

Encouraging the study of family history since 1976



in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire & the Isle of Ely

# THE JOURNAL



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VOLUME 30 : 3

AUTUMN 2024

# **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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*For latest news, and updates*

**WATCH THE WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER & FACEBOOK**

**CONTACT US (for additional contacts/services see p51-2**

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

**[secretary@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@chfhs.org.uk) or by post to**

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

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**Additional guidance for contributors can be found on the CHFHS website**

We aim to publish The Journal quarterly : mid-late Jan / April / July / Oct  
You can submit material for publication at any time. We will include it in the next available issue (please be patient, space is finite and we will keep you posted)



# CAMBS & HUNTS FHS JOURNAL

VOL 30 : 3

AUTUMN 2024



Welcome to the Autumn edition of the CHFHS Journal—this issue opens with a review of the past year in the Chairman’s AGM Report, and a selection of photos illustrating recent society events—the RUS-Live Fair and the hybrid AGM at Ely Archives. We thank the Archives for hosting the AGM and setting up a documents exhibition to enhance the day, and to Gill Blanchard for presenting her talk as a zoom from home when she was unable to travel to Ely as had been expected.

Feature articles in this issue include—Graham W describes the double life led by a relative, where petty crime gave way to . . . *you’ll have to wait for the next issue to find out!!*; the tangled “web” of relationships which came out of an ancestors’ chain of marriages is outlined by Mike T (can anyone better the tally!!); Vicki A recounts the life and times of her relative, a renowned local jockey in the early/mid 1800s.

All the regulars features are to be found dotted throughout—research surgeries and meetings’ diary (please note: from the New Year, we will be consolidating the online evening talks into a single monthly event); reports of talks; book reviews—& much more—do take a look at p11 for details of an exclusive offer to members, and keep an eye open for further details of the ReallyUsefulShowOnline in November.

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

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**cover photo : RUS LIVE @ Burgess Hall, St Ives : Sat 20 April**

*Muriel and Les welcoming visitors on behalf of the East Anglian Group*



MEMBERS HAVE FULL ACCESS TO THE ONLINE RECORD SEARCH

### Keep an eye out for new content on the website

All members have FREE access to the transcription database, which is accessed via the 'Members Area' (click top right; then select <search the database>)

- **Registering for zoom talks** : you will receive an acknowledgement by return whenever you register, but no zoom link. The link will **only** be issued 48hrs ahead of the event—so, please recheck your emails.
- **Cambs and Hunts Research** : a new records database search / retrieval system has replaced AncestorFinder and SuperSearch, and is accessed **only** via the members area login. The big difference now, is that :

**all searches and results are FREE TO ALL**

*drop in &  
say hello*



Suffolk Family History Society – Family History Fair 2024.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2024 10:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The Talks Theme is "Farming in Suffolk" by 3 topline speakers.

The Hold, Suffolk Archives, Ipswich Waterfront  
131 Fore Street, Ipswich, IP4 1LR,



**BEHIND THE SCENES VISIT TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHIVES AT ELY WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2PM. PLEASE CONTACT SECRETARY IF INTERESTED**



## A WORD FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN



### **Brick walls and hypothesis testing**

As we research our family history, we will often reach a point where we cannot seem to progress any further – we have reached a brick wall. There are too many possibilities; gaps in the records; lack of evidence. We can go round in circles, hoping for inspiration, checking and re-checking. I thought I would share with you two examples from my own research that I am currently working through with some success. I hope you can see ideas for your own work.

The first links to the catalyst for my own interest in family history – bringing alive my ancestors through finding photographs showing what they looked like, what they wore, where they were when the photograph was taken. I have recently taken copies of a Victorian photograph album, 50 cartes and cabinets, that was made by the brother of one of my great grandmothers and his wife, and I am comparing this to copies I have had for some time from another of her brothers. The labelling of both collections is patchy, but there are a few photos common to both sets. I've been looking carefully at all the clues – type of photograph, studio setting, name and address, position in album, pose, age, family grouping, likeness, costume etc but also trying to learn what I can about the thinking of the person who compiled the collection. Martha Langford's book *Suspended Conversations* – the afterlife of memory in photographic albums, has helped my thinking, and is worth reading; it is based around a collection of albums in a Canadian museum, but her approach can be applied anywhere. I have been able to identify about 40% of the people in both collections and have used the hypothesis approach to distinguish between two different women both labelled as grandmother. I am now confident that one or two of the photographs are of my second great grandmother, and there are also photos of some of her husband's siblings. Photographic research uses different skills to textual research, but I have been able to add to my aim of finding photographs of as many as possible of my great grandparents' siblings, and second great grandparents and their siblings, as well as a few from earlier generations when photography was just starting.

My second example is based around naming patterns and county boundary borders, and another of my second great grandparents. Living on the border between Herefordshire and Radnorshire, but looking at occupation, sibling movement, the patchy survival of Welsh parish registers and a few wills, I am reconstructing as many family groups as I can, again using the hypothesis approach to distinguish between people of the similarly spelt first and family names in late 18th and early 19th century records. Both these projects take a considerable time to explore carefully but are revealing new things to me after more than 50 years research. The first is helped by the fact that others have researched both overseas and at home, but the second has almost no declared interest from other family historians as family size and marriage was small. Please contact me if you would like to know about either of these pieces of work.

### **Thank you**

I wrote in the last journal about two important imminent events for CHFHS – the first face to face family history show in our county for several years, and our AGM. The show was a great success, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the planning and work on the day, staffing our stand, and all our members who attended in person. It was so good to speak with a range of exhibitors and visitors from across our region. We shall soon be discussing a date for the next local show, probably in two years' time, as the planning for St Ives took 18 months.

Our AGM was well attended both in person and by zoom, and everything went well; this is vital for our charitable status. Those coming to Ely were able to see a display put on by Archives staff, and to talk to them about the items. A future visit to the Archives for Society members is planned for the autumn. Again, I would like to thank everyone, including our re-elected President, Elizabeth Stazicker, for chairing the meeting so efficiently.

### **Talks**

We have noticed a fall in the numbers registering for and attending our talks this year, although we are not sure of the reasons for this. Numbers have been discussed in our committee, and there may be several reasons for the decline including other commitments, timing, last minute illness. Irene and I regularly attend talks either in person or by zoom for a range of organisations to which we belong, and it is always good to learn new things, benefit from the knowledge and expertise of both the speaker and those attending, and to chat with others at face to face meetings such as our meetings in March library on the first Wednesday of the month. The health benefits of intellectual stimulation are well documented and contribute to our mental and physical wellbeing. All our events are well publicised in the journal,

newsletter and website.

The choice of topic may also be a factor in numbers attending. Both Linda at March and Muriel for the zoom meetings do a great job finding interesting speakers, and those attending always appreciate what they have heard and seen. However, if we are not covering the topics you want, please contact me with suggestions, and also if you have any other comments.

Because of declining numbers, we will be reducing from three talks each month down to two each month later in the year, all details of the new arrangements and forthcoming talks will be widely shared.

### **Our local museums**

During Covid, we made a donation to fourteen local museums recognising that they would lose income as people were unable to visit. The donations were widely appreciated, and the museums have continued to be an important source for local and family history now that they are fully open again. We have therefore recently made a further donation to each of these museums and have started to receive an indication of what our money will go towards. Many of these museums now offer beneficial rates or activities for CHFHS members.

### **1066, DNA and all that**

This edition of the journal includes a request asking members with qualifying surnames to undertake a DNA test to build up more information about one of the families that came over with the Conqueror in 1066. Please respond if you meet the criteria. 1066 is an iconic date in our history, of particular interest to me as I used to work in a building on the edge of the battlefield, and I have used the SoG publication *My Ancestor came with the Conqueror* to link with members of my own family. The possibilities of DNA and reconstruction are growing all the time; Richard III is well documented, but I have just attended an exhibition where a photograph of the face of a 16 year old Anglo-Saxon girl buried near Cambridge can be seen.

Evidence for her origins in Europe is included. You can see the temporary exhibition at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology until 22 September.

*David Copsley*

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

**Mary Wren**

# **Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society Charity Number 278815**

## **Chairman's Report 2023/24**

### **1 Overview**

The Society has continued to provide the full spectrum of its activities to its members. We regularly monitor changing national and sector developments in the light of our overall aims, as set out in our constitution, linked from the front page of our website. Again, I must thank you all, and particularly our project volunteers and our committee members, all of whom have a key role in ensuring that the Society continues to be seen as a leading organisation in family history. The Society does not employ any staff, so the huge amount of time, energy, expertise and hard work that our volunteers all give deserves public recognition. I have used the same headings for my report as in previous years; the more significant items come first.

### **2 New Website**

Our new website was launched in June 2023 built and hosted by Beachshore, and has had a major impact on many aspects of Society work. The new address is <https://www.chfhs.org.uk/>. For our members, the most significant change is that searching through our database then allows everyone to see all the transcribed information for any event, from more than four million records. The previous payment by using tokens to see the full record has been stopped. Some members do not yet seem to be aware of this change, and I hope this AGM report will encourage them to make full use of the enhanced access to further their knowledge and research. Non-members can use the search facilities to search for information and then make online purchases of downloads/CDs, books, maps and also membership so they can then receive all the member benefits listed on the website. Other content in the members' section of the website includes policies, strategies and guidelines, past journals and newsletters, recordings of talks, member surname interests, and e-journals from other societies. For our committee, the new website has changed the way we receive and store business information. The papers for the bi-monthly committee meetings are all filed together by meeting date and provide a permanent record of our work. Events are set up through the website, recordings made available to members. The new website has made the management of our work more transparent and easier to use. Role descriptions for committee post holders



have also been updated, and a Knowledge Audit lists areas of expertise and interest for each committee member. I should like to thank both Beachshore and our team for the huge amount of work involved in preparing and launching the new website. As with all new websites, there were initial issues that needed to be resolved, and we have worked together to solve these. There are still some issues that have held up the ongoing transcription and checking process for the final Wisbech Museum and Huntingdon records. We have applied a temporary fix, and I am very sorry for the disruption this has caused our volunteers who give their time and expertise freely. I also need to thank ED2 for hosting the previous website for many years. Our webmaster still has access to the previous content when this is necessary.

### **3 Membership**

The past year has seen a great increase in our membership. The new website allows us to generate daily and longer-term reports and we recruit between 30 and 50 new members each month. As with all societies, not everyone renews their membership, but the total number of members has grown by about 350 in the past twelve months, a 15% increase. A major reason for this is our increased social media presence particularly with Facebook, and the work that committee members do on a daily basis to post interesting content to a wide audience and promote an awareness of our work and encourage people to join the Society. We have written a Social Media policy to provide guidance in this rapidly growing area of our work; the policy is on the website. The dedicated telephone line number for contacting the Secretary was rarely used and the account has been dropped.

### **4 Exhibitions and Shows**

We had a booth at the online Really Useful Show hosted by the Family History Federation in November 2023. There are always new processes and procedures with online shows, and the small team staffing our booth attended several training sessions. The number of physical family history exhibitions is starting to increase as we adjust to new ways of working. We had a stall at the Suffolk Family History Society fair in Ipswich, but most of our work has been concentrated on preparing for the Really Useful Show Live at St Ives on 20 April. The Society has been involved in two of the five working groups and the co-ordinating group. I am writing this report before the Show, and planning is nearing completion with more than 50 tables sold, the event will take place before our AGM. Several online planning meetings are held each month. This is the first family history physical event that the Federation has hosted for four years, and we are pleased that the East Anglian Group of Family History Societies has chosen a location in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. The initial suggestion for the Fair

came from the meetings of the East Anglia Group, the group provides an opportunity to share practice amongst family history societies across the region.

## **5 Partnership Work**

Two member visits and tours of the Cambridge University Library and Archives took place in September and January. Both were fully booked, and several of those visiting applied for the free University Library membership offer available to our members. Both tours included displays of maps, family history sources, and a summary of the recently completed Ely and Wisbech Assizes cataloguing project, funded by the Society. Society volunteers have just begun working on the preparation of Consistory Court records so that they are easier and therefore less expensive to catalogue. Both the Library and the Society are looking at a range of funding sources so this new large-scale project can be started. The County Archives and Ancestry project to digitise all the parish registers in both Ely and Huntingdon Office and match these to Society transcripts is continuing. The completed work is projected to go live on Ancestry during 2024 and will have a significant impact on family history research in both Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. We have received our first annual payment from Ancestry for using our transcriptions. The Society made donations to the Archives Service to fund new laptops and we have been asked to purchase a display cabinet for the entrance foyer area at Ely. This will include a note that it was funded by the Society. The new cabinet should be ordered at the start of the financial year, although it is unlikely it will be delivered in time for attendees at our AGM in this year. We continue to monitor Ebay for potential purchases in liaison with Archives staff; sometimes the documents sell for very high prices, but successful bids are highlighted in the Archives reports to the CAGALS group at which the Society is a full member. We have deposited older Society records including minutes of meetings and accounts in the Ely Archives office and developed a Retention Policy to provide guidance for both physical and digital content. Continuing links with the County Library Service include using venues for surgeries and talks and the purchase of archival quality storage boxes for the Cambridgeshire Collection. Following an approach from the Society, the libraries have agreed to become a Family Search Affiliate Library. This will mean that the full range of Family Search resources will be accessible to everyone visiting the library including our members. Previously, it would have been necessary to make an appointment at a Family Search Centre for those records not freely available online for home access. Other significant partners include the Museum of Cambridge, local museums and village societies. We attend events with these organisations on a regular basis. Our work with local schools was highlighted at the inauguration of a new

community centre near Mill Road in Cambridge. The local community has continued its enthusiasm for how family history sources can contribute to an understanding of area and its history. I was one of several people interviewed by a sixth form student about the contribution that community history can make. Work is also ongoing with Stretham Primary School. The Society has submitted a response to two recent issues – the proposal to destroy original copies of wills after they have been digitised, and the proposal to close the Bury St Edmunds Archives office and move the content to Ipswich. Many Cambridgeshire records are at Bury.

## **6 Projects**

The final transcribing and matching work for the Wisbech and Fenland Museum parish register collection is continuing, as is the ongoing work to integrate the Huntingdonshire parish registers into the database search. As new records become available, they are listed on the home page of our website, for both members and others to see. We have started to look at how Fenland cemetery registers can be more accessible and will be discussing this with all parties over the next few months.

## **7 Meetings and Surgeries**

The series of talks held three times a month continue to attract our members from all over the world. The talks at March library provide an opportunity to chat with other members over a cup of tea or coffee, and the March group also organised a trip to the National Archives in Kew. The talks at the traditional Huntingdon time are zoom only, and the Cambridge talks have now become zoom only from September 2023, as the numbers attending in person did not justify the hire costs of the venue. Most of the speakers give permission for their talks to be recorded, and these are then added to the members' section of our website. All talks are publicised in our monthly newsletters, and reports are included in each quarterly journal. Surgeries continue to be held at Bar Hill, Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon, March and St Ives. Numbers attending each venue vary, but feedback from those helped confirms how widely appreciated the help, guidance and advice they receive is valued. Many of those helped donate to the Society or join as a new member. Committee members have given a series of family history related talks to local groups, and radio interviews. We were chosen as the representative for the University Library family history constituency to help understanding of the needs of all categories of users.

## **8 Accounts and Independent Examiner for 2023**

Our Treasurer has prepared the 2023 accounts, and these are independently examined by Peter Rasberry from Clenshaw Minns. We are proposing that Peter Rasberry continue as our independent examiner for 2024.

## 9 Honorary Life Memberships

We have just over 20 HLM's in recognition of the significant and long last lasting work that they have done for the Society. This year, we are not proposing any new HLMs.

## 10 Committee Nominations

Each of our committee members has a key role in Society work and has confirmed their willingness to be nominated and seconded. The split between nominated and co-opted members fits the structure of our constitution, but all committee members have full voting rights. There are no changes to our constitution.

## 11 Five-year Plan

We have significantly strengthened our approach to research, appointing a new Research Officer who is supported by research assistants, all of whom are experienced at answering the range of enquiries we receive. The research team now has access to a Society Ancestry account as well as the Find My Past account, so that we can research more widely the enquiries we receive, many of which are challenging, as the enquirer will have undertaken much preliminary work. The plan informs our work and is on the website.

**David Copsey, Chairman**  
**March 2024**

### **RECEIVED FROM ELLIOT RUFF (unsolicited advertisement):**

I am emailing today in regard to our self-publishing arm, Scotforth Books <https://www.scotforthbooks.com/> (the self-publishing arm of Carnegie Publishing) which has been aiding authors in publishing their own books since 1984. We are aware that those involved with various historical societies around the country often have a book in them, but without any idea on how to self-publish. We are currently aiming to get word out to groups like your own, where members eager to publish local-historical titles are likely to be.

Scotforth Books then offers a people-based service, so you're always be dealing with people attentive to how personal a thing a book is, guiding authors towards the end result of their own high-quality printed book. This can simply be to pass around to friends and family, or to sell with the free marketing advice based on how we market our own titles. Essentially, this allows the individual to publish their own book, retaining complete control, whilst making use of the infrastructure available at a professional publishing house.

I do hope this sounds like something your members would be greatly interested in and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Following CHFHS's donations to local small museums as described by David Copsey in his introduction to this issue, (see p 5), we've received this reply and exclusive members' offer from The Farmland Museum at Denny Abbey—located by the A10 between Waterbeach and Chittering.

Thank you!

... to the *Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society* for their generous donation. CHFHS is a local organisation that encourages the study of family history in the old counties of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and the Isle of Ely. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Society for their generosity and support.

This donation will help fund one of our priority collections projects - a review of the objects in our museum store. It will help us to obtain up-to-date information about items in our collection and their condition. Many objects have been tucked away in the store for a number of years, so we hope this project will lead to the creation of new displays of unseen items for our visitors to enjoy.

As a result of this donation we can dedicate additional staff time to the project, train volunteers on collections care procedures, and purchase storage, packing and cleaning items to help care for objects.



\*\*\* **FREE ADMISSION** \*\*\*  
**FOR CHFHS MEMBERS**

THE MUSEUM ARE OFFERING  
FREE ADMISSION TICKETS FOR  
ALL CHFHS MEMBERS TO VISIT  
THE MUSEUM & SEE THE  
COLLECTION FOR THEMSELVES

***A GRAND DAY OUT!***

**Sarah Michael**

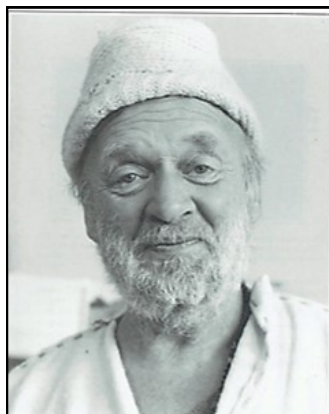
**Museum Manager**

[sarah.michael@farmlandmuseum.org.uk](mailto:sarah.michael@farmlandmuseum.org.uk) (01223 860988)

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO TAKE UP THIS KIND OFFER, PLEASE CONTACT SARAH**

# HAROLD FORDHAM: a life in two halves Part 1

*by Graham Webster*



***Harold Fordham***

(STEMP and COLLINS,  
1989)

I have been researching my, and kindred, family trees for many years now and while I come across fascinating and interest stories in other's trees, apart from a little-known prisoner-of-war in the First World War <sup>1</sup>, I have not come across one that I can say has hit the mark of a (albeit minor) celebrity. In this case there were two parts to the story.

First, the background and the first half of the story:

On 3 November 1919 <sup>2</sup>, Harold FORDHAM was born in Chesterton Fen Road, Milton, Cambridge, to William FORDHAM (born, also in Chesterton in 1885) - a general labourer - and Louisa nee MEDLOCK (born on 12 June 1885 in 12 Smalls Way, Cambridge). They were married at the Cambridge Registry Office on 1 November 1907; he was their youngest son, with only a sister, Louisa, younger. In the 1921 Census, Harold, his parents and his six siblings were still living at Chesterton Fen Road, Milton, Cambridge. Father was recorded as a bricklayer's labourer working for John BRIGNELL, a building company. Harold attended St Andrew's and Brunswick schools, and his first employment may have been farm work but he soon started working at Brignell's building yard <sup>3</sup>, no doubt helped that his father was working there.

We then have gap of some years in the records before the 1939 Register in which Harold is recorded as living at 132 Kendal Way, Cambridge with his parents, and working as a bricklayer; father is a builder's scaffolder and navy. Interestingly, John Brignell is credited with building houses in Kendal Way <sup>4</sup>. Harold took pride in his Army service as gunner. He is enlisted in the Territorial Army in December 1941 into the 50th Antitank Regiment, Royal Artillery starting at the depot in Church Stretton, Shropshire for training <sup>5</sup>. His service record shows that for two and a half years he is based in the UK,

having moved to 59th Antitank Regiment, Royal Artillery, in April 1942 and serving in 236 Battery, posted to Uckfield, Sussex. He is posted to France a couple of weeks after D-Day (he is moved on 22 June 1944) <sup>6</sup>, and moving through to Germany until October 1945; after a brief spell back in the UK he was off to Egypt in December 1945 until May 1946 during which he is transferred to 19 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, after which he is discharged in June of that year. Amongst the other notable entries in his service record are: he fractured his right wrist, hospitalised in Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, in 1938; his 'physical development' is described as 'stout' during his pre-enlisting medical; he twice injures the middle finger on his left hand; he received a partial denture in May 1944; on discharge it is recorded that his 'character [was] very good'; his address is changed to 81 Cam Causeway, Cambridge <sup>7</sup>, and 'in prison from June 1951' in an amendment in May 1952. It was later reported he had suffered from shell shock <sup>8</sup>, and this might explain the two stages of Harold's life as documented in the records.

The first is the unfortunate period of 'criminal' Harold. Circumstantially - although see later - in January 1950, a Harold FORDHAM (reported as being 32, so would be the correct age) was sent for two years corrective training at Cambridgeshire Quarter Session for breaking into Chesterton Bowls Club between 18-19 November <sup>9</sup>. He was convicted for stealing 4s 7d cash, part of a bottle of Scotch whisky and other articles worth together £1 15s 6d. It was said Harold was a fairground attendant, with his address given as The Encampment, Fen Road <sup>10</sup>. Harold, it is reported pleaded guilty, but said he did not take the whisky and this plea was accepted.

Again, in 1953 "Harold Fordham, 35-year-old bricklayer":

*...appeared before the Court of Criminal Appeal to appeal against the sentence of eight years' preventive detention passed on him at Northants County Sessions for larceny at Peterborough. The Lord Chief Justice (Lord Goddard) said: "No one will be as surprised as you when I tell you that we are thinking of giving you a chance."*

*The surprise was the substitution of two years' probation for the sentence.*

*Announcing this, Lord Goddard said that Fordham had been the victim of short sentences <sup>11</sup>.*

This Court of Criminal Appeal followed an appearance at Peterborough Appeal Committee on 8 January 1953 <sup>12</sup>.

The substituted probation order was the subject of the third of three charges

laid on Harold at Cambridge Magistrate Court on 13 January 1955<sup>13</sup>. The trial extensively reported in the local press, where "...[a]waiting trial at the next Quarter Sessions on false pretences and other charges, [was] Harold Fordham, whose address was given as 132, Kendal Way, Cambridge..."<sup>14</sup>.

Briefly, there were three charges:

*...obtaining from James Elliot a cheque for £100 by false pretences on September 3rd; stealing a black leather wallet containing some notes and change, and other articles valued at £3 12s 6d from Julian Francis Hawes on September 10th; and breach of recognisance entered on March 9th 1953*<sup>15</sup>.

Harold was not represented in court but was granted legal aid for the first two charges and to apply at Peterborough for legal aid on the third.

For the first charge it was alleged that Harold, a bricklayer, signed a memorandum of understanding with ELLIOT to do plastering and tiling in Holbrook Road, Cambridge. Despite stating he had three bricklayers working for him, for which a cheque was issued for their pay, he did not and ultimately used the money to buy a radio for £15 and said the remainder "...had all gone on bed and breakfasts and the 'dogs'"<sup>16</sup>. Harold had been previously lodging in King Street, Cambridge, and he surrendered himself at Barkingside police station, Essex:

*I got fed up wandering around on my own, wondering when a man in blue was going to tap me on the shoulder...I have been on my own all the time. When I heard the cheque was stopped you could have knocked me down with a feather. I thought I was in real trouble so I caught the first train to London and I have been working here ever since...*<sup>17</sup>

Harold then stated that the second charge followed from this first one. The allegation for that was that Harold had been asked to retrieve a wallet from HAWES' lodgings at 66 King Street. It was found missing but on 30 November, after a warrant was issued on 3 November and his arrest on 26 November<sup>18</sup>, it was recovered from Harold's lodgings at 32 Digby Road, Corringham, Essex. The landlady, Mrs Dorothy PURKINS gave evidence that an Edward PITT asked for lodgings and that he was working on a building site at Woodford Avenue. Harold said "...Joe [HAWES] told me to get it and I took it away with me."<sup>19</sup> For these first two charges, Harold was committed for trial at the County Quarter Sessions. On the breach of probation charge Harold was committed to Peterborough Quarter Sessions.



The report of the trial at the Soke of Peterborough <sup>20</sup> Quarter Sessions Appeal Committee on 13 January 1954 started by providing the background to the initial offence – stealing a gent’s overcoat for which Harold pleaded guilty at the he Peterborough Petty Sessions in November 1952 <sup>21</sup>. It was alleged that the breach of the probation order involved failure to report where he lived to the Probation and that he left Cambridge without informing that Officer. At the trial, the Clerk of the Peace catalogued Harold’s previous convictions:

- for attempting housebreaking and possessing housebreaking implements by night, Essex Quarter Sessions, 3 December 1948, six and six months concurrent;
- pavilion-breaking and larceny, Cambridgeshire Quarter Sessions, 6 January 1950, two-years corrective training;
- possessing housebreaking implements by night, Hertfordshire Quarter Sessions, 25 June 1951, two years imprisonment.

After the substitution of the probation order, the court heard that Harold was put under supervision of the Cambridge Probation Officer, but this was transferred after a year to the Biggleswade Probation Officer and back again in June 1954 <sup>22</sup>. Harold was, it was said, “...a competent and willing worker in the building trade” <sup>23</sup>. Whilst informing the court that Harold had been sentenced to three years imprisonment for the other two charges from the earlier December trial, “...all his offences had occurred in the last seven years and up to the time he was 30 he had a clean sheet”, although it was noted he had eight previous convictions dating from October 1947 <sup>24</sup>. The chair of the committee cited the statement of the Lord Chief Justice at the appeal:

*Do you know what will happen if you break your probation and commit an offence?*

[Harold had replied, yes].

*You will go back to preventive detention.*

*We are going to give you a chance.*

*If you don’t take it you will be brought back and we shall send you to preventive detection and probably for more than eight years.*

*Do you understand that, because if you commit more offences it will show that you are incorrigible and we shall protect the public against you for a very long time.* <sup>25</sup>.

He was sentenced to eight years preventive detention <sup>26</sup>.

**The second part of Harold’s story will portray a completely different side to his character ...**

## ENDNOTES :

1. See Jack Roland Webster, *The Journal* [CFHS], October 2015, vol 21, no 4, pp3 *et seq* <https://www.cfhs.org.uk/journals/Volume%2021%20Number%204%20October%202015.pdf>
2. This date is taken from his birth certificate; it is given as 20 September 1919 when his death was registered, and 2 November 1919 in the 1939 Register.
3. STEMPE, Robin and COLLINS, Denise (1989), *Harold Fordham: a journey through the paintings: paintings exhibited in Cambridge, 1988 and 1989 at The Gallery on the Cam*, Gallery on the Cam, ISBN-13: 978-0-906782-43-9, ISBN: 0-906782-43-0
4. PETTY, Mike (comp) (2015) *A Century of Cambridge News, from 1888*, <https://archive.org/details/CenturyOfCambridgeNewsAugust2015>
5. STEMPE and COLLINS, 1989, *ibid*; The National Archives, Harold FORDHAM , service number 1134326, service record .
6. 59<sup>th</sup> AntiTank Regiment, Royal Artillery is listed in the Order of Battle in 43rd (Wessex) Division for Operation OVERLORD (France)and Operation MARKET GARDEN (Allied force move northwards in Netherlands to Germany) (*cf* <https://www.dday-overlord.com/en/battle-of-normandy/forces/gb/43rd-infantry-division>; <https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/ww2/allied/battalion.php?pid=1281>; <https://www.antonybeevor.com/order-of-battle-operation-market-garden/>
7. An address not too far away from the address given on enlistment, 132 Kendal Way, Cambridge, his parent's address.
8. Colourful character and artist dies at 78, *Cambridge Evening News*, 23 November 1998, p13
9. Theft from Bowls Club, *Cambridge Independent Press and Chronicle*, 13 January 1950, p4
10. Does this (?a gypsy/traveller camp) relate to the current encampment on Chesterton Fen Road, Milton; is it relevant that the war Harold found it difficult to settle down to a conventional life. Louisa GAWTHROP, Harold's sister recounted how her brother once came close to marrying a Romany woman. (<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Fordham-852> ); Harold's name appears in the *Cambridgeshire, England, Electoral Registers, Burgess Rolls and Poll Books, 1722-1966*, for 1946-1954, at 132 Kendal Way, Cambridge
11. 8 years' jail is quashed, *Leicester Evening Mail*, 9 March 1953, p6
12. 8-year sentence for breach of probation, *Peterborough Citizen and Advertiser*, 18 January 1955, p3
13. "Obtained £100 cheque by false pretences" charge, *Cambridge Daily News*, 7 December 1954, p4
14. *ibid*
15. *ibid*
16. *ibid*

17. *ibid*

18. 8-year sentence for breach of probation, *ibid*

19. *ibid*

20. The Soke of Peterborough is a historic area of England associated with the City and Diocese of Peterborough, but considered part of Northamptonshire. The Soke was also described as the Liberty of Peterborough, or Nassaburgh hundred, and comprised, besides Peterborough, about thirty parishes, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soke\\_of\\_Peterborough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soke_of_Peterborough)

21. 8-year sentence for breach of probation, *ibid*

22. Is it a coincidence that in May 1954 a ‘Harold Fordham’ “...of no fixed abode...” and a “bricklayer” was found guilty of “...obtaining by false pretence, with intent to defraud, 500 Fletton bricks worth £5...” at a special Biggleswade court. It was said his real name was Edward Johnson and that he had 7 previous convictions. The case later went to the Bedfordshire Quarter Sessions Appeal Committee and he was discharged without a sentence. See Bricks theft Alleged, *Biggleswade Chronicle*, 7 May 1954, p13; Sentence to come, *Biggleswade Chronicle*, 14 May 1954, p1; Bricklayer is discharged appeal allowed, *Biggleswade Chronicle*, 4 June 1954, p10

23. 8-year sentence for breach of probation, *ibid*

24. 8-year sentence for breach of probation, *ibid*

25. *ibid*

26. *ibid*; Eight-year sentence, *Peterborough Standard*, 21 January 1954, p16; ‘preventive detention’ - an imprisonment that is putatively justified for non-

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## CONTRIBUTED BY MIKE STEPHENSON : extracted from

*Sheffield, Yorkshire, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Universal Advertiser*  
28 July 1787

### Struck by lightning

“A correspondent informs us, that the following melancholy accident happened at Staughton in Huntingdonshire a few days ago: The church-bells being ringing during a thunder-storm, the lightning fell upon the fane [weather vane] of the steeple, and descending into the belfry, killed three of the ringers on the spot; two others were struck speechless, but are likely to recover.”

### **Mike adds that there’s a tablet on the west wall of Gt Staughton church**

*“In the belfry of this church/ John CHAPMAN aged 40/ William GOOSEY aged 13/ Charles FAVEL aged 11/ were instantaneously killed by a flash of lightening/ on the 17th of July 1787/ about 4 in the afternoon/ in the presence of several persons/ whose lives were miraculously preserved/ This stone/ is erected at the expence of the parish to perpetuate/ the memory of so awful a catastrophe/ Whilst o’er their grave the tears of pity flow/ May public virtue spring from private woe/ Warned by their fate, the careless and secure/ Shall learn tho life’s uncertain, death is sure/ “*



**REVIEW BY KAREN ORRELL :** In his latest book, *Sunday Best*, available as a digital download only, Stephen Gill takes an in-depth look at Victorian and Edwardian photography. The book is not specifically aimed at family historians, but genealogists will find plenty of helpful information between the pages.

Our main question as genealogists is probably “who is this a photograph of?” Many of us have inherited a relative’s old photograph album, full of photographs of unidentified people and with the help of this book, you will be able to fairly accurately date when a photograph was taken and then work out who appears in it.

Stephen gives a thorough description of fashions through the ages and you may think that, as it is called *Sunday Best*, the book concentrates on clothing to date photographs but this is not the case! It turns out that there are so many other things to look at when dating a photograph and Stephen clearly lists them all.

From the shape of the card the photograph is printed or mounted on to the photographer information given on the card (they would only advertise having electric light whilst it was a novelty!) Stephen carefully builds your knowledge of the history of photography and encourages you to look in more detail at your photographs, enabling you to more accurately date them.

Starting with the very earliest types of photography, Stephen introduces you to a world where you can suddenly see that the girl with the very black hair in your early black and white photograph was probably a redhead, the woman in the dark dress standing next to the man with a flower pinned to his jacket were pictured for their wedding day and the address of a photographer’s studio can narrow the date of a photograph to a few short years. You certainly will not look at old photographs in the same way again!

The book is illustrated with lots of photographs covering every decade within the period plus handy line drawings to highlight the differences in costume, grooming and even the location the photograph was taken in, all vital clues to help you date a photograph and work out who is in it.

Stephen’s enthusiasm for his subject shines through and he writes in a clear, easy to understand manner. He not only helps you to date your old photographs but also discusses the best way to preserve them for future generations, restoration and the perils of digital storage. **If you are the custodian of old family photographs—this book is a must buy—5 star!!**

Stephen offers suggestions on how to approach analysing old photos ...

**Carte de Visite**

- square corners (worn round)
- medium thickness card
- no name on front
- full length figure
- coloured printing
- simple backplate
- Robert Knott on Bark Street in 1865

gent's hair - curtain beard      hair centre parted

large lapels      ears partly covered

full length frock coat      elaborate epaulettes

deep cuffs      geometric patterns

trousers don't match jacket      bell shaped dress

square toed shoes

116. GIV - Knott c1865

## ***CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED***

### **Are you a (male) LISLE ...**

**James Michel Lile is doing an extensive research project in the USA to differentiate the differently spelled L'ile and Lisle surnames.**

Two members of the family Ralph and Humphrey came over with William the Conqueror in 1066. We invite male Lisle family members from Cambridgeshire, who know some of their ancestry, to do DNA testing. We would like for them to test at "Family Tree DNA" in the US, because we know the mathematician who does their estimates.

We must find some UK testers to help us identify links to break the ice.

**Any input would be appreciated. If you are interested, please contact James Makklile@yaho.com**

### **THIS MAY INTEREST YOU .... "Le Tour de Granta"?**

In the 1870s cycling was beginning to be a competitive sport. Keith Falconer was a tall and muscular aristocratic Scot. When a Cambridge University student, he was rated one of the fastest cyclists in the world. In May 1878 he won the two mile National Cyclists Union championships to give him the (unofficial) world championship. In 1882 he completed Land's End to John O'Groats in 13 days, an impressive time over the lumpy 19th century roads.

## **A Tangled Web**

**received from Mike Tilley**

I'm sure most of us have an ancestor who's remarried after their first spouse has died. Some will have a man or woman who has gone through the process again later in life. But I wonder if anyone can match the woman who appears in my tree?

Isabel KNOWLES was born in about 1820, probably in Witchford, the daughter of John and Ruth Knowles. In 1840 she married Thomas WATSON in Witchford and they had 4 children between 1842 and 1852. Thomas was my 2nd cousin 3 times removed which is how I came across Isabel.

Thomas died aged 60 in 1878 and was buried in Witchford and, later that same year, Isabel married widower William DEWEY. She was in her late 50s at this time while William was in his 60s. Like Isabel, he was from Witchford and his first wife, Mary TABRAHAM, had died in 1866 after bearing him 8 children.

In 1887 William died aged 71 and then, in 1898, Isabel married her 3rd husband, Job HANCOCK. Like Isabel he had been married twice before: firstly to Anne LONG in 1846 and then to widow Sarah CARVER née SOUTH in 1867. Job and Anne had had 6 children.

Isabel's 3rd marriage wasn't to last long however as, the next year, Job died aged 79. Undeterred, Isabel then married her 4th husband, William CLACK, in 1900. You may have guessed by now - William wasn't a bachelor - he was on his 3rd marriage. He had married Sarah BATES in 1859 and, on her death in 1864, he married widow Sally GRANFIELD née ARBER in 1866. William and Sarah had 2 children while William and Sally had 3 more (Sally had had 4 children from her first marriage to John GRANFIELD).

So, by the time she was in her 80s, Isabel had nominally 4 children, 19 step-children and 4 step-step-children though, of course, not all of them outlived her but it must have been a complicated family set-up.

Finally, aged 81, Isabel died in 1901 in Ely. Somewhat surprisingly, her last husband decided not to remarry and he died aged 79 in 1910 in Littleport.

In some ways I was a little disappointed in Isabel's last husband. You may have noticed that her first husband married once, her second husband married twice, her third husband married three times but her fourth husband only married three times - it would have been so satisfying to my methodical brain if he had married four times! You just can't rely on your ancestors, can you?

# Martin Starling

~ jockey ~

by

Vicki Atkinson [2833]

My great grandmother KATE COLLIS nee WOOLLARD (1864-1933) was born in Wood Ditton and had an extensive family which included ISAACSON, JAGGARD, STARLING and JEFFERY. As Wood Ditton is so close to Newmarket, quite a lot of my ancestral cousins worked in stables, racing and stud. But it is of one in particular that I felt I had to write about - MARTIN STARLING.

Martin was born 14 April 1795 in Wood Ditton and baptised there 21 May 1795. He was the son of Thomas STARLING (1772-1815) my 1<sup>st</sup> cousin 6x removed and Sarah JAY (c1774-1838). Sarah married secondly (1816) Thomas' 1st cousin 1x removed John STARLING (1788-1856) John is my 4<sup>th</sup> Gt Uncle.

The earliest I could find regarding Martin's career is that as a boy he would be on Newmarket Heath on race days and is recorded as having held the horse of Col. Mellish (renowned racehorse owner, jockey and gambler) outside the old Duke's Stand and was rewarded by a sovereign from the Colonel.

Martin's employment was always around horses. After his marriage in 1815 he first in lived Newmarket St Mary parish and moved to Cheveley about 1816 but moved back to Newmarket before 1841. In the census of 1841 he was a colt breaker, and in 1851 gave his occupation as horse breaker. He must have been employed by the Stewards of the Jockey Club in the early 1850's as his occupation was given as 'Inspector of Racecourse' when he remarried in 1854. He was employed to look after the management of the Heath all year and had labourers working under him. He was often complimented on the condition of the Heath. In 1856 the Morning Advertiser said "*The course reflected the utmost credit on the indefatigable vigilance of Mr Martin Starling, the long-ried servant of the Jockey Club, no other grazing has been permitted since last October*" and in 1861 The Nottingham and Midland Counties Daily Express said, "*Martin Starling has converted the change in the weather to good account, for it has afforded him an opportunity of placing the Heath in that order which it is his pride to see it*". One paper said, "*Starling regarded the intrusion of common people upon Newmarket*

*Heath as a most heinous offence and would willingly have had gibbets erected at various intervals for the dispatch of present offenders and the encouragement of all others yet to come”*

In the early days of racing on Newmarket Heath, and other places, there were no rails, only ropes and the crowds would mill about where they pleased so the organisers brought in the local hunt and others to control the crowd.

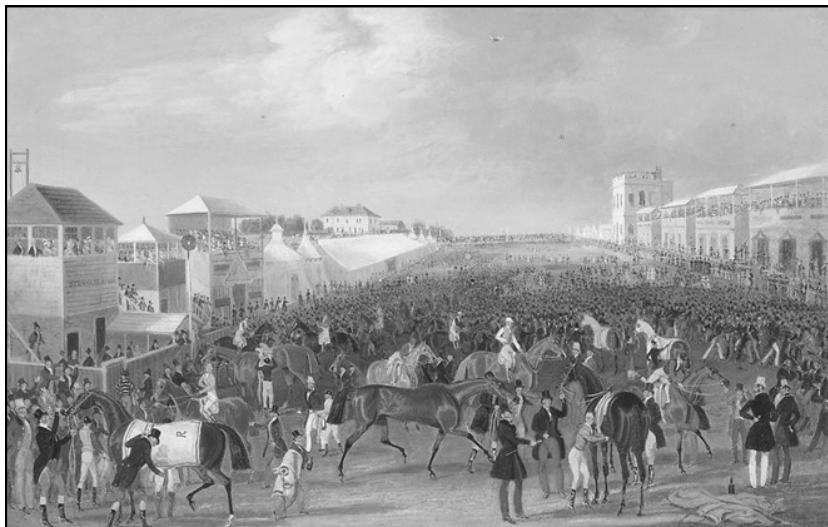
### **1865 Dover Races**

*.....and the rest of the company consisted mainly of the classes to whom at any other place than a race-course everyone is inclined to give a wide berth. The amusements were as various as the company and were eminently adapted to the tastes of the majority. A variety of games over which vagrant and sinister-looking men presided, and at which luckless wights, unskilled in the wooing of Fortune, lost their surplus cash, were interspersed with Aunt Sally, vendors of mock rings, brooches, and telescopic pins, which had to be given to the purchasers of the other trumpery, as they contained photographs which were mysteriously described, and which were supposed to be of a nature that could not legally be sold. There were other equally mysterious vendors of closed packets containing Heaven knows what. These men were surrounded by groups of young persons who, if they remained uncorrupted by what they purchased, could not have failed to get polluted by the foul-mouthed utterances of the vendors and the scraps of lewd poetry in which some of them from time to time indulged. Surely, the police, who no doubt looked well enough after pickpockets and other less dangerous offenders against public morality, might have given the telescopic pin men and the sellers of closed envelopes a little of their attention. We throw out the hint for their benefit on another occasion; because it is the permission of such practices as these which lowers the character of our country race-courses and justly invite strictures such as we have referred to. Almost the only honest caterers for the public enjoyment, excepting the stall-keepers and oystermen, were a band of serenaders, who worked very hard at their legitimate business and reaped but a scant harvest of coppers as their reward. A large number of booths were erected upon the ground, and there was no lack of refreshment for the weary and the thirsty, who, to say the truth, availed themselves very freely of the provision which had been made on their behalf.*

There were many more races in a day then. In Newmarket there was a week of racing called Houghton Week and in 1848 one of the leading jockeys of the time, Nat Flatman, rode in 46 races over the six days of the meeting.



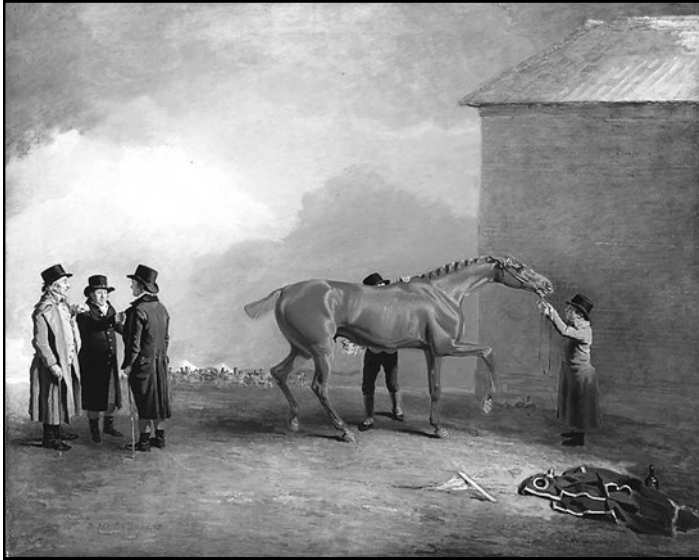
The Southern Times and Dorset County Herald reported on Derby Day in 1867, saying that Martin Starling led the runners up the course and that later he and the police had a hard time clearing the way for the winner. Another paper recorded a huge mob had accompanied the horses to the start and also the return of the winner to the saddling enclosure.



James Pollard *Epsom Races: The Race Over c1835*

In an 1869 report on the Two Thousand Guineas, the writer lamented the coming of Stage Coaches and the railway bringing hundreds of people to the Heath, pressing about the start so that the starter was unable to start the race. Martin was ordered to get down to the start and it said, *“called to Martin Starling who had been striking terror into comparatively innocent minded people milling about the weighing stand, to ride down and read the riot act to the hardened offenders who were actually so pressing on the horses at the post, and so obstinately blocking up the course”* it went on to say that, *“the great days at Newmarket are fast getting beyond the control of Martin Starling and his few satellites”*.

He officiated at a lot of other racecourses as crowd controller, starter and other positions. He rode on horseback, by preference a grey and wearing his red coat. The competing horses would be saddled etc. in the open and people could watch this, then they would meet at a certain spot to go the start. He would lead the horses down to the start, clearing the crowd as he went, and later lead in the winners.



Mully Moloch by Ben Marshall 1803  
*A chestnut colt being rubbed down on Newmarket Heath,  
to the left are Trotter, Hardy and Thompson.*

In 1870 Madame Tussaud added a model of Martin to her collection, seated on a horse, wearing the identical jacket and tops usually worn by him at race meetings.

Martin was pensioned off by the Jockey Club in 1871 and subsequently, when reporting on later race meetings, there were many articles in the papers lamenting his going, though he did still officiate at smaller meetings such as Danebury in Hampshire in June 1871.

The Halifax Collection of Sporting Pictures by David Oldrey (2011) contains two pictures of Martin, one is Truffle by Benjamin Marshall which shows a young Martin together with James Robinson (1794-1873) known as 'Jem' who became a great jockey, winning the Derby six times, a record only beaten by Lester Piggott in 1976. The other is by J F Herring, senior of an Imaginary Race between Ten Champions (1853/54) entitled Unsaddling. In it Martin can be seen resplendent in his red coat and seated on his usual grey horse.

Martin died in April 1873 and was buried at Newmarket All Saints. The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer said, "*This well-known turf Character, employed for many years by the Jockey Club as custodian of Newmarket*

Heath, died at the headquarters of the turf at seven o'clock last evening. Poor Starling had only survived his 78th birthday by one day, and though he had been what he termed "kneading up" for some time, his death was sudden, as it was only on Saturday last that he was in the High Street. He was employed as course clearer at Epsom, Ascot, and elsewhere, and was pensioned by the Jockey Club two years ago".



The handwriting says -  
*Martin Starling, late C.C. at Newmarket, in 1871, 77 years old.*

Of the many tributes to him, I like this one the best, written in The Staffordshire Sentinel about Derby Day -

*"...frequenters of the Surrey Downs will however, have felt much regret in missing two well-known faces, Mr Henry Dorling.....and Old Martin Starling "the man in the red coat" generally looked upon by the populace as the clerk of the course himself, has also passed away, and his stentorian voice, backed up by the smack of his hunting whip, while clearing the course, will be heard no more. Old Starling could boast of an experience possessed by few living men concerning past celebrities both biped and equine, and his anecdotes about the time when the turf was in its "palmy days".*

Also, in 1880, The Field, The Country Gentleman's Newspaper had an article about All Saint's Cemetery,

*“But in addition, there is one grave in the cemetery, the occupant of which, when he was alive, linked the Newmarket of modern times with the Heath as it appeared when the famous Colonel Mellish was the cynosure of every eye. Martin Starling – for it is of him that we now speak – was born at the end of last century, and died, aged 78, not long ago. His portly form, clad in a red coat, was as familiar an object upon the Heath when races were going on as those of Admiral Rous and Mr George Payne, who were never absent from a race meeting between the third and the eighth decades of this century. No more suggestive grave is to be found at Newmarket than that of the old clerk of the course, the crack of whose whip kept even the riotous undergraduates from Cambridge in order, but who found himself at last unable to cope with the ever increasing crowds of visitors whom the railroad now brings down from London. With Martin Starling, the Heath as it was known to the last generation has passed away, and while contemplating his grave we are reminded of the days when the judge’s chair was rolled about on wheels – when, as Mr J.C. Whyte puts it, “no crowd and no booths impeded the view, and the number of spectators seldom exceeded five hundred, mostly of the highest classes, and on horseback”.*

### **Family Notes**

Martin married ELIZABETH TAYLOR in 1815 at Newmarket All Saints. She was born in Attleborough, Norfolk about 1795. They had four children:-

THOMAS STARLING baptised 12 Nov 1815 at Newmarket St Mary. He married 1st Mary SKIPPAGE 1839 Newmarket St Mary and 2nd SARAH BAKER Newmarket All Saints, 30 June 1849. Of his nine children, his son, Charles Martin STARLING 1854-1935, became a successful jockey, riding both in England and France but a serious accident at the racecourse at Auteuil in France ended his career and he was invalided for life. This must have been about 1893 when he applied to the Bentinck Benevolent Fund and received £15.

JOHN STARLING baptised 2 March 1817 at Cheveley. He married Eliza Ann ALDRIDGE 1848 Blything District of Suffolk. He was racehorse trainer later Stud Groom, for the Earl of Stradbroke at Henham Hall in Suffolk. His death also made the news, “STARLING – On the 28th October, at Wangford, John Starling, aged 73, for upwards of 40 years in the service of the late Earl of Stradbroke, and last surviving son of the late Martin Starling, Sen., of Newmarket.” John was buried at Wangford, Suffolk, 31 October 1891.

ROBERT STARLING baptised 1 July 1821 at Cheveley. He married Maria BRAME 1844 Guiltcross, Nfk. He died 1849 Newmarket St Mary, Sfk

MARTIN STARLING jnr., baptised 7 November 1824 at Cheveley. Amongst other things he was assistant to Mr. MANNING in the weighing rooms at Newmarket, Epsom, Ascot and Goodwood & etc.. There are many adverts in newspapers inviting entries for race meetings and the entry fee to be paid to Martin Starling jnr. His illness, and later death, in 1869 was reported in many newspapers. The Sportsman wrote in December 1868, "Mr Martin Starling., Jun., still lies in a very precarious state, and little hopes are entertained of his recovery". Martin jnr., died on the 16th December 1869 at eleven p.m. after a long illness of consumption.

Elizabeth died at Newmarket in 1852. Martin married secondly Maria WATERS nee THREADER 1854 in Newmarket All Saints, she was baptised in Gazeley, Sfk 17 Aug 1817 and had been married twice before.

Martin's Uncle Richard STARLING (1803-1879) was a groom in the Royal Mews and wore livery. He joined the Royal household in 1821 and was pensioned in 1847 with a pension of £12 10s per quarter and became a Lodge Keeper at Bushy Park still under the Royal Household. It is amazing to think that he worked for George III, George IV and Victoria. After his death his wife and daughter both received pensions from the Royal household.

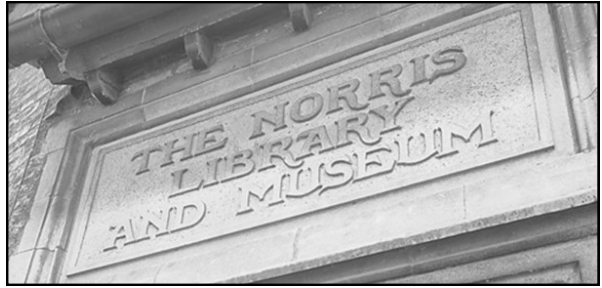
## SOURCES

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|--|--|
| Bury Free Press  | The Birmingham Mail  |
| Cambridgeshire Baptisms                                | The Bury & Suffolk Standard  |
| Cambridgeshire Burials                                 | The Cheltenham Looker-On   |
| Cheveley PR  | The Daily Telegraph  |
| Dover Express  | The Field, The Country<br>Gentleman's Newspaper  |
| National Burial Index                                  | The Lincoln, Rutland<br>and Stamford Mercury   |
| Newmarket All Saints PR                                | The Sporting Life  |
| Newmarket Journal                                      | Wood Ditton PR   |
| Newmarket Journal Centenary<br>Issue                   | Yale Centre for British Art,<br>Paul Mellon Collection -<br>Album of carte de visite<br>photographs of British<br>jockeys, [1865?] |
| Norfolk News   | Mr T Cox   |
| Register of Privy Purse pensions<br>and annuities, etc | The Mully Mulloch picture is in the<br>public domain, as is 'Epsom<br>Races: The Race Over' c1835                                  |
| Royal Household Staff<br>1526-1924                     |  |
| Southern Times and Dorset<br>County Herald             |  |
| Suffolk Baptism Index                                  |  |
| Suffolk Marriage Index                                 |  |

# FAMILY HISTORY TALK

@

## NORRIS MUSEUM ST IVES



by Lisa Constanti

I was lucky enough to be invited to do a Family History talk today for the Men's Group at the Norris Museum in St Ives. The group runs twice a month and is an opportunity for local men to gather together to socialise and spend time learning or honing in on skills such as woodwork, gardening, play games and much more.

My remit was to give a presentation on genealogy and possibly offer some tips and advice to any of the group hoping to dig further into their own ancestry. After my own introduction, I talked about the origins of Genealogy and why people should consider doing their own.

I discussed how it always amazes me to think of how many people it took to be born, survive long enough to be of childbearing age and bring up their own children in order for me to exist here and now. It often surprises people that even to go 10 generations back would require 4,096 people to exist and procreate in order for any of us to be alive now.

### How many Ancestors were needed to create you?

| Generation Back from You | Ancestors               | Number of Ancestors in this Generation | Cumulative Total Ancestors |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 1                        | Parents                 | 2                                      | 2                          |
| 2                        | Grandparents            | 4                                      | 6                          |
| 3                        | Great-grandparents      | 8                                      | 14                         |
| 4                        | 2nd-great-grandparents  | 16                                     | 30                         |
| 5                        | 3rd-great-grandparents  | 32                                     | 62                         |
| 6                        | 4th-great-grandparents  | 64                                     | 126                        |
| 7                        | 5th-great-grandparents  | 128                                    | 254                        |
| 8                        | 6th-great-grandparents  | 256                                    | 510                        |
| 9                        | 7th-great-grandparents  | 512                                    | 1,022                      |
| 10                       | 8th-great-grandparents  | 1,024                                  | 2,046                      |
| 12                       | 9th-great-grandparents  | 2,048                                  | 4,094                      |
| 13                       | 10th-great-grandparents | 4,096                                  | 8,190                      |

*Where should people start when doing their family history?*

Well, as there are so many digitised record collections online now, the big

four were mentioned first – Ancestry, FMP, FamilySearch and MyHeritage.

*But what then?*

I offered many suggestions of other sites people could use, both subscription based and free services, and then via demonstration, gave example slides to show how a site like freebmd.org could be used to support good research practices. How with, some a small amount of information, you could build a generation and more.

Archives, Libraries, Family History Societies and other organisations were mentioned. I discussed other sites and what kind of records they could find on the CHFHS site and how to use the services, but also provided information on Huntingdonshire specific registers where BMD records could be found pre-1837.

### **Baptisms**

108,627 Huntingdonshire entries are included in England & Wales Christening Records, 1530-1906 at Ancestry. Formerly known as *British Isles Vital Records Index - 2nd Ed.*

### **Marriages**

1754-1837 Huntingdonshire Marriages 1754-1837 Index at Findmypast - index & images; 18% of Huntingdonshire's parishes are indexed in Boyd's Marriage Index ; 31,375 Huntingdonshire entries are included in England & Wales Marriages, 1538-1940 at Ancestry. Formerly known as *British Isles Vital Records Index - 2nd Ed.*

### **Burials**

Burials from 99 Huntingdonshire places (241,100 entries) are included in the National Burial Index. Nearly all of Huntingdonshire's parishes are included up to 1800 (and to 1900 for many places).

### **Online Records**

1538-1983 England, Huntingdonshire Parish Registers at FamilySearch;

### **Marriage Licences**

Boyd's Marriage Index includes **Archdeaconry of Huntingdon** marriage licences (1517-1797).

Other places where strong genealogical information can be found include war memorials and monumental plaques in churches.

Then there are military records. I advised the group about available options like Fold3 (Ancestry owned), Forces War Records and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and also took the opportunity to discuss the transfer of 9.3 million records from the Ministry of Defence to The National Archives for persons doing service until 1964. At the same time, I made the group aware that people can now apply for Records of Service for free via

the following link <https://www.apply-deceased-military-record.service.gov.uk/>. We discussed the kinds of problems people encounter when researching and went through some examples and I summarised the talk by reminding people of the importance of capturing memories to pass on to future generations and encouraged everyone to think about what they wanted to leave behind for their descendants and to build trees and store artefacts for the future. I named the talk "*When memories turn us into detectives*", and for me I see the value in becoming your own detective to make memories last for generations.

People asked questions throughout and at the end. All strong, considered questions. I stayed behind after to engage with a few of the men on their person family history queries. I look forward to potentially visiting the group in the future.

The Men's group runs at the Norris Museum on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month from 1:30pm to 3pm. [communities@norrismuseum.org.uk](mailto:communities@norrismuseum.org.uk)

**ONLINE EVENT: Participate from Home - WORLDWIDE!**

**2024**

**FHF REALLY USEFUL**  
Family History Show

Explore Your  
Genealogy



**Friday 15th November 10 am - 10 pm GMT and**  
**Saturday 16th November 10 am - 6 pm GMT**

**COME & VISIT THE CHFHS VIRTUAL BOOTH**  
**~ WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ~**

**PROGRAMME & TICKETS**  
**AVAILABLE NEARER THE TIME FROM**  
**<https://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/>**



## 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<br>alternate mths  | July / Sept / Nov                  | drop in between<br>10.00-4.00   |
| <b>Norris Museum<br/>St Ives</b> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed<br>alternate mths  | Aug / Oct / Dec                    | drop-in between<br>10.30 & 3.30 |
| <b>Bar Hill Library</b>          | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon<br><u>every</u> mth  | Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec       | drop-in between<br>1.30-4.00    |
| <b>Huntingdon Archives</b>       | 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed<br><u>every</u> mth  | Jul / Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec | drop-in between<br>1.30-4.00    |
| <b>March Library</b>             | 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues<br><u>every</u> mth   | *** <b>TWICE MONTHLY</b> ***       | drop-in between<br>10.00-4.00   |
| <b>Cambridge Central Library</b> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat <u>every</u><br>month  | Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec       | drop-in between<br>11.00 & 2.00 |
|                                  | <b>NB : owing to the Library reorganising the top floor, we will be using a table outside the Cambridgeshire Collection ... look out for our banners ...</b> |                                    |                                 |

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

With the end finally in sight, work on completing the project had, unfortunately, to be temporarily suspended to enable the switch over to a new data management system embedded in the new website, and has been slow to get restarted.

Join us for that final push once the data input facility is back up and running. At the last count there is just a handful of registers remaining (although a couple are in Latin, the others are quite readable). To date we have completed over 555 registers with not far short of 400,000 records.

**If any of the old volunteers, or new ones (and particularly if you have skills with old handwriting and/or reading Latin) would like to help with the final push to completion and get the project finished over the coming months—**

**—please get in touch via my Projects e-mail**

|                                       |   |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>MARCH BRANCH PROGRAMME</b>         |   | <u>1<sup>st</sup> Wednesdays at 2.00pm</u><br>March Library, March<br><b>enquiries : <a href="mailto:march@chfhs.org.uk">march@chfhs.org.uk</a></b> |
| <b>Wednesday Face-2-Face Meetings</b> |   |   |
| <b>Wed<br/>4 Sept</b>                 | <b>Apprenticeship Records</b><br><i>A Talk focusing on a Wisbech family.</i>  | with Richard Holt   |
| <b>Wed<br/>2 Oct</b>                  | <b>Edith Cavell</b><br><i>A talk based on his own research into the British nurse, born in Norfolk, working in German occupied Belgium during WW1. She helped hundreds of soldiers escape the Germans.</i>                              | with Dr Martyn Thomas   |
| <b>Wed<br/>6 Nov</b>                  | <b>WW2 &amp; The Cold War</b><br><i>A multimedia talk including a survey of some of the war's crucial moments, concentrating on Hitler's decisions, and offering a shocking alternative history if any of these had been different.</i> | with Richard Gibbons  |
| <b>Wed<br/>4 Dec</b>                  | <b>Seasonal Social Afternoon</b>  |   |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>HUNTINGDON BRANCH PROGRAMME</b>   |   | <u>3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm</u><br><b>enquiries : <a href="mailto:huntingdon@chfhs.org.uk">huntingdon@chfhs.org.uk</a></b> |
| <b>Zoom only (register via website)</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Wed<br/>18 Sept</b>   | <b>Your History Needs You</b><br><i>A brief history of the fens / eastern frontier—The Old West has been an almost forgotten backwater for many generations. For much of its length it looks like little more than a reed-lined stream, dawdling betwixt fields and meadows. Yet this little river has, for thousands of years, been the Eastern Border, equal or greater in significance to the White Cliffs of Dover, Offa's Dyke and Hadrian's Wall. Join us for a tour of its vital importance through the centuries.</i> | with Gill Fraser Lee  |
| <b>Web<br/>16 Oct</b>  | <b>Fenland Folklore</b>   | with Mary Burgess   |
| <b>Wed<br/>20 Nov</b>  | <b>The Use of History in Putin's Russia</b>   | with Dr James Pearce  |
| <b>PLEASE NOTE that from the New Year 2025, we will be consolidating monthly online talks into a single session on the 3rd Wednesdays of each month (live talks at March are unaffected)</b> |   |   |

**CAMBRIDGE BRANCH  
PROGRAMME**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday** of the month at **7.30pm**  
enquiries : [programme@chfhs.org.uk](mailto:programme@chfhs.org.uk)

Cambridge Branch talks are via Zoom only  
Register via the website [www.chfhs.org.uk](http://www.chfhs.org.uk)

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Thurs<br/>12 Sept</b></p> | <p><b>How Your Family History Has Made You Who You Are Today</b><br/>with Marianne Powell</p> <p><i>How is your family history showing up in your present? This talk will cover the topic of family systems - the surprising ways that our ancestors continue to influence us now. There are so many things that our families pass down to us, and most of the time we don't even realise. But when we ask the right questions, we can unlock new insights that might even help us right now. Questions like: what were the rules in your family? What was valued? What was taboo? Who were the legends and the black sheep? We'll also look at 'genograms' a kind of map to our family history that can help us understand our ancestors - and ourselves - even better.</i></p>             |
| <p><b>Thurs<br/>10 Oct</b></p>  | <p><b>The Crime Of Bigamy 1604-2024—a guide for family historians</b><br/>with Rebecca Probert</p> <p><i>Today bigamy is one of the rarest of crimes, with only a handful of prosecutions each year. But at its peak there were approaching 1,000 cases in a single year. So what factors led to this rise and fall—what does the evidence tell us about marriage, separation and illicit relationships in past centuries? What were individuals risking by going through a ceremony of marriage while already validly married? Drawing on thousands of cases, from the Old Bailey to magistrates' courts, this talk describes findings on the nature and extent of bigamy and remarriage in past centuries and decades, to help family historians interpret their ancestors' lives.</i></p> |
| <p><b>Thurs<br/>14 Nov</b></p>  | <p><b>The Mourning Brooch</b><br/>with Jean Renwick</p> <p><i>In an extensively illustrated talk, Jean Renwick discusses delving into libraries, archives and on-line sources to record the lives of the descendants of Elizabeth Addy, the Doncaster woman memorialised in the brooch. Book 1 "An ending. A beginning" the story runs from 1849 to 1876 as Elizabeth's widower struggles to care for their two little girls and see them grow up, marry and have children of their own. Book 2, the story takes the reader beyond Yorkshire to the Continent, USA even Constantinople, revealing the joys and sorrows of life as well as some scandal. Bring your own mourning jewellery to show before the talk starts</i></p>   |
| <p><b>15/16<br/>Nov</b></p>     | <p><b>ReallyUsefulShow Online</b><br/><i>Join us for this exciting opportunity for talks &amp; visiting FHSs</i></p>   |

Wish You Were Here ...  
... The 'RUS Live' Fair at St Ives in April



# MEETINGS REPORTS

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

## **THE LITTLEPORT RIOTS** *WITH SUSANAH FARMER* *(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : JUN 2024)*

Our guest speaker became bitten by the local history bug whilst working in Nottinghamshire, and this eventually led to a job in the library at The National Archives in Kew and a Masters in Local History from Kingston University. On moving to Wisbech she joined the Fenland FHS and became editor of their journal, and is also currently Chairman of the Society.

Susanah drew parallels between the headlines of today - war, environmental issues, and the cost of living crisis – with the problems faced by the inhabitants of the Fens in the early nineteenth century, specifically the Littleport riots of May 1816. The story was about “a most desperate body of insurgent Fenmen” and largely based on contemporary accounts, of which there are many, and later research.

Susanah explained how the worsening economic situation was driven by a sequence of events:

- The Battle of Waterloo ended and the soldiers returned home, unemployed and looking for work.
- Import barriers were lifted leading to cheap imports which did not please local farmers.
- An act was passed to regulate imports to please the farmers but the result was higher prices again, particularly for grain.
- People lobbied Government to reduce taxes, to no avail.
- An event on the other side of the world in April 1815 added to the misery – the eruption of volcano Mount Tambora sent enormous quantities of dust and debris into the atmosphere. The whole world was affected and global temperatures dropped, crops were severely compromised and the Fens suffered.

This reduced supply of our staple diet – bread - and its higher price led to public protests demanding action from the Government to help them out.

In Littleport on 22 May 1816 a meeting of the existing Benefit Club was held in the Globe Inn where the members decided to take their case to the people

they thought could directly help them: local land owners, the vicar, overseers and shop keepers. It was a case of the peasantry showing their displeasure to the better-off but unfortunately it soon got out of hand with vicious attacks and damage and theft in the shops but, despite pleas to stop, the rampage spread throughout the village.

Susanah painted a vivid picture of the escalation of the riots which became known as the Bread or Blood riots, which now spread to Ely. Local magistrates agreed to pay poor relief and guaranteed wages with no prosecutions, provided every man immediately returned home. At the same time they also called out the yeoman guard and troops and sent a message to the Home Secretary who sent out the military. There appeared to be a suspicion that the riots were not just about prices but also political.

The Littleport rioters were joined by others from Ely and the violence and robbery escalated there; they even turned a cart into a mobile weapon, armed with anything they could find including guns. The rioters then returned to Littleport but were quickly followed by the various militia groups, including the Hessians – German mercenaries – who shot an innocent thatcher on their way.

Very quickly the rioters were rounded up and around 70 prisoners were taken back to Ely to stand trial before two London judges. The charges were for robbery and theft – both capital offences at the time. Twenty five of the rioters were condemned to death but this was reduced to the five ringleaders, and nine of the others were transported to Van Diemen's Land.

Susanah described how a large procession, including the condemned men, walked from the gaol to the scaffold outside Ely. Although it was not a long distance it took two hours to pass by the many onlookers. The men were hanged and buried together in Ely, and a stone with their names was later placed on the site as a warning to others. Susanah made the point that although the cost of grain was at the heart of the riot there were other acts of violence and even vengeance displayed.

The presentation was concluded with acknowledgements to the many publications and newspapers describing the events of Spring 1816. Some of these publications are in the collection of the Littleport Society in the Barn. There is also a walking guide around the village.

This talk brought to life a momentous event and was informative and interesting in the manner of the story-telling for both locals and those viewing from further afield. There followed questions and much discussion, such was the interest engendered by Susanah's story about "a most desperate body of insurgent Fenmen".

*Reported by John Bownass*

## **BURIED DEEP BUT NOT LOST FOREVER : DISCOVERING YOUR ANCESTOR'S FINAL RESTING PLACE**

*WITH LINDA HAMMOND*

*(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : MARCH 2024)*

Our guest speaker was Linda Hammond, a professional genealogist and member of the Register of Qualified Genealogists with over 35 years' experience as both a researcher and a lecturer.

Linda explained that this presentation was to guide us through the ways we could investigate our ancestors' burial sites, and the variety of information we may find on the gravestones, which can be used to enhance the information we may have already collected through other means.

Linda then proceeded to follow a well-defined route through the subject matter in eight distinct areas, all supported by many excellent photographs of the graves.

She started with the reasons we should look at gravestones, the obvious reason being that they may contain more information than already known, including clues to other family members including those who died young, life stories and especially military details.

The Information will include the obvious: full name of deceased, date of birth, date of death but may also show their occupation, aspects of their life, spouses, children, military rank and unit. In some cases, there is information about two or three generations and sometimes their address.

Where to look for your ancestor's grave may not be straightforward. One starts with where they lived and died. They may be buried with their extended family or they could be in specific areas associated with their religious or military associations.

Linda described some of the records which can help establish their place of burial, including death certificates, will & probate records, newspapers – obituaries & death/funeral announcements - and coroners' reports. In many cases mass or prayer cards have been kept by the family which will help.

The type of cemetery is important as their records are not standardised. Linda explained that a graveyard refers to the burial ground within the churchyard and its records will be in the church or the local archives, whereas a cemetery is the more general term and it refers to a town burial ground, a memorial park, or a military cemetery and these have their own records. Family or institutional burial grounds (Asylums, homes, hospitals, prisons) may also have their own cemetery and their own records or

archives.

Burial records at churches will typically include abode, date of burial and age whereas cemetery records may contain much more information, including the grave number, date of death and parents' names. If applicable, cremation records also include more information.

Once the burial place has been identified then we need to locate it. Again Linda suggested various means, including google search, websites, old OS maps and county histories, FH Societies, and local archives. One also needs to know if the burial ground has been indexed so that the grave can be found. Locally the information may reside with the Vicar of the church, the Local FHS, the Local History society or at the county archives office.

Searching online, starting with Google always helps. The number of specialist websites is increasing, and Linda mentioned several: FindAGrave, BillionGraves, Ancestry, Interment.net, Jewish Gen Online Worldwide Burial Registry, Family Search (also included links to FindAGrave and BillionGraves), DeceasedOnline.com, Irishgraveyards.ie, Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Linda's advice was clear – try, you never know what you will find.

Linda then moved on to visiting the graveyard, and the first thing to check is if there is a graveyard plan. Look around to see if there are other family members buried nearby. Also check the back and sides of stones for other inscriptions and remember to check around the perimeter of the graveyard. Linda also reminded us that the inscriptions on the stone should be treated as a secondary source and need to be verified. She noted that there was no point in travelling to a graveyard if the grave no longer exists, or maybe never did.

Finally, Linda described how to prepare for a graveyard visit and gave tips for reading difficult tombstones, based on her own experience. She described her kit to take: this included a camera for taking photographs and a mirror to enhance the inscriptions by directing the light across the face of the stone. If the stone is worn then water can be sprayed on to the inscription or even an imprint made on aluminium foil (lightweight type and dull side out).

The audience clearly appreciated the clarity and exhaustive coverage of the subject given by Linda which was so informative and well researched. The meeting was closed after many questions and comments.

*Reported by John Bownass*



## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS**

*RICHARD HOLT*

*(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : MAY 2024)*

Our guest speaker was Richard Holt, a professional genealogist with a deep-rooted belief that learning is a life-long endeavour. He serves on AGRA's Council and is the Chair of AGRA's Marketing Committee, and also co-Chair's the East of England Network.

His talk was about a subject of which we are all aware but perhaps have never used - the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), that entitles members of the public to request information from public authorities, including information that can be vital to family historians. He looked at how you go about requesting information under the Act, along with case studies looking at the type of information that can be helpful to family historians. He also addressed what you can do when things go wrong, such as when you believe a public authority hasn't handled your request correctly.

Richard made it clear that he did not have a legal background and the presentation was based on his experiences; he also stressed the need for patience at all steps of the way.

He started with the meaning of the FOIA. Chapter 36 gives the public the right of access to recorded information held by public authorities, irrespective of the date – unless an exemption applies. The definition of public authorities and the many exemptions are listed in detail but he also noted that:

- FOIA does not replace any laws already covering disclosure of particular information.
- Exemptions: 25 of the 88 sections do not allow disclosure.
- Organisations might not be clear what information they hold and may not want to disclose it anyway by seeking an exemption.

There were also many reasons for refusal, including national security, data protection, and also the cost to the organisation of finding the records you request. An additional reason the public authority may not release the information is that their records or archive management are so poor that they can't find the information!

Richard then described how to make a request for information, which could be any records such as documents, letters, emails, photographs. The request must be made in writing (letter or email). Include your name and contact details, be specific on what information you are seeking, how you want it sent and ask them to contact you if they need further clarification.

The request should be sent to the contact details given on the authority's website. You should receive acknowledgement of your request and an answer within 20 working days, including information on how to request an internal review if not satisfied.

Richard then took us through the steps of complaint, starting with the internal review. If not satisfied then make a complaint to the Information Complaints Office (ICO) who will issue a Decision Notice. If still unsatisfied, appeal to the First Tier Tribunal, then the Upper Tribunal, and finally the Court of Appeal. This confirmed Richard's first piece of advice – patience.

Richard then moved away from the technicalities of the FOIA and described some case histories of using the FOIA, both for his own family research and on behalf of clients.

- Request for burial records from a local Parish Council. The PC could not find the information requested but after much probing accepted their process was poor and instigated a project to digitise all the records and maps of the burial site, and make it freely available.
- A second request for specific grave details in the same county were initially not forthcoming but with further prodding he was provided with a complete list of all graves .
- The 1939 survey was used and updated by the NHS until adoption of a computerised system in 1991. All changes to the survey in the meantime were recorded on index cards that can be requested under FOIA, so you are able to see change of addresses. Column 11 of the 1939 survey is cut off on the online version but that information can also be requested, it often refers to military service. There were several other features of the survey that Richard mentioned that will probably be included in a future talk on the 1939 Survey.
- One of the most long-running requests under the FOIA that Richard has made was to the Passport Office. It holds details of all passports issued from 1898 to 1996 on index cards, those from 1929-1971 were copied onto microfiche, and from 1898-1928 and 1972-1996 have been digitised. From 1996 onwards passport records are automatically written to HM Passport Office main index database. The Passport Office did not provide the information that Richard knew they must have and after several appeals up to the ICO he finally received the response he required.
- The final case study regarded information held by schools, such as admission registers, minute books, log-books, cash books, curricula, and plans. In his case they didn't provide the information but instead invited him into the school and allowed him to photograph the relevant pages he needed.

Richard had not only given us a detailed description of the Freedom of Information Act but brought it to life by describing his own experiences of using it in his family history research work. He also left us in no doubt that there would be roadblocks along the way, but that they could be overcome with persistence. The meeting was closed after questions, and we all left knowing much more about the FOIA.

*Reported by John Bownass*

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**GOODNIGHT DARLING, GOD BLESS YOU, HEAPS OF LOVE—  
MOTHER**  
*WITH JERRY PORTER*  
*(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : APRIL 2024)*

Our guest speaker was Jerry Porter, ably supported by Kay his wife for some of the readings. Jerry has a lifelong interest in WW1, which began as a child listening to his grandfather's experiences as a very young gunner in France, and later by frequent visits to the battlefields of France and Belgium with his father.

After retiring from his career in UK intelligence and security, with emphasis on support to military operations, Jerry now has time to research his ancestors who served in WW1 and this is the story seen through their eyes. In this regard he was helped by original letters, photos and artefacts passed down in the family that illustrate his great grandmother's life on the home front, two of her sons' preparations for deployment overseas, the younger one's brief service in the front line and his mother's perhaps surprising reaction to the news that he had been killed in action.

His great grandmother, known as Gert, was born in 1866 in London and died in 1955 in Hastings. She moved to Norwich to be nearer other family members and later married William Porter. William was a widower, with four children from his previous marriage, 21 years her senior, and had a flourishing business as a tailor in Long Sutton. Gert soon had four sons of her own, but two died from illness whilst still young, one was killed in action in WW1, and one son outlived her.

Gert had a strong Christian faith and was forthright in her views. She was involved in many aspects of life and usually in charge; she taught French; kept bees; presented a paper on Esperanto and taught the language; danced and sang,

Gert was the first member of their family to experience the horrors of war. She was visiting Lowestoft in early 1915 when there was a Zeppelin raid that dropped a bomb on the town causing widespread damage. Gert wrote a

detailed report of the raid which was published in the newspaper.

Bert, her eldest son, was the first to join up and was conscripted in 1916 at the age of 29. He joined the Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps and in 1917 was commissioned to the Labour Corps. In a letter home he described his posting to the Chinese Labour Corps and his story featured in a newspaper article. Further letters home were received with a final one in December 1918 describing the dreadful wet weather and mud everywhere. Bert returned from the war and lived to age 95.

Cecil's path took a different route. He had a comfortable life and attended the same grammar school as Bert, and by 1911 was following in his father's trade as a draper's apprentice in Lincoln, but preferred the outdoor life and so became a farm pupil. In 1915 a photograph of Cecil showed him in the uniform of the Holbeach Company of Voluntary Training Corps. In the same year he had been rejected by the army proper due to "defective sight".

However, in 1917 national service became compulsory and now Cecil was judged to be category 'A' with no medical problems. Although he tried to join the transport side of operations he was put into the signallers, despite continuing problems with his eyes. Cecil wrote to his mother several times with requests for goodies and money to which Gert always responded, but some information was censored, including his location. On 17<sup>th</sup> January 1918 Gert wrote suggesting using a code between them in letters, but it was a time when his battalion was on the move and Gert did not receive any more letters from her son. On the 25<sup>th</sup> January Cecil's company, the B Company in reserve, was heavily shelled whilst digging a communication trench and nine were killed, including Cecil.

Sadly, Gert continued to send letters to Cecil not knowing he was already dead. She heard about a week later and in time all his personal possessions were returned to the family. Jerry showed pictures of many of these artefacts and most had similar damage caused by shell fragments.

Jerry then returned to Gert's story back in Long Sutton. She was the leading light of the Girls' Mutual Happiness Guild and supported St. Dunstan's with gifts of cigarettes for the blinded service men. Gert was also the lead in the sale of war bonds in Long Sutton with an initial target of raising sufficient money to purchase three planes. The newspapers headlined the news that in one week in March 1919 Gert and her committee raised £22k - enough for 9 planes.

In 1920 Gert went to France to visit Cecil's grave in the British Cemetery. Her experience was described in great detail in an article and included praise for the YMCA for organising this and other visits. Jerry was able to illustrate

her visit with original photographs and her writings, as well as the history of the creation of the War Graves Commission.

Jerry brought the story of Gert and her family to a close. In 1921 Gert and her husband moved to Leicestershire to be nearer Sid (her second son) where he was working, and now married with a son who was to become Jerry's father. Sid died in 1934 and Gert's husband died soon after and so Gert moved back to Hastings to be close to Sid's widow (who came from there) and her only grandchild.

Gert was a truly remarkable woman, energetic and forward looking, indomitable in spirit and with a firm grip on her family and local community. She was also a great communicator and the title of this talk was taken from one of her many letters to her sons.

In my opinion...Jerry's presentation of Gert and her sons' lives was truly moving. Whilst the story was factually based with much supporting evidence, it was told in a very personal and sensitive manner that had the audience fully involved. Many comments and questions followed Jerry's talk with many expressing their thanks.

*Reported by John Bownass*

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**THE 'REDISCOVERY' OF ALEC NELSON :**  
**ATHLETE & FAMOUS CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY COACH**  
*WITH IAN STONE*  
*(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : JUNE 2024)*

Although Leopold Alexander Nelson was born in Orpington in 1871 to Robert Nelson & Elizabeth Reeves the family originated from Fife, Scotland. He had a twin sister, Beatrice, who was Ian's great grandmother. Alec met and married his wife Lizzie, who originally came from Cambridge, in London and they had three surviving children.

Alec was a gifted runner and joined the Goldsmith Institute Athletics Club in London in the early 1890's and was the Captain of the Club for some years and ran various distances. He was the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile British champion in the late 1890s. Amateur races at that time were run on a handicap system and many amateur athletes were semi professional in order to earn a living. This was frowned on by the Amateur Athletics Association who resisted sending semi and professional athletes to the Olympic Games. Alec was always wanting to improve himself and his knowledge of tactics, coaching etc. He was Cambridge University Athletics Club coach from 1908-1940 as a professional coach which was frowned on by Oxford University. However, many of

Oxford's Varsity team was made up of athletes recruited from America where they had been trained by professionals – although that did not always help them!

Although from a working class background, Alec was able to mix easily with people from all walks of life – and 'knew his place' in the world of Amateur and Professional athletics. Although he was coach at the 1912 Olympics, he had very little support and the team did not do well. However, Alec was coach for Canada team in 1928 and the Irish team in 1932 and both teams did reasonably well.

Through contacts, Alec met Philip Noel-Baker at Fenners who was President of CUAC. Philip was an Olympic silver medallist and became a Labour Politician and Nobel Peace Prize winner. He became Alec's friend/ patron/ mentor which lasted the rest of his life. There was no athletics during the First World War and Noel-Baker formed the Quaker Friends Ambulance Unit to evacuate wounded soldiers from France and then N E Italy. Alec accompanied him.

As a professional coach Alec was only employed from October to the middle of March so in order to earn money, Alec also sold athletic clothing and sports related items. He designed trousers with zips at the bottom for easy taking off over spikes (track suit) and sold them from one of his homes at 4 All Saints Passage – the other being a house in Barton. He also trained the Army team and was a London University coach being involved in track and facilities development, ran correspondence training course etc.

Ian has written a book on Alec Nelson and he went on to explain his research into this remarkable man and spent around 14 years doing so! His conclusion is 'Be careful what you get yourself into' when you start researching!

Ian is donating a copy of his book to the Cambridgeshire Collection where it can be viewed.

*Reported by Muriel Halliday.*

**CORRECTION**—in the last issue, the "Oh Yes It Is!" talk report on p40-41 was attributed to John Bownass when it should have been to Linda Peckett. Sorry, one of the perils of cut'n'paste!!

***Spotted this while avoiding the Euro 2024 Final !!***

*from : 'Sporting Life'  
3 April 1884*

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE** v. **HUNTINGDONSHIRE.**

This match was played yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon, on Parker's Piece, Cambridge. The visitors were a weak team, and made only a poor show, the home county winning by four goals to none. Sides :—

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE.**—A. R. Hill (goal), E. Firlar and W. S. Borrow (backs), A. Amos, A. E. Ivatt, F. James, E. C. Kelly, and E. H. Merry (right wing), A. T. B. Dunn (centre), E. P. Prest, and H. Barham (left wing).

**HUNTINGDON.**—P. T. Harris (goal), C. A. Stubbs and C. Watson (backs), G. K. Bower and T. G. Payne (half-backs), T. Gillham and E. C. Hughes (right wing), H. Amos and F. B. Brackenbury (centres), Hon. D. Tollemache and W. Walker (left wing).

## HEROES AND GHOSTS

WITH MICHAEL HALLETT

(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : APRIL 2024)

The talk “Heroes & Ghosts” was the story of Michael's grandfather, Harold Blackburn MC AFC. Although one of the pioneer aviators in the period before WW1, Michael knew little of his grandfather's life due to a cloak of silence resulting from a ‘scandal’ which severely affected his daughter's (Michael's mother) life - even emigrating to New Zealand to distance her family from the knowledge. Along the way, the facts of Harold's achievements were lost, so Michael has spent a long time piecing together his grandfather's life story.

Born in 1879 in Gloucestershire, Harold's parents moved to Doncaster. There he had seen the first ‘air show’ in England in 1909, and soon became an enthusiastic pioneer aviator himself becoming acquainted with Robert Blackburn (no relation), an early manufacturer of aircraft in the north of England. Harold won a trophy for an early air race in a Blackburn plane, and later piloted a two-seater plane carrying passengers in flights in the north of England. At a Yorkshire show in 1914, a claimed first regular scheduled flight in Europe was even instituted from Leeds to Bradford and back. With much publicity, his first passenger was the Lady Mayoress of Leeds.

On the outbreak of WW1, Harold joined up by (rather ostentatiously) landing a plane in a recruitment area at a park in Harrogate. Sensibly, the Army quickly placed him in the newly-formed Royal Flying Corps. He served initially in France then Egypt helping to defend the Suez Canal from the Turks; he received an MC and an AFC decoration for his service. After the war, as a respected senior officer, he continued in the new RAF. Aged 42, Harold married Michael's grandmother in 1921, however his London-born wife was unhappy living in primitive conditions on air bases. She admitted an affair with a rich industrialist, causing a great scandal at the time, and they were divorced in 1935. As the innocent party, and a war hero to boot, Harold received custody of their daughter (Michael's mother) who thereby lost all contact with her mother, and resulted in a very unhappy childhood as she felt abandoned. Harold remarried and later retired to Jersey with his family until forced to evacuate in WW2. He buried his medals and air trophies in the garden before leaving. They were fortunately still there when he returned post-war (Michael now has them).

Michael's final point was that his mother's unhappy upbringing meant she had told Michael little of her father. A perceived ‘shame’ can thus affect the way memories are perpetuated within a family such later generations can still be affected by attitudes from long ago—and family historians need to be aware of this.

*Reported by CJ*

**AN EVENING WITH HEREWARD**  
*WITH RORY GIBSON & JAMES PEARCE*  
*(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : MAY 2024)*

We were greeted by Hereward himself in full dress, although Rory removed the headgear before his presentation and performance. He stressed that surviving documents about Hereward are very limited, much of what is now popular belief is based on 19th century and more recently 21st century, embroidering what is known.

Hereward was born into a wealthy, noble family at the time of Edward the Confessor. His father insisted he left home when Hereward was 18, and he became a ruffian fighter alongside his friend, Martin Lightfoot. He stayed with his uncle who kept a bear as a toy and spent his time hunting with Martin. One day, on their return, there were screams as the bear had escaped, Martin put a stone in a sling, but the bear noticed and charged, rearing up. Hereward killed the bear with his axe, saving a young girl. His uncle was not pleased, so Hereward and Martin were exiled to Cornwall, welcomed as nobles by the King of Cornwall. The king's daughter was set to be married to an eight feet tall giant; Hereward provoked the giant into a fight, killing him, so the Princess could marry her beloved Irish prince.

Hereward and Martin went to Ireland to fetch the prince, and both joined the army fighting as mercenaries. Martin was believed killed, so Hereward returned to England as Guillaume invaded at the Battle of Hastings, claiming land across the country. Hereward's brother was killed, his mother taken prisoner, Guillaume slaughtered knights and claimed lands. Hereward travelled to Peterborough where he had relatives, attracted William's attention by setting fire to a monastery, taking everything except a great cross, and then sailed to the Isle of Eels. King William came to Aldreth causeway but was unable to cross into the Isle. He built a causeway that sank into mud. The siege of the Isle lasted months, food ran out, sickness was rife. William employed a witch, built a witch tower, cast spells, but Hereward set fire to the tower, the witch falling with a broken neck. Hereward was sent by monks to fetch food, but he had to cross the secret path from the Isle, and William was able to flood the Isle and defeat Hereward. William took the Peterborough treasure gold but could not find the rest of the treasure. It is not known what happened to Hereward.

James Pearce was a late substitute for David Maile who was unable to attend. He spoke about Anglo Saxons in exile, some will have come from Ely, perhaps Hereward himself. His talk was based on sources of surviving evidence. King Harold had the largest army in Europe, his grandchildren became princes, and are still seen as heroes in Russia. Harold and his wife Edith had a daughter, Gytha of Wessex, who later became a Russian



princess. In 1066, she was living with her grandmother in Exeter, a tax haven to avoid paying Danegeld. Gytha and her brothers went to Denmark, then by river to Kiev and to Russia. She married the heir to the Danish throne, and this gave her a claim to the English throne. She became the most important woman in Russia. Trade flourished between Russia and England. Many English refugees settled in the Crimea.

Gytha became a nun and was buried in Kiev. Succession rules in what is now Ukraine were not clear, but one of her children married the heir to the Swedish throne; another became a prince near Moscow and created the largest army in Europe. The Mongol invasion of 1237-1240 in Russia led to the fall of the Russian army. England was not seen as important, but a backwater, until Edward III rebuilt the English army; England was protected by sea, and Hereward forgotten. King Charles III is directly descended from the Romanovs.

Many of the questions showed the high interest in this period of history, and its continuing relevance today. Topics mentioned included Boris Johnson and Brexit. It is hoped David Maile can give his talk at a later date. The talk was not recorded, but Rory and David give local performances, look online.

*Reported by David Copsey*

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## HUNTINGDON LOCAL & COMMUNITY HISTORY MONTH

### @ Huntingdon Library in May

The CHFHS Events Team was in action at Huntingdon Library in support of the Local History Month

We had a steady trickle of visitors, mostly with quite complex queries. For those visitors who did come, it was fortuitous we were not busy as we were able to spend as long as needed, or as long as the time

they had available, to work on their stories. Everyone went away with either new information or some ideas to be considered at leisure another day.

Drop-in sessions can very satisfying, but not on every occasion. The very nature of the format can make it difficult to devote enough time to unpicking a problem—the research which has been done already and the sources used both need to be understood, first. Only then can we start looking for new information and attempt to move the query forward. Sometimes, clear answers do emerge from readily available records, other times, not so ...



# BEHIND THE SCENES WORKING WITH WDYTYA

WITH GILL BLANCHARD

AGM MAY 2024

@  
CAMBS ARCHIVES, ELY

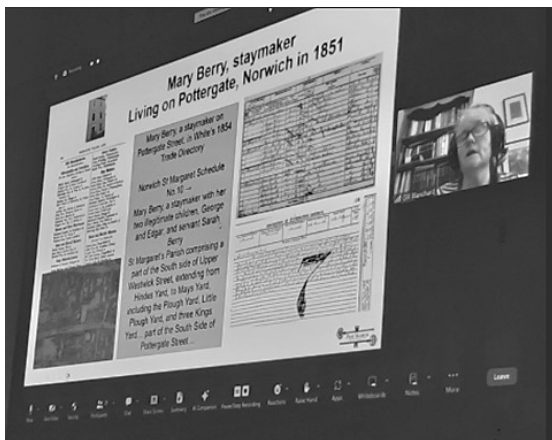
A professional genealogist, house historian, lecturer and author, with thirty years experience, Gill has also authored several books on

local history in East Anglia. She has often been involved with the popular television programme *WhoDoYouThinkYouAre?* which sets out to delve into a celebrity's family history. Gill's well-received talk, via zoom, gave an insight "behind the scenes" when working as a researcher on the programme.

When a "subject" is proposed for WDYTYA, various researchers are hired to find any points of interest in that subject's family. The researchers initially work independently of each other, and usually have no idea who the ultimate subject is, although they often work out who it is in the course of their findings. The TV production team varies from programme to programme, but the overarching desire is for there to be some historical/social context and a "big reveal" when the subject is given some surprising information about an ancestor (preferably with some link to the subject's own life).

As an example, Gill worked on the Mary Berry (known for the *Great British Bake-off*) programme and found a distant relative on Mary's mother's side who featured as a baker in an 1856 Victorian trade directory in Norwich. A somewhat unscrupulous businessman apparently, as the low quality flour he supplied was responsible for causing a riot in both a prison and workhouse when the bread was found to be inedible! Research into this baker led to searches among old street maps, and walking the streets in Norwich to find out where his premises were, or had been. A lot of information discovered in the course of all this background research, however, ends up being ignored by the programme producers; they tend to prefer to follow their own narrative which often distorts the story somewhat in order to get the desired overall effect (and make an entertaining programme).

Often a researcher appears onscreen with the subject. However one of the disadvantages of appearing is that, although there may be several months



between different scenes with a subject, for continuity everyone needs to be wearing the same clothes. Therefore, filming a particular scene may require winter clothes at the height of summer!

The TV producers' strategy is for a researcher never to directly tell a subject information, but to 'suggest' they read a particular directory or official document, and let them 'find' the entry for themselves. This is a genuine 'reveal' not rehearsed, hence the occasional emotional subject bursting into tears over the discovery of some sad story about an ancestor.

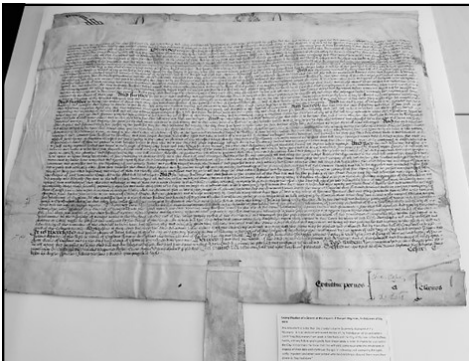
*Reported by C.J.*



**CHFHS AGM 2024**  
**@**  
**Cambridgeshire Archives**  
**Ely**

When looking for an accessible venue for a hybrid meeting, the Archives kindly came to our rescue by arranging for a special Saturday opening just for our meeting.

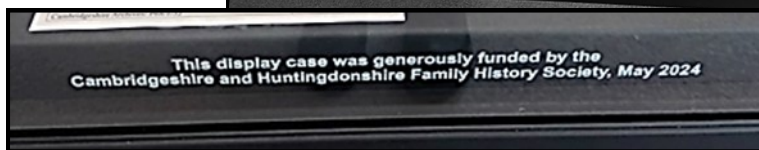
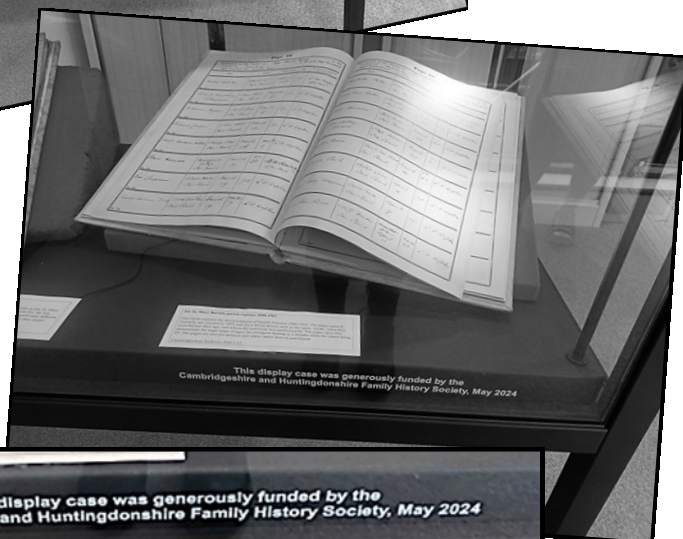
Our day also meant that the Register Office was closed. So, in the future, should anyone wonder why there were no civil marriages at Ely on Sat 11 May 2024—*we will know why, won't we !!*



Exhibition of local historical documents laid on for attendees by the Archives



## DISPLAY CASE FUNDED BY CHFHS FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHIVES



Our 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 jigsaw puzzle to fit the material into the available pages.

*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 also available, if preferred, as a digital download. The UK subscription, due on joining and annually thereafter, is £12, and includes the member's partner. The overseas subscription is £17, which gives airmail postage of the Journal. If you chose to receive the e-Journal, the annual subscription for all locations is £9 (we also offer a life membership for x10 annual rate). 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 and members' interests to the Membership Secretary, please. See p52 for contacts.

## SEARCHABLE RECORDS & SHOP

**“Cambs & Hunts Database”** When fully operational, the new CHFHS website will feature a brand new records search and retrieval system (replacing both “AncestorFinder” and “SuperSearch”). On offer will be a basic search facility freely available to all comers, and the records database with searchable access to over 5m of CHFHS's online transcribed records from across Cambs & The Isle of Ely and Hunts. The database is **available to members only** and accessible via the website members area. Additional records not suitable for the format can be found as browsable pdf files.

**CHFHS SHOP** Search the publications listings on the website to see what's available for particular parishes and locations (CDs and/or downloads). Additional material not suitable for the database is also available as CDs and/or downloads. Also shop via: [www.ParishChurch.com](http://www.ParishChurch.com) (incl books).

## RESEARCH SERVICES

The Society will undertake a limited amount of help for members who have reached a sticking point in the work. 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 already have, and which records/resources have already been consulted (eg. BMDs, census, wills, parish registers, a family tree, Ancestry, FindMyPast, FamilySearch, etc)*

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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