

# Roots in the Forest



**King Harold's grave at Waltham Abbey**

**WALTHAM FOREST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**  
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# WALTHAM FOREST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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# Roots in the Forest

The Journal of the Waltham Forest Family History Society

March 2023

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## **A to Z of FAMILY HISTORY – H is for ...**

### **HEARTH TAX 1662–1689 (records to 1674)**

The Hearth Tax was introduced in 1662 to help fill the depleted coffers of King Charles II after the restoration of the monarchy and ran in England and Wales until 1689.

For records at TNA, see their research guide – Taxation before 1689 – which can be downloaded from their website:  
[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Almost two years after the Hearth Tax Online website was taken down after a cyber-attack, the 17<sup>th</sup> century tax records have returned online with a new website called Hearth Tax Digital. Launched at an event in London, the new website enables researchers to explore records held for Durham, York, parts of Yorkshire and Westmorland as well as the City of London and Middlesex, with other areas, including Bristol, Essex, Kent and Surrey, in the pipeline.

Scotland's Hearth Tax was collected between 1691 and 1695 and surviving records can be viewed at:  
[www.scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/historical-tax-rolls/hearth-tax-records-1691-1695](http://www.scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/historical-tax-rolls/hearth-tax-records-1691-1695)

Also see Jeremy Gibson's book *Hearth Tax Returns*

### **HERALDRY** [www.theheraldrysociety.com](http://www.theheraldrysociety.com)

Definition of heraldry:

1. The practice of devising, blazoning, and granting armorial insignia and of tracing and recording genealogies.
2. An armorial ensign broadly: insignia.

Heraldry originated when most people were illiterate but could easily recognise a bold, striking and simple design. The use of heraldry in medieval warfare enabled combatants to distinguish one mail-clad knight from another and thus to distinguish between friend and foe.

In 1947, a twenty-year-old John Brooke-Little founded the Society of Heraldic Antiquaries. This name was changed to The Heraldry

Society in 1950. It was incorporated in 1956 and is now a registered educational charity.

The principal object of the Society is to extend interest in and knowledge of heraldry, genealogy, precedence and related disciplines. The Society also offers qualifications for heraldists: in conjunction with the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies three examination levels are offered – Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced – which when taken successfully in sequence lead to an award of the Society’s Diploma and the post-nominal DipHS.

Although based in London, the Society has an international membership.

Rules of heraldry:

- Each coat of arms should be unique.
- The arms should be distinguishable at a distance, so the majority of components should be large, simple and composed of a very few tinctures (colours).
- The main charge (design on the shield) should cover its field (the whole of the space available on the shield).

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## **VISIT TO NEWHAM ARCHIVES**

**Mark Carroll**

Most of us who live in the Waltham Forest area will have visited the archives at Vestry House Museum at some point and will be aware of the cramped and poorly accessible facilities for family historians there. Currently (late 2022) the Council has plans to develop the site, but without any specific proposals for the archival holdings. Other neighbouring London boroughs have far superior facilities for heritage research. Furthermore, the changes in administrative boundaries over the years have resulted in Waltham Forest having acquired records that properly belonged elsewhere. For example, Vestry House had the women’s admission registers for Central Home Leytonstone – part of the West Ham Poor Law Union – before they were returned to their ‘home’ at Newham Archives. In addition, some records – such as those of West Ham Union and a few relating to Whipps Cross Hospital – are kept in Newham but they also relate to

places and people of Waltham Forest. So the Committee approached Newham Archives – based upstairs at Stratford Library (3 The Grove, London E15 1EL; [www.newham.gov.uk/libraries-arts-culture/local-history-archives](http://www.newham.gov.uk/libraries-arts-culture/local-history-archives)) – to arrange a visit by WFFHS members in November 2022.

The new and enthusiastic archivist there, Jess CONWAY, and her assistant Natalie (ex-Vestry House) welcomed seven of us in the spacious reading room. Jess gave us some background information about the archives and her nascent plans to relocate to a new heritage centre in Canning Town. She then provided a guided tour of the records available in the reading room. Natalie had also laid out some materials of relevance to Waltham Forest: reports of the Board of Guardians of West Ham Union, plus a few maps that covered parts of our ‘patch’. Jess emphasised that although some of the archives’ holdings are indexed, there is no comprehensive online catalogue. There is also no special access to the online parish registers at Essex Record Office. Later, we were taken down to the basement to view the modern storage facilities for some of the older and more specialised materials, which can be removed for inspection in the reading room. Gill found some information on Jack CORNWELL VC, and Tim found records relating to West Ham Tramways.



*Gill and Amanda browsing the shelves at Newham Archives*

The materials available in the reading room include:

- books and directories on open shelves: trade and street directories start in 1811, covering various places, eg Post Office London, PO Essex, PO Home Counties, of various dates;
- electoral registers, likewise: from 1945 for East Ham and West Ham, and from 1965 for Newham; earlier ones are stored in the basement, but those for 1891–1911 East Ham and West Ham are also available on microfilm;
- local newspapers on microfilm (with three film readers): *Stratford Express*; *Stratford Times* 1857-1910; *Newham Recorder* (then *Express*) from 1965 to date; other local publications cover Barking, East Ham, Docklands, West Ham;
- a limited selection of parish registers, likewise;
- maps: including the Clayton 1821 survey, plus index; disease maps; local development maps; and WW1 bomb damage reports;
- photographs: there are 30,000 images in the photographic library, indexed by theme in folders or stored as negatives; also street survey pictures from the 1970s and 80s;
- school registers: a fairly complete run of registers for most schools; and
- local businesses: there is some material relating to Tate & Lyle and to Clarnico, but employment records are probably with the firms themselves.

After the guided tour we were free to browse the sources we had just been introduced to, with Jess and Natalie on hand to help us with access. I was unable to locate a 1940 marriage entry in Canning Town, but at least now I know where *not* to look. Barrie set Jess a challenge to find out more about the death of a worker in his family who supposedly drowned in a vat of syrup in the Tate & Lyle sugar factory in Docklands. For any WFFHS member interested in accessing the holdings of Newham Archives, visits there are by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays – contact them by email at [archiveslocalstudies@newham.gov.uk](mailto:archiveslocalstudies@newham.gov.uk) or by calling 020 3373 6881.

## **GOSPORT ROAD WALTHAMSTOW     Linda Shapiro**

I live in the Midlands, but when my daughter moved to Gosport Road recently, I rapidly became interested in Walthamstow. It's a lovely, lively, buzzing place. It didn't take me long to start some research. This has been mainly internet based, because of the distance, although I have managed a couple of strolls through Queen's Road cemetery.

So far, the most compelling impression the road has made upon me is the degree of social change over time.

Today, many of these originally small terrace houses have been extended and sell for amounts that are eye watering for a Midlander not used to London prices. I cannot see how a new family could move in without the benefit of the equivalent of two professional wages.

But it has not always been so.

In a previous project, I came across a couple of handwritten recipe books by a young Victorian girl called Minnie. Because she accredited many of her recipes, I was able to discover quite a lot about her. She was an architect's daughter from a wealthy street of detached houses in a town in Yorkshire. One of the sources I used was the local newspapers. Her family and associates were likely to appear in these as candidates for local elections, owners of woollen mills, or advertising for servants.

I followed my newspaper procedure for Gosport Road, and the difference was stunning. The residents of Gosport Road in days gone by were associated with articles on workhouses, assault, theft, early death and paternity claims.

In Robert Barltrop's book *My Mother's calling me* I found two interesting references to Gosport Road. One refers to Barltrop's aunt being dismayed when she realises that her nephew, having recently moved house, would have to walk down Gosport Road to get to school. The second was a comment that Gosport Road was the only place in Walthamstow where Barltrop saw bare-footed children in the street in the thirties.



My other observation has been that the part of the street with the greatest poverty seems to have been the section nearer to Selborne Road. I'm basing this on census information regarding the number of people living in the houses. These poorer houses were the first to be built and have all been demolished now. Numbers 27 to 47 were shops, and I've seen a photograph of these, but I've been unable as yet to see photographs or read detailed descriptions of the houses. These were (at least) double occupancy with upstairs and downstairs flats. There were people living both behind and above the shops.

I'd love to know what the houses looked like. Did they have two front doors like the houses in Ringwood Road round the corner from the other end of Gosport Road?

I'm looking forward to many more delights of discovery.

### **Reference**

Barltrop, R (1984), *My Mother's calling me: Growing up in East London between the wars*, pp29, 47. London Borough of Waltham Forest Libraries and Arts Department.

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## **AN INFAMOUS COUSIN**

**Barrie Burton**

During the last week I was sitting at home watching a Western movie (she who must be obeyed must have been out). It was about William QUANTRILL. Who?

Well, probably due to Saturday morning pictures when I was a kid, I was an ABCer, but had the Trocadero across the road just in case, at the Elephant & Castle. There we had Hopalong CASSIDY, Gene AUTRY, Roy ROGERS and many others.

But I digress – what about William QUANTRILL? Well, he was a Confederate guerrilla, leader of the QUANTRILL Raiders, in and around the state of Kansas in the USA, during the latter part of the American Civil War. Supposedly they were rounding up escaped slaves. Part of this group – you might well have heard of them – were the James brothers, Frank and Jesse. But he was also guilty of the

Lawrence Massacre, where they killed about 150 unarmed men and boys. Lawrence was a town in Kansas (Wikipedia).

After the film had ended, I thought – I have QUANTRILLS in my tree in Suffolk, it is an unusual name, is there a connection?

So just on the off-chance of a connection, I Googled William, and this is what I found. (His full name was William Clarke QUANTRILL.)

Born: 31 July 1837, Dover, Ohio, USA

Parents: Thomas Henry & Caroline Cornelia QUANTRILL

Died: 6 Jun 1865, Louisville, Kentucky, USA

**Parents:** *Thomas Henry QUANTRILL* and Caroline Cornelia CLARKE

Born: 19 Feb 1813, Hagerstown, Washington, Maryland, USA

Married: 11 Oct 1836, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, USA

Died: 7 Dec 1854, Dover, Tuscarawas, Ohio, USA

Parents: Thomas and Judith Ann QUANTRILL

**Grandfather:** *Thomas QUANTRILL* and Judith Ann HEYSER

Born: 1785, Hagerstown, Washington, Maryland, USA

Married: Date and place unknown

Died: 1862, Washington, Columbia, USA

**Grt-grandfather:** *Prettyman QUANTRILL* and Susanna CREAME

Baptised: 13 Mar 1738/9, Badwell Ash, Suffolk, England

Parents: Thomas & Dorothy QUANTRILL

Died: 1804, Maryland, USA

**2x grt-grandfather:** *Thomas QUANTRILL* and Dorothy

Born: c1703, Badwell Ash, Suffolk, England

Parents: William QUANTRILL and Mary CLARKE

Died: 1771

**3x grt-grandfather:** *William QUANTRILL* and Mary CLARKE

Born: 1670, Badwell Ash, Suffolk, England

Parents: Not known

Now was the time to look at my tree, and the following is what I have. I will only put in the details of the male side as I'm still researching the females and I have stuck to the spelling in the registers, which as you know changes occasionally.

**7x grt-grandparents:** *William QUANTERELL* and Mary STILEY

Baptised: c1667, Badwell Ash, Suffolk

Married: c1691, Badwell Ash, Suffolk

Buried: 26 Feb 1731, Diss, Norfolk

**6x grt-grandparents:** *Thomas QUANTERELL* and Dorothy RICE  
or MATTHEWS

Baptised: 7 Nov 1703, Badwell Ash, Suffolk

Married: 29 May 1730, Langham, Suffolk

Died: 10 Mar 1779, Badwell Ash, Suffolk

**5x grt-grandparents:** *William QUANTERILL* and Elizabeth  
WARREN

Baptised: 17 Jul 1737, Badwell Ash, Suffolk

Married: 3 Aug 1759, Badwell Ash, Suffolk

Died: 1804, Foulden, Norfolk

**4x grt-grandparents:** Isaac PAMMENT and *Catherine QUANTRILL*

Baptised: 12 Sep 1774, Badwell Ash, Suffolk

Married: 28 Feb 1793, Walsham-le-Willows, Suffolk

Died: 3 Oct 1865, Walsham-le-Willows, Suffolk

**3x grt-grandparents:** Philip BEDFORD and *Catherine PAMMENT*

Baptised: 11 Jul 1793, Walsham-le-Willows, Suffolk

Married: 18 Dec 1811, Walsham-le-Willows, Suffolk

Died: 2<sup>nd</sup> qtr 1862, Ely, Cambridgeshire

**2x grt-grandparents:** Richman BUTTERISS and *Matilda BEDFORD*

Born: c1824, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire

Married: 12 Oct 1848, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire

Died: 26 Nov 1891, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

**Great-grandparents:** *Tom BUTTRISS* and Eliza Jane MEAD

Born: 7 May 1865, Linwood, March, Cambridgeshire

Married: 11 Apr 1891, Loughton, Essex

Died: 15 Apr 1940, Leytonstone, Essex

**Grandparents:** Herbert Edward FRYER and *Matilda Sarah BUTTRISS*

Born: 2 Dec 1892, Leyton, Essex

Married: 17 Aug 1890, Leyton, Essex

Died: 2 Dec 1974, Stoke Newington, Middlesex

**Parents:** Frank Herbert BURTON and *Doreen Helena Mary FRYER*

Born: 28 Feb 1922, Leyton, Essex

Married: 25 Apr 1942, Walthamstow, Essex

So where is the connection? Well, my 6x great grandfather Thomas QUANTERELL and his 2x great-grandfather Thomas QUANTRILL are one and the same person, therefore making William Clarke QUANTRILL my 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin 4 times removed, through my mother's side.

The thing about his side is that it is partly through Ancestry, and we all know how contentious that can be. So I will be doing further checks along the way.

Well blow me down, I started this just a week ago and today there was **another** film about him, called the *Kansas Raiders* starring Audey MURPHY. Must get on with that checking.

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## AN ONLINE FAMILY TREE ADVENTURE

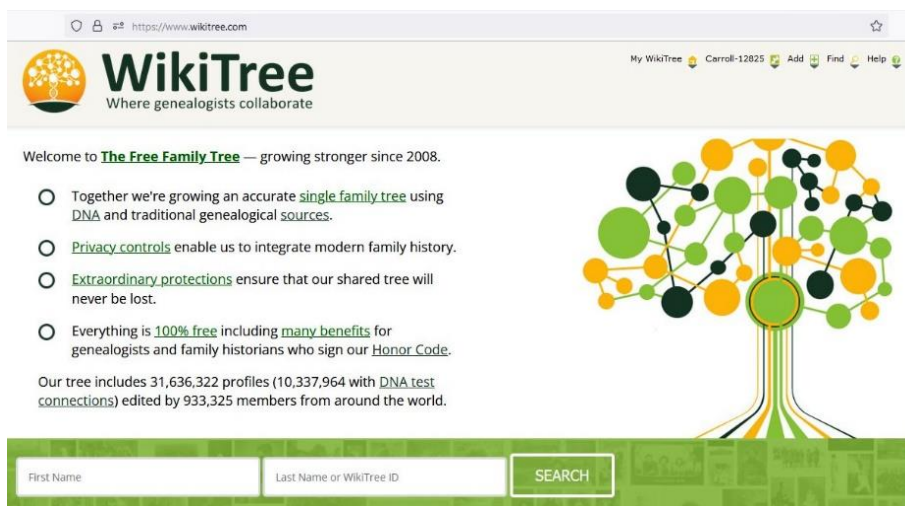
**Mark Carroll**

### Introduction

How many times have you looked at a family tree online and thought to yourself: "That can't be right"? There can be howlers there: women giving birth after they have died; people living to the age of 200; couples having two babies every year; and many more. The problem does not end there. Once the information appears online, other folk thoughtlessly copy and paste it into their own family tree, without first checking its validity. Indeed, it is often difficult to do so, for many genealogists do not cite the sources of their data. To my knowledge, **Ancestry.com** does not confirm the correctness of its user-generated online trees. At least with other such websites, such as

**FamilySearch.org**, you might get a warning hint that something is not quite right.

How should one respond to such a situation? A common piece of advice to budding genealogists is to look for what has already been done by others on branches of your family. In principle then, accessing online trees is a good idea, as it might give you ideas for future research, but to what extent can you trust what you find there? One genealogical website that tries to minimise errors in its online offerings is **WikiTree.com** (Fig 1). It also provides a free service enabling you to look for potential ancestors among all its online family trees. That is how my involvement with WikiTree started out, but it snowballed into an eight-month commitment and quite a journey.



*Figure 1. WikiTree home page*

## Searching for ancestors

I registered with WikiTree in December 2021 and uploaded a GEDCOM file of my family tree. The next day I went through the suggested matches from its “GEDCOM Compare” facility and for each one, made one of three decisions: confirm as a Match; reject as No Match; or leave as Uncertain as to its validity of being a match. The algorithm used by this WikiTree program is very broad ranging in what it considers to be a possible match; for example, my Scottish ancestral surname of BONE matched implausibly with BEAN. We all

know that the spelling of names was rather erratic in the past, but not that different surely? Also, the proposed match sometimes had a completely different forename or middle name, or the suggested individual lived their whole life in the USA and mine in England. Furthermore, there were very large numbers of matches for the SMITH and WILSON folk in my family tree, often with little or no detail. Nevertheless, for half a dozen groups of ancestors in my tree, there was enough identical information (such as date and place of birth) to confirm the match. Clearly in these cases a distant cousin of mine must have been working on the same shared branch of our trees. For me, out of 1,584 individuals in my family tree, there were 37 confirmed matches belonging to seven distant cousins.

Did any of this information benefit me? One of the cousins was already known to me, and another two were interested in a collateral line of my maternal ORRISS family, so I did not learn anything new there. In yet another case a man with the distinctive name of Bertram Miall Smith had married into the cousin's family and he was of no great interest to either of us. One cousin had a GOWER family from Chiddingstone, Kent, in their tree, as do I on my maternal side, but we could not find the genealogical link between us. My most fruitful correspondence was with a Jim BLACKLEY, who had done extensive research into a Wilson family from Cumnock, Ayrshire. His ancestor Marion Wilson (born 1805) was the younger sister of my paternal Scottish ancestor, Charles Wilson (1794–1869). Jim gave me a lot of useful advice on researching this family with its common surname.

Along the way one of the new-found cousins suggested I join WikiTree's England Project, as most of my maternal ancestry is from this country. Before investigating the potential benefits of doing so, I needed to find out more about WikiTree and what it can offer.

### **“The Collaborative Tree”**

There is a helpful online video about WikiTree by Leanne COOPER (ref 1). After an overview, it has a critical assessment of the pros and cons of WikiTree, including tips and advice to get the best out of it, plus emphasis on its four main features: collaboration, accuracy, privacy and citing sources. In this free, global family tree each ancestor appears in only one profile, partial overlapping trees are

combined, information is crowd sourced, work is preserved, and there is a convergence towards accuracy as invalid information gets eliminated. Openness is balanced against privacy, since each profile has a privacy setting with a range of levels. Collaboration is facilitated through public comment and private messaging, editing of profiles, merging of duplicate profiles on the same individual, and the ability to see who has made what changes and when, with the possibility of resolving disagreements. Profiles are “tagged” with searchable Categories, so that others can find your work relating to a topic of interest to them. Projects involve groups of WikiTree members working on a common theme or activity. The benefits of collaboration are said to come from working within an active community to create a free, accurate, global online family tree. This is all very well in principle, but what does it mean in practice?

### **WikiTree versus the rest**

After **Ancestry.com** carried out my DNA test some years ago, I uploaded my family tree to their website. This allowed it to offer a facility called ThruLines, whose algorithm carries out a matching process against the trees of all their other DNA testees – much like WikiTree’s “GEDCOM Compare” program. My experience with ThruLines has been mixed. On the one hand it has correctly identified distant cousins with whom I share only a small amount of DNA and we have a known common ancestor. On the other hand, some of its suggested ancestors were plainly wrong (Fig 2). My maternal ancestor Harriet MITSON did *not* have as her father a Thomas Job MATSON, and I was able to identify the source of the error in the tree submitted to **Ancestry.com** by the distant cousin concerned. Her father was William Mitson (1774–1815), as evidenced by the baptismal entries for his children in the parish registers for All Saints’ Church, Hundon, Suffolk (ref 2). All matching programs such as ThruLines depend critically on the accuracy of the user-generated trees, and as we have seen, many of them contain errors.

I have uploaded my raw DNA data and my family tree to other companies’ websites, including MyHeritage, Family Tree DNA, Living DNA and Gedmatch. The intention was to maximise the pool of potential DNA cousins, with the companies’ computers searching



*Figure 2. Incorrect ancestor suggestion by ThruLines*

for a potential genealogical link with each match. The outcomes have been much as described above for **Ancestry.com**, with quite a few ‘false positive’ matches. WikiTree fared likewise, but at least the rigour of its monitoring process should enhance the accuracy of its online trees. I decided it would be a good idea to construct my family tree on WikiTree, but I wanted to learn how best to do it. One of my new-found distant cousins suggested embarking on the England Project’s Orphan Trail.

### **The early stages: Orphan Trail 1**

The Orphan Trail is a guided process whereby an inexperienced WikiTree member learns the procedures and styles associated with WikiTree under the supervision of a mentor, called a Trailblazer. There are three stages. You start with Orphan Trail 1 (OT1), which itself has two parts. In part 1 you develop profiles for people who were born after 1837, and so you are using familiar sources available online, such as FreeBMD and the censuses. In part 2 of OT1 you work on someone born before 1837 but who lived mainly in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century; hence you need to trace at least one parish register entry



in order to locate a baptism. After qualifying with OT1, you can then move on to the intermediate stage, Orphan Trail 2 (OT2). Here you work on profiles for people who lived mainly before 1700. Finally, the advanced stage, OT3 or Pre-1500 Certification, is an optional stage intended to allow you to develop profiles for ancestors who lived more than 500 years ago.

In early January 2022 I embarked on OT1 in the company of my supportive and helpful Trailblazer, Gill. My first profile, which I chose from an extensive list, was for a west London woman with the unglamorous WikiTree identifier of Chandler-1515. After a further three profiles and a fairly intense period of genealogical research and writing, I graduated from OT1 in February. The profiles had covered a wide range of types of people: a working-class laundress from Fulham, a farmer's wife from Huntingdonshire, a vice-admiral in the Royal Navy, and the son of a lord. In the process I learnt various WikiTree skills, such as formatting, embedding images, and in-line referencing. Gill answered my frequent queries and tactfully pointed out my occasional imprecision. One subject had a special resonance for me. The farmer's wife, Elizabeth MASH (baptised 1769 in Stow Longa, Hunts), lived for some years in the village of Houghton, near Huntingdon. As a teenager I had spent many happy hours there fishing in the River Great Ouse. I was even able to use for her profile a photo I had taken in 1967 of the watermill at Houghton; it probably looks now much as Elizabeth would have seen it (Fig 3).

One new element of the process became apparent at this point. The subject of one of the OT1 profiles, Wriothlesley DIGBY, was born in 1697, and 1700 marks the boundary between OT1 and OT2. Hence, I would need to achieve Pre-1700 Self-Certification before proceeding further. This involved an extensive multiple-choice test on aspects of genealogical research and WikiTree style. The aim of the questions was not to generate a score, but rather to allow you to correct any misunderstandings: it was certainly a thought-provoking test.

Anyway, I passed – but not at the first attempt at every question!

### **The intermediate stage – Orphan Trail 2 (OT2)**

The OT2 stage began for me in early April 2022. It continued in much the same vein as for OT1, with the three subjects of the profiles



**Figure 3. Houghton Mill on the River Great Ouse, 1967**  
*[Photo: Mark Carroll]*

– whether chosen or allocated – having lifespans that were largely pre-1700. Inevitably at this stage of the process one tends to be researching members of the upper classes, who are more likely to have left traces in the records than, say, an ag lab. For example, many of them and members of their family left a will or were the subjects of heraldic visitations (which were used to validate pedigrees and coats of arms up to about 1650). Those who were Members of Parliament had a life-history that was amply documented in the History of Parliament Online (ref 3). Others who were students at Oxford or Cambridge University appeared in the corresponding lists of alumni, available online. A few were mentioned in books of historical research, some modern and some long since out of date but available at Google Books and other online repositories. Indeed one of the advantages of WikiTree is that it encourages its members to cite online resources available to all, rather than research papers in obscure journals.

My favourite subject for OT2 was Thomas D'ARCY (1560–1593). He left a relatively brief will which, judging by the date, was dictated on his deathbed. Thomas married across a stark cultural divide, a life-choice that is also true of me personally. As a Protestant Englishman

he took as his wife a Catholic woman of Italian descent, Camilla GUICCIARDINI, daughter of a Florentine merchant living in London. The D’Arcy family gave their name to one of the Tolleshunt villages in south-east Essex. I went there on a visit to see the family’s ancestral home of Tolleshunt Hall, an Elizabethan manor house with a moat and surrounding wall. The parish church of St Nicholas nearby has an impressive D’Arcy chapel with family mementoes such as brasses, tombs and memorial monuments (Fig 4). The memorial inscription on Thomas’s monument contained much useful genealogical information.



**Figure 4. Memorial monument to Thomas D’Arcy, 1594**  
*(Photo: Mark Carroll)*

The OT2 research enabled me to develop further WikiTree skills – all faithfully recorded in my online Research Trail (logbook). For example, I was able to make much more effective use of all the records and information on FamilySearch’s Research Wiki for the appropriate county. There are images there of parish registers that have not yet been transcribed and digitised, but they can be browsed; it also has useful old maps. My OT2 Trailblazer, Susie, helped me appreciate the many informative sources available in old books, such

as heraldic visitations (ref 4). She also took care to ensure that I had cited my sources correctly in the References section of each profile, and that I had checked that none of the images I had used contravened copyright regulations.

### **The advanced stage: Pre-1500 Certification (OT3)**

The advanced stage is not formally part of the Orphan Trail. Many WikiTree members stop after OT2, but it seemed to me to be perverse not to achieve the full set of qualifications, or Badges. The aim of OT3 is to demonstrate to a team of senior Project Leaders that one can demonstrate the full range of WikiTree competencies in relation to a profile of a subject who was born before 1600. My allocated individual was Cornwallis-77, Sir Charles CORNWALLIS MP, JP (c1555–1629) (Fig 5). He was from a wealthy East Anglian family, a Knight of the Shire for Norfolk, a courtier and a diplomat. In 1614 he offended King James I and as a result languished for a year in the Tower of London. He married three times and fathered his youngest daughter Rachel when he was 67. He died intestate, so his widow Dorothy had to attend an inquisition post-mortem in January 1629/30 so that the Prerogative Court of Canterbury could grant her permission to administer his estate.



**Figure 5. Sir Charles Cornwallis c1610**

*[Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery (used with permission)]*

Unlike Charles, several members of his family did leave informative wills. The handwriting of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was a challenge to transcribe, but it was worth the effort for the genealogical connections that it revealed. For example, Charles's sister Elizabeth KITSON left bequests in 1628 to two of his children, and in her will she named them and their respective mothers. My OT3 Trailblazer, Ann, helped me neaten the long URLs of some online sources in the References section, and also encouraged me to embed in the profile, as a Free Space Page, my transcription of the 1605 will of Charles's father, Sir Thomas Cornwallis. The wills were obtained for free from The National Archives via its Discovery catalogue (ref 5). I also found out that TNA holds a set of documents relating to this Cornwallis family, so I arranged a visit there at Kew. It turned out to be a treasure trove of information put together largely by antiquarians in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (ref 6). As a result, my profile of Charles was particularly well supported by cited sources and images. I submitted the profile for OT3 approval on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022 and waited with some trepidation, for it is some time since I had taken an examination! Four days later the verdict came back: Fail.

### **Next steps**

Was it worthwhile devoting so much time and effort to achieving these WikiTree qualifications? What am I going to do with these new-found skills? Would I recommend this developmental process to others? Does WikiTree represent the best of the online family trees? Certainly this process is not for the faint-hearted, nor would it be easy for anyone in full-time employment, given the time commitment. Also, you have to enjoy writing historical material to a high level of literacy. Of course one can construct a family tree on WikiTree without achieving all the OT1, 2 and 3 Badges, but it is unlikely to match the standard of most of the trees and profiles there. There is also the danger that one will unwittingly create a duplicate profile. Project teams of particularly committed WikiTree members scour the trees and profiles in their special area of interest with the aim of eliminating errors of content and style; you do not want to increase their workload unnecessarily. Furthermore, one consequence of this collaborative and rigorous fact-checking process is that a family tree or profile on WikiTree is likely to be more accurate than most online genealogy and with an extensive set of readily available, correctly cited sources.

So far, my own family tree on WikiTree – Carroll-12585 – is extremely limited: it currently only amounts to profiles of my mother, my maternal grandmother (Fig 6), her father and his father, my elusive 2x great-grandfather, Thomas William Smith (?1851–1932). I would like to create profiles for my distant maternal ancestor Thomas WORLIDGE, who married Ursula SEELEY in Lidgate, Suffolk, in 1597. And then there is everyone else, on both sides of the tree. For obvious reasons I shall not be able to go back along my paternal Indian ancestral line much beyond my great-grandfather, Abdul AZIZ (1867–1935). There are also projects to which I could contribute, in the collaborative spirit of WikiTree – if only I can find the time.


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**Biography**

**Overview**


Ada (Smith) Orriss was born in Essex, England.


Ada Louise was born in 1899, the daughter of [Thomas William Smith](#) and [Ada Orriss](#) and the eldest of four children. She married her first cousin, [Frank Orriss \(1896-1940\)](#), with whom she had two children, a son and a daughter. After he was killed in World War 2 by a German land-mine that destroyed the family home in Walthamstow, Essex, England, she supported her family by working as an administrative assistant in local government. Ada remained a widow until her death in 1988.

**Early life**

Ada Louise started life on 15 March 1899 at the family home of 149 Ramsay Road, [Leyton](#), Essex, England. <sup>[1]</sup> She was baptised at nearby St Columba's Church in Wanstead Slip, [Leytonstone](#), Essex, England on 23 April 1899. <sup>[2]</sup> Her parents moved home in east London several times over the following years (see Research notes): in 1900 they were at 4 Cobbold Road (now Clinton Road), [Forest Gate](#); and in 1903 at 127 Station Road, Forest Gate, where they appear in the census of 31 March 1901. <sup>[3]</sup> Ada was joined by three siblings: Constance Milly in 1900, [Orriss Redvers](#) in 1903, and [Dorothy Emmeline](#) in 1911, when the family was living in [Plastow](#) and [Ada](#)

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[Ada and Constance Smith](#)



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[Uncertain](#) 1919 [Uncertain](#). [Comments](#): 1.  
Popularity: 1.

[Ada and Constance Smith](#)



**Figure 6. WikiTree profile (part) of Ada Louise Orriss née Smith**

## Acknowledgements

I thank my three WikiTree Trailblazers, Gill Whitehouse, Susie Officer and Ann Sadler, for their patient mentoring and insightful advice.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Mark Carroll

***The Sawtooth Slayer*, by Nathan Dylan Goodwin, 2022, Amazon Books, £9.49 or less, ISBN 9798844327537**

This new book by Nathan Dylan Goodwin is the second in the “Venator Cold Case” series and follows on from *The Chester Creek Murders* (reviewed in an earlier WFFHS Journal). It forms a stand-alone story but reading the first book will provide useful background to the complex personal lives of the investigative genetic genealogists who work for the Venator company in Utah, America. Where this book differs from the first is that it is not a ‘cold’ case – an unsolved murder from the past – but a ‘live’ case with a serial killer on the loose. To be honest, my heart sank when I read the synopsis of the book on its back cover. Why do so many thriller books and films these days have to involve the murder of pretty young women, rather than of ugly old men like me? So as I started reading, my unspoken thought at the outset was: to counteract my initial negative attitude, this story had better be good. Fortunately, it is.

The author convincingly justifies the rather gruesome background to the killer and the case. The murderer is a mentally deranged young man with a frustrated relationship to the opposite sex, a troubled upbringing and a curious speech impediment that led to his being bullied at school. The fact that the authorities have to find him before his latest victim succumbs leads to a sense of nail-biting tension, suspense and drama as the police and the genealogists work against the clock. The story is set in 2020 at the start of the COVID

pandemic. The two key locations are the state of Idaho, where the killer and his victims live, and Salt Lake City, home of the Mormon Church with its extensive family history records and of the Venator company. The impact of COVID on the everyday lives of the main characters is satisfyingly recreated, as is the sense of place for the various locations. The author has clearly done his homework.

Above all, what impressed me most was the realism of the investigation by the genetic genealogists. Any of us who have undertaken a DNA test, and have used the numerous tools of genetic genealogy to further our family history research, will recognise the approach used by the Venator team. They exploit the killer's DNA results to build a picture of his identity: through Y-DNA matches, ethnicity, predicted physical characteristics such as hair and eye colour, and autosomal DNA matches and their associated clusters, as well as the modus operandi of the murderer and his probable home area. They work backwards in time to identify the ancestral couples whose descendants include the killer and his known DNA cousins. Somehow, they have to connect partial family trees whose origins lie in eastern Europe, Sicily, England and America. They then work forwards in time to the present generation of all the descendants, only one of whom will be the man they seek. Along the way the team encounter breakthroughs, setbacks and the occasional 'red herring'. Running in parallel with their forensic genealogical work is the police investigation, which once again is convincingly recreated. Indeed, the author's extensive Acknowledgements section explains why: he has sought professional advice from a wide array of American individuals with appropriate expertise. The result is a satisfying blend of murder mystery thriller and realistic DNA-based family history research.

It seems churlish to point out a few minor quibbles. Its British readers would have benefited from a glossary of definitions of acronyms and American English; as it was, I had to Google 'DUI' and 'dead-naming'. There are a few typos, but in general the proofreading by the author's many helpers has been very good. The story ends with some intriguing developments in the mysteries and problems associated with the lives of the Venator team members. I look forward to the next book in the series, where no doubt more will be revealed.



## Further comments

### *Typos*

p51, l.6: “indentifying ...”

p73, l.7 from end: “site ...” You mean “sight”.

p141, l.10 from end: “flair ...” You mean “flare”.

p175, l.13: “analyst’s desks” should be “analysts’ desks” (unless the one analyst had two desks).

p330, l.2: “chilies” should be “chillies”.

## English, style, other comments

- Genetic genealogy: On p235, l.12 from end, do you mean “endogamy” or “pedigree collapse”? My understanding is that endogamy relates to repeated intermarriage, as has occurred in Jewish communities. Pedigree collapse is just one or two first-cousin marriages – as with my own maternal grandparents. But I might be wrong.
- On p164, last line, do you mean “invidious” (causing resentment) or “insidious” (stealthily harmful”), or neither?
- Cover: I agree that the image is striking, but the title of the book is so hard to read – dark blue on a dark grey background was a poor choice.

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## MAPPING THE DEAD

**Mark Carroll**

An article in *Sunday Times* of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 described the latest attempt to make money from the dead. A Cumbria-based tech entrepreneur, Tim VINEY, is on a mission to catalogue the country’s burial grounds and their gravestones. You will then be able to track your long-lost relatives’ final resting place from the comfort of your own home – but at a price.

Other companies already offer some of the information that Atlantic Geomatics hopes to provide, such as FindAGrave and Deceased Online, so what is special about this new venture? Well, it is a seven-year project to map all of England’s graveyards and to create a database of the dead, funded in part by MyHeritage and FamilySearch. Its key bit of kit is a £140,000 scanning digital camera that can create 3D images of the location in very high definition. Once a map is generated, digitised records are matched to each grave;

if no gravestone is present, the person concerned is assigned to the parish. The first results – for the diocese of Carlisle – are expected in mid-2023, to be followed by Cornwall, Devon and Salisbury.

Does this mean that all the hard work of past family historians has been in vain, when they attempted to transcribe the MIs on the gravestones in their local cemeteries and churchyards? I think here of WFFHS's own efforts in Walthamstow at St Peter-in-the-Forest Church and Queens Road Cemetery, or the East of London FHS's recent work in part of Manor Park Cemetery, in which I helped as photographer. In some respects Tim Viney's venture will not be able to match the commitment of dedicated knowledgeable volunteers, particularly those who worked in the previous century. Many old headstones made of limestone or sandstone are now so badly eroded that their MIs can no longer be read. Volunteers invariably at the outset clear away vegetation so that headstones are fully visible. They also raise and clean fallen headstones, something that no high-tech camera can achieve. Their local knowledge means too that they can sometimes decipher hard-to-read MIs. It is true that numerous cemeteries and churchyards have no definitive map of their graves, and in this respect Atlantic Geomatics can make a valuable contribution. However, there is still a role for FHSs in this aspect of genealogy – without making money from the dead.

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## **COVER STORY – WALTHAM ABBEY    Kathy Unwin**

In 1961 I went on a school trip from our primary school in Crouch End to Waltham Abbey as we had been studying the Normans. Back then it felt like a day in the country. We had also learned the poem *Ring Out, Wild Bells* by Tennyson, as the bells of the Abbey are the inspiration for the poem which we recited in the Abbey. Now many years later I am living not very far from the Abbey and have visited it many times, including last year's summer outing with the WFFHS (Fig 1). The town of Waltham Abbey is covered by our Family History Society.

There has been a church on the site from as early as 610, which would have been a wooden building. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century a stone building was erected, and it was during this time that a stone crucifix

was brought to the church which was thought to have healing powers. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century Harold Godwinson was cured of an illness after visiting the Holy Cross of Waltham and he rebuilt the church as a secular college. The present church was built in 12<sup>th</sup> century by the Normans. The church later became an Augustinian Abbey. The building was extended over the following years until the reformation when it was the last abbey to be dissolved. Much of the abbey and other buildings were pulled down and the stone reused in other buildings.



*Figure 1 Society members on a recent visit to the Abbey*

In October 2013, I attended King Harold's Day in Waltham Abbey. It was first held in 2004 and has carried on every year (with a few exceptions, eg Covid) on the nearest Saturday to 14<sup>th</sup> October to commemorate the death of King Harold at the Battle of Senlac Hill, better known as the Battle of Hastings. It is said that King Harold is buried in the grounds of the Abbey and a stone marks his supposed

grave. However, other sites are also claimed to be his resting place and there was talk at one time of trying to find the body as they did for King Richard. However, it appears these plans have been dropped.

The 2013 celebrations were quite a big affair. There were many activities and entertainments, and the event took place over two days. Luckily the weather was good on the Saturday when I went, and it was well attended. There were many re-enactors including Vikings and the Free Company of Aquitaine. They manned stalls, played music and fought with each other in the arena. There was also a craft fair and a birds of prey display; unfortunately, the birds preferred sitting in the abbey's large hedge to performing.

The highlight of the day was the parade along Sun Street from the museum to the grave. Local dignitaries and re-enactors marched up the street to music and shouts of "Godwinson". I also heard one stallholder shout to his companion "Don't let them past without buying a doughnut!" At the grave wreaths were laid and speeches made (Fig. 2). A priest from the abbey gave a speech and read a



*Figure 2 The laying of the wreaths*

poem supposedly written by Harold's wife. It started "First I was afraid I was petrified, kept thinking I could never live without you by my side etc" and with a few amusing amendments ended with "I will survive".

As well as guided tours of the abbey there was also a concert by the Early Music Ensemble from the Royal College of Music. This was slightly delayed because the harpsichord needed to be retuned but it was worth the wait.

I also climbed up the bell tower; the climb was first up a winding stone staircase, then a steep ladder and finally a metal spiral staircase (not sure whether this would be allowed now with health and safety). Not easy for someone like me who does not like heights, but I am glad I did as the view of the surrounding countryside was impressive (Fig 3).



*Figure 3 The view from the tower of the Abbey gardens*

While I was waiting to buy my ticket for the Abbey grounds, where the stalls were situated, I overheard a woman say that one of her relatives took part in an archaeological dig in the 1950s to look for





the remains of King Harold. She said that they did not find anything. The reply to this was that it may only have been part of his body that was buried at the Abbey. Later, on a guided tour of the Abbey we were taken outside and told that it would be very unlikely that the body was buried where the stone is as it would have been buried near the altar. The original altar's present position is now outside the building.

### *One of the stalls in the Abbey grounds*

This year's event was much simpler with just a parade up to the grave and laying of flowers. Hopefully, it will become a bigger event again in years to come.

Some of the highlights of the Abbey are:

- The ceiling, which is painted with the signs of the Zodiac (Fig 1).
- The coloured reredos telling the Christmas story, gifted to the Abbey in 1875. Sadly in 2003 it was vandalised with an axe but is now restored. The photo was taken after Harvest Festival (Fig 4).
- The wall painting of Judgment Day in the Lady Chapel dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which had been painted over during the Reformation. It had been uncovered by the time I went in 1961 but there was not a lot to see. However, it was restored in 1968 (Fig 5).



*Figure 4 The reredos and black American walnut altar*



*Figure 5 Judgment Day wall painting*

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## **THE LAST WORD**

**Kathy Unwin**

On 8<sup>th</sup> November we held the AGM for the Society on Zoom. After the formalities Barrie gave his address, and an edited version of his speech follows for those of you who were unable to attend:

## **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS – Barrie Burton (WFFHS President)**

Well, we finally seem to be back to normal, with a few minor changes, eg meetings between the hall and on Zoom – personally I like both, so a good mixture.

As last year, I wish to thank the Chairman, Secretary and Committee for keeping the Society going. And believe me, having done all of the jobs in the past, well all except Treasurer, they are doing a great job.

So, how has the last year gone? Well, very well on the research front – but not exactly on all fronts. I have been having a slight problem with some Jewish research for some time.

But on the good side, in the last month, I have discovered that I am related to the infamous William Clarke QUANTRILL of the QUANTRIL/Kansas Raiders in the American Civil War, he being my 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin 4 Removed on my maternal side. (*Editor – see article on p7 above.*)

So, what else has happened this year? Well, I assisted in running our family history stall at the Highams Park Day in July and the Copped Hall Day in October. We took the decision to sell all the books off at £1 each, as I have been carting them around for more years than I can think of, and I'm not getting any younger.

Quite a while ago, at a meeting in the hall, it was asked how many ancestors' photographs we had. Well, I decided to have a look, so: grandparents – all 4; great-grandparents – all 8; 2x great-grandparents – 6 of the 16. Also, many cousins, some I know names of and probably, like a lot of you, those family wedding photographs where no one is named.

What is the weirdest job you have come across this last year? Mine has got to be a sheep trotter dresser, not a pig's trotter but a sheep's. Is there much on a sheep's trotter? I'll have to find a butcher who might know.



Exchange journals: I know that some of you do, but I'm sure not all of you know that we exchange our Journal with other Family History Societies. Back in the 1980s I think we used to exchange with 60+ other societies, which gradually diminished over the years, with some of them collapsing, amalgamating or just could not afford the postage. Nowadays we have email, so a lot exchange that way. At the moment, we still exchange hard copies with 7, which are: Cleveland, Sheffield & District, Shropshire, Society of Genealogists, West Middlesex, West Surrey and Woolwich & District. Now I expect that in the near future they will change to email. So how many use this service? Some of the articles produced by these other Societies are quite fascinating and informative. I have just checked my records and I have 64 other Societies that we used exchange with, which include some from Australia.

As we say to people, when researching you should, if possible, join your local Family History Society, as you are meeting people with the same interest, therefore picking up other tips. Also join the Societies where your research takes you. Now if we are exchanging with those Societies what better way to see what they are like, what records they hold in the way of transcriptions, than looking at their journals.

**Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month  
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**Either at Spruce Hill Baptist Church Hall, Brookscroft  
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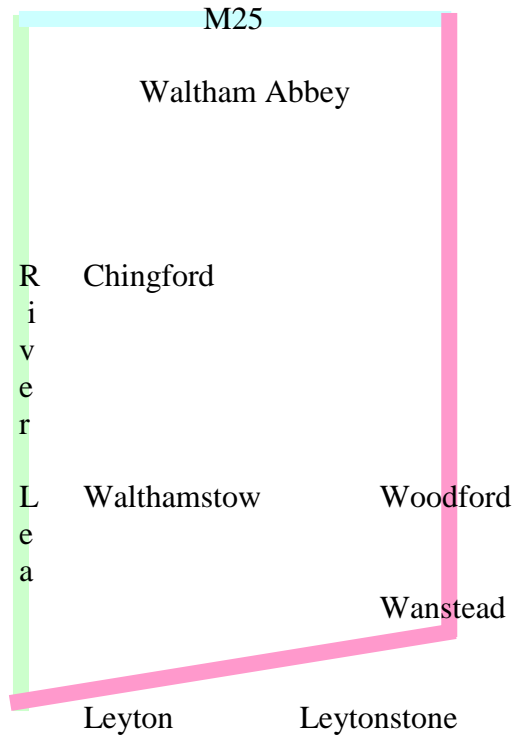
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**DIARY**

- 11<sup>th</sup> April**      **Talk – The Long Paper Trail (of a 17C east London merchant) – Sue Paul (Zoom)**
- 9<sup>th</sup> May**        **Workshop – Poor Law records (in hall)**
- 13<sup>th</sup> June**      **Talk – Highams in Walthamstow – Georgina Green (Zoom)**
- 11<sup>th</sup> July**      **Workshop – subject TBC (in hall)**
- August**        **No meeting**
- 12<sup>th</sup> Sept**      **Talk - Medical records for family historians - Ross McFarlane (Zoom)**

# Waltham Forest FHS



The Society covers an area largely defined by the River Lea, M25 and A11/A104 roads. This includes the London Borough of Waltham Forest, comprising the old Essex metropolitan boroughs of Chingford, Leyton and Walthamstow, and extends to Waltham Abbey in the north.

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