son Francis George, the first

F. G. W. DARBY PROPRIETOR

**G. DARBY & SON**

MILLERS & BAKERS

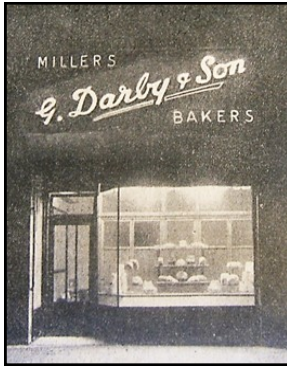
**PYMOOR, ELY,**  
CAMBS.

"BLUE CROSS" BALANCED BATHON FOODS

TELEPHONE: PYMOOR 25  
TELEGRAMS: DARBY, PYMOOR 25

NEW PROCESS BREAD

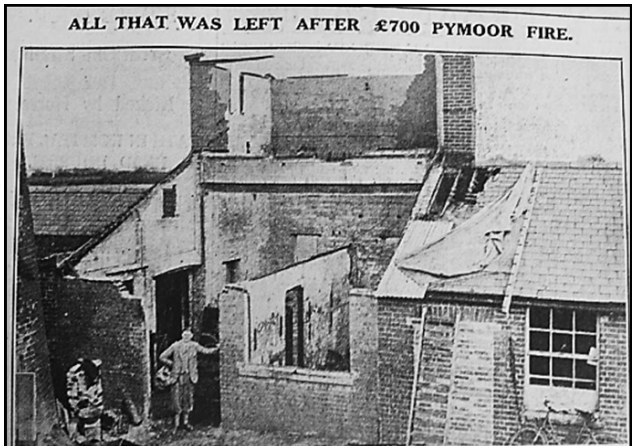
STATIONS: BLACK BANK & PYMOOR SUND LANE



Darby baptised in the parish. In 1932 they opened a shop in Ely which sported the only electric sign in Ely when it opened. The Great Fire of London was started by a fire in a bakery: fortunately when there was a fire at Darby's bakery in 1936 the results were less devastating as reported in the newspaper of the time:

*"A fire, which caused damage amounting to £700, lasted about two and a half hours on Saturday morning at a Pymoor bakery owned by Mr FGW Darby, who trades as Messrs G Darby and Son.*

*The fire was discovered just before six o'clock, when a confectioner in the bakehouse noticed smoke coming from a hole in the wall from the confectionary department. When he opened the door, he saw that the department was on fire and thick clouds of smoke made it impossible for him to go into the building. An attempt was made to put the fire out with an extinguisher, but it was found that the outbreak was rapidly getting out of control, and the confectioner went for Mr Darby, who sent for help from the village and telephoned for Ely fire Brigade, who arrived within 20 minutes of receiving the call. The cause of the outbreak is thought to have been that the fat which was to have been used to fry doughnuts caught on fire. The confectionary department was soon gutted, only the cake mixing machine being saved, and even this will have to be reconditioned before it can be used. The fire then spread to the room where two grist milling machines were placed. The heat was so terrific that the four stones, two weighing one ton each and the other two half a ton each, were cracked and broken in several pieces. The wooden stairs were soon in flames, and a few minutes later the wooden floor collapsed, and with it came several tons of provisions. As far as is known, there were about 55 coombes of maize, 40 cwts of meal mash and 30 cwts of meal. The roof of the stores caved in 10 minutes after the fire was discovered, which gives some idea of the way the flames spread.*



Meanwhile, the rafters of the bakehouse had caught alight, and slates were torn off the roof so that water could be poured onto them. It was only by a superhuman effort on the part of the employees and villagers that the flames were overcome and the bakehouse was saved. Hardly had this part of the outbreak been brought under control than it was seen that the door of the engine room was alight, and flames were licking the walls and rafters. Machinery worth several hundred pounds, as well as about 1000 gallons of fuel oil were in danger, but fortunately the flames were overcome, though not until it was only a few feet from the machinery. The electrical switch board in an adjoining room was absolutely ruined, but the accumulators were saved. The brigade had the fire under control about 7 o'clock, but it was not until 8:30 that all danger was passed. In the confectionary department all the utensils were destroyed, and 500 loaves of bread were spoilt. The fire did not spread to the mill, which was only a few feet away from the engine room, but the heat was so intense that the tar on the mill walls was melted. Mr Darby said that at one time he had given up hope of any of the buildings being saved, and but for the work of the brigade, and the villagers, particularly the lady helpers, the damage must have been considerably greater. The firm have carrying on a bakery business for the past 40 years, but it was not until 15 months ago that it was decided to venture into the confectionary side. They now deliver all over Ely district and employ 10 men, who are working night and day to cope with orders."

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE TIMES'**  
**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27th, 1942.**

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**PYMOOR BAKER'S  
 SUCCESS.**

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**Diploma Gained in  
 National Competition.**

At the National Association of Master Bakers' Bread Exhibition held recently at Caxton Hall, London, Mr. F. Darby, of Pymoor, was awarded a diploma for a loaf of wholemeal bread made and baked at his Pymoor Bakery.

There were 5,000 entries for the exhibition.

The baker employed by Mr. Darby is Mr. Albert Bidwell, of the Council Houses, Pymoor. The loaf exhibited was selected from a batch of 240 loaves.

As can be seen from Albert Bidwell's success the business recovered but closed in Pymoor in the 1950s.

It was a common belief that bread baked on Good Friday never went mouldy, and if kept, brought good luck. In Cambridgeshire it was also thought to be a cure for indigestion. Although bread wasn't rationed in the second world war, rationing was controversially introduced in July 1946 and lasted for two years.

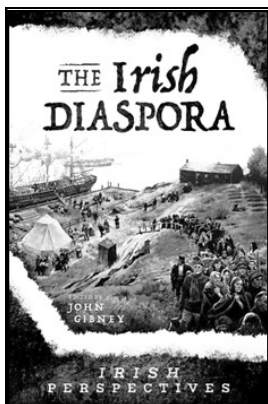
Before the second world war there were four bakers in Downham. Bobby Taylor's bakery at 92 Main Street, Alf Saberton, where Churchill court is now, and Fullers, later JC Palmer, at 50 Main Street, the Live and Let Live Bakery. Also at the cottage at Townsend now called the "Old Bakery" was Les Fryatt.

He delivered his bread in old van with the traditional big wicker basket.

The first two days' of white bread baking in Ely produced little more than curiosity among housewives, a reporter was told when he visited local bakeries on Wednesday. The first firm he visited had sold white bread on Tuesday and Wednesday, and said the demand had been only moderate until then. On each day only about 3 to 4 percent of the bread they produced was made from white flour; this had all been sold, but there was no further demand once it had gone. The second baker said that, although he also baked white loaves on Monday and Tuesday, quantities amounted only to a few dozen. There had been no particular demand, but it was, he felt, too early to say whether this would continue to be so. The third business stated that they were making no sales until yesterday, but had had a few enquiries for the new loaf. The general opinion of all three was that the public would not consider the improvement in the new bread worth the increased price (about sixpence for a small loaf). There had, they said, been a great improvement in "national" bread during the past fortnight.



There was briefly a bakery in Main Street (where the fish and chip shop is now) that shut around 1990: that business was done for by an increase in business rates. There was briefly a cake baking business in Main Street but that sadly only lasted about a year. Now [at the time of writing] the Nisa shop sells bread, prepared elsewhere and baked on the premises.



### THE IRISH DIASPORA BY JOHN GIBNEY (2022)

[www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk) £10.39

Many of us may well have Irish ancestors or relatives around the world—this new book will help understand their experiences:

*“Ireland is known worldwide as a country that produces emigrants. The existence of the 'Irish diaspora' is the subject of this fifth instalment of the 'Irish perspectives' collaboration between Pen and Sword and History Ireland. From the early Christian era Irish missionaries travelled across Europe, from the early modern period Irish soldiers served across the world in various European armies and empires, and in the modern era, Ireland's position on the edge of the Atlantic made Irish emigrants amongst the most visible migrants in an era of mass migration. Ranging from Europe to Africa to the Americas and Australia, this anthology explores the lives and experiences of Irish educators, missionaries, soldiers, insurgents, from those who simply sought a better life overseas to those with little choice in the matter, and who established an Irish presence across the globe as they did so.”*

*Here To Help ...*

## Research Surgery Reports : *Huntingdon, St Ives, Bar Hill Ely, Cambridge, March*

Word is getting around that we've restarted our research surgeries, including at Cambridge (held at meetings). We've welcomed visitors old and new with a variety of queries about the county and further afield ...

... here are summaries of a few of the problems we recently received

- **Bar Hill**—a problem readily solved for one enquirer, but not as immediately successful for another; and someone seeking information on an Irish relative is going to bring what is known to one of the Cambridge sessions another day. The first problem highlighted the importance of ensuring that all the details in every record found are meticulously recorded in your own notes, and, to widen the scope of searches if what is sought doesn't immediately come to light. The enquirer couldn't find a particular person in the 1861 census, but had only made a note of details about that specific person from other records. We retraced the steps through BMDs and later censuses, and by noting all details of every person in each record it was evident that ages were not particularly precise in the later censuses. Too narrow a search failed to pick up how he happened to have been recorded in 1861 along with a very vague, county-name only, birthplace; the surname had also been mis-interpreted for the online providers search data-base. The second enquirer sought a person prior to his marriage, but no real candidates emerged—all we could advise was that the marriage certificate was purchased to see what it said about "father's name" etc.
- **Ely**—an enquirer, here, sought help with interpreting a WW2 Army Service Record. These are only available by applying for a copy from the MoD <https://www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-service-records>. A person's record is what it is: mostly a listing of dates, acronyms and abbreviations relating to personnel movements, postings, promotions, etc. As with any hand-written record, interpretation can be difficult, and acronyms may have more than one meaning (context might rule out one or other: ATS Auxiliary Territorial Service or Air Training Squadron; NA North Africa or Not Applicable; PAD Passive Air Defence or Port Ammunition Detachment; PO Pilot Officer or Petty Officer or Post Office; RMA Royal Military Academy or Royal Malta Artillery or Royal Marine Artillery; and so on—see link below). To get an idea of what people were actually doing, we then need to dig deeper into unit/regimental histories for the specific periods in question, and to search for WW2 War Diaries held at the National Archives. For advice on researching both WWs, take a look <https://www.researchingww2.co.uk/>

# An Unexpected Connection ... and an ethical dilemma

*received from*  
**Ian Stephenson**

The use of DNA in family history has become widespread, but can throw up information which needs “care” over deciding how to treat the findings ...

An exploration of for me a hitherto unknown aspect of Ancestry's DNA analysis, together with another aspect of that which I tended to disregard, led me to an unexpected family connection and an ethical dilemma. Since this article concerns living persons I use pseudonyms where appropriate.

It started when I viewed Vikki Manners DNA presentation on the members' page of the society's website. From that I learnt about the Ancestry 'Shared Matches' function that for any individual with whom you have a DNA match third parties are identified with which both share a DNA match. In so doing I stumbled across 'M', a man with whom I have 106cM shared DNA, making him a possible 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin once removed (amongst other possibilities). 'M's surname is one that I had not heard of before, and therefore probably quite rare, but sounds like it has a Yorkshire origin - I will call it 'York'. Because 'M' does not have a family tree on Ancestry, I had previously taken no interest in him. But through the shared matches facility I discovered there is a good case for 'M' to be descended from my principle Scottish line of Kerr.

Now to the aspect of DNA analysis that I generally disregard: ethnicity. I do so because my ancestry back through 6 generations is wholly British, so Ancestry's ethnicity analysis for my DNA has nothing to tell me. Furthermore, 4 or 5 years ago Ancestry's DNA analysis identified me to be 7% (range 0-12%) Iberian, its latest iteration gives no Iberian but 13% (range 0-16%) Sweden and Denmark, which I equally disregard. But for some inexplicable reason I clicked on 'M's ethnicity (something I had never, ever, done for any other DNA match). And there it gave 'M' as being 48% Chinese and 38% Scottish. Since 'York' could hardly be a Chinese name that suggested that 'M's father was a 'York' and his mother Chinese.

I then realised that if the 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin once removed relationship between me and 'M' was correct there were only 2 generations between my Kerr great grandparents and 'M's 'York' father, and the possibility of finding a 'York' / Kerr marriage could lead to placing 'M' into my family tree. An Ancestry search for a marriage between a 'York' and a Kerr without prescribing a date provided a single result of a 1930s marriage between a male 'York' and female Kerr. It was easy to find their son born in the 1940s who married in

the 1970s a woman with a distinctively Chinese surname, and their son born in the 1980s with the same given name as 'M'. I had found 'M's Kerr grandmother, potentially a first cousin of my mother.

The only problem was 'M's Kerr grandmother didn't feature in my extended family tree. She was easily found in the 1939 register and that, fortuitously, gave her birth as prior to the 1911 census. The census showed her as an adopted infant daughter, with a middle name that could only be a family surname - but again one I did not recognise. My tentative conclusion was that 'M's Kerr grandmother was the illegitimate daughter of one of five of my Kerr great-aunts, and that her middle name was her father's surname.

Only a copy of her birth certificate would enable me to progress. That confirmed that the mother was indeed one of my great-aunts. Although the birth is recorded in a different town, the mother's address was that of my great-grandmother. The great-aunt was unmarried at the time of the birth and the birth certificate gives no information about the child's father. The great-aunt went on to marry a few years later and have a family.

**Now to my dilemma** - should I include this line of family in my published Ancestry family tree? I had decided that if this great-aunt had any living grandchildren I would withhold the information. For I could not know whether the existence of their grandmother's illegitimate daughter is common knowledge - I have to assume, not. Whilst I would not be concerned to find that a grandparent had had an illegitimate child, others might feel differently. Since I now know who she is and that she has living grandchildren (my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins) I shall not include this illegitimate birth in my published family tree.

~ x ~ X ~ X ~ X ~ x ~

## **A TALKING POINT :**

### ***What would you do if faced with Ian's dilemma, or any other?***

Throughout family history, researchers have always faced the prospects of discovering out-of-the-ordinary information about ancestors and relatives. The question has also been one of what to do about it. All families had some "fiercely kept secrets" which were closely guarded at all cost. The discovery that perhaps prim and proper Great Aunt Mary was born out of wedlock, or herself had had an illegitimate child, or that there was bigamy, or elopement, or murder (victim or perpetrator), living in sin, criminality, etc. However, all the things that make for an "interesting" story come at a price, and can still be sensitive or even unknown to their closer relatives, as Ian has found above. We can't undo the knowledge, but is it right to share it—even to a closed group, as others might have different standards and fewer qualms??



**Pte**  
**James Marriott**  
*by Colin Ashworth*

*A long forgotten  
 WW1 soldier  
 brought "in from the cold"*

In 2019 I photographed the entire older section (and much of the newer area) of Whittlesey Cemetery and uploaded the images to Find a Grave. During this process I came across the headstone in memory of Private James Marriott. The inscription on it reads: 'In Loving Memory of James Marriott (1st Cambs Regt.) Died Aug 26th 1915 Aged 20 years. Also of Millicent Marriott Died March 7th 1900 Aged 8 years (Interred in Woodstone Cemetery) "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away."' (He was actually 19, but only just short of his 20th birthday.)

Some years before, I had gone to the cemetery to visit the CWGC graves and had taken a list of them with me. At that time I did not know about James but, in 2020, I rechecked [www.cwgc.org/](http://www.cwgc.org/) and found he was not listed. I felt I needed to submit him to [www.infromthecold.org/](http://www.infromthecold.org/) as a possible unrecognised war casualty.

I researched James and his family on Ancestry and obtained his birth and death certificates, although the latter was the essential one. As far as I could make out from the difficult handwriting, James was born on 30 October 1895 in Cemetery Road, Woodstone Rural RD, although the road has since been renamed. His mother Emma (née Redhead) was born in Coates which is the subject of my One Place Study so it was of interest to me. James was also the name of his father who was a Brickyard Labourer in 1895 when the family were in Woodstone (these days spelt without the 'e'), and a Brick Burner in 1901 by which time they had moved to Fletton. The 1911 census tells us he was a Publican and Carter and that the family were living at "Three Fishes" East Delph, Whittlesey. At that time James junior was a Butcher's Apprentice, aged 15. From his military record I know he became a butcher for the Cooperative Society in Whittlesey and the "Three Fishes Inn"





was still his place of residence.

James' attestation papers are dated 10 March 1913 when he was 17 years and 5 months old: he was declared fit on 17 March that year. His military service was with the 1<sup>st</sup> Cambridgeshire Regiment (Service Number 1519) from 19 July 1913 to 10 June 1915. He made a soldier's Will (dated 13 Feb 1915) leaving his estate to (his father) James Marriott of 7, East Delph, Whittlesey and we know he was in France from the 14 Feb until 29 April 1915.

James' medical records reveal that between 17 and 29 April 1915 he was diagnosed first with Laryngitis and then Bronchitis. Having been sent home to England, doctors at the 1<sup>st</sup> Southern General Hospital in Birmingham discovered a 'Tubercle of Lung' on 17 May 1915 which was obviously more serious. The medical report says that he had been quite strong and well until two months before the examination, when he had started to display symptoms of a cough, shortness of breath and night sweats whilst in France. He was declared permanently unfit for both Home and Light Service. The opinion of the medical board was that he became unfit (was infected) whilst on active service and he was discharged on 10 June. Pte. Marriott died on 26 August 1915 only a short time later so his health clearly deteriorated rapidly: the cause of death was given as Phthisis Pulmonalis - pulmonary tuberculosis.

James was accepted as a war casualty on 29 October 2022 and is now recorded in the United Kingdom Book of Remembrance. I was honoured to have played my part in his recognition. He did not marry, and I have not been able to discover if any of his other relatives still live in the area. Nothing will change in the cemetery by way of a further memorial, but, at least the records have now been put straight.

*(Article also submitted for publication to the Peterborough & District FHS)*

## THE 1921 CENSUS

get unlimited access to  
the 1921 census  
with FindMyPast's  
new enhanced  
"Premium" level subscription

**1921 Census Scotland**  
has now been released  
access via ScotlandsPeople.

## Cambs & Hunts

### Family History Society Annual General Meeting 2023

will take place on Sat 13 May  
F2F and zoom

Further details in the next issue. If you will wish to attend remotely, but don't do zoom, please contact the Chair, David Copsey.

# THIS MIGHT INTEREST YOU ...

## Records' Transcriptions & Resources ...

some observations on *accuracy vs interpretation*  
as noted from a fledgling surname study

The dark winter evenings and the recent holiday period has allowed time to delve further into an on-going surname study (which has evolved out of ancestral research into a specific family of the surname from the Nottingham area) and to make an attempt at defining the scope of project. The name itself, Soar, here is immaterial (and while it's not a local name, a variant from Suffolk/Essex does creep up into the Newmarket/Soham area in small numbers), it's the process and techniques which are of interest here. Soon evident was the question of "accuracy" and "interpretation" among, especially, transcribed records—and would be an important consideration in the project at all stages. It's been useful to outline on paper some of the broader issues encountered in connection with transcribed records ...

Broadly, a surname study could be said to have three aspects:

- *Number crunching* : collecting "data"; counting occurrences of the name over time and place; identifying variant and deviant spellings; mapping distributions of the name/variants over time; identifying core areas; depicting of migration away from the "home" area(s)
- *Family reconstitutions* : linking individuals into families and wider groups—following paper trails through the records; trying to determine whether various geographical groupings are related families or unrelated variants
- *Analysis* : isolating variants; deductions and conclusions derived from the above to describe the evolution and spread of a name and its variations/deviations; could variants perhaps have common ancestors at some point (the inclusion of genetic genealogy would be of help here)

What could be simpler ... in theory, perhaps ... in practice however, a whole raft of issues arise when it come to following through. No less so, than when it comes to trying to ensure the capture all instances of a particular family as opposed to just one particular spelling—the two are not necessarily the same, and sorting it all out has become a very convoluted task. The following of a single surname and the defining of variants/deviants brought home the complexities of the whole process, and the importance of considering the possibility of different spellings when making searches. It's really worth reconsidering the question of the idea of "accuracy" in transcribed records and indexes, and recalling that if the rules of transcription are strictly followed, it's not an exact science and is open to good faith mis-interpretation—and shouldn't, automatically, be regarded simply as "wrong".

The majority of historic parish registers are, these days, lodged with the relevant Archives covering the area. While a small number of parishes do retain all their registers, the vast majority have “deposited” their closed registers which are generally available for consultation. Apart from travelling to the Archives, many of us can now take advantage of being able to search for records remotely, and use indexes, transcriptions or perhaps original images. Transcribed records are, however, fast becoming seen as “old school”, and in many cases, probably shunned. Increasingly these days, the demand is for nothing less than images of the original register pages, and thanks to Ancestry and FindMyPast, FamilySearch and TheGenealogist, et al, online collections can include extensive selections for most counties across the country. Transcriptions should not be discounted and, even where original images are available, do continue to form an essential resource for furthering research.

To recap. Transcribed records, once virtually the only go-to resource for remote research, are now being widely shunned in favour of original images—and why not—using original images is the “gold standard” in research, and for many researchers, their first port-of-call is to one of the major online providers offering original images. However, it’s easy to forget the role played by transcriptions and indexes in the widening of access to records and in facilitating remote research. The then Cambs FHS, for example, was prominent in leading the way towards whole county coverage of parish register transcriptions—our then projects team, led by Carol, Wendy and the late David W, worked tirelessly to oversee the transcription/indexing of records for every parish in the county, and their publication.

It’s a given that our family history interests lie in the places where our ancestors happened to live, but it’s a matter of luck as to which parish register records are available and how (newer researchers are perhaps confused by the universal coverage online of BMD indexes and censuses, and do not grasp the vagaries of parish register availability). Whether we have to travel to the relevant Archives to consult specific parish registers, for example, or whether we are able to take advantage of print or online resource(s) from afar is the luck of the draw. It might be that transcriptions are all there is, and unfortunately, is a situation not always fully understood—with the perception that “someone is at fault” being encountered from time to time; the behind the scenes input which goes into producing transcriptions, isn’t always fully appreciated. There have been occasions when comments have been made over the availability and form of material for a particular parish—a couple of such comments come to mind ... *“what am I supposed to do with this [a microfiche as opposed to a CD]”* and *“I want such-and-such parish [on a CD not a microfiche] and I want it now”*. Today, the goalposts

have moved, and now it's "*I don't want transcriptions, why haven't you produced original images?*" or an almost angry "*why haven't they put the images online?*".

What can one say!! As researchers, we all have to work with what there is—and it has to be asked how they might otherwise gain access to the material, other than by visiting the relevant archives (as we all once did with no alternative!). While we would all like to have equal access to all records, that's not the case, and we have to make the most of what there is. It should be acknowledged that there is a huge amount of material "outside" the big online providers, which might hold what is wanted. All records are not equally accessible to all, and it's disappointing if what we want isn't as accessible as something else. Having remote access, from wherever you live, to original images and/or just transcriptions is a bonus, and one which many of us now do have the good fortune to benefit from. Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire are currently among the few exceptions for online original images—one soon to be rectified thanks to Cambs Archives and CHFHS.

However, records and collections available through a "third party" (be it transcriptions from a FHS or images from one of the major online providers, or from one of a number of other provider organisations) do need treating with a certain amount of caution, and might not provide the answer to a given research question. The content and coverage of the material must be taken into account: for example, regarding baptisms for a particular parish ... which dates are included; or, with a collection featuring baptisms collated from a number of parishes in an area ... which parishes and for which dates (eg: which dates for which parishes; are all the parishes contiguous; are any parishes missing). Adjacent parishes may be differently covered, and the required record just might not be included; if records for a particular place are not accessible through say, Ancestry, we might be able to "fill the gap" through other resources, perhaps FindMyPast, FamilySearch, the local FHS.

It has to be said that in terms of content, transcribed records per se, have always attracted a certain amount of critical comment—the question of "accuracy" of the transcript compared to the original is frequently raised. In its strictest sense, the transcription process should take every character and interpret them individually, regardless of the resultant complete word. On the one hand, it's easy to impose prior knowledge on certain words and names, and be able to see that what the complete word is intended to be, "William" or "Elizabeth" for example are virtually never spelled any differently. On the other hand, however, it can be far harder to be certain about less familiar words such as many surnames—words where subtle real differences in spellings do exist separately, and as might be found between spellings in different documents. That is to say, a person's surname might be found

genuinely spelled differently on different occasions, quite apart from other versions created by character-interpretation of individual letters. Whenever there is “third party” input between researcher and the original document—and despite the best will in the world—there is also room for human error to creep in with transposed or omitted entries or keying errors.

Although online parish register images from the major providers can be *browsed* directly, page by page, to find a person, what is often overlooked is that to *search* for a particular entry as an original image, we are obliged to use transcriptions to locate the relevant image page. So, even if original images happen to be available, searches are still subject to the question of “transcription accuracy”; an inaccurate transcription may prevent the relevant original image ever being located. Creative searching, however, might enable inaccuracies over surnames to be circumvented by focussing on collateral details: such as forenames, age, place, occupation, other people present, etc, such as parents in parish baptisms or spouse/children in censuses.

A certain degree of trust is perhaps necessary when using transcriptions. If the researcher is content to use transcriptions as an alternative to visiting the original parish registers in person, it’s their prerogative to agree or disagree with the interpretation. Should there be doubt, steps should be taken to make alternative arrangements: such as enquiring to the relevant Archives for a visual check or a photocopy etc.

Regarding the question of “transcription accuracy”, a number of issues can be identified as being in play, such as :

- spelling of, say, a surname in the record of a particular event is what it is, and may differ from that of the same person or family on another occasion
- a deviation spelling may cross into the spelling of a completely separate name group, one not otherwise included in the surname study
- spelling differences can result from phonetic variations and enunciation, or because different people made the records (their ability to hear the spoken name, the quality and style of their handwriting, or their spelling a similar-sounding more familiar name)
- quite separate are issues surrounding the transcription process itself, where foremost is the quality of the document on the desk (faded writing, bleed-through from the overleaf page, blots, damage to the page—ie. it’s difficult to read the name in the first place)
- certain letters and character combinations can be said to be notoriously less consistent in form than others, and are very much hand-writing and document-quality dependent for clarity. Letters such as L and S; T and F; I and J; P R or B; C E or G; A or O or C; St or H; tt, tl, tl, ll; an ending of le te or tt ll; u, n, m, w; ae oe or oo or ee; g or j or y; c or e or o; st or h; etc etc

etc. Is a name, therefore, Hall or Hale, Ball or Bale, Stilton or Hilton; or are records detailing the surname Hospitals, Orspitals or Aspital all referring to the same person or family? We need to consider the consequences for indexing and making searches—what could the spelling be in any particular record? Would a particular search pick up all the possibilities?

- researcher vs transcriber : they are approaching a record from different perspectives. The researcher knows the surname they seek, as well as probably being aware of collateral details associated with this person—they know what they are expecting to find, and are often able to clearly “see” the correct spelling in an otherwise illegible squiggle. The transcriber, on the other hand, starts off on the back foot and is faced, cold, with an squiggle on the page to make of it what they can according to their experience. No wonder some weird and wonderful words emerge, but perhaps we shouldn’t be too quick to criticise their efforts (a census transcriber once managed to make “Robert Organer” into “Robert Paganis”, and having seen this, it’s actually not an unreasonable cold interpretation of the word as it appears in its the original handwritten form—collateral information of forename, age, birthplace and wife helped identify Mr Paganis as Mr Organer!!).

Consequently, and it’s down to the luck of the genealogical draw, there can be little doubt that certain names by the nature of the letters involved, will be far more susceptible to potential inaccuracies in interpretation than others—the Organer/Pagnis example is not untypical. My recent further ventures into surname studies quickly highlighted that most of issues regarding transcriptions, as outlined above, appear at almost every turn.

In this study, the preliminary number crunching is progressing well. The extracting of both the main name, Soar (“A”), a significantly occurring variant, Sore (“B”), plus a number of other far less numerous variant spellings (including Soer, Soars, Soare, Sores, Soers, Sour, Sorr, Soares) from BMD listings has been quite a straightforward task. It should be remembered that the BMD indexes, themselves, are transcribed from the original certificates and that the searchable online resources are further transcriptions of these indexes—all open to errors creeping in—and that different search systems invariably return differing sets of results. Here, listings from FreeBMD for example, were easily isolated, dropped into spreadsheets and sorted to analyse distributions and frequencies over place and time. In total, about 4,500 BMDs for names “A” and “B” combined have been noted between 1837 and 1911 (approx 320 Bs, 150 Ms, 190 Ds per decade) equating to some 60-65 BMD events per year. Not an unmanageable number to work up as family reconstitutions, and track back into “core” areas in the earlier C19.

What does preliminary analysis show? Are there concentrations in particular

counties? Do county-based concentrations focus into particular registration districts? How do spellings variations pan out, are there geographical concentrations? How do the numbers and locations of the vary over time?

Broadly, in the earlier decades, two core areas of registration districts become quite apparent among BMDs—the main surname “A” concentrates in the Notts/Derby/Leics border triangle, with a significant variant spelling of “B” found in the Suffolk/Essex border area and up into Cambs, and not unexpectedly, both names crop up in the London area to a certain extent. Instances of both versions also occur in the others’ main area—whether they are they migrants, related, or instances of mis-spelled deviants remains to be seen; odd instances of both variants are also increasingly noted scattered across the country in later decades. Far smaller numbers of further variants (mainly the addition of “-e” or “-s”) also crop up in the core areas. Curiously though, the variation with an ending of “-es” is comparatively rare and mostly confined to the port cities of London and Liverpool, and occurs with predominantly Hispanic forenames.

A simple name extraction across all censuses 1841-1911 also reveals (especially in Ancestry’s resources) a wide variety of interpretations across the entries, and no doubt accounts for much of the discrepancy in numbers between Ancestry and FindMyPast’s separate renderings of the censuses. Over the census period, the basic headcounts approx. triple, with the broad distribution generally mirroring the earlier decades of BMDs; in later censuses, odd instances are noted over a widening range of areas but mostly with “core” area birthplaces. Birth counties, especially among older people, remain quite consistent with the earlier BMDs locations. It’s suggested that more detailed analysis will probably be able to show that the vast majority of individuals/families found elsewhere in the country will be traceable back to one or other of the core registration district areas. It will then be a case of noting where the older people in the earlier censuses are actually from, and which parishes are involved—and begin to look at the extent to which these families might be linked in the previous century.

Some preliminary inroads have been made into reconstituting families, and this is when the “accuracy” issue really comes into play. Thus far, the number crunching has been counts of occurrences in isolation, whereas trying to “join the dots” and link people together between different records highlights different (deviant) spellings and/or interpretation issues. As a starting point, it was decided to look instances of surname variants “A” and “B” male marriage registrations between 1837 and 1911 in the Suffolk/Essex border area and London, find the couples in the next available census, follow the immediate descendants, and then backtrack the husbands to their own parents—some fifty marriages, give or take. Five things have already become evident from

this limited excursion into family reconstitutions:

- 1: most of the “B” variants in London can be traced back to this Suffolk/Essex area, while most of the “A” variants have longer-standing London associations, many predating the 1750s;
- 2: many, but not all, of the later families with spelling “A” in the Suffolk/Essex area are in fact of spelling variant “B” when it comes to pre-census parish register records of the families;
- 3: most of the “B” variant families seem to be coming together in parishes between Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich as one of about five dynasties of millers or shoemakers or farmers (they may come together further in the earlier C18);
- 4: many the census entries for these families are mis-transcribed in the search database of one of the leading online providers (the other leading provider’s database seems far more “accurate”) and accounts for much of the discrepancy noticed between the providers’ search results
- *and* 5: on inspection of the original images, all of the following are clearly variant “B”, Sore, but interpreted and transcribed as: Sare (the most common version), but also Son, Sove, Lore, Gore, Sorr, Soren, Sone, Jone, Jore, Loar, Tow, Low, Soro, Lear, Fore, Sole, Sar, Sora, Pore, Sorl, Sour, Saur, Sauer, Saure, even Ivan!! A number of these deviant spellings are also true surnames in their own right, such as Sare and Low, and Sole, and begs the question of the extent to which other instances of these surnames ought to be checked out in case they too mask examples of the names sought. Saur, Sauer and Saure mostly seem to trace back to families of immigrant origins, especially Germany.

To conclude, I’ve only scratched the surface so far. Following multiple same-surname families, well illustrates the “accuracy”/“interpretation” issue, and highlights the thankless task faced in many instances by transcribers—that of being perceived as having “got it wrong” if the transcribed name, when found, is not as expected by the researcher. Often overlooked is that researchers are familiar with the name being sought and will often be able to make an informed interpretation of the squiggle on the page, as illustrated in 4 and 5 above. Also demonstrated in the limited reconstitution exercise here, is the part played by drawing on prior knowledge and collateral information when trying to pick up a person/family when a mis-interpreted deviant spelling crops up in a particular record. The transcriber, on the other hand, may be faced with just a blotted faint italic squiggle to interpret at face value, character-by-character, cold—and have to make of it what they can ...

For advice and guidance on setting up and running surname study projects, draw on the wisdom and experiences of others by taking a look at the wiki pages on the Guild of One-Name Studies’ website: <https://one-name.org/>



## The WisMus & Hunts Projects— newly completed registers since the last journal

*NB : the dates refer to the year of commencement of individual registers*

### WisMus Parishes :

Leverington	Baptisms	1968
Leverington	Baptisms	1989
Wisbech St Augustine	Baptisms	1977
Wisbech United Reform	Mixed	1889
Wisbech St Peter	Banns	1981 and 1989

### Project co-coordinator, Terry, updates progress of WisMus

The end is in sight at last, and is a little closer, and 19 registers remain to be completed: 15 are in various stages of transcription/checking, and the other 4 are still to be started. Some of these remaining registers are throwing up a few problems much in the “early” ones is either of poor quality and/or in Latin. But, nothing which can’t be overcome with a little more time and patience.

**If any of the old volunteers, or new ones (particularly if you have skills with old handwriting and/or reading Latin) would like to help with the final push to completion—please do get in touch with me via my Projects e-mail address.**

### HUNTS PARISHES : records now added to SuperSearch and AncestorFinder :

Abbotsley  
Alconbury  
Barham  
Bluntisham  
Botolph Bridge  
Brington  
Brampton  
Broughton  
Buckden  
Buckworth  
Bury-c-Hepmangrove  
Caldecote  
Colne  
Conington

Hartford  
Leighton Bromswold  
Little Gidding  
Little Raveley  
Little Stukeley  
Somersham  
Wood Walton

### There are now over 130,000 new individual records. Currently in progress are :

Alwalton,	Bythorn,
Chesterton,	Denton,
Diddington,	Eynesbury,
Elton,	Gt Staughton,
Huntingdon,	Ramsey,
Warboys	

**Exning Workhouse**  
*what's in it for me—  
that's Suffolk,  
not Cambs!!*

It's easy to forget that while many records for the county do literally end at the county boundary, others do not—and some records may well get overlooked

because they are perceived as out-of-county, and therefore, not relevant. One such situation is where a Registration District or Poor Law Union overlaps into (or, from) a neighbouring county, and in particular, where the name of that District or Union is more associated with the “other” county.

*Researchers who are unfamiliar with the lie of the land, may often discount “candidates” based solely on the District/Union name associated with a record being that of the other county, and therefore can't possibly be “their” family. Similarly, we may also overlook bothering to search improbably named areas based on an area's name. One such example, in Cambs, concerns the Newmarket District and Union—Newmarket town is, of course, in Suffolk, but only partly and the area covered by the District/Union of that name extends well into Cambridgeshire (up to just two parishes removed from Cambridge itself). Therefore, a person doesn't have to move far from Cambridge town to find themselves appearing to be recorded in “Suffolk”.*

*CJ takes a look at how Cambridgeshire people may well be missed through not considering the places included within the cross-border Newmarket Registration District and Newmarket Poor Law Union—*

Some parts of the world, which were developed from scratch by settlers, have borders and boundaries which appear as neat straight lines drawn on a map and, where not, often a convenient river or mountain range. Back in old England, this was never the case. The parish boundaries that exist may originally be the result of the shape of a long gone medieval farm or monastic settlement or the line of a Saxon hedge. Parishes existed for centuries as loosely defined groupings of manors, hamlets and other residences. Ancient parishes are often defined as ones which existed prior to the 1597 and 1601 Elizabethan Poor Law Acts. They often had detached parts, exclaves and enclaves which were not contiguous with the rest of the parish. In some cases the detached part was in a different county. In other cases, an entire parish was in a detached part of the county to which it belonged. There were also many examples of parishes divided between two or more adjoining counties. Cambridgeshire is no exception to these geographical oddities.



- Cambridgeshire parishes  
in Newmarket Union  
(and Registration District)**
- Ashley-c-Silverley
  - Burrough Green
  - Bottisham
  - Brinkley
  - Burwell
  - Cheveley
  - Chippenham
  - Dullingham
  - Fordham
  - Isleham
  - Kennett
  - Landwade
  - Newmarket St Mary
  - Snailwell
  - Soham
  - Stetchworth
  - Swaffham Bulbeck
  - Swaffham Prior
  - Westley Waterless
  - Wicken
  - Wood Ditton

Over the last century bureaucrats have attempted to rationalise boundaries and newcomers to family history may then wonder why records for their apparent Cambridgeshire ancestors are to be found in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire or Suffolk archives.

A clear example can be found in the east of Cambridgeshire, where the two Suffolk parishes of Exning and Newmarket St Mary's were almost completely surrounded by six Cambridgeshire parishes. The link from Exning through Cambridgeshire, that is to say, back to the rest of Suffolk, was literally just a few yards wide—so it only just avoided being a true enclave. The Suffolk parish of Newmarket St Mary's, to the south of Exning, confronted the Cambridgeshire parish of Newmarket All Saints across the main street with the county boundary running up the middle. Tidy minded reformers thought this needed to be changed.

## **Chopping and changing**

In 1895, the local government boundary reforms that year moved the Newmarket All Saints parish over to Suffolk to make Newmarket a wholly Suffolk town. However it was as late as 1994 before the narrow land link to Suffolk was substantially widened.

In the early 1970s, major alterations were made to the borders of many English counties. The Soke of Peterborough (the city and surrounding rural parishes), formerly linked with Northamptonshire, was switched to the old county of Huntingdon. Similarly Eaton Socon was in Bedfordshire but also became part of Huntingdonshire in 1974; nearby Tetworth and Swineshead were detached parishes of Huntingdonshire in Bedfordshire.

Huntingdonshire was later, of course, swallowed up by its neighbouring county to create the present 'new' county of Cambridgeshire.

It was also proposed at the time that both Newmarket and Exning be moved over to Cambridgeshire but this was voted down by their residents in a local referendum.

Going the other way, the small parish of Landwade historically in Cambridgeshire, was switched to Suffolk, in 1994. Tinkering with the boundary led to some houses changing county. Two moved from Suffolk to Cambridgeshire, and ten from Cambridgeshire to Suffolk. All of the houses affected were in the estate of Landwade Hall. The church at Landwade was among the buildings transferred to Suffolk.

There was one institution which, although always based in Suffolk, played a large part in the lives of many Cambridgeshire parishes throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

## **Newmarket Union Workhouse**

The workhouse was an institution where those unable to support themselves financially were offered accommodation and employment. A service once provided by the old monasteries had to be revised after the Reformation. This led to the idea of the workhouse system, financed (reluctantly) by the local parish ratepayers. Parish officers were always keen to pass on indigent strangers to what were deemed their home parishes to avoid any cost to the parish.

However some people were truly local and could not be ignored so provision had to be met. A growth in the number of workhouses was then prompted by the Workhouse Test Act 1723 which required anyone seeking poor relief to enter a workhouse and undertake a set amount of work, usually for no pay (a system called indoor relief). The purpose was to prevent irresponsible claims on a parish's poor rate. They were initially organised on a local basis. In

eastern Cambridgeshire, Burwell had a parish workhouse as early as 1736. By 1777, a government report showed there were more than 1800 of these local workhouses nationwide. Amongst these locally were Burwell (with accommodation for 20 inmates), Dalham (14), Wood Ditton (30), Isleham (30), Soham (60) and Wicken (28). Dullingham workhouse used the Guildhall premises [spotted by chance in a Newmarket estate agent's window this week: "For Sale — Dullingham Guildhall"].

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 there was mass unemployment, especially in rural areas, where the introduction of new technology to replace agricultural workers (such as threshing machines), a series of bad harvests, and the preference for cheap grain imports over more expensive domestic grain needed to feed the new urban populations, meant that by the early 1830s the old, disorganised, system of poor relief was simply unable to cope with extensive rural unemployment. The New Poor Law of 1834 sought to discourage the provision of relief to anyone who refused to enter a workhouse. New much larger workhouses were to replace the older individual parish buildings. Built in specific towns they were designed to cut costs by implementing the economies of scale (and thus save parish ratepayers money). Some Poor Law authorities thought they could run workhouses at a profit by utilising the free labour of their inmates. Over a few decades however, the workhouses increasingly became refuges for the elderly, infirm, destitute and sick, rather than the able-bodied poor.

It is estimated that at least 10% of people in Britain have a genealogical link to a sometime workhouse inmate. (Certainly, I found my great-grandmother in the 1891 census amongst the Leighton Buzzard workhouse inmates together with several of her children).

The requirement for more health care for inmates led to many workhouses building adjacent infirmaries. An infirmary was added to the Newmarket workhouse in 1903, connected by a corridor to the existing workhouse building. In an early form of royal walkabout it was reported that King Edward VII visited it in 1904 and talked to a stable boy inmate suffering from TB.

By 1929 legislation had been passed to allow local authorities to take over workhouse infirmaries and 'rebadged' as municipal hospitals, independent of the stigma of the workhouse, in theory at least. Many such establishments went on to become old peoples' homes or maternity hospitals after the NHS was founded in 1948, such as did the former Chesterton and Cambridge workhouses.

The Newmarket Poor Law Union was formed on 30th December 1835. The Newmarket Union workhouse was erected in 1837 on the north side of Exning Road in Newmarket. It was designed by William P Roote (also

responsible for the Union workhouses at Newport Pagnell and Leighton Buzzard) and the operation was overseen by an elected Board of Guardians. Its remit covered both west Suffolk and eastern Cambridgeshire parishes, so people looking for a missing relative from eastern Cambridgeshire might find him or her to actually be born, or living, in Suffolk.

*Cambridgeshire parishes:* Ashley-cum-Silverley, Borough Green, Bottisham, Brinkley, Burwell, Cheveley, Chippenham, Dullingham, Fordham, Isleham, Kennet, Kirtling, Landwade, Newmarket - All Saints, Snailwell, Soham, Stetchworth, Swaffham Bulbeck, Swaffham Prior, Westley, Wicken, Wood Ditton. [see map]

*Suffolk parishes:* Dallham, Exning, Gazeley, Moulton, Ousden, Newmarket - St Mary's (2), Sidgate.

A workhouse chapel, dedicated to St Etheldreda, which could seat 250, was later erected in 1895. This was used by outsiders as well as the workhouse inmates and staff. The baptism records for the chapel, perhaps unsurprisingly, show the baptisms of many children born to unmarried women inmates hailing from the nearby Cambridgeshire parishes. In that first year of 1894-95 alone, the records show women from Snailwell, Isleham (3), Fordham (2), Stetchworth, Chippenham (2), Swaffham Prior and Lode. Later records only record the abode as being “of the workhouse” rather than naming the particular parish-of-origin.

As an aside, one of the curiosities which has turned up in these records is this: one Elsie Willis daughter of Arthur and Jane of Savernake Rd, Hampstead (he a barrister's clerk) baptised July 1898, and also a son Arthur in Oct 1900—the puzzle is that of what the family might have been doing to have their children baptised at the Workhouse Chapel up in Newmarket. The 1901 and 1911 censuses find the family at the same address in London, with both parents and both children born either St Pancras or Clerkenwell, nor did either set of grandparents appear to have any birthplace connection with the anywhere in the area at all. Any suggestions ?!?!??

*I have a transcription I made some years ago of the “Newmarket Union Workhouse Chapel Baptisms 1895-1914” (about 150 records), which we hope to add to the website in the near future. In the meantime, if anyone wants a name search making, do contact me via [shop@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:shop@chfhs.org.uk)*

*We can't say whether there is much by way of other records relating to the workhouse. Enquiries should perhaps be directed to Suffolk Archives at Bury St Edmunds. Broadly speaking, records survival is very varied from place to place—“good” records are apparently associated with less efficient places, the well-run places tended to clear their cupboards and disposed of records when they had the opportunity to do so.*

**\*\*\* CAMBRIDGE BRANCH \*\*\***

**MEETINGS & DROP-IN RESEARCH SURGERY**

**St Andrews's Street Baptist Church : the back room & upstairs  
St Andrew's Street, Cambridge (just up the road from John Lewis)**

**help desk from 11.30-14.00 in ground floor room (beyond the café)  
talk at 14.15 with zoom (upstairs room, lift available)**

**COME ON IN & FOLLOW THE YELLOW DIRECTION ARROWS**

**RESEARCH SURGERIES—scheduled locations/dates/times**

CHFHS volunteers hold regular help & advice sessions at society meetings and at public libraries around the county  
there are no charges for these services

**enquiries :** [secretary@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@chfhs.org.uk)

<b>Ely Library</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed alternate mths	Jan / Mar / May Jul / Sep / Nov	drop in between 10.00-4.00
<b>Norris Museum St Ives</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed alternate mths	Feb / Apr / Jun Aug / Sep / Dec	drop-in between 10.30 & 3.30
<b>Bar Hill Library</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon <u>every</u> mth	May / June / July / Aug Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 1.30-4.30
<b>Huntingdon Archives</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Wed <u>every</u> mth	<b>** NEW SESSION for 2023 **</b> 25 Jan / 22 Feb / 22 March	drop-in between 1.30-4.00
<b>Cambourn Library</b>	surgery sessions discontinued at Cambourn ... we will be at Huntingdon Archives for a 3-mth trial from Jan 2023 instead		
<b>March Library</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Tues <u>every</u> mth	once a month for the time being but likely to be increased	drop-in between 10.00-4.00
<b>Cambridge St Andrews St</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat each month at meetings	at the monthly speakers meetings <b>end of corridor beyond café area</b>	drop-in between 11.30 & 2.00

**\*\* NEW FOR 2023 \*\* a new research session has been set up in Huntingdon. We have been given space in the Archives' Search Room on the 1st floor on an otherwise closed day (so no browsing/research). Many thanks to the staff at Huntingdon for their assistance.**

<b>MARCH BRANCH PROGRAMME</b>		<b>NB:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> <u>WEDNESDAYs</u> at <b>2.00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday Face-2-Face Meetings</b>		March Library, March <b>enquiries :</b> <a href="mailto:march@chfhs.org.uk">march@chfhs.org.uk</a>
By popular opinion, the meetings will continue on Wednesday afternoons		
<b>Wed 4 Jan</b>	<b>Fen Ague : the malaria of the fens</b>  <i>An affliction suffered by many a fenland resident in past times</i>	with Dr Martyn Thomas
<b>Wed 1 Feb</b>	<b>The Great Stink</b>  <i>Insights into Victorian public health problems and improvements</i>	with Don Chisholm
<b>Wed 1 Mar</b>	<b>Back To The Land</b>  <i>A look at what can be gleaned from The National Survey, Inland Revenue Survey, Tithes and Land Taxes</i>	with Gill Blanchard
<b>Wed 5 Apr 3 May</b>	<b>To be confirmed</b>	with TBC

<b>HUNTINGDON BRANCH PROGRAMME</b>		<u>3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday</u> of the month at <b>7.30pm</b>
<b>Zoom only (register via website)</b>		<b>enquiries :</b> <a href="mailto:huntingdon@chfhs.org.uk">huntingdon@chfhs.org.uk</a>
<b>Wed 18 Jan</b>	<b>Secret Fens</b>  <i>With Karen Merrison</i>	
<b>Wed 15 Feb</b>	<b>The Adventurers</b>  <i>With Peter Daldorph</i>	
<b>Wed 15 Mar</b>	<b>Undergraduate Life At Cambridge in The 1880s</b>  <i>With P J Flowers</i>	
<b>Wed 19 Apr</b>	<b>The History Of Family Photography &amp; Dating Old Photos</b>  <i>With Stephen Gill</i> (Photos in advance for dating advice are welcome—via secretary please)	
<b>Wed 17 May</b>	<b>NonConformity For Family Historians</b>  <i>With Alan Ruston</i>	



**CAMBRIDGE BRANCH  
PROGRAMME**

2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month  
enquiries : [programme@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:programme@chfhs.org.uk)

**at the St Andrew's Street Baptist Church**

a face-2-face talk at 2.15 also to be zoomed out to a remote audience

PLUS : an in-person "here to help" enquiry desk 12.00-3.30

**follow the yellow direction arrows to find our rooms**

**January 14 Sat**

**14.15 60 Years Of Aviation** with Terry Holloway

**F-2-F & Zoom (for zoom attendance—please self-register via the website)**

**February 11 Sat : F-2-F & Zoom**

**14.15 Life, Death & Magic In Cambridgeshire** with Michael Marshall  
*Stories derived from the Late Prehistoric and Roman artefacts  
found during excavations along route of the A14 Upgrade*

**F-2-F & Zoom (for zoom attendance—please self-register via the website)**

**March 11 Sat**

**14.15 Ely Cemetery and Cathedral** with Mary Stevens  
*A cross-section of 19C life*

**F-2-F & Zoom (for zoom attendance—please self-register via the website)**

**April 15 Sat : F-2-F & Zoom**

**14.15 Vanishing Cambridgeshire** with Mike Petty  
*Recalling sight and sounds of yesteryear Cambridgeshire*

**F-2-F & Zoom (for zoom attendance—please self-register via the website)**

**PLEASE NOTE THIS DATE IS 3<sup>rd</sup> SAT (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat is Easter weekend)**

**May 13 Sat : F-2-F & Zoom**

**14.15 History of Cambridge's Townscape** with Tony Kirby  
*A look at how the town has grown and evolved over the centuries*

**F-2-F & Zoom (for zoom attendance—please self-register via the website)**

**June 10 Sat : F-2-F & Zoom**

**14.15 Oats and Beans and Barley Grow Along the A14**  
*Over 9,000 botanical samples were collected during excavations  
on the A14 Huntingdon to Cambridge improvement scheme—  
analysis has produced evidence of agricultural change and an  
evolving diet involving bread and even beer. The talk will show  
some of the finds and the ways in which the evidence is looked at.*

**F-2-F & Zoom (for zoom attendance—please self-register via the website)**

# MEETINGS REPORTS

*Don't forget that many of the talks  
are recorded and available in the  
members area of the web-*

## THE RECTORS OF DODDINGTON WITH DAVID EDWARDS (HUNTINGDON BRANCH : OCT 22)

The Huntingdon branch hosted its twelfth hybrid meeting at the WI Hall in Huntingdon in October, where we welcomed our speaker, David Edwards, with the seven members in the hall and 15 more on zoom.

David is very well known in the Society as our March Branch representative and Archivist at the March and District Museum.

Doddington was one of the largest parishes in England and so has had a number of rectors who had interesting careers beyond Doddington and were the subjects of his talk. David explained that the talk charted the Rectors of the Parish dating back to the 13th century. The presentation of the Living was in the gift of the Bishop of Ely until 1601, when the Manor and right of presentation passed to the Peyton family, though there had been some Crown presentations during vacancies in the See of Ely.

David started with an illustrated map of the parish of Doddington which showed the parish had an area of 38,000 acres and was probably the largest in the country prior to 1868. Later in the talk David referred to a newspaper article dated 1852 which showed the pay scales for rectors and vicars in all English parishes; the average was about £200 pa whilst 16 parishes paid more than £2000, with Doddington the highest at £7306. This supported the view that Doddington was indeed the largest parish, but after this date two acts of Parliament were enacted which divided the parish into several smaller parishes, including the building of six new churches.

David showed a picture of the tablet from the church listing the Rectors of Doddington from 1216 to 1999 and then proceeded to discuss around half of them in more detail, starting with Nicholas in 1216 and ending with Rev. Richard Ridge in 1922. It was evident that many rectors of Doddington also held other posts, particularly with various Cambridge University Colleges, as well as moving on to other churches and cathedrals in time.

I have picked out only a few of the 26 or so that were mentioned:

**Hugh de Cressingham** (1294) was Steward to Queen Eleanor and Treasurer of Scotland and so was responsible for tax collection in Scotland. He took part in the battle of Stirling Bridge on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1297 (on the

English side) but they were beaten by William Wallace and the Rector was caught and killed.

**Thomas Boleyn** (1439) worked in three different dioceses and was Precentor of Wells. He was the great-great Uncle of Queen Ann Boleyn. His tomb is in Wells cathedral.

**Nicholas Hawkins** (1519) was Archdeacon of Ely when he was summoned by Henry VIII who wanted a divorce from Catherine of Aragon. He was also Ambassador to the court of Charles V, King of Spain and Catherine's nephew, so had to tread a careful path through the conflicting interests. In the event the divorce went through in 1533, and Nicholas Hawkins was rewarded by becoming the next Bishop of Ely – but he died on the way home from Spain.

**Christopher Tye** (1560) was a well-known musician in Tudor times and choirmaster at Ely Cathedral. He composed the music used for "While Shepherds tend their flocks by night".

**Thomas Neville** (1586) was the first rector appointed by the Crown as there was no bishop. He had a very extensive CV and was eventually Dean of Canterbury. He became very wealthy and built Neville's Court at Trinity College at his own cost. His tomb is in Canterbury Cathedral.

**John Peyton** (1601). Elizabeth I appointed a new Bishop of Ely who handed over the land to the crown which included the Manor of Doddington, and this was granted to Sir John Peyton who was also the Lieutenant of the Tower of London. When the Queen died Sir John sent his son to James I and he was created one of the first knights by the King. The Peyton family now held the Manor of Doddington and five more members of the Peyton family became Rector between 1641 and 1811.

**Algernon Peyton** (1811) was the last Rector of the old parish of Doddington and served for 57 years.

**Rev. George Edmund Walker** (1869) was the first rector of the new Doddington village parish and he inherited a very grand 15<sup>th</sup> century rectory. Unfortunately it was destroyed by a fire during building work on the roof.

**Rev. Richard Ridge** (1922) was notable for several reasons.

- He stood in the Stepney Limehouse borough election as an independent candidate alongside Clement Attlee at his first attempt to enter politics. Attlee did not gain the seat and blamed Richard Ridge for taking some of his votes. Later on in life when Richard Ridge was the rector, he asked Attlee for support to become Dean but no help was given.
- He was a very resourceful and active in the parish. He had a William

Morris stained glass window installed in the church which was a present from his previous church in the East End of London.

- In 1926 he invited the BBC to record Handel's Messiah from Doddington Church. This was just three years after the BBC was founded.
- In 1938 he placed an advert in the Times asking for an organ to be donated. It was, and is still in the church. He then asked for some bells and again was successful. The Times newspaper was obviously impressed by his adverts and featured them in an advert of their own for the Classified Advertisement column.

David's knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject made this a very interesting talk.

*Reported by John Bownass*

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## **THE RIVER GREAT OUSE—A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME** *WITH LIZ DAVIES* *(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : NOV 22)*

The Huntingdon branch hosted its thirteenth hybrid meeting at the WI Hall in Huntingdon in November, where we welcomed our speaker, Liz Davies, together with seven members in the hall and 36 more on zoom. As we now know, this turned out to be our last hybrid meeting held in Huntingdon with future presentations on zoom only.

Liz Davies is the curator of St Neots Museum and has many prepared talks about the town, its surroundings, and its people through history. Liz had written this particular talk in response to a request by the local radio station, Black Cat Radio, for one on the River Great Ouse and its connection to the history of St Neots. The original title of TALES FROM THE RIVER BANK was accordingly changed to the more appropriate RIVER GREAT OUSE – JOURNEY THROUGH TIME.

The River Great Ouse has played a central role in the life of the St Neots area since the woolly mammoth roamed here in prehistoric times. This talk revealed local stories with links to the river from barges to house boats, from Viking invaders to the medieval shrine of St Neot and from basket makers to a Victorian spa.

Liz reminded us that the River Great Ouse is one of the longest rivers in the country, at 143 miles from its source in Northamptonshire to its outlet at the Wash, with the river Cam its best known tributary. Its shape has changed many times over the last million years and in earlier times we were connected to mainland Europe. Liz then took the audience through time...

Twenty thousand years ago woolly mammoths roamed the country, and their fossilised tusks have often been found around St Neots where they were

attracted to the water.

Stone Age people, the hunter gatherers, were also attracted to the area by the water supply and evidence of offerings and burials, and hand flint axes have been found at St Neots, Huntingdon, the Offords and Hemingford. The river was also seen as a place where they could communicate with their gods.

During the Bronze Age, the area around the river became the centre for trade, travel and fishing. Evidence of log boats and settlements has been found in the mud at Flag Fen.

By the Iron Age (800BC to 43AD) people lived in tribal groups and trade with Europe was increasing. Imports such as wine and glass were coming in by log or hide boats across the sea and up the river. Farming of wheat, barley and oats was well established in East Anglia and was exported to Europe. In Kimbolton a coin hoard was found which is now in the St Neots' museum.

The Romans arrived in 43AD and there is evidence of a Roman villa in Eynesbury next to the Ouse. Its position allowed trade on the river to be monitored and certainly the growing of crops in East Anglia increased to feed the invading army. The river was important for religious reasons in the Roman period and the coming of Christianity; a silver baptism spoon was found in the river Nene.

Vikings were the next visitors in their long boats and were in the Eynesbury area in 886AD, attracted by easy pickings from the local Anglo Saxons. On one occasion the Vikings planned to attack Bedford and built a marina on the river a few miles away at Tempsford in preparation. However before they could implement their plan the locals attacked them and the raid on Bedford never happened.

A monastery was founded in Eynesbury in 974AD and relics of the Cornish Saint Neot were brought from Cornwall in an attempt to attract pilgrims to the expanding town. The plan worked and this part of Eynesbury grew and assumed its own identity as St Neots. The priory was moved from its original site in the market square to the riverside and was pulled down after the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539.

The monks built the first wooden bridge over the river to give better access to their priory. It is known that Henry II and Henry III visited the priory in the 1200's. The first stone bridge had been built by the 1640's and was certainly used by the Parliamentary troops when they launched a surprise attack on the Royalist forces camping in the Market Square and took 200 prisoners. The current bridge was built in 1963.

During the Georgian period St Neots became an important trading town as the furthest inland port which could be reached from the sea on the river

Great Ouse. The supremacy of the river for transport came to an abrupt end in 1850 by the arrival of the railway even though the station in St Neots was some way out of town as the landowners wouldn't allow it on their land. The dramatic changes continued with the arrival of road transport and warehouses and an hotel were now built at the station rather than catering for the river traffic.

Liz then moved onto more recent history as the importance and use of the river changed, and was able to include many photographs to illustrate the story, including:

- Flooding of the river was frequent and widespread as the land was so flat. Liz showed a picture from 1908 showing the market square and surrounding shops under water, and there are many records of flooding over the years, especially in 1947. Since 2000 work has been carried out to relieve the flooding and over the years the general level of the Market Square has been raised.
- In 1895 a spring was discovered and it was hoped that St Neots could be promoted as a spa town. Unfortunately the water tasted bad and despite a great parade on the river to promote the spa the idea was quickly dropped.
- Swimming in the river for pleasure took off during the Edwardian period and bathing huts were provided at both ends of the town. Unfortunately they became the focus of "indecent practices" according to the local papers. There were some fatalities, one soldier from Aberdeen, who was undergoing training in St Neots prior to entering WW1, tried to save a woman in the river and drowned. The final straw for official support for river bathing was the increasing levels of pollution caused by the town's sewerage, and WW2 put an end to it.
- Skating competitions were frequently held in the Fens and also in St Neots whenever the river was frozen. Liz showed picture dated 1891 not only of the skaters on the ice but their chairs as well, where they could change their footwear. A local, Mr C Tebbutt was an internationally renowned skater and developed the game of bandy or hockey on ice. In 1940 the river was frozen over for two weeks.
- Rowing has always been popular and the rowing club was formed around 1865. The regatta still continues to this day and popular events such as dragon boat racing are now an annual event.
- Fishing on the river has been around for a thousand years and is a very popular pastime today. The first recorded case of poaching was in 1640, with the case detailing a huge collection of different species of fish.
- Basket making was a booming business in the 1900's with one family firm growing osiers on seven acres of riverside land.
- One surprising enterprise was when a Charles Gill built a houseboat, which

he moored by the town bridge and rented out for holidays. He placed an advertisement at Kings Cross and promoted St Neots as a holiday destination, and also built a pavilion to show films and other entertainment for the holiday visitors. The problem of sewerage in the river signalled the end of the enterprise.

Liz concluded her talk and took many questions from the audience who showed much appreciation for her presentation.

This was a very instructive and fascinating talk which made clear how significant the Great Ouse has been in influencing the forming and developing of our local town, St Neots, and its people.

*Reported by John Bownass.*

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## **PEOPLING THE A14 : LIFE & DEATH IN ANCIENT CAMBS**

*WITH DON WALKER*

*(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : DEC 22)*

The construction of the A14 bypass from Bar Hill to Alconbury has produced around 280,000 archaeological finds, and Don Walker, Senior Osteologist at the Museum of London Archaeology, gave a detailed analysis of the 186 cremations and 94 inhumations (burials) found during the excavations. His charts showed the statistics for all periods between the Bronze Age and the Anglo-Saxon period, the number of inhumations increased at later dates. Unusually, there were twice as many male burials as female, most adults living to between 36 and 45 years of age. Evidence of disease, particularly scurvy, was prevalent in many of the bones.

DNA analysis of the bones provides the opportunity to learn about the people who are buried, and Don focussed on a few examples during his talk. A double child burial at Bar Hill, both male, one was 18 months to two years old, the other between three and four years of age were buried with the arm of the younger child over the older child. It was clear from the DNA analysis that the two were closely related, half-brothers, with a common mother and different fathers. Their diet showed that the mother had moved from one area to Bar Hill. A further burial had an arm severely distorted at the elbow; Don showed how the bones were badly diseased, and life would have been very painful. His slides compared healthy and diseased bones.

Questions confirmed the DNA potential for linking the finds to later people as has happened with Richard III at Leicester. Some of these burials may be our ancestors, a fascinating thought, in a most interesting talk. The recording is on the website.

*Reported by David Copsyey*

## **A CHIP OFF QUEEN VICTORIA'S OLD BLOCK**

*WITH JOHN VIGAR  
(MARCH BRANCH : NOV 2022)*

**Queen Victoria** is one of our best loved monarchs. Almost within touching distance of our own time her story is so familiar to us it seems unlikely that there is much new to discover.

Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent had already been married and widowed before her wedding to a son of George III. By her first husband she had a daughter, Feodora, who came to live in London when her mother remarried. At Kensington Palace she married the Prince of Hohenloe Langenberg. Their son, and Queen Victoria's nephew, was Prince Victor Gleichen. After distinguished service in the British Navy he took up a career as a sculptor, working from his apartments in St James' Palace.

Quickly becoming the Victorian sculptor of choice his work may be found in collections throughout Britain, and especially in the Royal Collection.

Two of his children followed in their father's footsteps.

Feodora became an even more successful sculptor, exhibiting at the Royal Academy on more than a dozen occasions. Helena, an early suffragist who served on the Western Front during WWI was an accomplished artist.

The talk looked at Prince Victor and told his remarkable story through his work and that of his daughters.

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### **SEASONAL SOCIAL**

*(MARCH BRANCH : DEC 2022)*

Around 20 members gathered for our annual March Branch Christmas Social. Members brought along food and drink (non-alcoholic!) to share; the entertainments consisted of a quiz, raffle and two short talks. Wendy Hill told the story of an interesting relation who had served in the army during the Boer War, Royal Flying Corps during World War One and later the merchant navy, and David Edwards gave a talk on the history of the March Maternity Home 1924-1977.

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### **SEASONAL SOCIAL**

*(MARCH BRANCH : JAN 2023)*

Our Chairman, David Copsey, has been researching his family history for nearly 50 years. He shared his knowledge and experience, using examples from his own family. It is hoped that these will suggest areas of investigation that may help to break down your own brick walls, as well as other helpful tips. (Talk previously given at Huntingdon-recording available on the website)



## 60 YEARS OF AVIATION

WITH TERRY HOLLOWAY  
(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : JAN 23)

The Saturday talk on 14th January 2023 was an illustrated account by Terry Holloway, currently Managing Director of the Cambridge Aero Club (based at Cambridge Airport, Marshalls, and Duxford), of his 60 years in aviation.

The son of an WW2 RAF pilot, he was seemingly destined to follow in his father's footsteps. Perhaps footsteps is the wrong word – he certainly has spent a long time off the ground! When he joined the RAF he already had considerable flying experience. Aided by the many photographs he took, he described his various flights throughout the world, Europe, North Africa, Australia, New Zealand, North and South America (where, when gliding, he accidentally 'whooshed' five climbers in the Andes to both his and their surprise). Gliders, aircraft old and new, civilian and veteran WW2 planes (Spitfire, Mustangs, Mosquitos and Dakotas), RAF trainers both prop and jet, iconic RAF fighters like the English Electric Lightning, Hawker Hunter and Phantom. Plus countless modern civilian light aircraft I have never heard of. Add in helicopters, freefall parachuting and wing walking for good measure—he has experienced flying in many forms and in scores of different aircraft types both during and after his RAF career, when he worked for Marshalls.

Oh, he also described receiving a mobile phone call during an awards event which, fortunately in this instances, he had inadvertently omitted to silence. Just a call of congratulations from Tim Peake—who happened to be orbiting the earth in the International Space Station at the time.

His talk ended with a cartoon of a young boy telling his mother. "When I grow up I want to be a pilot". "You can't do both, dear" she replies.

*Reported by CJ*

**This talk, accompanied by the slides, is available via the members' area of the CHFHS website.**

**PS:** do take a look at the history page of the Cambridge Aero Club's website—some interesting gems of local history, such as:

*"The Cambridge Aero Club is one of the longest established flight training schools in the world and has been training pilots for more than ninety years".*

*"During the war, Marshall's Flying School trained over 22,000 pilots for the RAF, Army and Navy – 1/6 of the total number of pilots trained for the RAF during the war."*

*"...a pupil at the CAC was Ricardia "Dickie" Morrow, who, in 1948 became the first female pilot to fly around the world in a flight that began and ended at Cambridge Airport."*

# SUTTON-IN-THE-ISLE BAPTIST CHAPEL

by Gill Shapland

**This article was originally compiled for The CFHS Journal by the late Alan Bullwinkle; Alan was responsible for many (if not most) of the early MI recordings done by the society. It was published in 1993.**

The monumental inscriptions in the burial ground around the Baptist Chapel in Sutton-in-the-Isle have recently been recorded, as reported elsewhere in this Journal. Sixty-one headstones were recorded dating from 1800 to 1947; not all of those after 1947 were noted. When I gave a copy of the transcript to the Secretary of the church she kindly let me look through the old minute books containing records dating from 1789 when the church was founded by nine people:

William WRIGHT	Mary CARTER	Anne FAUX
Robert BLINKHORN	William HIDE	Jeremiah REYNOLDS
Jane FAUX	William FAUX	Mary REYNOLDS

Mr George Norman was the first pastor, and in 1790 William Wright and William Hide were elected deacons. In the following year the Church House was built. By 1805 there were 49 baptised believer members, and by 1846 there were 77.

In one of the minute books a list was made in 1809 of people who had become members since the formation of the church:

John MURFITT	John CHAMBERS	Susanna POULTER
John JARVIS	George REMINGTON	John POULTER
Thomas UFFINDELL	William BENSTEAD	Joseph BLACKMAN
Robert TUBBS	John SMITH	Jane SMITH
Mary BLINKHORN	Elizabeth SMITH	Mary SIMONTS
Elizabeth NORMAN	Sara DOCWRAY	William COLE
Eleanor MURFITT	Elizabeth LANGLEN[Y?]	Thomas WRIGHT
Thomas MORGAN	David BELL	Richard AUBURY?
Catherine TOWNSEND	Rebecca NUNN	John WAYMAN
John SYMONDS	Thomas B. MICHAEL	Elizabeth BARRETT
George NORMAN	Catherine MICHAEL	Thomas LAMBETH pastor
Anne HARRISON	Elizabeth MacCORMICK	William HINSON
Mary WHITING	John PEARCE	William POOLE sen
Susan BURLING	Anne BRADSHAW	George REMINGTON
Mary POOLE	John NEWMAN	Susan LAYTON
Anne SMITH	Mary SIMPSON	Elizabeth PATE
Anne COOPER	Rebecca COCKCROFT	Elizabeth SABERTON
Elizabeth COOTE	Thomas STOKES	Elizabeth PARKER

A later list dated 1810 added the following new names:

John WEBB: bap. 6 Apr 1806

Mrs BULL

Mary RUMBARD

Mary PATTERSON and Margaret CLARY, bap. 6 Jul 1806

Ann DOGGETT (formerly Sutton)

Mary COUZENS and Mrs AUBURY

Mrs HARVEY

William DOGGETT

Judith PALMER, Sarah CATTLE and Mary HUTCHINSON bap. 7 Jul 1811

Elizabeth BLACKMAN

Elizabeth SAMMONS

Lettice REYNOLDS

Sarah BOSTON

John THURBAN, James WRIGHT, John UFFINDELL, and Joseph  
SAMMONS bap by Wm ORRIS, pastor 1809-20

William COZENS

Lydia BUKET

I hope that the records will be deposited in the CRO because the membership is down to nine and the church may close.

Sadly when the church closed the records were not located. I lived at Sutton a few years later, and in spite of the efforts of myself and a couple of well known village enthusiasts no one could provide any clue to the fate of them. If anyone with village or Baptist connections can throw new light on their fate we and the Archive service would love to hear from them!

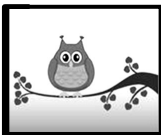
*[Due to the layout of the hand-typed text from which this is copied there is some confusion whether some names were intended to indicate baptism on one of the dates given. The original article appeared in the CFHS Journal Volume 9, issue 4 1993. Gill Shapland]*

**WANTED :**  
**could**  
**you**  
**help ?**

**Publicity Officer & Newsletter/Social Media Editor**

As David mentioned in his piece on page 2, Marie has decided to stand down owing to other commitments. We thank her for all her work in promoting the society, and for her input into all the fairs, both live and online, that CHFHS has attended in recent years.

We seek someone to help fulfil these roles—we can readily spilt the “jobs” to suit your skills and time. **If you might be interested in helping us** please contact the CHFHS Chair, David Copsey



## LAST WORD

### Can We Ever ... “Get Them All”

The extent to which we try to chase down our ancestors and their relatives is a matter of individual choice and the length of time we have been working at it. While some researchers may perhaps focus just on their own surname or those of the grandparents or great-grandparents only, others branch into as many of the 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024, 2048, etc

direct ancestral families as can be tracked down; or, perhaps prefer to delve into the descendant families of siblings, and work forward through time.

In any specific historic ancestral family, descendants from a given individual are, in theory, finite in number. However, success in finding them is very much down to our skill and to how well “genealogical luck” falls into place ...

A family’s “lot in life” can dictate both the *quantity* and *quality* of their life-course records—such as whether there’s likely to be more than just basic BMD, bap/mar/bur and censuses. Life’s lot also influences where records were made—from generations remaining in the same place at one extreme, to every record of every person being made at a different location.

Then, there’s our skills in understanding of records’ availability and what various records can or can’t tell us. The bottom line is the “luck of the draw”, and whether the paper trail is sufficiently complete to enable enough proof about relationships to be uncovered. For some researchers, this can be cut short by an ink blot or a mouse-nibbled page corner, for others, perhaps it’s their ancestor’s choice of religion, their decision to migrate, life’s misfortunes leading to the person sought being the “unknown stranger” found drowned in the river, or, perhaps it’s a conscious decision to take another name and disappear. Even with no intended deceit, people can appear to vanish—an itinerant lone life, each record in a different place, an unfamiliar birthplace, a surname phonetically spelled, a derivative forename, an inaccurate age, the quality of the written record itself, the subsequent interpretation of this writing for the purposes of widening access to records online, the ability of database algorithms to cope with non-exact-matches, our ability to spot a mis-recorded entry among the returns ... and so on. **No wonder we can’t find ‘em all!!**

**O**ur thanks continue go to everyone who has sent in contributions—whether as articles about your families and researches, or just shorts pieces, please keep it coming—getting something down on paper to share “the story” with others is the key. Family history is so much more than just genealogical facts, it’s the stories which we either know or have deduced from the raw facts, and these need to be written down. Apologies if your piece hasn’t appeared as yet, it’s very much a matter of doing a jigsaw to fit the material into the set number of available pages.

**Remember, the CHFHS Journal is predominantly made up of your work—we just put it together ...**

*The Editorial Team*

## MEMBERSHIP

The Society offers a regular programme of meetings designed to appeal to the specialist and beginner alike; the quarterly members' journal is now available, if preferred, as a digital download. The UK subscription, due on joining and annually thereafter, is £10, and includes the member's partner. The overseas subscription is £15, which gives airmail postage of the Journal. If you chose to receive the e-Journal, the annual subscription for all locations is £7 (we also offer a life membership for £100, or £70 with e-journal). Subscriptions/renewals may be made online through the CHFHS website via debit/credit card or PayPal, or by DirectDebit; alternatively, sterling cheque/etc payable to *Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society*, should be sent to the Secretary. Changes of address/email, members' interests contributions, to the Membership Secretary, please. See p52 for contacts.

## SEARCHABLE RECORDS & SHOP

**"CAMBS SUPERSEARCH"** most of the transcribed records for Cambridgeshire & Isle of Ely (available on CDs or as downloads from our online e-shop) are name searchable via this facility on our website—**now includes** a place-name search for Huntingdonshire parishes—see which transcription products might feature your names &/or places of interest

**"ANCESTOR FINDER"** an online 'pay-per-view' database of our transcribed records for Cambs plus digitised images of most parish registers from the Wisbech area (the WisMus Project is nearing completion), with Hunts being added as they are reformatted. Tailor searches to meet your particular needs—view only records you select using prepaid "tokens" (typically, 25p per record or less, equivalent).

Visit **"AncestorFinder"** at : [www.chfhs.org.uk](http://www.chfhs.org.uk)

**NB:** "AF" mainly features records from Cambs & Isle of Ely at present; transcriptions of many selected Hunts records are being reformatted and added as they become available (are available as downloads or CDs—check their availability via the website shop)

**CHFHS SHOP** search the publications listings on the website to see what's available for particular locations (CDs and /or downloads)

## RESEARCH SERVICES

The Society will undertake a limited amount of help for members who have reached a sticking point in their research. This can be done in two ways :-

- # general enquiries can be addressed to the Secretary by email [secretary@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@chfhs.org.uk) (or by post, with an SAE please)
- # more detailed requests should be sent to our Research Team, preferably by email, via the request form on the website [research@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:research@chfhs.org.uk)

**We will attend to requests as our time allows. We ask that you remember we are all volunteers, so please be patient and reasonable in your requests. Please supply as much information about the topic/person as possible (such as the sources of "facts" you have and which records/resources have already been consulted (eg. BMDs, census, par reg, a family tree, Ancestry, FamilySearch, etc)**

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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**email** : chairman@chfhs.org.uk

**VICE-CHAIRMAN** : vacant

**SECRETARY** : (T) Muriel Halliday, 15 Castle Hythe, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4BU  
**email** : secretary@chfhs.org.uk

**TREASURER** : (T) Les Potts, 11 Woburn Close, Flitwick, Bedfordshire MK45 1TE  
**email** : treasurer@chfhs.org.uk

**MEMBERSHIP SEC** : Joan Bennett, 36c, Mill Green, Warboys, Cambs. PE28 2SA  
**email**:membership@chfhs.org.uk

**MINUTES SECRETARY** : (T) Wendy Siddles

**PROJECTS CO-ORDINATOR** : Terry Garner

**email** : projects@chfhs.org.uk

**CHFHS SHOP** : Chris Norton [mail orders via the Secretary, please]

**email** : bookstall@chfhs.org.uk

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**email** : webmaster@chfhs.org.uk

**NEWSLETTER & SOCIAL MEDIA CO-ORDINATOR** : vacant

**email** : newsletter@chfhs.org.uk

**JOURNAL EDITOR** : (T) Caroline Norton [postal correspondence via the Secretary, please]

**email** : editor@chfhs.org.uk

**PUBLICITY** : vacant

**email** : publicity@chfhs.org.uk

**RESEARCH TEAM** : [postal enquiries via Secretary, please]

**email** : research@chfhs.org.uk

**MARCH BRANCH CHAIRMAN** : Margery Young

**email** : march@chfhs.org.uk

**CAMBRIDGE BRANCH PROGRAMME ORGANISER** : vacant

**email** : programme@chfhs.org.uk

**HUNTINGDON BRANCH REPRESENTATIVE** : John Bownass

**email** : hunts@chfhs.org.uk

**EDUCATION OFFICER** : (T) Caroline Norton

**email** : editor@chfhs.org.uk

**ARCHIVES & LOCAL STUDIES SERVICE LIAISON** : (T) Gill Shapland

**email** : archives@chfhs.org.uk

**COMMITTEE MEMBER & MARCH BRANCH REP** : David Edwards

**email** : march@chfhs.org.uk

**ALL OTHER & POSTAL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE SECRETARY, PLEASE**

**CHFHS tel. no.: 01223 853273 for UK only (answer machine)**

*please leave your name/phone no. & we'll get back to you as soon as is possible*

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**[www.chfhs.org.uk](http://www.chfhs.org.uk)**

**visit the CHFHS website to find listings, links and information**

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ANCESTRY

FINDMYPAST

THE GENEALOGIST

FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE

WDYTYA MAGAZINE

FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION

SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LOST COUSINS

CAMBS ASSOC FOR LOCAL HISTORY

HUNTINGDON LOCAL HISTORY SOC

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ON YOUR COMPUTER*'

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMMUNITY

ARCHIVE NETWORK

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HISTORY

ROLL-OF-HONOUR

# PUT SOMETHING BACK INTO FAMILY HISTORY



**CAMBS & HUNTS FHS WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE COUNTY ARCHIVES & LIBRARIES TO PHOTOGRAPH, SCAN, TRANSCRIBE AND INDEX KEY COUNTY RECORDS ESPECIALLY NAME-RICH ONES OF GENEALOGICAL INTEREST**

we are looking for additional volunteers to help expand access to name-rich county genealogical material

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