



THE JOURNAL



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VOLUME 29 : 3

AUTUMN 2023

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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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 p52-3)

All general correspondence via the Secretary, please :

secretary@chfhs.org.uk or by post to

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

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

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS BY EMAIL TO THE EDITOR, OR THE SECRETARY BY POST. PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE OBTAINED CORRECT PERMISSIONS FOR PUBLICATION OF IMAGES SO AS NOT TO INFRINGE COPYRIGHT (private photos; book/web sourced)

We aim to publish The Journal quarterly : 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 29 : 3 AUTUMN 2023



Welcome to the Autumn edition of the CHFHS Journal—this issue opens with **AN IMPORTANT NEWS FLASH** made just as this issue was going to print—about the CHFHS website and records data base search/retrieval system (p. 2 & 24)

the new website has now been released, and once fully populated, and **all records are to be on FREE access to members via the website**

A variety of topics follow, including two reports on researching local VAD hospitals in Cambridge and Whittlesford from Sarah F and Suzanne R; and John B recounts his research on his ‘fennish cousins’. A couple of short pieces on army matters, and another couple discussing Strays and their modern counterpart, DNA. Reports from this year’s AGM, details of the revised arrangements for Cambridge-based meetings; a reminder about the upcoming ReallyUsefulShow in November, and the celebrating of the achievements of a man from March round off the features in this issue.

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

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

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cover photo : Staff and patients at The Lodge, North Road, Whittlesford, September 1917.
This photograph is used with a credit to The Whittlesford Society. **(see p.10)**



Over recent months, CHFHS has commissioned a new website to, in particular, provide improved access to the society's database of millions of records for Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire and to introduce a number of new features.

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

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

the new website / emails will be in use :

www.chfhs.org.uk

<email>@chfhs.org.uk

★ ★ ★ ★
NEWS FLASH

by the time you receive this issue, the website will hopefully have gone live

**www.chfhs.org.uk
data and content will be
added over coming weeks (see p 26)**

a user guide to help you make the most of the features and facilities of the new website will be included in the next issue



A WORD FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN



Annual General Meeting quorum

Thank you to everyone who took part in our AGM in May. I should have been more specific in my piece for the previous journal, to ask you to register in good time to ensure that the meeting is quorate. Our quorum is deliberately set at a low figure of 25, about 2 % of our membership. You will all have received an email a couple of days before 13 May as registered attendees were then well below the numbers required for the meeting to have any validity. The appeal produced a number of last-minute registrations and also many apologies. Although I recognise that AGMs are not at the top of everyone's must attend list, the Society AGM is an important part of our work as a charity. Without a quorate AGM, we cannot approve or not approve anything; we cannot submit accounts to the Charity Commission; we cannot have a President or committee to run the Society; and we cannot follow the constitution that confirms how we operate. I would be very grateful if you could all try to confirm your attendance for next year's AGM soon after the details are published, so we do not have to send out another last-minute appeal.

The AGM itself went smoothly through each agenda item much as we had hoped; I should like to thank our re-elected President, Elizabeth Stazicker, both for chairing the AGM and for the work that she does for the Society.

Subscription increase, action required if you pay by Standing Order

The increase in membership subscriptions highlighted in the last journal and the AGM documents was confirmed. It is particularly important that those of you who pay by Standing Order (SO) update your instructions to your bank to match the new rates - £12.00 pa for those receiving a print journal; £9.00 for those choosing the e-journal option; and £17.00 for overseas members receiving the print copy of our journal. Life membership remains at ten times these amounts, but as the AGM reaffirmed, life members do not have to pay anything more when the membership rate has increased. Although we no longer have a payment by SO option for new members, the Society cannot change any Standing Order, you have to make the change. There is always a large amount of work chasing members whose SO has not been updated. Please can everyone who still has a Standing Order, make sure that your instructions are amended in line with the new approved membership rates, so we do not have to spend unnecessary time chasing payments.

Parish register images and matched transcriptions

We have recently sent copies of our transcripts to Ancestry for the parish registers held in the County Archives Offices at Ely and Huntingdon. We believe these cover all parishes in the old Cambridgeshire, and about 30% of the old Huntingdonshire parishes that have transcripts in a format that will allow Ancestry to match these with the newly taken completed images for all the registers held in the two offices. All this means that the project to search the registers and find the matching images is a step nearer to being published on Ancestry. Those of you who have used the images and matching transcripts in our Fenland parishes from the Wisbech Museum collection or have used images in other counties will know how valuable it is to see the original so you can decide for yourself what the image shows.

Committee representation: research

We have always had the Society Research Officer as a member of our committee, and I am very pleased that Lisa Constanti, one of our still fairly new assistant researchers, has agreed to join the committee to represent this important part of our Society work. We shall look forward to working with Lisa in this new role, and to drawing on her experience and expertise.

New surgery venue in Cambridge

The research surgery venue we have used for the past year at St Andrews Baptist Church has not been widely attended, so we have decided to return to using the County Central Library from September for our monthly Saturday surgeries. We will also have new zoom talks on a Thursday evening, again from September. Please keep a look out for full details in our monthly newsletters, and our website.

Retention policy, Society records

The Society has a considerable number of papers about its work since it was set up in 1976 – minutes of meetings, accounts, policies etc. We are now planning to deposit most of these in the County Archives so they can be seen alongside other historical records such as churchwardens accounts by future scholars and researchers. We will be writing a retention policy in the near future so we can have guidelines to inform on-going deposits. If anyone has any old Society papers, or can offer thoughts on a retention policy, please contact me, chairman@chfhs.org.uk.

Beyond 1837, 1538, 1066?

Many of our members tell me that all their ancestors were not sufficiently wealthy to appear in early records so that a family tree cannot be compiled going back much beyond 1837, the start of BMD registration, let alone the start of parish registers in 1538 or even 1066. Some of you will have heard my talk about how I traced members of my own family back to 1066. I have recently bought a copy of Anthony Wagner's classic work English Genealogy from the bookstall at our March branch meetings, written when he was Richmond Herald. I read this book many years ago but had forgotten what he

had said in the first chapter, about the purpose of his book. “Since the total number of the ancestors of each of us doubles in each generation we go back (save as modified by the marriage of cousins), most ancestries, if they could be carried back on all lines for eight or ten generations, would probably traverse a surprisingly wide social range.” He then goes on to talk about exceptions for “closed communities” such as royal families, members of straiter sects, but comments that these are “far from being watertight”. My talk gave examples of both upward and downward mobility, something statistically highly likely as Anthony Wagner says. When I am told that someone’s ancestors only had humble origins, I always suggest that this may not be the case for every branch, and hope Wagner’s experience and advice will encourage you all to research further, including siblings of your direct ancestors as this will give you more clues. There are far more accessible sources than in 1950 when he was writing.

David Copley

Cambridge Branch Venues New and Old — all change again!!

After much deliberation, we’ve reluctantly decided that F-2-F meetings for talks in Cambridge are no longer a viable proposition. Unfortunately, attendances at the Saturday meetings have never returned to even near B-C (before covid) levels, which, when considered alongside costs of suitable town centre venues with reliable wifi, has led to this tough decision.

When covid hit as you will recall, and in common with many other societies at the time, we soon set up a programme of talks via zoom. This proved to be an overwhelming success both with the local “regulars” and also with a “new” audience of members remote from the area, who would otherwise have never been able to participate in meetings. Today, in this P-C (post-covid) age, the desire to continue providing access for the “remote” audience led to adopting the so-called ‘hybrid’ format whereby a live talk is beamed to a zoom audience at the same time—but with varying degrees of success. We’ve decided to abandon the live, face-to-face delivery of talks, in favour of zoom only—and establish separate F-2-F research sessions elsewhere.

From September, the Cambridge Branch meetings are to be split into :

- Cambridge Branch zoom talk on **2nd Thursday evenings at 7.30**
- Cambridge Branch F-2-F research session on **2nd Saturdays 11-2**
at the Central Library (top floor)

We hope to welcome you to one of the sessions—also see p 32.

Cambridge VAD Hospitals in the Great War

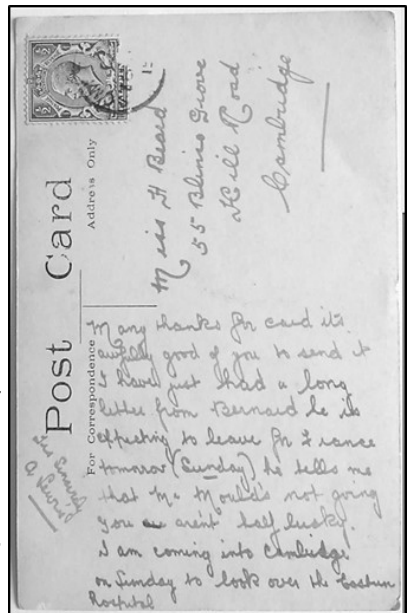
by Sarah Fletcher

It all began with a photo...
where did
great grandmother
serve as a VAD?

When my great-grandmother died in 1995 aged 97, her family photographs came to us and sparked my interest in learning about my family history. Among them was the photograph printed on the front cover of the previous issue of The Journal: a group of 36 staff outside what is presumably an auxiliary hospital during the period of the First World War. She had told family members that she had once been a nurse, but no one seemed to know any details beyond that. With the 1914-1918 centenary, I was determined to try and find out more about my great-grandmother's experience and contributions during the War. When the British Red Cross released its VAD database I felt sure we'd learn something¹ – but searches for her there have failed to retrieve any results.

With her family photos came her collection of postcards. These are very evocative of the era – quickly scrawled notes arranging visits and outings, or conveying brief lines of news or birthday wishes. They have been very useful in locating my great-grandmother during the War years. Hilda Beard was born in Cambridge in 1898 and her family moved to Lode when she was young. By 1911 she is working in domestic service, firstly in Quy and Bottisham, but after that at addresses in Cambridge. Postcards dated 1914 are addressed to her at St Barnabas Road, in 1915-16 her post is sent to Tenison Avenue, then Market Street and then to Blinco Grove, and in 1917 she is in Milton Road. So as far as we know, she was in Cambridge throughout the War period in domestic service.

Another reason for wanting to find out more about the hospital photo is that we are also lacking information about my great-grandfather during the War. Hilda married



James Perry in June 1918 at Newmarket Register Office. The marriage certificate tells us he was a Rifleman 3rd Royal Irish Rifles. He was from Stebbing in Essex and enlisted in the Essex Regiment but his service records seem to have been lost in bombing during the Second World War so we know little of his wartime experience. Nor do we know how Hilda and James met. Might he have been invalided and they met at the hospital?



So with these questions in our minds, we have attempted to find out more about the auxiliary hospitals in and around Cambridge. The Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) was formed nationally in 1909 as a way of ensuring nursing and medical assistance would be available during a time of war. Detachments were organised through the British Red Cross Society and the St John's Ambulance Association. Men were involved as well as women: they worked as drivers, transporting patients from stations, while women could contribute by doing needlework or laundry as well as undertaking nursing activities. Cambridge's First Eastern General Hospital, formed of pre-fabricated wooden huts housing up to 1,700 beds with operating theatres and ancillary buildings, took its first patients in October 1914. This provided the greatest concentration of medical activity in Cambridge, but auxiliary hospitals were also established in the town and surrounding villages to accommodate convalescing patients.

The British Red Cross website lists 18 hospitals across Cambridgeshire ². In Cambridge there are: Cintra Terrace on Hills Road, St Chad's in Grange Road, Wordsworth Grove in Newnham, and Huntly in Herschel Road. A report in the Cambridge Independent Press in May 1916 provides some details on these ³:

"The activities of the Cambs 8 Detachment were focused on St Chad's Hospital which had 38 beds. It had accommodated 178 patients since it opened in May 1915. The Cambs 8 had 53 members in the nursing section of whom 45 were connected with St Chad's. There were three resident staff members, 22 on daily work or half-day shifts, and 20 who came on certain days or as required."

The Cambs 28 Detachment were running Wordsworth Grove. It had opened in July 1915 and could accommodate 30 patients. 33 minor operations had been undertaken there, and massage therapy had a prominent place. Nursing was carried out by a set of permanent staff, while those unable to give their whole time served as orderlies or ward maids.

The Cambs 40 Detachment opened Huntly as a convalescent home with 18 beds in September 1915. The paper reports "*all the wards face south, and there is a good garden, with croquet lawn and golf holes*". Most of the patients were suffering from gunshot wounds. The Cambs 40 at that time had 30 fully-certified members, 7 members on probation and 5 cooks.

The paper does not report on activities at Cintra Terrace. An article printed in January 1915 records that it was being used as a Rest House for Belgian Soldiers, and that the Borough Red Cross Division had just taken it over ⁴. It had 50 beds. However the premises were quickly found to be unsuitable, and the decision was made to close the hospital in March 1915 ⁵.

Based on what we know, the Cambridge hospitals would seem to be the most likely contenders for the photograph. The only building I am familiar with is St Chad's: a red brick house thought to be by Basil Champneys c1880 – definitely not the building in the photo. A recent visit to the Cambridgeshire Collection, where I was able to view images of hospital staff photos, has also ruled out Huntly and Wordsworth Grove. Neither matched our picture, and the architecture of the buildings was quite different. There wasn't a photo of the short-lived Cintra Terrace hospital.

What about the hospitals in the villages? The buildings used to accommodate the hospitals included village halls, schools, rectories and large houses. The hospital at Shelford, one of the closest to Cambridge, was run by the Cambs 14 Detachment, initially with assistance from the Cambs 24 (Harston Detachment), and had 50 beds ⁵. It opened in May 1915 at Mount Blow, a red brick mansion designed by Edwin Lutyens in 1908, now known as Middlefield. In August 1917 the hospital relocated to the centre of Great Shelford in The Chestnuts, now named Browning House and described by the village's conservation area report as a grand Queen Anne/ arts and crafts residence ⁶. Neither sound a right fit for the photo.

What does our photograph show? The building has a canopy supported by slim spiral metal pillars with ornamental work on the upper sections, and an angular brick bay with large sash windows. Possibly a lighter colour brick is used on the corners of the building and around the windows. Just visible in the original photo are three men looking out of the windows, presumably patients, while trees are reflected in the glass. It could be the back rather than the front of the building, perhaps facing on to a garden. One of the

nurses in the front row holds a cat on her lap.

Another possible location might be Newmarket, as Hilda and James were married there. The British Red Cross website lists 3 hospitals there: Rous Hospital, Sussex Lodge and Severals House, but online searches of the buildings, if I'm looking at the correct places, don't look promising.

While we wait for breakthroughs in the research, we thought that sharing the picture might help us get to an answer. Surely we don't have the only copy of the photograph? Perhaps another copy has some identifying details written across the back. It would be wonderful to solve the mystery, and know something of Hilda's wartime contribution.

¹ <https://vad.redcross.org.uk/>

² <https://www.redcross.org.uk/-/media/documents/about-us/our-history/list-of-auxiliary-hospitals-in-the-uk-during-the-first-world-war.pdf>

³ Cambridge Independent Press, 5 May 1916

⁴ Cambridge Independent Press, 8 January 1915

⁵ Cambridge Independent Press, 16 May 1919

⁶ <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/media/1579/great-shelford-conservation-area-appraisal-2007-pages-1-20.pdf>

ONLINE EVENT: Participate from Home - WORLDWIDE!

2023

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Saturday 18th November 10 am - 6 pm GMT

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we'll be there and look forward to seeing you
—visit our booth for a CHFHS shop voucher—

Whittlesford WW1 VAD Hospital

by Suzanne Ridley

In the last issue, the photo of an unknown VAD hospital prompted Suzanne to tell of her researches on the VAD Hospital at Whittlesford

In her article [elsewhere in this issue], Sarah Fletcher outlined the search for her great-grandmother's nursing service during the Great War; one auxiliary hospital which has been thoroughly researched (and can be discounted from Sarah's search) was in the South Cambridgeshire village of Whittlesford.

In December 2020 I wrote a book titled '*Whittlesford: Caring for the Wounded*', published by The Whittlesford Society as part of the Society's on-going project to discover and record what happened in the village during the First World War. The book is divided into two parts, firstly telling the story of how the hospital was set up and how it was organised on a day-to-day basis, with numerous photographs of the village and the nurses, and secondly listing and discovering stories of the many local men and women who volunteered as nurses, night orderlies and knitters, as well as the children who sewed 'comforts' for the troops and collected eggs, and the notable village families who donated supplies. Volunteers were identified from the Red Cross database (<https://vad.redcross.org.uk/>) as well as from contemporary newspaper reports, and included many of the surnames common in Whittlesford at the time such as Maynard, Barker, Arnold and Nunn.

As Sarah described, the regional focus of the medical response to the First World War was the 1st Eastern General Hospital in Cambridge. After wounded soldiers had been treated there, they could be discharged to one of the auxiliary hospitals based in Cambridge and the surrounding villages. Whittlesford was an ideal location for a hospital, having a station on the railway network, some larger empty buildings suitable for loan to the Red Cross and fields and open spaces suitable for recreation and recuperation in the fresh country air. There was already an enthusiastic Voluntary Aid Detachment (the Cambs 30 V.A.D.) made up of local women who had completed First Aid training in Sawston. The Red Cross records show that Cambs 30 V.A.D. nurses came from the nearby villages of Whittlesford, Babraham, Sawston, Abington, Pampisford, Shelford, Hildersham and Grantchester, some being the daughters of families from the large country houses who had grown up as friends and who now served as nurses under hospital Commandant Miss Olive Briggs. A small number of women arrived on General Service later in the war from around the UK. At least 57 local

men volunteered as night orderlies from Sawston, Whittlesford and Duxford; mainly ineligible for military service due to their age or occupation being essential to the war effort (particularly agriculture, engineering or the factories in Sawston).

Whittlesford hospital opened in March 1915 with 19 patients transferred from the 1st Eastern to premises in the Working Men's Institute and Orient House on the High Street. The hospital later expanded into The Lodge in North Road, and the sites were filled to capacity until they closed in December 1918. The war years were filled with hard work, constant fundraising, social events and sports, and villagers rallied to support up to 50 wounded servicemen in their village at any time. Whittlesford continued a connection with Red Cross nursing which extended beyond 1918, and the conflict of the Second World War saw the Whittlesford and Duxford Red Cross Detachment manage a small military hospital in the Men's Institute, for elderly patients who had been bombed out of their hospital accommodation in London. This was managed by Mrs Catherine Arnold of Whittlesford, who had worked tirelessly as the hospital Quartermaster in the First World War.

A novel aspect to my research was to collate a list of names of around 150 of the 1,700 military patients who spent time in Whittlesford, being a 'home from home' for those so far from their own. They came from around the world to this small village, and left it with many happy memories. These wounded servicemen were mentioned in newspaper reports after playing in whist drives and cricket matches, singing and playing in fundraising entertainments or performing ceremonial duties at local funerals.

I am still researching the Cambs 30 V.A.D. nurses and trying to identify people in contemporary photographs and find out more about their war service, and would be interested to hear from anyone who could help.

Copies of the book are available to read in Cambridgeshire Archives and the Cambridgeshire Collection, or can be purchased for £10 plus P+P by contacting me.

Suzanne Ridley
Whittlesford
sjridley23@btinternet.com

[See also the journal cover photo]



*Book cover photo supplied by,
and acknowledged to,
the Cambridgeshire Collection*

Strays & DNAs

received from
David Cotton

Some 40 years ago, I became involved in the family history quest hobby.

I soon discovered it was important to find “Strays”.

A “Stray” is someone who is no longer living where they were born.

Family history publications of the 1980’s used to print lists of strays hoping that someone from “Home” might recognise a surname from a home county or state or country, make contact and find they had a connection with someone back “Home”. It was the 1980’s version of the modern day DNA explosion.

Being a Ten Pound Pom I am a “Stray” and when you think about it everyone with a non- indigenous heritage is a stray so Australia is full of them. In fact, if you study population movements in the last 300 years the whole world is full of strays.

The study of history and geography are important adjuncts to making family history connections.

I have only been here since 1961 and know I was born in St Ives Huntingdonshire but many Australians have linkages back to pre 1800 and finding where their original roots are is a challenging quest. Bendigo is a very good example as a “home of strays” seeking their Eldorado.

It is full of Cornish, Chinese, German (before Germany existed) Irish, Italian (Before Italy existed) Scandinavian, a mix of English counties, Scots, Welsh, Americans plus “Double strays” from Tasmania and NSW. Double strays is my term for someone who “strayed” to become a convict and then became a family history stray because they had involuntarily left home.

As I mentioned I am from Huntingdonshire often shortened to “Hunts”. In early Victorian immigration shipping records one will see “Hunts” but also one sees “Hants”. One of those quirks of the English language means that sometimes Hampshire is shortened to Hants, This is because in Old English Hampshire was named Hantumscir a district around the port of Southampton and no where near Huntingdonshire. It was very easy for people with no knowledge of the geography of either place to intermix Hunts and Hants.

Earlier this year we were looking for a family who strayed from Cornwall to South Australia then to Bendigo then to Charters Towers and then to Croydon Queensland.....this is what strays do when they have GOLD in

their blood. By accident and with no connection to our research I saw on Trove The Northern Miner Charters Towers 18 Jan 1922 page 3 “Unclaimed Money” looking for WILLIAM MARTIN WILKIN who had left BUCKDIN HANTS for Australia.

My geographic knowledge suggests he may be a stray from BUCKDEN HUNTS ?

David Cotton
Research Officer Bendigo Family History Connections

XXxxxXX

As David says, strays are a fascinating topic, and finding them has been revolutionised by online searching - no longer are we reliant on the sheer luck of someone spotting your particular stray wherever they happen to have been recorded, and then to make the effort to report this individual back to their home area. Otherwise, trying to find someone who had gone “missing” was like looking for the proverbial needle-in-a-haystack, or involved countless hours of speculative searching on the off chance—assuming, that is, we even had the opportunity to visit relevant places. Now, online resources can turn up someone in Australia as readily as if they were in the next street, village or town—and with that, has enabled the wider family to be researched to an extent quite unimaginable in the pre-internet era.

As for the misrepresentation of place names, that's another story entirely, isn't it!! The Hants / Hunts issue is well known and has actually cropped up in my husband's family—as it did when an enumerator elsewhere in the country, attributed a birth county entry to being Hants rather than Hunts and causes a little confusion at the time. In another instance, the Hunts village of Leighton (Bromswold) was recorded as Leighton (Buzzard) in Bedfordshire - and caused yet more head scratching at the time as this family actually did have links with Bedfordshire at that period. You may also have heard about the instances of birth places of Ditto or Do featuring in the 1881 census when the transcription was first done—and the cases where people were apparently from Southants as opposed to Northants. Ditto marks also cause issues in their own right—the transcriber/researcher only gets one chance to determine what a particular surname or birth place might be.

Ed.

“BARRINGTON—a tour in old photographs”

by Ray & Margaret Jude (2023)

new edition £10 ... contact barringtonsociety@gmail.com if interested in a copy

My Mee Family : Fennish Cousins?

*a contribution from
John Barrell*

***In common with many
writing their family
history I chose to
concentrated on my
Barrell ancestors.***

However, as we go back through the years other surnames will appear as grandparents, aunts & uncles, cousins and they all deserve to be remembered. Having been born in Cambridge I felt I should investigate my Cambridgeshire MEE ancestors.

The MEE surname and similar sounding names seem to be scattered through many counties in parts of southern England and those with whom we are connected appear to have been from the Fenlands and adjoining areas. Some historians refer to these dwellers as the “Fennish”, a term we have adopted.

Our earliest sighting is of my 3xGGF, John Mee, born about 1800 in Doddington. This is one of the Fenland villages which were situated on small areas of raised ground in the Isle of Ely. For centuries most of this vast area of land had been marshy and unusable. The first of several attempts at draining the Fens was made in the time of Roman occupation of the country. It was not until the 17th Century the major scheme to drain the area for agricultural uses was made. However, the result was that the peat soil shrank and dried out and, over the years, has tended to blow away in the strong fenland gales.

The scattered nature of the Fennish population and the manner in which they existed probably explains the lack of accurate parish records of births, marriages and deaths. We cannot prove but only suspect that Mees were among the Fennish families for many years before my 3xGGF's appearance. During the 19th century, as living conditions and records improved, we were able to make better interpretations of the information we found.

Whilst technology overcame many of the problems associated with the need to raise the water from the shrunken levels to the higher waterways the overall impression still is of a land, misted over in winter, windblown throughout the year and with small widespread communities situated on slight rises in the countryside. Nowadays at times it can seem desolate – no doubt it was even more so to our ancestors whose opportunities to leave the area were few indeed.

In October 1822 John Mee married Ann Meeks at St. Mary the Virgin church, Doddington. Although both gave the parish as their place of birth neither could

be found in the parish Register. Nor could they be found in other parishes they named as place of birth in the 1851 or 1861 Censuses! Between 1823 and 1838 John and Ann had 3 sons William, John and Jabez and 3 daughters, Elizabeth, Ann and Mary.

In 1841 John, his wife and five children, Elizabeth, John, Jabez, Ann & Mary, were resident on Hill's Farm, Somersham, about 8 miles south of Doddington where he is described as a bailiff, the farm owner's local manager looking after his interests, both land and tenancies. There were also two labourers, 17-year-old William Smith and 44 year old William Johnson living with the Mees. John's son, William, had left home to be employed as a labourer for a farmer, William Shepperson, at Benwick, about 3 miles from Doddington.

Sadly, John Mee's family suffered two tragedies in succeeding years. On 15 March 1846 their 9-year-old daughter Ann was killed by accidental burning when her skirt caught fire. When he was 18 years old John died of consumption on 4th December 1847. In 1851 and still in Somersham parish, John is shown as Land Bailiff at Iletts Farm. The children still living with them are Jabez, now 16, and Mary, now 12; also resident is Margaret Sutton, a house servant. At 28 years of age Elizabeth had moved away from home. John's wife, Ann, died in Somersham in the second quarter of 1852. 3 years later he married Sarah PHILLIPS there in the first quarter of 1855. Sarah was born at Yaxley, on the outskirts of Peterborough, about 16 miles northwest of Somersham, Huntingdonshire on 1 July 1827 to Thomas and Mary Ann PHILLIPS.

In 1860 John, farm bailiff, is aged 63, and Sarah is aged 34. Also living in separate accommodation on the farm are William King, carter aged 26, William Osbourne, ag lab aged 56 and Frederick Townson, ag lab aged 19. John died in the third quarter of 1865. Sarah lived well into the 20th Century, dying in the Downham District, Norfolk, in the second quarter of 1913 at the age of 86.

My 2xGGF, William Mee was born in the Doddington parish in December 1824 but was not baptised until 10 April 1831 together with his younger sister, Betsey, who had been born a year before him in January 1823. In 1841 William, aged 15, was living with farmer William Shepperson and his family in the Benwick parish.

When looking at records such as the Censuses we often wonder at their accuracy. For example what was the ability of the recorder, did the family really know the accuracy of the details they gave, did local accents mislead the recorder. In this area in particular where there is a real shortage of recorded details records must be of uncertain accuracy as the following case shows. This Census stated that there was 2 Sarah Strattons, both born at

Doddington, one in 1826 and one in 1827. Only the latter's father, John, aged 50 was named with his wife, Hannah, aged 45. Their daughter's age is given as 14 years, born in 1827.

The details of the second Stratton at least tally with the wedding on 1 November 1850 of William a 'labourer of full age' and Sarah STRATTON, daughter of John Stratton, a farmer, at Doddington. William signed the register with an 'x'; Sarah and the two witnesses, Abraham and Ann STRATTON signed their names.

In 1851 William and Sarah are living in a cottage at Park Lane in the Chatteris registration sub-district where William is still an "ag-lab". Both give their place of birth as Benwick, which is a village about three miles west of Doddington. Their first child, John was born at Chatteris in 1853. Like so many other Fenland villages Chatteris is situated on a raised island within the wetlands. Fen drainage between the 17th and 19th Centuries resulted in Chatteris becoming a centre for agriculture and associated industries with a population now approaching 9,000. Its beginnings date back to the Neolithic period and it is reputed to be the last refuge of Boudica, fleeing from the Romans. It is mentioned in the Domesday book, was site of a small Benedictine nunnery until the Dissolution and it and most of the town was destroyed by fire in 1310. Later fires in 1706 and 1864 (when the Mees were living there) destroyed most of the medieval and Georgian properties.

By 1861 they have moved about 12 miles north to Outwell Cambridgeshire, living in Turn Pike Road where their next three children were born, Martha in the fourth quarter of 1863, Lucy in the third quarter of 1865 and William in the second quarter of 1867. By 1871 the fenland had been drained by an extensive system of ditches, one of which, the "Sixteen Foot Drain" ran in a straight line between these two villages.

Until 1990 half of the village was in Cambridgeshire and half in Norfolk, the boundary being the former course of the river Nene. As their births were registered in the registration district of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire we assume they were living in the Cambridgeshire half of the village! Outwell and Upwell are two adjacent villages on the Cambridgeshire/Norfolk border, the latter was also the sub registration district. We feel confident that it was Outwell where the family lived but it is possible that they lived in Upwell.

By 1881 William and Sarah have moved to Flegg Green, Wareham in Norfolk with their children, Martha, Lucy and William and he has a 40-acre farm to manage. Their elder son, John had left home by then and ten years later, in 1891, Lucy had also departed. However Martha and William were still living with their parents at Flegg Green. They are also together in 1901. Having been described as a farmer's son ten years earlier William is now

described as being in agricultural work (a euphemism for ag. lab?!) and Martha is working in a dairy.

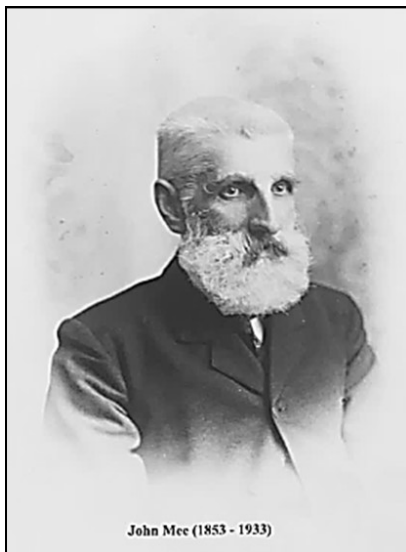
William died at Wereham on 1 August 1904 and by 1911 their son William is the head of the house with his widowed mother, Sarah, and sister, Martha. The widowed Sarah died nine years after her husband on 28 June 1913. We have been fortunate to find that a headstone to William and Sarah stands in St. Margaret's churchyard reading *"In loving memory of William Mee who died Aug 11 1904 aged 79 years. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Also Sarah his beloved wife who died June 28 1913 aged 87 years."* Among the farmers listed in the Kelly's 1908 Directory is a William Mee. Is this William's 40-year-old son, William now farming the same 40 acres? Or had Kelly's Directory not been updated correctly?

My GGF, John MEE says he was born at Chatteris, about 2 miles west of Ely in 1853. His granddaughter, Beda, my mother said his birth date was said to be 6 March 1853 but the GRO records suggest it was in the June quarter of that year in the South Witchford Registration District. He married twice, firstly to Beda, daughter of George SPARK(E)S, a labourer of Runcton Holme, Norfolk, on 5 November 1878. Beda, born in the fourth quarter of 1853, was the eldest of two daughters and five sons of George SPARKS and Frances, nee GUTTRIDGE who had married in the parish church of St. James, Runcton Holme on 1 November 1851. The church, of Saxon origin, has a square tower, the base of which is Norman and the upper part and most of the church is in medieval brickwork and gingerbread carstone.

John and Beda Mee's first daughter, Edith was born on 26 October 1879, and a son, Henry was born on 25 November 1880. According to the 1881 Census John, Beda and their two children were living at Stoke Road, Wereham and John's occupation was given as an agricultural labourer. Their second daughter Lucy was born in 1882. We were able to establish the dates of the first two children thanks to "1813 – 1830 Baptism Project, St. Margaret of Antioch" found on a website.

Beda died on 19 March 1889, and is buried at Wereham next to her husband's parents. Her headstone of red sandstone reads *"In loving memory Beda wife of John Mee, who departed this life March 19, 1889 aged 35 years. Be ye therefore ready also."* The writer's mother, John Mee's granddaughter, Beda, always said that she did not know after whom she was named and it is sad to record that we did not find the answer until after her death. Having been born in 1907 the grandmother she would have known would have been John's second wife, Eliza CARTER, born 19 May 1859 whom he married in the last quarter of 1891.

Having begun life as an 'ag lab' John has clearly found a better opportunity in



John Mee (1853 - 1933)



Eliza Mee (nee Carter) (1859 - 1941)
(John Mee's second wife - married 1891)

what was then a new career as a sub-postmaster. By 1891 he is also the parish clerk and in 1901 the family had moved to High Street, Stoke Ferry where John is described as the village sub-postmaster. John and Eliza have three sons born in Stoke Ferry, Howard John, Frederick and Frank. The 1911 Census and the Kelly's Directory for 1912 show that John was still sub postmaster at Stoke Ferry, Norfolk, with his wife, Eliza and son, Frederick. John Mee died in the second quarter of 1933 and was buried at Tilney All Saints, a small village about 3 miles from Kings Lynn. His wife, Eliza, died on 11 December 1941 and was buried at Stoke Ferry.

In the 1911 census Howard John Mee (born in 3rd quarter 1892) was lodging with Andrew Wylie and his family in Kings Lynn. Howard John, Wylie's daughter and a second lodger are all elementary school teachers. Howard John joined the army in World War 1 and served in the Norfolk Regiment (Regt. No. 14272). From his medal card he was a sergeant serving firstly in France in 1915 before going to the Middle East where he was killed in action. The medal card shows he received the Victory, British and 1915 Star medals (Pip, Squeak and Wilfred). He was buried in Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery Part 2. Whilst not a direct ancestor this was the first WW1 casualty we found in our researches.

My Grandmother, Lucy MEE was born in Wereham on 29 March 1882 and baptised there on 17 May 1882. At the age of 22 she married James Albert WOODS, by then a postman in the village, at All Saints Church, Stoke Ferry on 6 April 1904. Her father, John Mee gave his profession on the marriage register as Postmaster. One can imagine that this sounded better than sub-

postmaster! It was at Stoke Ferry that James and Lucy's three children Louis, Beda and Margaret were born. Sadly Lucy's early death, in 1924, aged only 42 meant that, apart from my mother I never had the opportunity to meet a single one of my Mee direct ancestors. I can just remember, shortly before WW2, being taken by my mother to visit one of John's sons, Frank Mee and his wife, Kate and their home in Cambridge.

Lucy's and my mother's story will continue in the sections on the WOODS and the BARRELLs.

Local Victorian Army Recruitment Puzzler

Another article in this issue mentions the disbanding of the old Cambridgeshire regiment in 1881 and its rebadging as the East Lancashire regiment.

The old Huntingdonshire regiment met a similar fate in the same year, and was rebadged as the East Surrey regiment.

So, family historians in Cambs or Hunts who have previously dismissed possible male ancestors, due to having no apparent links with Lancashire or Surrey, may need to reconsider.

RECENTLY SPOTTED IN A NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

A 105yr-old lady still living with her 76yr-old son ...
... in the house in which she was born

WHAT'S THE LONGEST A HOUSE HAS BEEN IN YOUR FAMILY??

The Really Useful Show : Live

(FHF EA Regional Fair) Sat 20 April 2024

@ The Burgess Hall, St Ives, Cambs

*promises to be a fantastic day for all
aspects of research across the area and beyond*

**watch out for more information on our website & social media
as arrangements come together over the coming months**

A Victorian Army Medal by CJ

(names omitted for privacy reasons)

At a recent 'surgery', an enquirer in his 70s(?) arrived with a request to find out more about the paternal grandfather he never knew. As a child, his few elderly relatives had passed on very little information and there was even doubt about the grandfather's age since records contradicted each other. Family lore (notoriously unreliable) said he was from a farming family around Ely, but had served in the army in India at some time and was later in receipt of an army pension. The family had passed down a medal featuring Queen Victoria, complete with a clasp stating "Relief of Chitral".

At least we had a surname to go on, not uncommon around Ely, but fortunately the enquirer knew the names of two spinster great-aunts which enabled us to identify the correct family from the early censuses in 1871 and 1881. Nothing to do with farming (so much for family lore) - the men in the family were all railway workers. From online sources, we then found the grandfather's attestation papers. He had joined the army in 1891, stated his home was Ely but lied about his age by knocking a few years off. His employment was given as "railway porter" - and this happened in Burnley of all places, why Burnley?

In 1881, after very extensive army reorganisation, the old Cambridgeshire regiment had been dissolved. Its soldiers found themselves rebadged as the 1st battalion of a newly created "East Lancashire" regiment. So army recruiters in Cambridgeshire now passed on new recruits to this regiment.

Back to the medal. The 1st battalion East Lancashire regiment was involved in the relief of the Siege of Chitral, an outpost on the Northwest frontier of India, in 1895. One of the forgotten episodes of the late Victorian period unlike the sieges of Mafeking and Ladysmith in the Boer War. However, it was quite famous at the time. Participants in the siege and relief were awarded medals to celebrate the successful expedition.

The enquirer's grandfather had only joined up on a short service basis. He left the army, went back to Ely, got married and started work again on the railways. He still maintained his fictitious age on his marriage certificate, and both 1911 and 1921 censuses, but by the 1939 register had reverted to his real age; he died in the 1940s.



Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Family History Society

AGM : Chairman's Report 2022-2023

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. Our Patron, Nicholas, Lord Hemingford, died in December; amongst his many achievements and influences, he served as President of the Huntingdonshire Family History Society for more than 20 years. An appreciation was published in our journal. 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 last year.

2 Meetings and surgeries Like many other organisations, our Society has noticed significant differences in attendance patterns at meetings; many people are still wary of attending public events, and others are not comfortable with zoom or other online meetings. Our previous venue in Cambridge, the Central Library, is difficult for wi-fi talks as the network is shared with students working in the main library. We looked carefully for another suitable venue in the middle of Cambridge with easy access to public transport. Face to face meetings started at St Andrews Baptist Church in September, when our President spoke about people involved with draining of the Fens. Surgeries resumed at the new venue at the same time. During the Autumn, we emailed members about their preferences, suggestions and ideas for the pattern of meetings and surgeries that we offer. I am grateful to more than 140 people who responded, the results were analysed and discussed, and continue to inform our work. The responses showed how much our members value the Society. The current pattern for monthly talks is in person at March Library; hybrid at Cambridge; and zoom only using the traditional evening time for meetings formerly at Huntingdon. We will continue to keep this under review as circumstances change. We have moved the Cambourne Surgery to Huntingdon Archives and Library, evidence from other family history societies shows the benefit of sharing a venue with the Archives service. Our other surgeries at Bar Hill, Cambridge, Ely and St Ives all continue, and the surgeries at March have just changed from once a month to twice each month.

3 Projects The Duke of Manchester's collection of papers is the most significant in the County Archives that does not have a detailed catalogue. Work has now started on a part time basis to compile the catalogue funded by the Society and two other organisations. More than 500 items now have a searchable detailed online entry. The second year of our Schools Project working with year 5 children examining local censuses and other records for the area where they live, began in Stretham with considerable help from our Honorary Life Member, Mike Petty. However, the unprecedented heat last summer stopped the work, so it is continuing this year. The momentum from the first year of the project in the Sturton area of Cambridge has continued with blue plaques on display in several local streets, a new community centre about to open, and a student interviewing children, parents and local historians about the impact of local history. Many further parish registers from both Huntingdonshire and the Wisbech area are now searchable through AncestorFinder.

4 Partnership work The project to digitise all the parish registers held in the County Archives offices at Ely and Huntingdon and to link these to Society transcripts has now started. Image taking began last Autumn and was completed in April 2023; the matching of the transcripts and images will commence soon. The completed work for publication on Ancestry should be finished next year, and the Society will then start to receive royalty payments. We continue to search ebay to fund new acquisitions for the Archives, and also to give them items donated by our members that will enhance the collection. We have continued to play an active role in the work of the Family History Federation including participating in national meetings sharing practice and problems with others having the same role; attendance at twice yearly meeting of the East Anglia Group comprising around 20 other societies. All Society members can now have free access to the library at Cambridge University. This was one outcome of the funding we gave the University to catalogue the Ely and Wisbech Assizes records; this project is now completed, and the records can be searched online. Applications for membership are made online, and the collection of the card must be accompanied by a letter from our Membership Secretary. The process was described in an article in the Autumn journal. We continue to work with the Museum of Cambridge and have joined the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust. Committee members have given talks at local libraries through the Engage programme. We also have a close working relationship with the Cambridgeshire Collection staff; we know the new local studies head, Mary Burgess, well. We have developed new contacts with local villages particularly through Facebook and have recently noticed that several people have joined the Society through these links.

5 Exhibitions and shows The Society attended the online Really Useful

Show in November, and many members went to the first face to face show held in our region at Ipswich in October, although we did not have a stall. Several members have commented that they miss being able to attend fairs in person, so it is pleasing to note that there will be a major family history fair at the Burgess Hall in St. Ives on 20 April 2024. Five groups have begun detailed planning; we are contributing to two of these groups as well as the overall co-ordination. The show will be called the 'Really Useful Show Live' with funding and support from the Family History Federation and will be the first of what is hoped to be a series of fairs at venues throughout the country. The most recent fair at the Burgess Hall, in 2015, was organised by the Huntingdonshire Family History Society and was well attended.

6 New website We have continued to work with Beachshore on the development of our new website. Work is nearing completion; the Name and Place software and other developments will make searching more productive and updating easier. When the new site goes live, there will be a new address, an opportunity to update your bookmarks. Access arrangements to records will also be improved.

7 Membership rates The Society membership rates were last changed in 2014. Since then, there has been a large increase in postage and printing charges. This now means that we do not cover our basic costs for those choosing to receive the journal by post. We are therefore proposing an increase of £2.00 pa for all members, the new rates to come into effect on 1 July. The new rates will therefore be £9.00 for those having an e-journal; £12.00 for UK posted print journals; and £17.00 for overseas members receiving print journals. Life membership will continue to be based on ten times the annual rate. Please remember to adjust your payment arrangements to the new rates. The monthly newsletter is included with membership, but each person needs to opt in to receive this; you can do this online.

8 Accounts and Independent Examiner for 2022 Our Treasurer has prepared the 2022 accounts, and these are independently examined by Peter Rasberry from Clenshaw Minns. We are proposing that Peter Rasberry continue as our independent examiner for 2023.

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. I am delighted to announce two new Honorary Life Memberships for David Jordan and Margery Young. Both will receive a certificate.

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

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND HUNTINGDONSHIRE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (Via Zoom)
13 May 2023 at 13.00

David Copsey (Chair) introduced our President, Elizabeth Stazicker who welcomed all to the meeting, 49 members attended.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 26 members

2 Acknowledgements of member organisation representatives.

Bruce Frost, Littleport Society; Dave Edwards, March Branch; John Bownass, Huntingdon Branch; Lisa Constanti, Haddenham Family History Group

3 Minutes of the AGM held on 14 May 2022 via Zoom

The Minutes of the 2021 AGM had been placed on the members only section of the website and advertised in the last Journal and Newsletter.

Their acceptance as a true record was proposed by Les Potts, seconded by John Bownass and agreed. There were no matters arising.

4 Chair's report

The Chair's report as published on the members only section of the website was read out by the Chair. A brief summary of the main points follows:

An overview of the Society's activities including monitoring changing national and sector developments; and a thank you to all, particularly project volunteers and committee members. Sadly, our Patron Nicholas, Lord Hemingford died in December.

Like many other organisations, our Society has noticed significant differences in attendance patterns at meetings; many people are still wary of attending public events, and others are not comfortable with zoom or other online meetings.

Project updates, work has started on the Duke of Manchester's collection; our School Project is continuing; further parish registers are now searchable through Ancestor Finder.

Partnership work with Archives Service and Ancestry to digitise all parish records and link them with Society transcripts is under way.

All Society members can now have free access to the library at Cambridge University

The Society attended the online Really Useful Show in November and will be exhibiting at the major family history fair in April 2024 at Burgress Hall St Ives.

Work continues on new website

Proposing to increase membership rates; £9 for those having an email journal; £12 for UK posted print journals and £17 for overseas members receiving print journals.

The report acceptance was proposed by Mary Naylor and seconded by Ken Drake and agreed.

The President asked for a minute's silence for Lord Hemingford, and for our best wishes to be sent to Mike Petty.

5 Financial Report

The 2022 accounts are available on the members only section of the website and have been examined and checked by Peter Rasberry of Clenshaw Minns. Their acceptance was proposed by Ken Drake and seconded by Mary Naylor and agreed.

6 Election of President

Elizabeth Stazicker agreed to continue as our President; proposed by David Copsey, seconded by Les Potts and agreed.

7 Election of Officers

The list of officers of the Society is on the members only section of the website and all officers have agreed to stand for a further year in their respective roles including those of Branch representatives. There had been no other nominations. Taken on bloc and agreed.

8 Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Charity's accounts of the forthcoming year in accordance with clause M3.

It was proposed by Les Potts, seconded by David Copsey and agreed that Peter Rasberry of Clenshaw Minns should continue in the role of Independent Examiner.

9 Annual Subscriptions

It was proposed to increase annual subscriptions as outlined in the Chair's report. Proposed by Muriel Halliday seconded by Les Potts and agreed.

There was a question from a member as to whether Life Members would have to pay more. It was explained that once you have paid a life membership, the cost of which would now increase, there would be no further payment due.

Another member suggested a concessionary payment for OAPs this will be kept under review and raised at next year's AGM.

The Chair pointed out if anyone wanted to make a donation to the Society they could do by using the facility on the website.

10 Constitution

No change.

11 Submitted Motions.

None received.

12 Any other business.

The Chair explained that initially only 11 people had registered for the AGM, meaning that we may not have been quorate, a reminder email had been sent out with a much better response. He asked that members register when requested to do so.

A member suggested that it was a good idea to receive a reminder and the Chair agreed to do that in future.

No further items were raised and the meeting was closed.

A scenario which may encourage some of you to consider venturing into DNA to try and help solve a brick wall in your own research ...

DOCUMENTARY CONJECTURE SUPPORTED BY DNA

A query brought to one of the research surgeries led to an interesting piece of research. The gist of the story is this [NB: names have been changed] ...

An ancestor of the enquirer seemed to have just “appeared” in Newmarket as a young lone adult working in one of the stables. Despite some clues in records relating to his later life (1891, 1901 and 1911 censuses, marriage record, death registration, etc), he could not be conclusively identified in any records prior to 1891 anywhere, let alone Newmarket. So who was he???

Later-life records suggest that this ‘George Parker’ was born c1868, give or take, and from Dewsbury in Yorkshire, son of ‘Henry’, a foreman—but no birth or earlier censuses could be found to tally with these details. We revisited the searches made by the enquirer, but to no avail. A couple of red herrings muddied the waters, in that: firstly, there was a same-name and similar-aged man also in Newmarket (but from Snailwell, just up the road), and secondly, by coincidence, another same-name and similar-aged person was noted to have been born in the Dewsbury area. Both were discounted through having different fathers’ names/occupations, and, both can be identified elsewhere in later life. It’s worth noting, however, that another researcher’s family tree on Ancestry does link the same-namer in Dewsbury to being “our” man in Newmarket (perhaps because it superficially fits, and that they hadn’t seen our George’s marriage record for father’s name/occupation). So, somewhere “out there” was yet another ‘George Parker’ ...

The enquirer had added that family lore, via a daughter of ‘George’, was that he apparently might have used a different surname at some point in life, ‘Hills’. The first thoughts were that perhaps ‘George’ was either illegitimate or his mother had remarried—and ‘Hills’ might have been the mother’s surname or stepfather’s name, with ‘Parker’ perhaps a birth surname reverted to in later life. But, nothing came of exploring these possibilities—no births or marriages featuring ‘Parker’/‘Hills’ or ‘Hills’/‘Parker’ c1868 in the Dewsbury area, neither could any 1871 or 1881 census “candidates” nor baptisms be found (the latter searched online in Ancestry’s West Yorkshire Collection)—although it was noted that both surnames did feature in the Dewsbury area.

Where did we go from here? Genealogical luck came to the fore on four counts: 1) it was realised that George lived long enough to feature in the 1939 Register—with a supposed true date of birth given as “8 Feb 1868”; 2) the whole Dewsbury area was checked for birth registrations in the March/

June Quarters of 1868 with no hits, but baptism records for Dewsbury at that period however, had previously been noticed to feature dates of birth. 3) a search made on “8 Feb 1868”, the birth date as recorded of some seventy years later in 1939, was found to hold the key. An individual called ‘William Ernest Hills’ who was the son of ‘Henry, an overseer’, with that exact same date of birth, turned up!! 4) that family can be found in both 1871 and 1881, but the parents both died quite shortly after 1881, and the now-orphaned ‘William Ernest Hills’ seems to have “disappeared” from later records. Is this too much of a coincidence to ignore—or, is it just that—a coincidence?

We put our findings to the enquirer, who responded that she did have some DNA results which, at the time, didn’t mean much. A match had been returned through descendants of a ‘Susan Watson’. You’ve probably guessed it by now—the mother of ‘William Ernest’ was an ‘Ann Watson’, who can be shown to have had a sister ‘Susan’ ...

The family of ‘William’/‘George’ appears not to be related to the same-namer, (this other family was shown to be only transiently residing in Dewsbury when the same-namer was born). So, no nearer to accounting for the name change beyond speculating. Could ‘William’/‘George’ have been running away from something at home—a new name and a new life some two hundred miles away would hide a lot of secrets!! Might there be some locally held record or newspaper with a clue, if it can be ever found—who knows?!!?

THIS MIGHT INTEREST YOU ...

A short while ago, local newspapers carried an article which featured a commemorative exhibition, held at March Museum, to recognise the world-class achievement of a past son-of-the-town in the centenary of his birth.

Born in Northants in 1923, Stewart Adams came to March as a child. On leaving school, he became an apprentice in the pharmacy of the town’s branch of Boots. In later life, whilst working at their research labs in Nottingham, he went on to discover Ibuprofen. The time scale well illustrates the input necessary to bring new drugs to market—patented in 1961, and with clinical trials completed in 1969, the drug was not approved for over-the-counter sales until 1983. Stewart Adams died in 2019, aged 95.

The Museum were unaware of Mr Adams’ achievement until as recently as 2016, when by chance, some research on the subsequent careers of former pupils of the Grammar School highlighted him. A photo of CHFHS’s Dave Edwards (Archivist at March Museum) with the display material was featured in the papers and on the local BBC website.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-65263499>

& ... BY COINCIDENCE ...

A couple of weeks ago, for something to do on an idle Saturday morning, I happened to attend one of the half-day events arranged by the Society of Genealogists—a zoom meeting of three talks. The topic was “London’s Lost Department Stores & Insights Into the Archives of Sainsbury’s and Boots”.

A really interesting session—despite being about former London dept stores such as Gamage’s, Dickens & Jones, Peter Robinsons, Swan & Edgar, this talk delivered a real flavour as to how these grand establishments evolved and “worked”. The speaker also said that over 80% of regional department stores have vanished in the past 7 years alone. Many of us will undoubtedly fondly recall Eaden Lilly, Joshua Taylor, Mitchams and the old Robert Sayles in Cambridge alone, and similar establishments in almost every town up and down the country. Some of us may also have had relatives who worked in these local “palaces of shopping” ...myself included (in Boston and Brighton)

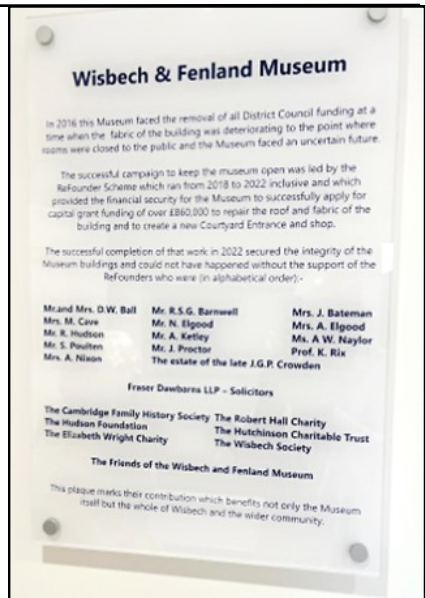
The speaker on Boots happened to include a mention of our own Ibuprofen-discoverer, Stewart Adams, from March. The Sainsbury’s archivist also raised something of a local interest. While some of us may remember their original shop in the centre of Cambridge, it is their store in Coldhams Lane which is of particular interest here—opened in 1974, it’s claim to fame is being JS’s very first out-of-town supermarket—right here in Cambridge!!

Wisbech & Fenland Museum

A few weeks ago, David Copsey attended the opening of the new foyer at the W&FM, on behalf of CHFHS. The occasion also saw the unveiling of a plaque acknowledging contributors to the ReFounders Scheme which helped secure the Museum’s future—incl us.

The W&FM is well worth a visit if you’re in the area, especially if your families are from that part of the county. An accredited archive, they have a wealth of material relating both to the town and surrounding area.

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



HUNTINGDON BRANCH PROGRAMME	
3 rd <u>Wednesday</u> of the month at 7.30pm	
Zoom only (register via website) enquiries : huntingdon@chfhs.org.uk	
Wed 20 Sept	John Thang Harradine : Hunts transportee with Peter Cooper <i>A farmer from Langham House, Needingworth, who, in 1856 ran off with large debts, stole a horse, and was transported for 14 years to Western Australia</i>
Wed 18 Oct	An Introduction to The Hundred Parishes with Ken McDonald <i>An area of <u>Eastern England</u> with no formal recognition or status encompassing c450 sq mls (1,100 sq km) of NW <u>Essex</u>, NE <u>Herts</u> and S <u>Cambs</u> — around 100 administrative parishes, hence its name. It contains 6,000+ <u>listed buildings</u>, <u>conservation areas</u>, village greens, ancient hedgerows, protected features and small historical <u>rural</u> settlements in close proximity to one another. (Wikipedia)</i>
Wed 15 Nov	Bringing Family History to Life with Fiona Chesterton <i>Tips and ideas on how to turn researched information into a compelling read for family, friends, publication. Based around Fiona's recent book "Secrets Never To Be Told"</i>
Wed 20 Dec	Christmas In St Neots with Liz Davies <i>A look at how local Christmas customs have been observed in St Neots and local villages. Derived from newspapers, memories and other sources, Liz paints a picture of Christmas celebrations</i>

Project co-coordinator, Terry, updates progress of WisMus

With the end finally in sight, work on completing the project has, however, had to be temporarily suspended for a few weeks to enable the switchover to the new data management system embedded in the new website.

Join us for that final push once the data input facility is back up and running. At the last count there are just 9 registers remaining — 4 in progress, with 5 still to be started (although two are in Latin, the other three are quite readable). To date we have completed some 555 registers with not far short of 400,000 records.

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

MARCH BRANCH PROGRAMME		<u>1st Wednesdays at 2.00pm</u>
Wednesday Face-2-Face Meetings		enquiries : march@chfhs.org.uk
Wed 6 Sept	<p>Letter From America with Caz Norton</p> <p><i>An illustrated talk following the research trail to identify the people, families and locations featured on a mystery C19th Christmas card found in the Cottenham Village Society document collection.</i></p>	
Wed 4 Oct	<p>1000 Years of Romany Life with Charlotte Paton</p> <p><i>A thousand years of the life of the Romany people. How they crossed the world, suffered enslavement and cruelty during the World Wars. How they sang, danced, retained their flamboyance, and lived outside the law when they were unable to live within it. How they lived by their wits and what the hedgerows provided. Romanticised and feared, even Queen Victoria was fascinated by them and their way of life. The talk is illustrated with pictures of their caravans - vardo - in the Romany language, and many more aspects of their secretive lives.</i></p>	
Wed 1 Nov	<p>'Oh yes it is' The history of English Pantomime Jim Stebbings</p> <p><i>Where did pantomime, the stories and elements we expect to find, originate? Jim will trace the history and development of this unique form of entertainment, illustrated with slides and pictures.</i></p>	
Wed 6 Dec	<p>Seasonal Social & A Most Notorious, Naughty, False, Lying Fellow: A Global Black Sheep or Maligned Character? With Sue Paul</p> <p><i>Henry, son of Ralph Smith, and brother of Samuel, flourished 1668 -1710. He worked for the East India Company towards the end of the seventeenth century and was sacked by the Company on a number of occasions being described as <u>a most notorious, naughty, false, lying fellow</u>. Subsequently, he was incarcerated in Newgate gaol and tried on two counts of piracy; before biting that hand that rescued him and acting undercover in Scotland.</i></p> <p><i>The talk is a light-hearted case study of Henry Smith demonstrating how you can reconstruct the life of someone who cannot be found in any traditional genealogical records in order to enhance your ancestral history.</i></p>	

Local Army Recruiting WW1

By 1914, Cambridgeshire fell within the Suffolk Regiment recruiting area. Huntingdonshire was within the Bedfordshire Regiment recruiting area. Many men from the Newmarket area served in the Army Veterinary Corps

***** CAMBRIDGE BRANCH *****
DROP-IN RESEARCH SURGERIES—only

2nd Saturdays ... 11.00-2.00

(same day as Cambridgeshire Collection Saturday opening)

**Cambridge Central Library—Top Floor
Grand Arcade**

(stairs : far end of top floor) (lift : turn left on exiting) (escalator : straight ahead)

LOOK OUT FOR THE CHFHS BANNER

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

Ely Library	3 rd Wed alternate mths	Jul / Sep / Nov	drop in between 10.00-4.00
Norris Museum St Ives	2 nd Wed alternate mths	Aug / Oct / Dec	drop-in between 10.30 & 3.30
Bar Hill Library	3 rd Mon <u>every</u> mth	Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 1.30-4.00
Huntingdon Archives	4 th Wed <u>every</u> mth	Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 1.30-4.00
March Library	1 st & 3 rd Tues <u>every</u> mth	*** NOW TWICE MONTHLY ***	drop-in between 10.00-4.00
Cambridge Central Library	2 nd Sat each month	** NEW FROM SEPTEMBER ** Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 11.00 & 2.00
Cambridge St Andrews	Moving to new venue in Cambridge from September ... Central Library		

**CAMBRIDGE BRANCH
PROGRAMME**

2nd Thursday of the month at **7.30pm**
enquiries : programme@chfhs.org.uk

From September, Cambridge Branch talks will via Zoom only on the
2nd Thursday evening of the month
Register via the website www.chfhs.org.uk

<p>Wed 16 Aug at 7.30pm</p>	<p>Online Q & A session with David Copsey and Muriel Halliday <i>Join us for a chat about both family history topics in general and local Cambs/Hunts-specific research. If possible, submit queries to secretary@chfhs.org.uk in advance, so we can have a think. Make yourself a mug of coffee get a piece of cake and zoom in!!</i></p>
<p>Thurs 14 Sept</p>	<p>Tawdry Tale : Translating Etheldreda with Charles Moseley <i>Etheldreda—St Audrey—is a familiar figure in Ely, and even more so in this year, the 1350th since she founded her monastery after running away from her second husband, Ecgrith, King of Northumbria. Princess of a royal house, related to the king who was buried at Sutton Hoo, long revered as a saint after her remains were translated to a new shrine—but what made her tick? What sort of world did she inhabit? In this talk Charles, a celebrated Cambridge University Academic who has lived in the Fens for more than 50 years, hopes to do something to make the sheer otherness of her life, mind set and times of this remarkable woman, whom we just glimpse through her legends, comprehensible to a modern audience in a very, very different world.</i></p>
<p>Thurs 12 Oct</p>	<p>Commonwealth War Graves Commission <i>Insights into the history of the CWGC, and their on-going work to commemorate the fallen of WW1 and WW2 both in this country and in the many immaculate cemeteries scattered worldwide</i></p>
<p>Thurs 9 Nov</p>	<p>Cambridge Inventions With Mary Burgess <i>Join Mary, from the Cambridgeshire Collection, to hear about inventions from Cambridgeshire—from biology to computing, Cambridgeshire has been “home” to a lot of new ideas</i></p>
<p>Fri-Sat 17-18 Nov</p>	<p>Also in November, online, is the Really Useful Show 2023 <i>Cambs & Hunts FHS will be there ... sign up, choose some talks, come and see us in the intervals. Or, drop in on Friday evening</i></p>
<p>Thurs 14 Dec</p>	<p>Hereward The Wake With David Maile & Rory G <i>On 2 June 1070, Hereward sacked Peterborough Monastery, stole all their gold and silver, and fled to Ely to resume his resistance against William the Conqueror. An entertaining talk to bring Hereward’s exploits to life.</i></p>

ANOTHER UNIQUE NAME ...

In the last issue, we took a look at the (?) country-wide unique forename of Tilgathpilneser which had been encountered quite by chance in local records—first, in Newmarket District birth registrations, and later tracked to Swaffham Bulbeck. Curiosity was sparked to see what examples of other rare or unusual forenames might be found in the county ...

How about Nebuchadnezzar?

There seems to be about 40 birth registrations across the country 1837-1980s, a couple of which are in Cambs. Wonder what they thought of having had such a name foisted upon them? Tilgathpilneser didn't live long enough to have an opinion, neither did one of "our" Nebuchadnezzars—the other, however, does seem to have gone by a more conventional name for at least part of his early adult life!!

First, we have **Nebuchadnezzar Miller**, whose birth was registered in Newmarket District in M1852. He was probably the son of ag lab John & Sophia (Peachey) Miller from Burwell, and seems to have died later the same year.

Second, then there is **Nebuchadnezzar Wilkin** birth registered in Chesterton District D1856 and lived to the ripe old age of 85, died J1942. Born to parents ag lab Jeremiah & Rebecca (Watts) Wilkin of Horningsea, he was 4th-born in a family of 8 sons and a daughter—curiously, while half the children had very ordinary names and the half had more unusual biblical names—Ebenezer, Edward, Thomas, Nebuchadnezzar, William, John, Septimus (the seventh son), Keturah, and Hezekiah. NW married Annie Banks in 1887 and they went on to have 7 sons themselves (but didn't name their youngest, Septimus). The family lived in Green Lane at Fen Ditton for the rest of their lives—Nebuchadnezzar is still there in Green Lane in 1939, and was buried in Fen Ditton Cemetery three years later. Perhaps not unexpectedly, NW seems to have avoided his somewhat peculiar name for a period of time—he married as "Samuel", and appears as that in 1891, but reverts to Nebuchadnezzar in the other key official documents for the remainder of his life (perhaps he went by "Samuel" in daily life?).

The next nearest to this area is a **Nebuchadnezzar Jeffery** from the Saffron Walden District, born S1863—but he died the following quarter year. He was likely the son of a Henry & Mary Jeffery who actually lived in Elmdon, Essex.

The most recent birth registration of a Nebuchadnezzar was in 1943 over in Leominster.

What really unusual names have you encountered ??

MEETINGS REPORTS

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

TULIPS, TOPIARY, TRADESCANT & THYME : C17TH GARDENS

WITH JANET FEW

(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : APRIL 23)

Janet, the President of the Family History Federation, and wearing the costume of Mistress Agnes, presented her talk at very short notice as the booked speaker was unable to be there. Her website, <https://thehistoryinterpreter.wordpress.com/> gives an overview of her extensive work.

Gardens were seen as a sign of wealth at the time of Henry VIII, and people paid huge sums for desirable plants, John Tradescant travelled overseas to collect seeds and plants. Some varieties of tulip were priced at 3000 florins, more than two years wages. Guidebooks began to be published, John Parkinson in 1629; books showed how the garden reflected the house outside in. Inigo Jones topiary achieved royal patronage, and Andre Le Notre designed the magnificent gardens at Versailles, Greenwich Park was laid out in the French style. The Dutch style came to prominence in the late 17th century, and Henry Wise started a nursery business so people could buy plants.

However, this was all way beyond the reality for our cottage garden ancestors. The first task for the cottage gardener was to fence it, in order to keep out animals; walls were expensive, hedges took time to grow, so the fence provided the best solution. Raised beds of varying length but about three feet deep allowed access from both sides. Plants were linked to astrology, each star sign had its own list of plants. Pest control included using boiling water, soot and urine. Many plants were grown to eat, others were seen as having medical or magical powers. Bay provided protection from witchcraft. Holly could be used for cleaning a chimney, feeding the branches down from the roof to remove the soot.

Sick people could not work, and paying for herbal remedies was expensive, so it made good sense to grow your own. However, this took knowledge – which part of the plant did you need for which treatment. Nicholas Culpeper's Complete Herbal published in the 1650's was widely used and there are several modern reprints. This would be fine if you could read. Some people were allergic to plants, producing skin rashes, a rash could be considered as an antidote to poison! Other herbal plants included rosemary to cure baldness; lemon balm tea for medicine; fennel for gripe water; mint as a predecessor to today's viagra. Plague was a constant worry, the plague in Cambridge in 1625 is a local example; as the cause of plague was not understood, cures did not work. Hannah Woolley's Complete Servant Maid,

first published 1677, had many recipes for personal hygiene, including tooth soap.

This was a fascinating talk full of interesting examples. Janet's book, *Coffers, Clysters, Comfreyes and Coifs* about the lives of our 17th century ancestors can be bought from her for £5.00 including postage. Details on her website.

Reported by David Copey

THE CAMBRIDGE TOWNSCAPE 1500-PRESENT

WITH TONY KIRBY

(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : MAY 2023)

Today's topic was the Cambridge City landscape and how it has changed from the medieval period onwards. The talk contained examples of the street plans of Cambridge over the years and photographs of extant buildings from the various eras as Cambridge grew, especially over the last 200 years.

Cambridge, more than any town, has been dominated by the presence of the University. In contrast with Oxford – a town with a university, Cambridge has been dubbed a university with a town, a town which arose simply to supply the various colleges. From the medieval period there is little architecture that is not related to the university colleges or churches. The older local industries that had existed during this period, based on the riverside trade, were swept aside as the university expanded. A few buildings still remain from the 16th/17th century - the large buildings along Bridge street, some of which were originally inns lining the main access road from the west. The ordinary domestic buildings of the time have not survived. The small villages like Barnwell, Cherry Hinton and Chesterton although within walking distance of Cambridge were not part of the town and thus free from university control. (Barnwell was peevishly labelled a 'den of iniquity').

The 18th century saw little in the way of new building in Cambridge. Unlike the Georgian houses to be found in Wisbech, properties built as the result of the river trade, there was little such commercial trade in Cambridge. As college fellows were not allowed to marry and lived in college, there was little need for large houses. In 1800 the Cambridge street plan was thus little changed from medieval times. The town surrounded by large tracts of common land cultivated by small-scale farmers. It was around this time that things started to change. There was a boom in student numbers. More students meant there was a need for more accommodation for these and the extra servants employed by the colleges. Alongside this was the enclosure of the common land surrounding the old town. The various colleges gained control of most blocks of the newly enclosed fields. There was building on some of the college owned blocks close to the centre of Cambridge such as the Maids Causeway area but fields (and grazing animals) were still to be found at the end of the street.

The 19th century industrialisation could not be ignored. The railway came to Cambridge and the various rail companies built their stations – the colleges insisting they were all well away from them. New streets grew up around the stations but the standard of some housing was poor and were slum quality almost from the start.

In the 1860s college fellows were allowed to be married. Now there was an increase in the demand for suitably large properties for their often large families and the many domestic servants a large household at that time required. Housing expanded in the Trumpington street area.

In the 1870s, there was a major agricultural depression in England caused by the huge American grain-belt being linked by rail to their ports. The subsequent cheap grain imports made arable farming in Cambridgeshire financially untenable as the imported grain undercut local prices. The colleges, faced with losing their former rental income from farms, now looked to profit by building housing for rent on their farmland instead. More houses were built reaching the surrounding villages which were swallowed up within the city boundaries. Also Chesterton, formerly awkward to get to, was made more accessible via the Victoria bridge and houses there became desirable for the local middle classes.

After WW1 there was a large increase in council housing to get rid of the worst slums. Suburban expansion continued apace as the increase in motor transport made outlying areas easier to access, initially by bus and later by private cars.

Reported by CJ.

EVERYONE HAS A STORY

JEANETTE MOSER

(MARCH BRANCH : APRIL 2023)

Jeanette encouraged all those present to write down notes of their own history for future generations, and to ask questions to other family members. She suggested these notes contain feelings as well as facts.

Jeanette started by telling us she was expelled from school at the age of 5 years. At the time she was traumatised by her parent's divorce, about which she had not had anything explained, but had been sent to a private convent school. Here she was punished constantly and didn't learn. She was not allowed in church as she was not a Catholic and told the Jews killed Jesus. In the dormitory she had to kneel in rubbish whilst others were in church. If she spoke, she was punished. In the cloak room Jeanette found boater hats hanging on the pegs, in her anger and frustration she punched several of them. For this she was expelled.

Jeanette went on to tell her fascinating story as the daughter of Jewish parents, born in South Africa at the time of apartheid, then going on to live in Berlin near the Polish border at the beginning of WW11. In 1932 things started to deteriorate, not only for Jews, but for all those of colour, with disabilities and any other facet that made them a little different. Hitler stopped married people being allowed out of Germany which had been the case. Jeanette moved in with her grandmother when her mother cycled for three days to meet her father. She hid from trucks in the forests and slept where she could. When she got to the village there was a road block. Nearby in a hostel a party was going on with Nazi youths. Her mother pretended to be drunk, got on a truck and got through the village. Both Jeanette's parents escaped, many were hunted down, shot at and killed.

In the 1930s, Jews being evacuated to Palestine were stopped by Joseph Goebbels: he preferred extermination. Jeanette's mother managed to get to Palestine where she had to live 20 people to a tent with the cockroaches. Her brother was born in the camp in awful conditions. Her mother wrote poems about being betrayed by Germany, Jeanette read one.

She told us about coming to live in the UK, working for Special Branch, owning a false passport and loving the Scottish scenery. Jeanette hates injustice and became head hunted by Special Branch to become a secret agent to infiltrate gangs of men. She trained in martial arts and knew self-defence. She showed us her false passport with a change of her name. She was never stopped using it at passport controls and worked in Rhodesia and Harari as well as Salisbury. She infiltrated a rough gang of men and women in Rhodesia, managed to get the date of an arms cache being passed out. Here she was caught and imprisoned, forgotten about for 24 hours and taken out the next day.

Whilst in her fifties in Thailand Jeanette experienced an elephant ride that she wished she had never done. The journey was over mountains and was an horrendous trip. She was sitting on a piece of wood, no handles, sweating and terrified. Looking into the elephant's eyes Jeanette could see how unhappy he was.

Scotland is the place Jeanette has found she can relax. Running brooks and mountains enable her to feel at one with the earth.

Jeanette again encouraged everyone to write down the stories of our lives. To look beyond barriers, not let others control our lives and share time with friends and family. To start writing a book, Jeanette advised starting by writing a 'I have done' list, 'burn bridges' and move forward. She ended with a quote from the Dali Lama 'Man sacrifices health for money, man sacrifices money for health'.

Reported by Linda Peckett

VILLAGE FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

WITH TOM DOIG

(MARCH BRANCH : MAY 2023)

Village Friendly Societies formed a mutual support network for the ordinary working family long before the introduction of the Welfare State. In the 1300s – 1400s most towns had Merchant and Artisan Trade Guilds who guaranteed product quality, looked after the interests of members and had a degree of political influence. Church Guilds catered for those earning a weekly wage, often the ubiquitous ‘Ag Lab’ farm worker. In return for a small weekly payment they received sick benefit, a funeral grant and ongoing support for their family.

Any church lucky enough to be able to claim a popular Saint as their patron would have the advantage of a regular income from grateful parishioners whose faith had been rewarded. Tom took as his example the church dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch in his own village of Barley, Hertfordshire. (From 1328 – 1495 the benefice was in the gift of the Abbess and Convent of Chatteris. The first Mayor of New York, USA, came from Barley. So many wealthy women paid large sums to this particular Guild that the church was able to undertake a number of expensive building enhancements which are documented in the written records. The Guild also built itself a small separate chapel for its own exclusive use.

For those unaware of the story of St Margaret, Tom explained that she was principally the guardian of women in childbirth. She was an early Christian woman who had been martyred by the Romans for refusing to renounce her faith. She was given to the soldiers to be humiliated, but they treated her with commendable decorum. But then they cast her onto a fire which went out. They then bound her hand and foot and threw her into a cauldron of boiling water, but her prayers were answered and her bonds were broken, she stood up uninjured. Next, Satan appeared in the guise of a dragon which swallowed her whole, but she split his stomach and escaped. Finally the poor lady had her head cut off. She prayed at her death that women in childbirth would, upon calling her, be safely delivered of their child, as she had been delivered from the belly of a dragon. St Margaret is known as the patron saint of women, nurses and peasants. She became the most popular Saint in the Middle Ages with 200 English churches dedicated to her.

By the 1650’s the Guild not only gave a cash sum towards a member’s funeral, but assembled in the procession to make it a significant public event. This was a men-only affair with the women-folk expected to remain in the background ready to provide refreshments. Those that could afford it, wore full official robes, with the less wealthy hoping to produce a sash/badge/

medal to advertise their membership. The coffin would be covered with a pall showing the Guild badge and uniformed 'Mutes' were paid to walk wailing behind the cortege.

The members met monthly in a local public house to transact business and have a convivial time. An annual feast was held, and the funerals of deceased members were usually followed by a supper. Ceremony and ritual were essential parts of the societies' life. They held open-air processions with bands, banners and uniforms. Indoors they conducted initiation rites. Originally Friendly Societies were local institutions with seldom more than 100 members but by the 1840's they began to amalgamate into affiliated orders – Oddfellows, Antedeluvian Buffaloes, Shepherds and many others. By 1892 probably 80 per cent of the 7 million male industrial workers were members of friendly societies. This illustrates the demographic shift away from the village where people were known members of their immediate society to the relative anonymity of the industrial town.

Around the 1840's we see the rise of the official Funeral Director. It was vastly important that a funeral should be most solemn and fitting, with everything done properly. A price list of the time offers, 'Plainest one horse hearse' for 6/- and going up to 'Best hearse with feathers, four horses and postillions' 63/-. A paupers funeral would be the ultimate disgrace.

There was a whole industry devoted to mourning attire with black ostrich feathers to adorn hats, horses and hearses being given great prominence. A businessman named Solomon became a millionaire by leading the market in this commodity. Only black feathers were acceptable but unfortunately each bird only produced a limited number. Mr Solomon's secret was his ability to transform the unwanted grey ones into the desired black. In a stroke of genius he had them coated in rabbit glue and dipped in soot and thereby made himself a fortune.

Around 1804 vicar's wives were encouraged to set up women's guilds for their parishioners. A weekly subscription of sixpence, from a wage of around 5/- was required, entitling the lady to payment of an agreed sum in the event of sickness, death and most frequently childbirth. The women's guilds were – unsurprisingly – more genteel than those of the men, the beverage of choice being tea rather than beer and meeting taking place in the church porch – later the Village Hall – instead of the ale house. There were published lists of the societies Rules and Regulations and proceedings were recorded in an official minute book. We are not surprised that the vicar's wife should be literate, but there are several existing payment books kept by working women such as laundresses who could keep accounts of their customer's individual financial account. Their Guilds were an embryonic Women's Institute for those ladies between 18 and 45 years old. Cash

benefits were paid although they did lose money on prolific mothers who, with multiple pregnancies, took out more than they ever put in. It became more cost effective to have a big box of baby clothes which could be recycled in lieu of cash. Local museums have some of these. The boxes are marked – The Ladies Lending Society, Harpenden Lying-in Society – with the contents being listed. For family historians the written records that survive give us an invaluable window on the past. For example, Sarah Robinson, on producing her third illegitimate child, was drummed out of the ranks.

As time went on, membership was offered to all females, with little girls and old ladies paying just thruppence weekly. There were some very shrewd business brains among the ladies who had the foresight in 1820 to buy Government Bonds and so put their societies on a very firm financial footing. By 1850 most villages had a flourishing Women's Guild.

By contrast, many men's guild's were struggling, not being financially sound after presumably spending too freely on the entertainment aspect of the group. There was a movement at this point which encouraged villages to buy a bed in the nearest city hospital. If no villager needed a bed themselves it could be hired out – for a fee - to an adjoining parish.

Guilds were now expected to publish yearly accounts, these, often held in the local Records Office, give us most useful lists of the person's name, address, date of death and amount paid. Sometimes a full report of the funeral and eulogy for the departed are included, absolute gold for the Family Historian! Little Downham had Southern Star Shepherds and Wicken - The Sons of Humanity. Pub names such as the Ancient Shepherds at Fen Ditton commemorate the guilds once housed there. Gradually, the most popular groups amalgamated and the traveller would be welcome in another branch as long as he could quote the appropriate password. We are left with an assortment of memorabilia such as illuminated membership scrolls, regalia and crested china. As time wore on, whispers of corruption led to government oversight, the guilds became more of a social club that a financial necessity, and in 1948 the National Health and the Welfare State signaled their demise.

Reported by Wendy Hill

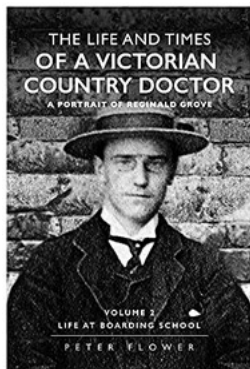
Cambridge Evening News 15 Jul 1923

“To be quite topical or rather tropical, I suppose I ought to say something about the heat. I think a precedent must have been broken this week in the Combination Rooms at St John's College. The Harvard and Yale Athletics team were entertained to dinner and after the toasts the chairman, Dr Salisbury Woods, said 'Gentlemen, precedent was broken down last night in the House of Commons when Members of Parliament removed their coats and waistcoats. I think the example was an excellent one, and I propose that we also should remove our coats and waistcoats.' Carried unanimously.”

UNDERGRADUATE LIFE AT CAMBRIDGE IN THE 1880s

WITH PETER J FLOWER

(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : MARCH 2023)



Peter is a member of the British Association for Local History, a member of the Richmond Local History Society and the Huntingdonshire Local History Society. He is the author of *The Life and Times of a Victorian Country Doctor* – a portrait of Reginald Grove (his grandfather) and has written many articles for a number of Local History Societies.

Today, Peter's talk focused on Reginald Grove's days as an undergraduate at Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge in the 1880s before training as a doctor and taking over his father's practice in St Ives. Peter was able to give a very detailed account of his grandfather's activities and friends because Reginald had written a number of diaries that were still in the family.

Reginald went to Sidney Sussex in 1887 as one of just 16 new freshers, Sidney being one of the smallest colleges, out of 847 new undergraduates that year at the university as a whole, including 184 who went to Trinity College, the largest.

Peter showed several historical pictures of Sidney, both external and internal views. The undergraduates' rooms appeared to be much grander than the present day and the facilities and help available made it a very privileged existence. Formal dinners were served at 6pm every day, served by waiters, although they did have to find their own lunch.

An interesting pamphlet was available to the freshers called "The Fresher's Don'ts" which set out a number of pieces of advice, some serious, others less so, for example - don't wear a tall hat; don't attempt to keep every brand of wine; don't speak with a provincial accent!

There were stories about issues between the students and the locals, largely brought on by drinking in any of the 140 taverns in Cambridge at the time. There were attempts to police the students in the town by a group known as the Bulldogs.

There were many societies, social and sports clubs on offer and Reginald joined several, including brass rubbing, cycling, and rowing. Reginald also frequented the University Union where he met up with his many friends, including several he knew from school. He was also a religious man from his school days and retained his beliefs, not being influenced by alternative views.

Reginald was captain of the rowing club from 1893 to 1894, as was his father during his time at Sidney Sussex. Peter described one horrifying event when a rowing friend was killed when the rival boat hit his boat and the prow speared him. As a result of this accident all boats are now fitted with a rubber ball over the sharp end.

Peter referred to Reginald's impeccable record keeping, especially his cycling trips. He rode both for leisure in the countryside, often with friends, and in races. He covered over one thousand miles in six months in 1888. His other main interest of brass rubbing was developed at Uppingham school but increased at Sidney where he became editor of the club magazine and produced some stunning rubbings – always travelling to the church by bicycle of course.

Reginald received his degree in the Senate House. At the same time a Miss Fawcett was applauded for achieving a much higher score than any male graduate but was not awarded a degree or even the title of Senior Wrangler being a woman. It was not until 1948 that women would be awarded with a degree. Reginald had gone along with the convention but later changed his mind about education for women and encouraged his daughters to follow professional training.

Reginald did not meet many women in Cambridge but did form a relationship that lasted until his first year at Guy's Hospital. His proposal for marriage, however, was rejected by her parents. Of course, he later married and was blessed with a large family.

This was a very well researched presentation and included many photographs, both old and new, that really helped to take the audience back to life in a Cambridge college in the 1880s. In some ways this was a very personal story about Peter's grandfather and his life as an undergraduate in Cambridge based on his own diaries from his time there, and in other ways it gave a very comprehensive view of the life of an undergraduate in Cambridge.

Peter concluded his talk by promoting the three books he has written about his grandfather, and took questions from the audience.

Reported by John Bownass

Cambridge Evening News Jun 29 1923

An animated discussion took place at the Cambridge council meeting over a proposal as to repair roads in Newnham – Hardwick Street, Derby Street and Merton Road. They all admitted that the state of various roads in Newnham Croft had been a disgrace to the borough. The owners of the three roads had been under the impression that in 1892 the roads were taken over by the then authority but the committee could not find a single entry in the books of a single pound having been spent on the roads.

NON-CONFORMITY FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS

WITH ALAN RUSTON

(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : MAY 2023)

Alan has been closely connected with Unitarianism for many years, in academia, in the Unitarian Historical Society, and as a writer and contributor to books and journals on the development of religious dissent in the UK over the last 300 years. He has been involved in lecturing and writing on family history for over 30 years and has been a regular speaker at the Society of Genealogists. He is president of the Herts FHS, and a former editor of their journal, as well as being an office holder in several Societies involved in both Hertfordshire history and English nonconformity.

Alan gave us a very simple definition of nonconformity - "not conforming to the Church of England". He then gave a brief history of nonconformity, starting in 1662, following the return of the CofE religion and Charles II. Rules were introduced that prevented former vicars speaking in churches and so signalled the start of organised dissent.

All the nonconformity groups that emerged were illegal at the time:

- C17th – Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers. Records of baptisms, eg, were kept but not recognised by the Church of England.
- In the C18th the Methodists appeared but in five distinct types that did not come together until 1932.
- By the C19th many new groups emerged: Salvation Army with superb records of their officers and followers; Mormons or Church of the Latter Day Saints, who caused a revolution in family history research with their digitising of records; Pentecostals, now the biggest nonconformity group.

Alan then turned to the nature of the nonconformity records. There was no set structure and each denomination had its own methods but as they were illegal organisations, none kept official records for fear of discovery. Nothing like the familiar Bishops Transcripts exist. In 1837 registers were submitted to the GRO and as the nonconformists became one of the most powerful groups in Parliament they were able to insist that civil registration must be brought in.

In many cases the congregations themselves held onto their records; the Quakers were the only group to have centralised records which are now available online. Otherwise most registers today are held in the local County Record Offices.

Alan explained that there were some advantages to be found in nonconformity records. All nonconformity groups kept a membership book which often has added information such as if the member died or moved to another district. They also kept discipline books which record bad behaviour

by members and the penalties imposed. He also noted that there are far more women in nonconformity records compared to the CofE, and more in positions of authority in the churches.

Interestingly, in 1800 it is estimated that 1 in 10 members of a nonconformity group also went to the CofE so may appear in totally different records.

Alan then turned his attention to advice on researching our family histories, as he pointed out about 10% of the population of England was a dissenter for much of the C19th and so most families have some ancestors connected to the nonconformity movement. However you need to know the name of the chapel and denomination to start the search, often at the local record office. He recommended a couple of books by Margaret Oliphant and Mark Rutherford for an in- depth history of the nonconformist movement, apart for his own, but the best book for help in tracing your family was “Tracing your nonconformist ancestors” by Stuart Raymond.

Alan completed his tour through the nonconformity field by showing some pictures of various churches with their distinctive styling appropriate to their religious beliefs – all quite different to the Church of England.

Alan proved to be a very knowledgeable speaker on nonconformity, but more importantly on such a vast subject was very engaging and informative.

The interest of his audience was obvious with more than 20 minutes of questions and discussion. Our Secretary also reminded those on the call that the CHFHS has many minute books available to view on the members-only section of the website, as well as Methodists records available on the ancestry finder.

Reported by John Bownass.

CAMBS ARCHIVES / ANCESTRY ...

Shortly after the last issue of The Journal was released, back in late April, an update statement appeared on the Cambridgeshire Archives facebook page to report progress on the Ancestry records digitisation project—

Scanning of registers was reported as being complete, and matching scans to **our** transcripts to produce a searchable index is, by now, well under way.

It's currently estimated that the project will go “live” in later 2024

How many records are involve :

Register scanned :	3,506	(Cambs	2,395	Hunts	1,111)
Images (pages) scanned :	360,715	(Cambs	245,731	Hunts	114,984)

Further updates will no doubt appear on the Archives facebook pages

HISTORY OF FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHY & DATING OLD PHOTOS

WITH STEPHEN GILL

(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : APRIL 2023)

Stephen has been a professional photographer for over fifty years and for the last twenty-five years has specialised in photo-restoration and research. He has published three books on dating old photographs and has been awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Photographic Society.

Stephen's presentation followed the history of photography, interspersed with how it could relate to your own family history research by looking at the details in the photo to give clues to time, place and context.

He started with an anecdote of a picture his brother had taken on a Kodak Instamatic. It seemed quite a boring scene of a tree and fence which drew the eye away from his brother's intention when taking the picture – there was a squirrel in the foreground that we all had missed. The message was that you need to investigate what is important and why the picture was taken.

The first pictures were Daguerreotype (1840-1861) - chemicals painted on copper. A single photo at the time would have cost the equivalent of two months' wages and so were usually the preserve of the wealthy. It also meant that the subjects had to remain still for 30 seconds which was no easy matter when infants were involved.

Stephen demonstrated how to confirm if it was a Daguerreotype by flipping the picture and seeing that the image changes from positive to negative. In 1861 the USA Government needed copper for use in the Civil War which reduced its availability for photography. The Ambrotype (1842-1875) using a glass substrate took over.

The glass on the Ambrotype is always painted black and usually with a brass surround, often with embellishments. Stephen explained how he had restored one picture from this era for a client which was simple as it just required the worn black backing to be replaced. However it was the story he was able to discover from the details in the image that led to a completely new view of the client's ancestors.

The next stage in photography was the Ferrotype (1855-1930) which was printed on iron and usually had one top corner cut off so that the photographer knew which way round the photograph was in the dark-room. Photographs were now becoming cheaper and the working class often had portraits taken to show how well they were doing. We were also reminded us that all photos up to this time were printed reversed.

Stephen next showed a picture of a group of ladies dated 1910 which he had

restored. The group included his grandmother, but no other information of the circumstances had been written down. He used this as an example of how looking at the details can give you more of the story behind the picture; in this case it was a suffragette meeting with Christabel Pankhurst in the centre, not just a ladies' day out.

Paper eventually took over as the substrate for holding the image. The Carte-de-Visite (1855-1915) became the favoured way of producing pictures. Early ones had square corners with the photographer's name on the back, from 1870 cards were now mass-produced and had round corners.

Several examples from this era were shown. Stephen showed one dated 1895 that had odd shading on it which was explained as the evidence that this was a copy of an original which had been in an album. The date of the original picture was therefore some years earlier than claimed, this was confirmed by the clothes worn as these dated from 1865-1870.

Later came the Cabinet card, which was about four times as large as the Carte-de-Visite, for displaying in your home.

Stephen closed with a detailed examination of a Ferrotypes picture of a group of men in the USA. He explained that they all wore a ring on their little finger, they were wearing bowler hats, and one had a watch winder shaped liked a revolver, and concluded that they were possibly gangsters. Some of these details were hard to see at normal magnification but certainly reinforced Stephen's message – it's all in the detail!

He also reminded us that when looking at old photos they don't show things as they really were. When looking at B&W pictures the viewer looks at the faces, if it is in colour you tend to look elsewhere. It is all a matter of perception. Take time to study every single detail.

Not only had Stephen given us a history lesson he had also awakened our senses to the importance of photographs and the stories they tell in relation to our family history hobby.

This presentation was very well received by the audience as shown by the 25 minutes of questions and discussion which followed.

Reported by John Bownass.

17 July 1898 [Letter to the Cambridge Evening News]

Sir – What more could be desired, I thought, as I walked down the streets and saw the beautiful clear cool streams running by the causeway. I spend a lot of my time in Trumpington Street. Lately however, this beautiful street has been a little "Sahara." Clouds of white dust are driving through the street all day, sufficient to choke or blind an ordinary person. On going through the side streets things are different, and the water cart man is ever to be seen going on his weary round. These streets are over-watered and sloppy – "Dusty"

FARM CHECKS OF THE FENS
WITH GARRY ODDIE
(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : JUNE 2023)

Gary is an avid collector of many objects including farm checks or tokens which were the subject of his talk today. He explained that tokens were substitute coins used for local purposes, in this case used by the farmers in the Fens to pay the workers which they would later exchange for cash when their work period was completed.

Gary had given this talk many times since 2005 but always encouraged the audience to share their local knowledge on the subject so that his information and the presentation was always evolving.

He started with a brief description of the Fens and the history of the land and its drainage which led to the fertile soils that are ideal for growing crops, particularly fruit and vegetables. Once the ditches were dug, windmills were installed to lift the water into them, and Gary showed the first token from the 17th century which featured a mill wheel in its design.

In simple terms a worker picked the crop, put it into a basket and when full had it weighed, received a token according to the weight, and usually at the end of the week exchanged the tokens for cash with the farmer and moved on to the next farm. The baskets were originally made of willow which started up a cottage industry supporting the pickers but these were later replaced by chip baskets which were much lighter and cheaper than the willow ones, and mass produced.

Gary then turned to the tokens themselves with examples from his extensive collection. There were many designs, often including the name of the farmer, or a picture of the fruit and the value. During war-time metal was too expensive so tokens made of card came into use, often at villages and small farms and these were made by local printers. Metal tokens were made of aluminium, brass, zinc, and tin plate by large companies, locally in Wisbech, but often in cities such as Leeds and London.

Gary showed his catalogue of all the tokens in his collection, which numbered over 2,500 examples from over 600 issuers (farmers); the descriptions include value, size, material, crop, farm, and other attributes. Hoards of tokens, still in their compartmentalised boxes, are still being discovered and Gary has a few. The box normally has a conversion chart fixed to the lid that shows the number of tokens against the picked weight and the conversion back to real value.

Gary pointed out the use he had made of Kelly's Directories to help trace the growth and movement of local token companies.

In conjunction with the growth of crop picking in the Fens a branch train line was built between Upwell and Wisbech (1883 – 1966) to enable farmers to get their produce to major markets more quickly, particularly to Kings Cross and its market. All waste, for example rotten fruit and horse dung, came back

via the same trains to the local area and was used on the farms. Baskets were also returned.

Gary then moved onto the local company of Chivers, who originally shipped out fruit to the jam factories but decided to boil the fruit in-house in 1873 and within a couple of years was employing 150 people in jam making in Histon. Gary showed an engineer's token from the factory.

Gary completed his presentation by acknowledging the help he had received from several collectors of tokens. He then showed a Pathe News video featuring a large group of fruit pickers, often families with children, travelling by train from London to the Fens where they were housed in Ferrybridge camp for the week. Each day they were taken to the picking area, in this case for gooseberries, and were paid with tokens at the end of the shift. The video gave the impression that everyone enjoyed the work and the money earned, and the chance for a 'holiday' out of the city.

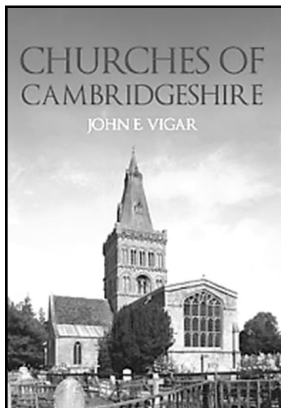
This was a shorter talk than most but the lengthy session of questions and observations that followed showed the impact Gary's presentation had on the audience. One recently retired farmer showed his box which was full of tickets which Gary had already catalogued from his collection; he even had some listed that the farmer didn't have. They agreed on why tokens or tickets had been phased out, partially because of decimalisation but mainly because workers tended to stay for a shorter time at each farm and wanted cash before moving on.

There were several questions about tokens in other parts of the country and other industries, such as in pubs or mills. They all served the same purpose but were in a different category to the farm checks of the Fens.

Gary's delivery and enthusiasm for the subject shone through and that encouraged people to share their experiences with knowledge gained, not just by the audience, but also by Gary.

Never have I heard such a fascinating talk about such a simple subject.

Reported by John Bownass.



Churches of Cambridgeshire

John E. Vigar

Cambridgeshire is a large and diverse county, and this is reflected in its churches. In the south, chalk provided flints for even the grandest of churches. The Fens in the north and east had no building materials of their own so limestone was transported from further north and may best be seen in those churches that were owned or established by monastic houses. In the former county of Huntingdonshire limestone dominates and bricks made from the local clays make an early appearance. In this book author John E. Vigar presents a selection of the most interesting churches from across the county, including the former counties of the Isle of Ely, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough, covering every period and type of church, from simple Saxo-Norman churches such as Hauxton, to late medieval churches where money was plentiful such as Whittlesey. Former monastic houses are represented by March and Ramsey, a rare seventeenth century church at Guyhirn and one of the most important nineteenth century churches in England at Cambridge All Saints as well as many other ecclesiastical gems in the county.

This fascinating picture of an important part of the history of Cambridgeshire over the centuries will be of interest to all those who live in or are visiting this attractive county in England.



LAST WORD

missed opportunities ?

How often might we let potentially useful information slip through our fingers—

—by only looking at records “at face value” or being too quick to some discount “candidates” ?

We’ve probably alluded to this topic on more than one previous occasion—but it’s perhaps something worth saying again and again, about how considering the bigger picture can pay dividends. You may recall that looking at a fledgling one name study has cropped up in this column from time to time—work has now moved on to begin to compile family groups from the lists of BMDs and census hits. Some interesting “observations” can already be made about linking unlikely “candidates” into their wider family lineages.

Mapping the early BMDs depicts registration events as concentrating in three distinct areas: NTT/DBY/LEI border, SFK and MDX. In more recent decades, however, bearers of the name are found sprinkled widely across the country, as are a number of perceived variant spellings. The initial of the project is to try and construct families around male marriages, and to attempt to link the husbands back to their own parental/sibling families—thus producing lots of individual 3-generation “grouplets”. Already, a number of “I’ve been here before” moments have arisen showing relationships between individuals found at opposite ends of the country and/or with quite different spellings—under different circumstances, many individuals might otherwise have been discounted on spelling alone. A giant jigsaw puzzle of post-it notes helps to demonstrate that virtually all the country-wide family grouplets, after c1911, can be linked into the grouplets existing between 1830s and 1911. They mostly converge back towards one or other of the three “home” areas (but not necessarily the nearest). With sufficient time and effort, no doubt most will further converge into smaller zones within these “home” areas.

Were this not a country-wide study aiming to account for all the bearers of a single name, isolated individuals might otherwise not get connected owing to distance and/or spelling (women and odd-ones-out will be looked at later) ...

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 matter of doing a jigsaw to fit the material into the set number of available pages.

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

The Editorial Team

MEMBERSHIP

The Society offers a regular programme of meetings designed to appeal to the specialist and beginner alike; the quarterly members' journal is 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, members' interests contributions, to the Membership Secretary, please. See p52 for contacts.

SEARCHABLE RECORDS & SHOP

"Cambs & Hunts Database" Once fully operational in the near future, 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 (which will be available to members only accessible via the website members area) giving access to the CHFHS online database of over 5m transcribed records from across Cambs & The Isle of Ely and Hunts. Researchers will be able tailor searches to meet their particular needs.

CHFHS SHOP Search the publications listings on the website to see what's available for particular locations (CDs and/or downloads), & far more than just parish registers. Also shop via: 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 (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

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)

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