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Journal**

Vol 25 No 6 Jun 2026



Sydney Frank Blane 'Sid' at Potton c1916-18 (1898-1985)

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**BEDFORDSHIRE
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
JOURNAL**



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JOURNAL SURNAME INDEX

Below is the Surname Index for this *Journal*, providing you with a rapid way of finding a Surname within this *Journal*. Note that only those that fell during the 1914-18 war remembered on the Potton War Memorial, pictured on page 17, have been indexed. A full index of names on this memorial can be found at **roll-of-honour.com/Bedfordshire/PottonRollofHonour.html**. The Surname Index for *Journals* on the BFHS website will be updated in due course.

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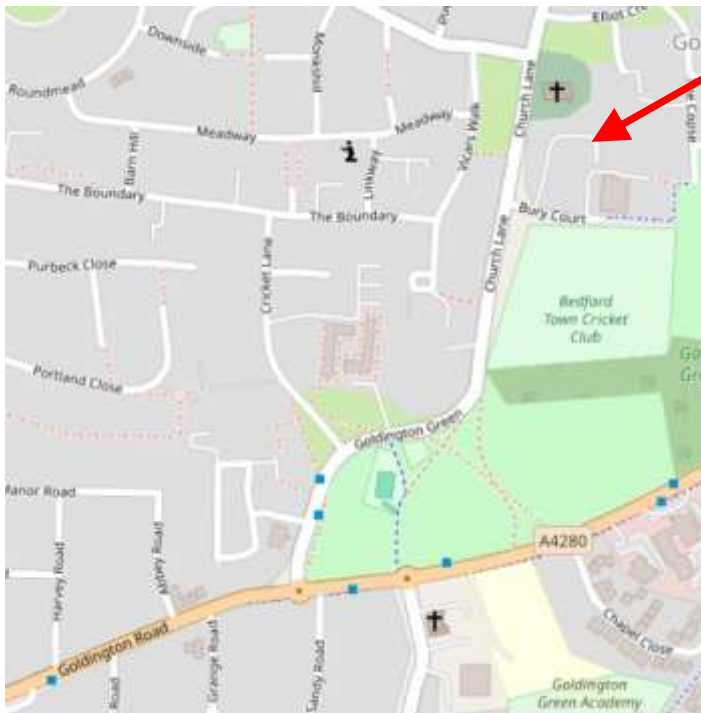
TALK PROGRAMME

All talks are at the new venue of St Mary's Church Hall, Goldington, and virtually via Zoom unless otherwise advised.

Doors open at 7 pm with the talks starting at 7.30 pm.

Our monthly Friday night meetings offer members instructive, interesting, and often amusing talks on subjects that fascinate all interested in history and genealogy in general and are usually particularly relevant to those with a Bedfordshire heritage. We look forward to seeing you in person.

Where possible, talks will be live streamed (Zoom log-in details are shown in the members' portal) or made available later as a video recording on the website in the members' portal, subject to approval by the speaker.



The address of the venue is St Mary's Church Hall, Church Lane, Goldington, Bedford (MK41 0AN for satnavs).¹

From Bedford town centre, head East towards Cambridge on the A4280 (was A428) Goldington Rd.

At the mini roundabout at Goldington Green, turn left towards Renhold into Goldington Green Road

Just after the pedestrian crossing the road becomes Church Lane. Take the second on the right, sign-posted Church Hall, then turn immediately left up to the Church car park where you will find the Church Hall.

¹ Map copyright openstreetmap.org, openstreetmap.org/copyright

TALK PROGRAMME (cont'd)

AGM
followed by
talk by Pamela Birch, County Archivist
Friday 5 June

Family History from Education Records
Colin Chapman
Friday 3 July



For centuries, education at all levels was provided, often free, by Churches, the State, charities, endowments, professional institutions and individuals. Surviving records are invaluable.

Colin Chapman is a Life Vice-President of the FFHS. Founder/co-founder of six county-based family history societies: President of three, including Bedfordshire, and Patron of another. A Vice-President and Fellow of the Society of Genealogists and a former member of its (then) Executive Committee. An acclaimed authority on WW1 German POWs held in Britain.

Talk not yet confirmed
Friday 4 September

At the time of taking this Journal to the printers, the disruption of air travel in the middle east and beyond has meant that the speaker planned for September, residing in Australia and visiting Bedford in September, could not confirm flights. Another speaker is being sought and will be confirmed by social media, email and the BFHS website.

THE GAZELEYS OF WESTONING

Jack Morath

Jack, who is 91, provided some background to his research:

I started researching my only family when I was around 15 of age and I was working in London. My teachers at primary school thought our surname was unusual and when I asked my parents' and grandparents' background of our line they did not know. When I was working in London as an Office Boy, I went to Somerset House and looked through the old binders of Births Marriages and Deaths back to 1837. As our surname was unusual there were not many MORATHs around. Over a period of time, I went through each book cover to cover looking for any Moraths and made a note of them. Ever since then I have continued to research the background which originated from an ancestor who lived in the Black Forest making and repairing clocks. My ancestor Michael Morath walked along the Rhine carrying clocks which he sold along the way to cover his overnight stays. He walked 600 miles along the Rhine to Antwerp where he caught a boat to London and started his own business a few years later. The rest is history.

I have all my records in a filing cabinet and not kept on the computer. I have completed 17 binders of our family history with pictures and records going back to the 17th century in Germany, which I will pass on to our two sons eventually. I spend a short time every day researching the lines of our family as well as the main line and adding information all the time. I have used mainly Findmypast, but some information I found out by contacting various sources here and in North America.

My grandmother's maiden name was GAZELEY and all her ancestors lived in Bedfordshire, mainly in Westoning area. I have been able to go back to the 17th century in my research and sometimes the name was spelt differently, ie Gazeley, GAIZLEY or GAYLEY, but with two or three exceptions, I have been able to obtain records of births, marriages, deaths and also census records since 1841 where possible.

So, we start off with my grandmother, Amy Gazeley. who was born in Bedford in 1886 and one of seven children living in Cromwell Road, St Paul's District. Her parents were Thomas and Sarah Gazeley. Amy married Alick ROBINSON in 1908 in Bedford, which is also where Alick was born. He was a French Polisher by trade and when he joined up in the First World War it was in the machine gun corp. He was sadly killed at the end of the First World War in action in 1918. My mother was born in 1910, and her brother was born in 1915. My grandmother married again in 1920 to Charles CURTIS, who was also born in Bedford. They had my aunt, who was born in 1921.

Amy's father Thomas was a locomotive driver on the Midland Railway and, according to relatives, he was a senior driver on express trains, including the famous Flying Scotsman from London to Edinburgh. Thomas was born in Ampthill, and he married Sarah PRESTELL in Bedford in 1875 and died in Bedford in 1921. His address in the 1861 census, his birth address, was shown as 'Village' Westoning. The parents of Thomas were George and Eliza whose address was also shown as 'Village' Westoning. George was born in 1832 in Westoning and married Eliza WALTON in Ampthill in 1852. He was an agricultural labourer (ag lab), and she was a straw plaiter which was quite a common

occupation at that time. The 1881 census shows the family at Central Rd, Westoning and he is a labourer, and she is a straw plaiter. The children were:

Joseph, aged 17 a labourer who emigrated to the town of Antler in Saskatchewan, Canada, and died there in 1938.

Emma, age 15, a hat sewer, died single in 1936.

Henry, aged 12 a labourer, emigrated to Wisconsin in the USA and died there in 1951 having married twice there.

John, aged 10 a labourer, emigrated to Canada and married an English girl from Yorkshire in Nova Scotia. He went on in Canada to become a railway engineer for the Canadian National Railway in its early days. Not bad after being an ag lab at 10 years of age. John died there in 1953.

Hannah was aged 8, a scholar and died single in 1950.

George died in 1888 age 56 in Ampthill, and Eliza in the 1891 census was aged 60 and shown as a charwoman and a widow.

The parents of George were Thomas and Sarah. Thomas was born around 1806 in Westoning. He married Sarah Crews WHITE in 1831 in Maulden, and in the 1841 census they had by then five children, all under 10 years of age. The 1861 census shows Thomas as an ag lab and his wife Sarah as a straw plaiter. The three daughters aged 24, 20 and 17, were all straw platters, and William, the youngest age 15 an ag lab, all living in Westoning. Thomas died in 1877 in Westoning.

The parents of Thomas were William and Mary. William was born in Westoning in 1766 and married Mary MATTHEWS in November 1789 in Westoning. He died in Ampthill in 1848. William's parents were James and Mary. James was born in 1725 in Upper Stondon and he married Mary STREET in September 1754 in Henlow. I have been unable to locate his death details. The parents of James were James and Mary. James was born in Hitchin in 1697 and married Mary CONSTABLE. James passed away in Upper Stondon in 1741. James's parents were James and Rebecca. James was born in 1657 and married Rebecca WHITNEY. James died in 1723. That is as far as I have been able to trace back the Gazeleys.

During my research back to the 17th century the Gazeleys had some interesting occupations. Here are some of them:

Plaiting Scholar

Straw Plaiter (for use in hat making)

Bonnet Sewer

Hot sower

Straw hat sewer

Agricultural labourer

Charwoman (Usually worked for hourly wages. A cleaning woman)

Nurse Monthly (Someone who assisted women during the first month of giving birth)

Plate layer (on the railway)

Hat Machinist

Journeyman Baker (A Master Craftsman who served his apprenticeship and mastered his craft)

Ganger on the railway (Overseer or foreman in charge of a gang of men)

Forman plate layer (on the railway)

Railway labourer

Domestic or household servant.

Porter

Railway Foreman

Railway Shunter Pointsman (Rides on locomotives with the driver, couples and uncouples waggons and alters points on the railway sidings to control movements.

Railway engine cleaner

Draper's assistant (Shop dealer in fabrics and sewing needs)

Home duties (unpaid domestic duties)

Dressmaker

Pauper (A person destitute of means, one who receives aid from funds designated for the poor)

Information about the local industries in the area:

Luton was the hat manufacturing centre. Plaiting actually took place in the villages around Luton into Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, other parts of Bedfordshire and into North Essex. There were around 30,000 men, women and children making plait in 1861. The plait was transported to Luton to be sold to the hat manufacturers.

The straw plaiters: It was a job that anyone, including children as young as four, could do, and although it was a rather monotonous job, it did give families an extra income. Children would attend Plaiting school to learn the methods involved.¹

Straw plaiting is the art of plating straw to form a length suitable for making hats. The length is sewn together in the rough form of the hat required, which then continues in the hat manufacturing process to form a straw boater or bonnet. The straw plaiting industry began in Luton and the surrounding areas in the mid-17th century and gradually increased in importance as straw hats became widely popular.

Railway workers: The railway network experienced rapid and immense growth from the 1830s, reaching a near completion of the network by the 1860s. A platelayer is a railway employee who inspects and maintains the permanent way of a railway, usually working in teams or gangs under the charge of a foreman.

¹ Plaiting took precedence over learning. See for example culturalhistories.org/home/the-history-of-the-hat-industry-in-luton/

THE BRICKETT ONE-NAME STUDY

Penelope Christensen

The BRICKETT One-Name Study was registered with the *Guild of One-Name Studies* (GOONS) in 1988 and grew out of an interest in my great grandmother Harriet Ann Brickett's family. Her family originated in SW Bedfordshire in the 16th century, migrated into Hertfordshire then across London to Surrey and Essex, with a branch emigrating to South Africa.

The aim of the study was to collect data on everyone recorded with this fairly rare surname and its variants and assemble them into pedigrees on AQ (*Ancestral Quest*) as far as possible. These have now been added to *FamilySearch* online, so they are widely available. A sideline is a small collection of pedigreed horses, dogs, goats, ships, businesses, places and fictional characters named Brickett.

Variants and Deviants

There are two variant spellings, BRICKET and BRICKETTS, as well as the early forms BRYCKET(T)(S) and BRIQUET, and some variants without the C, the BRIKETT(T)(S). The spelling has largely settled (about 95%) as **BRICKETT** in the 19th-20th centuries.

A major problem with this study is the frequency of deviant spellings caused by illiteracy and poor hearing. These include BICKETT, BRIGGETT, PRICKETT, RICKETT (my great grandmother could not read, and her name is so written on her son's birth certificate).

Even greater problems occur with mis-transcription:

Vowels are changed resulting in BIRKETT, BIRKITT, BRACKETT, BRECKETT, BREEKET, BRIKITT, BRICKOT, BUCKETT etc.

K may be read as H giving BRICHETT.

T may not be crossed, resulting in BRICKELL (a West Country name) and BRICKELT.

As a result of deviant and misspellings:

Large numbers of post-1837 Brickett parish register entries are not matched by civil registration entries and vice-versa.

A survey of eight decennial census transcriptions on *Findmypast* found that from 7% (1841) to 69% (1861) of those transcribed as Brickett were not as such on the original.

Conversely, it is a major job to search for the real Bricketts under all possible deviant and misspellings: the most common culprits seem to be Birkett, Brickell, Buckett, Prickett and Rickett.

Origin of the surname

The standard sources (*Guppy* 1890, *Bardsley* 1901, *Reaney* 1976, *Hanks, Coates & McClure* 2016) see Brickett as a metathesized version of Birkett, which indicates 'someone living near birch trees' (*birk* in Scottish); or possibly 'son of Burchard'. This

conflation of Brickett with Birkett ignores the fact that Birkett originated and is still most common in northern England, whilst Brickett is a southern name. Brikett occurs in the north of England and the midlands, probably as a metathesized deviant of Birkett: note both are without the 'C'.

Some early English Bricketts

Name	Source	Year
John BRYKHEDE	Close Rolls ¹	1443/4
Robert BRICKETT	Thornfield, Herts legacy	1517
Thomas BRICKETT	Mayor of Salisbury, Wiltshire and founded almshouses for six poor widows	1519
Thomas BRYCHETT	Of Rye, Sussex PCC Will	1523
Adam BRYKET	Of Windermere, Westmorland Will	1523
Benet BRYKET	Of Windermere, Westmorland Will	1523
Henry BRIKKET or BYRKETT	Suffolk Subsidy Rolls	1524
William BRICKETT	Christened son of George & Emme Beckett, Birchett, Burchett or Brickett at St Botolph, Colchester, Essex	c.1528
Robert BRYKKETT	Of St Sepulchre, London & Emelton, Cumbs PCC will	1537
Elisaunder BRICKET	Married Katherine RICE at St Peter Cornhill	1539
Mylis BRICKET	Married Elizabeth BROWKE at St Stephen Coleman Street, London	1539
Arthur BRIKET	Of Woking, held copyhold cottage	1540
Roland BRYCKETT	Christened at Lindfield, Sussex	1542
Thomas BRIGET	Christened son of Lawrance Briget at Hunsdon, Herts	1547
Henrye BRICKETT	Christened son of Richard Brickett at Holy Trinity the Less, London	1547
Raphe BRIKETT	Married Margery MAYALL at Broadway, Worcs	1555
Henry BRICKETT	Christened son of Christopher Brickett at St Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey, Surrey	1556
William BRICKETT	Buried at Dunstable, Beds	1558

¹ The British Chancery was the royal secretariat. Beginning in the year 1204, the Chancery began maintaining documents on various types of rolls. The parchment papers were physically rolled and sealed closed with sealing wax of the Great Seal of the United Kingdom. Each British monarch had a particular seal. The purpose of the rolls was to keep the contents private and maintain the highest regard for the document.

Edwardus BRICKAT	Son of Thomas Brickat christened at Totternhoe, Beds	1559/60
Alicia BRICKETT	Christened daughter of John Brickett at West Wickham	1560/1
Elsabeth BRICKET	Christened daughter of Johanni Bricket at St Edmund, Salisbury, Wilts	1561
William BRICKET	Married Edie DIENSLEY at St Pauls Walden, Herts	1563
George BRICKET	Married Alice HULL at Easton Maudit, Northants	1563
Katherin BRYCKET	Christened Newport Pagnell, Bucks	1565
Joane BRICKET	Married John SEELY at St Clemet Danes, Westminster	1565
Elizabeth BRICKET	Married Hugh JACKSONNE at Dunstable, Beds	1566
Robert BRICKETT	Will, gentleman of Barley, Herts	1566
William BRYCKETT	Married Margery WIGGE at St Giles, Reading, Berks	1567
Thomas BRICKETT	Bailiffe buried at Dunstable, Beds	1572
Edward BRICKETT	Married at Cartmel Priory, Lancashire	1561
Thomas BRICKETT	Married Margareta BRABAN at Surlingham, Norfolk	1575
Margaret BRICKETT	Married James ATKINSON at Kendal, Westmorland	1575
Jennet BRICKET	Married Peter Birket at Cartmel Priory, Lancashire	1577
George BRICKET	Married Agnes CROSKIL at Cadney, Lincs	1582
Isabel BRICKETT	Married William HODGESON at Lazonby, Cumberland	1587
William BRICHETT	Of Abinger, Surrey contributor to Armada defence	1588
Agnes BRICKETT	Married David HAYE at Earsdon by North Shields, Northumberland	1595

In French Briquet means a tinder box and an infantry short sword. It also forms the root for words associated with brickmaking such as briquette, a little brick made of compacted coal dust. The term bricket was also used in English for gold and silver blocks. Makers or sellers of these products could have acquired this surname. However, it is not known whether these terms were current in the 15th century by which time surnames were established. There is also a place called La Briquette situated in Valenciennes Nord, Pas de Calais close to the current Belgian border. Pas De Calais is the closest Department to

Dover in Kent. It may be significant that La Briquette is not far east of Douai, the location of the college for training Catholic priests for England founded in 1568. There are certainly French surnames Briquett, BRICQUET and DE BRECQUET and French names came to southern England in three waves:

Walloons (French speaking people from Low Countries) about 1500, eg Sandwich, Kent and some East Anglian towns were 25% Walloon in 1575.

Huguenots (Protestant refugees from France) 1680-1700.

French Revolution 1789. Aristocrats with their servants and tradesmen. The kings of France lived in Marylebone from 1793-1815. Weavers settled in Clerkenwell and Spitalfields and many trades settled in London's West End. However, the indexes to the Huguenot Society's 'Return of Strangers in the Metropolis 1593, 1627, 1635, 1639' contain none spelled Bricket(t)(s).

There were several concentrations of Bricketts in England when parish registers commenced in 1538. This could suggest multiple origins for the surname. Amongst early Bricketts in SE England several Flemish/Dutch/French given names have been noted, suggesting that the name may be derived from the Low Countries or France.

Flemish/Dutch/French first names for Bricketts in England

Given Name	Year	CMB²	Place
Evance BRIGETT	1579	C	London
Hercules BRICKOT or BRICKET (Hercule is French)	1591	C	Dunstable, Beds
Hercules BRICKET(T) (Herckeles is Flemish)	1659	B	Toddington, Beds
Jerbona BRICKETT (male)	1575	C	London, St Andrew by the Wardrobe
Josan BRICKET	1611	M	Harwich, Essex
Josian BRICKET	1588	M	London, St Mary Aldermary
Josinke BRICKET (diminutive of Josephine)	1599	M	London, Austin Friars Dutch Church.
Mees BRICKET (diminutive of Bartholomeus)	1592	B	Barley, Herts
Verten BRICKETT	1714	B	Shaftesbury, Dorset
Vidna BRICKET	1593	B	Birchington, Kent

The place in Hertfordshire called Bricket Wood derives its name from two old English words meaning *bright* and *an islet* (a little piece of marshland). Older spellings of this place name (with dates) are Bruteyt (1228), Broteghte (1314), Brutethte (1342), Brygteyght (1436) and Briteygtwod (1505). Probably coincidentally the Romans used the

² Christening, Marriage, Burial

wet boulder clay here for making bricks and tiles, and the word brick derives from the French *brique* (broken piece) and Teutonic *brek* (break). And there has been a Brickett family in the area since the 16th century at least. Are these facts all red herrings?

Other possibilities include derivation from later imports such as Bricketts born in Germany (1851 census) and Brickits born in Hungary (1871 census).

Historical occurrences

Thomas Brickett was mayor of Salisbury, Wiltshire in 1519 and founded a 'Hospital (almshouse) for Six Poor Widows' there. It was rebuilt in 1780 and is still in service.

John Brykktet or Breket was 'master cook for the king's mouth' for Henry VIII in 1536-1541.

The Brickett family in West Wickham, Kent were largely killed by the plague in 1609-1610.

Samuel and Caroline Brickett of Derby were convicted at Newgate in 1881 of stealing 329 pairs of boots!

In 1789 seaman Thomas Brickett/Burket/Burkitt became infamous as a prominent member of Fletcher Christian's gang who mutinied on Captain Bligh's ship *Bounty*. He was court-martialed and hung at Spithead in 1792.

Nathaniel Brickett (c.1648-after 1711) emigrated to USA from England settling in Newbury, Massachusetts. It is likely that he emanated from Bedfordshire as the only other early Nathaniels are there. His descendants are very numerous across the USA and were described in the *Essex Antiquarian* (Massachusetts) in 1907-1908. They included Lt Nathaniel Brickett (1731-1805), Dr James Brickett (1738-1818) brigadier general of the forces sent to Canada in 1776, Col Moses Brickett (1742-1813), Dr Daniel Brickett (1761-1835), Dr John Brickett (1774-after 1808) and Edward Montgomery Brickett (1898-1961) a mechanical engineer and authority on concrete and concrete design having published a number of papers. Several other Bricketts emigrated in the 19th century to North America and Australia where their descendants now live.

Walter Septimus Brickett (1865-1933), by trade a pianoforte maker, was the British Olympic Swimming Trainer in 1908 and 1912 and held the world record for the combination of 1 mile each of walking, running, hurdling, cycling (3 miles), rowing and swimming, all in under 1 hour. His son, Walter Sidney Brickett (1889-1945) was also a noted swimmer and trained the Women's National Team in 1936 and 1937. His son, Peter Sidney Brickett (1919-1990) kept up the family swimming tradition and was awarded a Royal Humane Society Ward for bravery in saving three lives at Clacton, Essex in 1939.

George Brickett (1868-1904) became a professional cricketer in Surrey after 12 years army service including in Egypt and the Sudan.

And we must not forget that the *Daily Telegraph* of 1903 called attention to the Rover Company's new eccentric Brickett chain adjustment!

Frequency

The number of Bricketts is difficult to assess because of the frequency of mis-transcription. I have found only 101 Bricket(t)(s) in the 1881 census and there were 338 births registered 1837-2005 (with only 5% not spelled Brickett). Only 11 researchers contacted me in 25 years. Excluding the North American families, I have 3,250 individuals on my AQ database, many of which are probably duplicates.

Distribution

I concentrated my research on the English families, but Bricketts are found in North America, Australasia and South Africa and probably elsewhere.

The *parish registers* have concentrations of Bricketts in several southern English counties (see table below) and there are other widely dispersed numbers in Buckinghamshire, Kent, Lancashire, London City, Middlesex and Surrey.

Major centres of Bricketts

County	Towns	Dates
Bedfordshire	Dunstable	1558 - 1793
	Harlington	1634 – 1781
	Toddington	1687 – 1763
	Sharnbrook	1721 – 1774
Berkshire	Reading	1567 – 1687
	Steventon	1598 - 1792
Hertfordshire	St Pauls Walden	1563 – 1594
	St Albans	1571 – 1781
Kent	West Wickham	1560 – 1610
Middlesex	Enfield	1566 – 1890
Northamptonshire	Floore	1653 – 1838
Surrey	Richmond	1843 – 1937
	Esher	1868 – 1939
Wiltshire	Salisbury	1561 – 1683
	Corsham	1612 – 1638

The *censuses* from 1841 to 1911 show movement into Greater London, especially Middlesex and Surrey as well as general dispersal of the population.

Civil registration births 1837-2005 show greatest numbers in Edmonton, Kingston, Lambeth, Richmond, St Pancras and Wandsworth registration districts, all in Greater London.

Those looking for Brickett ancestors are invited to check out the collaborative website **familysearch.org** bearing in mind that they may be listed under a different spelling. I have added all my sources to the Notes (Sources, Collaborate & Memories) where the actual spellings used in each different record can be found.

The Brickett One-Name Study has now been taken over by my 5th cousin Paul Snook (Email **brickett@one-name.org**) to whom enquiries should be directed.

References

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THREE BLANE BROTHERS AND A SISTER

Jean Flannery (née Blane)

Horace David BLANE was born in Bedford, his birth registered in the third quarter of 1894, the son of William¹ (my great uncle) and Janet SMITH.² He must have been born in July as he was baptised 29 July in Wimpole, Cambridgeshire, close to his mother's birthplace.

In 1901 he was living with his parents and siblings at 112 Sandy Road, Potton. Horace's father William died in late 1901 and was buried in Barton, Cambridgeshire, close to his wife's birthplace. His father died in the London Temperance Hospital but cause of death is not given. His mother Janet applied for poor law relief 9 April 1902. She also appears with Horace and her other in the 1904 renewal record.

Horace and a friend were brought before a magistrate at the Petty Sessions 30 October 1908 for setting fireworks on the highway in Potton. He was working as a parchment maker in 1911, living with his mother and siblings in four rooms in Sun Street, Potton.

Horace enlisted in the 2/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, in Sandy, as Private

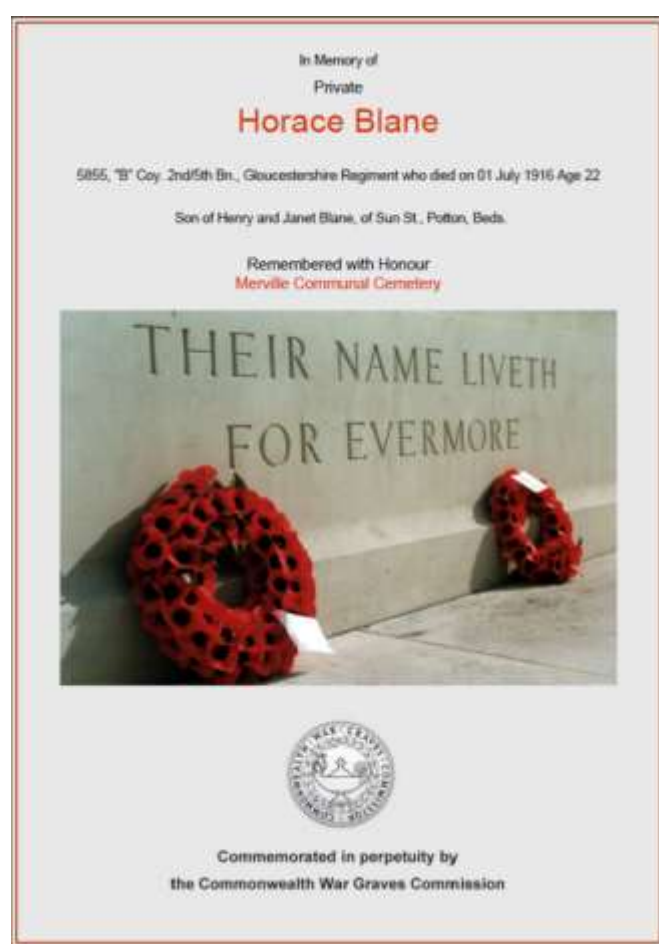
¹ **wikitree.com/wiki/Blane-178**.

² **wikitree.com/wiki/Smith-359647**.

5855. He was killed in action in France 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme but not in battle. His Company was doing some routine work behind the lines and Horace was one of three nameless Other Ranks listed in the regimental war diary as having died on that date. There is no information as to cause of death, which may have been a shell or a sniper: 'unavoidable wastage' or 'a quiet day casualty', as the British Army called it.

Horace is buried in Merville Communal Cemetery, Merville, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France. I have created a memorial to him on Find a Grave, Memorial number 56526690, and one on For Evermore, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) site of remembrance.

Gravesite Details: Private, B Company, 2nd/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. Died of wounds. Son of Henry and Janet Blane, of Sun St, Potton, Beds. Age 22.



CWGC Certificate of Remembrance

His name is on the Gloucestershire Regiment Memorial and Wall of Remembrance. It is also on Potton's war memorial and a commemorative plaque in the Church of St Mary, Potton.

UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919

Name: Horace Blane; Birthplace: Sandy, Beds; Death Date: 1 Jul 1916; Death Place: France and Flanders; Enlistment Place: Sandy; Rank: Private; Regiment: Gloucestershire Regiment; Battalion: 2/5th Battalion (Territorial); Regimental Number: 5855; Type of Casualty: Killed in action; Theatre of War: Western European Theatre. (There is a record stating that he died of wounds.)

Horace's effects were divided as follows: to his mother Janet a total of £8 14s 8d; to his brother Sidney, sister Doris and Brother Charles, £3 15s each. His mother also received a War Gratuity of £8 10s.



Photo taken by my niece, Dawn HULATT, on a recent visit to the cemetery.



Potton War Memorial photo courtesy of Imperial War Museum



Horace named on memorial base.

Charles Henry Blane (named after his uncle, my grandfather) was born 1 February 1896, also in the registration district of Bedford. At the time of the 1901 census, he too was living with his family in Potton. He is also listed as being a parchment maker in the 1911 census.

Charles served as a Private in 693 Agricultural Company Labour Corps during World War I.

UK, British Army World War I Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920, Army Medal Office (In the Care of the Western Front Association Website); London, England;

WWI Medal Index Cards:

Military Place: England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, United Kingdom

Name: Charles Blane

Military Date: 1914-1920

Regimental Number: 3382, 590091

Regiment or Corps: Bedfordshire Regiment, Labour Corps

He was registered on the 1918 Absent Voters list:

Full Name: Blane, Charles Henry

Residence Place: Mid-Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire, England

Residence Year; 1918

Service Number: 590091

Rank: Private

Regiment: 693rd Agricultural Company Labour Corps

Conflict Period: World War I

Served For: United Kingdom

The Agricultural Labour Corps was founded in 1917, generally comprising men who were unfit for frontline service and were sent to work on farms. We do not know the reason for Charles being enlisted into this corps.

In 1921, living in Sun Street, Potton with his mother, younger brother and sister Doris, Charles was now a leather tanner, working for F W BRAYBROOKS (Potton) Ltd. Charles married Mary EMERY in the last quarter of 1935 in the Biggleswade registration district of Bedfordshire. In 1939 Charles and Mary were living at 328 Bury Hill, Potton. The electoral register of 1945 shows them having moved to 4 Bury Hill. By 1963 they had moved to 32 Bury Hill. They were still living at 32 in 1972. Charles' death was registered in Bedford in January 1973. Mary lived until December 1996.

Sydney Frank (Sid) Blane was born 15 January 1898, in Potton. He enlisted in the British Army Royal Horse Artillery, attestation 7 June 1916.

UK, British Army World War I Service Records, 1914-1920:

Name: Sydney Blane

Gender: Male

Enlistment Age: 18

Birth Date: abt 1898

Document Date: 1916
Residence Place: Sun St Potton, Beds
Military Date: 1916
Regimental Number: 194977
Regiment Name: Royal Artillery (Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery)

Absent Voters List 1918

Full Name: Blane, Sydney Frank
Residence Place: Mid-Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire, England
Residence Year: 1918
Service Number: 194977
Rank: General (Correction: Gunner)
Regiment: Royal Horse Artillery
Conflict Period: World War I
Served For: United Kingdom

According to one transcript of the absent voters list of 1918, he held the rank of General. However, he certainly did not hold that exalted rank. It is an incorrect transcription of 'gnr', the abbreviation for Gunner, and he was a Gunner Lieutenant. We can tell from the photograph (see Front piece³) that he was commissioned at some point, as he has a lieutenant's pip on his shoulder and is carrying a swagger stick.

In 1921 Sydney was living with his mother, brother Charles and sister Doris, and like Charles working as a leather tanner for F W Braybrooks. Sydney married Amelia HARRIS in Potton 30 September 1928. Their son Kenneth was born in the third quarter of 1935. In 1939 Sydney and Amelia were living in Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, presumably with Kenneth (closed entry). According to the register Sid was a leather dresser/tanner (heavy work). Sydney's death was registered in the Bedford registration district in February 1985.

Doris Bessie Blane was born 24 February 1901 in Potton, her father dying while she was still an infant. In 1921 Doris was still living in Sun Street, Potton, with her mother and her brothers Charles and Sydney. Her occupation was given as land worker, employer M J ARMOND, market gardener. However, the census record also states that she was unemployed at the time.

Doris married William R RIDGELEY in the third quarter of 1934 in the Biggleswade registration district. There is no record of any children. At the time of the 1939 register Doris was living with her husband and mother at 35 Green End Gamlingay, South Cambridgeshire.

William died 6 February 1968 in Gamlingay, his death registered in Cambridge and his will probated 17 April in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. His estate was valued at £1,406. Doris died 31 May 1975 in Green End. Her will was probated 30 June 1975, her estate

³ 'Sid at Potton' in family collection: possibly taken for his commissioning. E Young Photographer, Newmarket (no date)

valued at £2,521.

Sources

Birth, Census Poor Law and Death records, courtesy of Ancestry; Marriage Records courtesy of Family Search.

Horace: Military Records courtesy of Ancestry and CWGC. Death details sourced from Regimental Records.

Charles: All information courtesy of Ancestry.

Sid: Military records courtesy of Ancestry and UK Forces War Records.

Stories and full sources can be found on Wikitree:

Horace ID: Blane-181

Charles ID: Blane-183

Sid ID: Blane-182

Doris ID: Blane-184

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

We notify our members via email about any zoom/hybrid meetings; however, some get bounced back and for some members we do not have an email address. If you have not been receiving these emails from us it means that we do not have your email address, or the email address we have is incorrect or your mailbox is full.

If you have an email address but are not getting our emails but would like to do so, please send your current email address to **treasurer@bfhs.org.uk**.

RECENT TALKS

Were you unable to attend the talk given by Michael Hallet and David Annul to the Society on 6 February and 6 March respectively, or use Zoom to join the live audience? If you missed out, both Michael and David have kindly provided summaries of their talks which appear on the following pages. Note that the hyperlinks in David's summary do not work in the Journal.

HEROES & GHOSTS

How scandal and shame affect genealogy

Michael Hallett

Visit any family home and you will tend to find mementos of the past, traces of the family's passage through time. Faded sepia photographs, perhaps a young soldier standing stiffly before going to war, or a tarnished trophy from a smalltown dancing contest in the 1950s.

When I was growing up, such traces of the past were absent. It was as if my parents' generation had appeared out of nowhere. No grandfathers and two step-grandmothers contributed to this sense of a family without a past. Without, that is, a past that anyone was proud of. Yet my family had every reason to be proud - very proud.

This is the story of my grandfather, Wing Commander Harold BLACKBURN MC AFC - a story that disappeared from my family narrative for the best part of a century.

Harold Blackburn was born in Dymock, Gloucestershire, in 1879. At age 2 his family moved to Doncaster, where his father took up a post as a school principal. Harold had an engineering bent and became a bicycle maker and repairer - advanced technology for the first decade of the twentieth century.

This was the decade of the first heavier-than-air flight in America in 1903. In the ensuing years the aviation 'bug' swept through Europe. Harold got bitten. He moved to London around 1909 where he designed and built the Blackburn-Walker Biplane with fellow engineer Albert WALKER. It is not known if the plane ever flew, but it seems unlikely.

Undeterred, Harold turned to piloting and in May 1911 gained Royal Aero Club license No 79 at Hendon, flying a Bristol Boxkite, see Fig 1. Harold's pre-war flying career took a decisive turn the following year, when he became the instructor at the Blackburn Flying School, also at Hendon. This was the brainchild of aircraft constructor Robert Blackburn, a fellow Yorkshireman but not related to Harold. The two became lifelong friends.

After the short-lived school closed in 1913, Harold became Robert Blackburn's test and demonstration pilot, spreading interest in aviation through flights across Yorkshire in the Blackburn Type I two-seater, accompanied by Dr M G CHRISTIE (later the British Air Attaché in Berlin in the 1930s).

These promotional flights included taking 10-year-old Isla TUDOR up to 10,000 feet at Bridlington, winning the 'Wars of the Roses' air race against the Lancashire-built Avro 504 in October 1913 see Fig 2 and Fig 3, making newspaper deliveries by air at the Sheffield Aviation Week (accompanied by actress Mae BACON), and flying Britain's first scheduled passenger-carrying flights at the Great Yorkshire Agricultural Show on 22-24 July 1914.

Two weeks later, the world was at war. On 5 August 1914 Harold flew his aircraft into a recruiting station at Harrogate. His machine was impounded by the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Two weeks later, aged 35, Harold was a certified combat pilot.

Harold Blackburn served in France in 1914. When the war that ‘would be over by Christmas’ was not over by Christmas, the RFC expanded. Pilots with experience in France were brought back to form new squadrons. Harold was given command of ‘C’ Flight of No. 14 Squadron - the only squadron whose motto is in Arabic.

Late in 1915 the squadron went to Egypt to defend the vital Suez Canal from Turkish advances. ‘C’ Flight undertook reconnaissance missions over the desert and harried the Turkish forces by bombing the water tank at the oasis of Bir Hassana, using a bombsight designed by Harold. He received the Military Cross and was mentioned in despatches on several occasions.

Harold returned to France in 1918, later receiving the Air Force Cross. He briefly left the Royal Air Force, got married to Violet LISTER, and soon re-joined. A group photograph from the marriage is at Fig 4. By 1921 he was at Henlow where they lost a child, but my mother was born. In 1924 Harold became base commander at the Aircraft & Armament Experimental Establishment at RAF Martlesham Heath.

Then scandal struck. RAF bases were hardscrabble places to live, with no electricity or hot running water. My grandmother broke under the strain and had an affair. The family fell apart. Harold gained custody of my mother. My grandmother was expelled from the family. She later retired to Cornwall with her second husband.

Harold and my mother moved to Jersey, which they had to evacuate for six years during World War 2. By the time I was born in 1961, Harold had passed away, along with traces of his extraordinary flying career. The pain and shame of being abandoned by her own mother was crippling for my mother, which she never recovered from. In the 1970s we moved to New Zealand - as if trying to get as far away as possible from the past.

In the 2000s I inherited my grandfather’s buried memorabilia and returned to live in Britain. I started researching the facts of his career—yet soon found there was a much more important emotional history I was carrying in my own DNA: the psychological damage my mother suffered, passed down through epigenetic inheritance.

Completing the jigsaw puzzle of Harold’s flying career shifted from assembling a timeline of people, places, and events to reconstructing the emotional narrative of the family that had been absent during my childhood.

I eventually learned the address of my grandmother’s house in Cornwall, visited it and encountered my grandmother’s lifelong pain. She never meant to hurt or abandon her daughter; she just got caught in a situation she could not handle and reacted in an understandably human way.

Three weeks after this cathartic moment, I took my father’s memorabilia to the Antiques Roadshow event at Banbury Castle. Along with my wife and son, I was filmed telling the world about this amazing aviation pioneer whose history had been lost for a century.

The pain and shame our ancestors could not cope with comes down to us as inherited trauma. The past replays until we heal it. From all I learned on this journey I have written *The Generational Trauma Workshop Manual*, which is available on Amazon.



Figure 1 - Harold Blackburn in a Bristol Boxkite at Hendon, 1912



Figure 2 - Blackburn Monoplane v Avro 504, Wars of the Roses Air Race, 1912



Figure 3 - Harold Blackburn, Robert Blackburn, Dr M. C. Christie, Jules Mamet, Wars of the Roses Air Race, 1913



Figure 4 - Marriage of Harold Blackburn and Violet Lister, Kingston, 1921

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN THE 19TH CENTURY

David Annul

Crime and Punishment ... in the 19th Century

 www.lifelinesresearch.co.uk
 dave.annul@lifelinesresearch.co.uk
 @davelifelines.bsky.social



Criminal Justice System – the hierarchy

Court	JPs	Judge	Jury	Archives
Petty Sessions (Police Courts in London)	✓	✗	✗	Local record offices
Quarter Sessions	✓	✗	✓	Local record offices
Assizes	✗	✓	✓	The National Archives
Court of King's/Queen's Bench*	✗	✓	✓	The National Archives
Court of Exchequer Chamber (appeals)*	✗	✓	✗	The National Archives

* From 1875 High Court of Justice – appeals to Court of Appeal

Recommended Reading

Tracing Your Ancestors in the National Archives: The website and beyond, Amanda Bevan, The National Archives (7th ed. 2006)

Criminal Ancestors: A Guide to Historical Criminal Records in England and Wales, David T Hawkings, Alan Sutton (1992)

Tracing Your Criminal Ancestors: A Guide for Family Historians, Stephen Wade, Pen & Sword (2017)

Websites

- Crime, Prisons & Punishment database, Findmypast: <https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-Records/england-and-wales-crime-prisons-and-punishment-1770-1935>
- Court, Governmental & Criminal Records database, Ancestry: https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/categories/clp_court
- The British Newspaper Archive: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>
- The Proceedings of the Old Bailey: <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>
- New South Wales State Archives Collection – Convicts: <https://mhns.wa.gov.au/archive/subjects/convicts>
- Libraries Tasmania - Convict Records: <https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/convict-records>
- Digital Panopticon: <https://www.digitalpanopticon.org>
- National Archives Research Guide: Criminal Court Cases, an overview: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/criminal-court-cases-an-overview>
- Victorian prisons and punishments (article): <https://www.bl.uk/victorian-britain/articles/victorian-prisons-and-punishments>

Dave Annul FRHistS, FSG, QG

Crimeline

- 1800 **Criminal Lunatics Act** – allowed for the indefinite incarceration of ‘criminal lunatics’
- 1815 **New Bethlem Hospital** opened in Southwark
- 1817 **Millbank Prison** London’s first ‘modern’ prison opened
- 1819 **Peterloo Massacre** – eighteen people killed at a meeting demanding reform
- 1820 **Cato Street Conspirators** became the last people to be sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered
- 1827 **Peel’s Acts** – repealed, consolidated and rationalised centuries of legislation
 - The Criminal Statutes Repeal Act
 - The Criminal Law Act
 - The Larceny Act
 - The Malicious Injuries to Property Act
 - The Riot Act
- 1829 **Metropolitan Police Act** – established London’s Metropolitan Police force
- 1832 **Reform Act** – introduced major changes to the electoral system
- 1833 **Labour of Children in Factories Act** – one of many Factory Acts which gradually improved conditions for the working classes (see also, 1847 & 1878)
- 1834 **Poor Law Amendment Act** – established Poor Law Unions to run workhouses
- 1834 **The Old Bailey** officially named the Central Criminal Court
- 1835 **Municipal Corporations Act** – enabled urban authorities to establish police forces
- 1839 **Rural Constabulary Act** - enabled rural authorities to establish police forces
- 1842 **Mines & Collieries Act** – women and children aged under 10 not to work underground
- 1842 **Fleet Prison** London’s main debtor’s prison closed
- 1842 **Pentonville Prison** opened
- 1847 **Factories Act** – limited the working week in textile mills
- 1848 **Indictable Offences Act & Summary Jurisdiction Act** - clarified divisions in jurisdictions between Petty Sessions and Quarter Sessions/Assizes
- 1853 **Penal Servitude Act** – replaced transportation with long-term prison sentences
- 1854 **Youthful Offenders Act** – established Reformatory Schools for children under 16
- 1855 **Criminal Justice Act** – increased powers of JPs to hear cases at Petty Sessions
- 1856 **County & Borough Police Act** – compelled local authorities to establish police forces
- 1857 **Industrial Schools Act** – established Industrial Schools for children aged 7 to 14
- 1861 **Offences against the Person Act** – death penalty only for murder
- 1863 **Broadmoor Hospital** opened to house ‘criminal lunatics’
- 1868 **Capital Punishment Amendment Act** – abolished public executions
- 1869 **Bankruptcy Act** – abolished imprisonment for Bankruptcy
- 1870 **Elementary Education Act** – the first of several Education Acts which eventually led to the introduction of free schooling for all children aged between 5 and 12
- 1873 **Supreme Court of Judicature Act** – established the High Court of Justice (from 1875)
- 1877 **Prisons Act** – all prisons brought under the control of the Home Office
- 1878 **Factory and Workshop Act** – consolidated and replaced previous legislation relating to working conditions in factories etc.
- 1882 **Royal Courts of Justice** opened in The Strand, London
- 1891 **Factory and Workshop (Consolidating) Act** – raised minimum age of factory workers to 11 and consolidated previous similar legislation

Dave Annal FRHistS, FSG, QG

VISITING BEDFORD

The new '*What's On Bedford Borough hub*' officially opened its doors on Wednesday 28 May 95, offering a vibrant space that brings together local culture, visitor services and community spirit under one roof.

Find it at 50 Silver Street, Bedford, MK40 1SU; Phone 01234 276573; email whatson@bedford.gov.uk; website bedford.gov.uk; open Wednesday to Saturday 10 am to 4 pm.

PUBLICATIONS LIST

Our Publications include Bedfordshire Parish Records, Marriage Licences, Non-Conformist Registers, Surname Index, Poor Law Paper Index, Journals, Luton General Cemetery Grave Registers, Wills and Members' Handbook. The Publication List is available from our website bfhs.org.uk/publications, or you can request a printed copy, see address details on rear cover.

BIRTH, MARRIAGE, DEATH CERTIFICATES

We are looking to build up our collection of resources at the Research Centre that are available to help researchers of Bedfordshire ancestors. We would like to build up our collection of Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates of Bedfordshire people. Do you have any copies of certificates that you would be willing to donate to this collection?

Please send copies to Bedfordshire Family History Society, Research Centre, Office 1-7, Community Voluntary Service, 43 Bromham Road, Bedford. MK40 2AA or alternatively send scanned copies to Research.Centre@bfhs.org.uk.

We would also like to build our collection of printed pedigree charts for Bedfordshire families. If you have a pedigree chart that you would like to share, please send a copy to the above address.

SURNAME INTEREST DATABASE

The Family History Federation (FHF) has a Surname Interest database on their website, familyhistoryfederation.com/surname-interests. This has 27 societies contributing data (up from 24 last year). There are nearly 70,000 surnames listed in the database.

Register your Surname Interests with us and these will be included in the FHF database, see 'Member's Profile Form' in the Members' Portal.

IMPORTANT MEMBERS' PORTAL CHANGES

Brian Payne

The Members' Portal of our website provides access to a variety of BFHS Member-only resources such as Talk Videos, back issues of our Journal (back to Volume 1, Issue1), Journals from a multitude of Family History Societies across the world, Funeral Directors' Records and much more. To ease our administrative burden of running the portal we have recently introduced a few changes.

From its inception, the system has always been set up to pick a password for you. This was a manual process for me that required linking the member number and password, then emailing it to the member. The passwords were always very random and possibly difficult to remember. Over the past few years, we have been testing new ways to log on. We now have a system that allows members to choose their own password and reset it automatically, without human intervention.

Below are the instructions for setting up your new login. **Every member will need to go through this process** to create a **new account** with a **new password** with the new system. Once approved by our Membership Secretary, you should have access as you did before. If you need to, there is a logout button on the menu on the right-hand side.

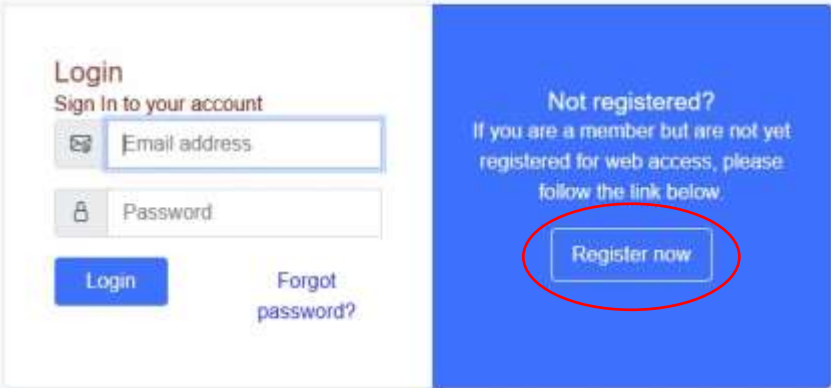
I would like to thank Ryan O'Neill for his hard work in setting this up. As you know, we are all volunteers, including Ryan, who spent considerable time creating the new system.

Set-up Instructions

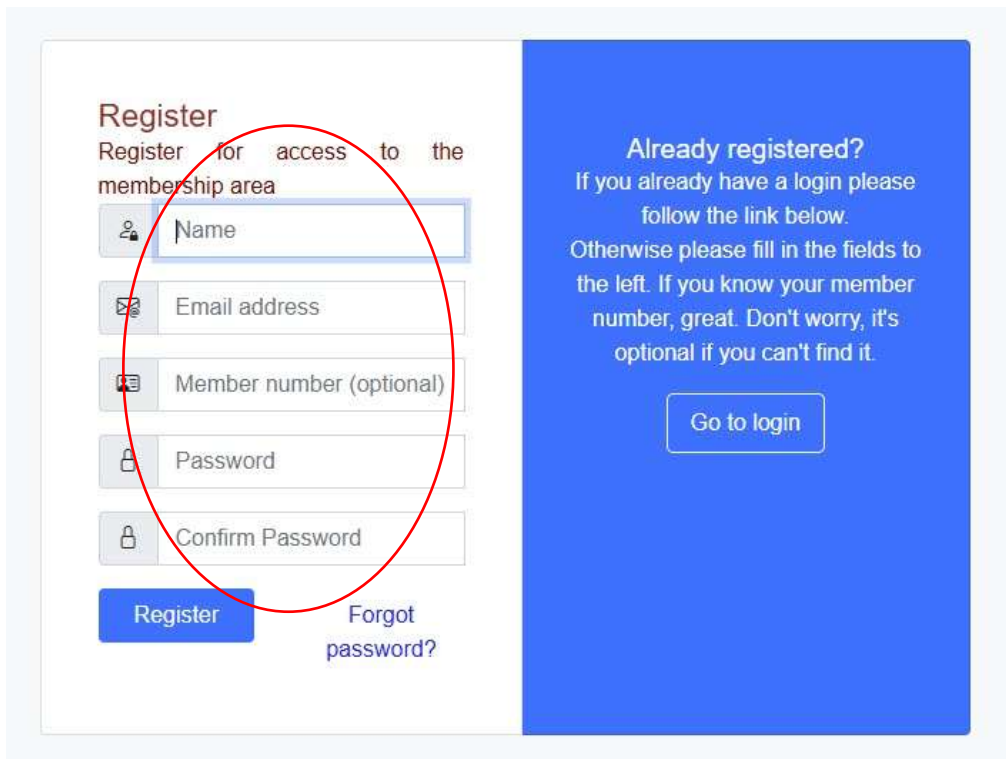
Click on Members Portal on the menu at the top of the screen of the BFHS website, **bfhs.org.uk**.

Please follow the steps below to set up your new logon

Click on "Register now"



The screenshot shows the BFHS Members' Portal interface. On the left, there is a 'Login' section with the text 'Sign In to your account'. It contains two input fields: 'Email address' and 'Password', each with an icon (an envelope for email and a lock for password). Below these fields is a blue 'Login' button. To the right of the 'Login' button is a link that says 'Forgot password?'. On the right side of the interface, there is a blue box with white text that reads 'Not registered?' followed by 'If you are a member but are not yet registered for web access, please follow the link below.' Below this text is a button labeled 'Register now', which is circled in red.

The image shows a registration form on the left and a blue sidebar on the right. The form is titled 'Register' and includes the text 'Register for access to the membership area'. It contains five input fields: 'Name', 'Email address', 'Member number (optional)', 'Password', and 'Confirm Password'. Each field has a small icon to its left. Below the fields is a blue 'Register' button and a link 'Forgot password?'. A red circle highlights the 'Name' field and the 'Register' button. The blue sidebar on the right contains the text 'Already registered?' followed by instructions for existing users and a 'Go to login' button.

Register
Register for access to the membership area

Name

Email address

Member number (optional)

Password

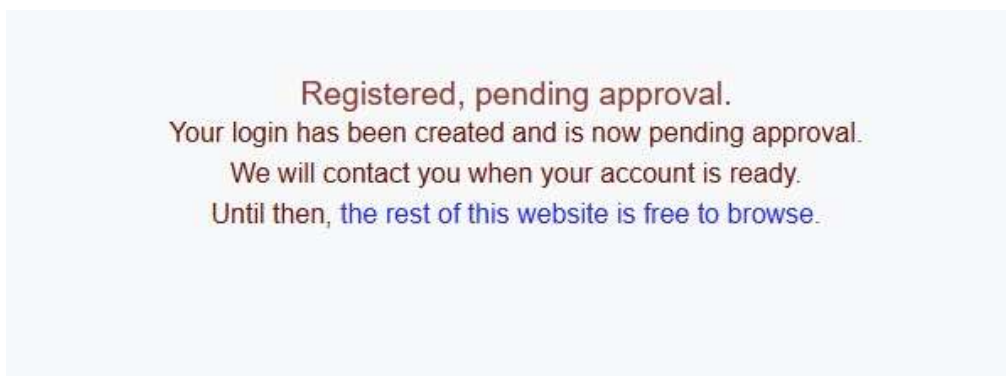
Confirm Password

Register [Forgot password?](#)

Already registered?
If you already have a login please follow the link below.
Otherwise please fill in the fields to the left. If you know your member number, great. Don't worry, it's optional if you can't find it.

[Go to login](#)

Fill in your information on the left, create a password and click on Register.
A confirmation page will appear.

The image shows a confirmation message on a light blue background. The text is centered and reads: 'Registered, pending approval. Your login has been created and is now pending approval. We will contact you when your account is ready. Until then, the rest of this website is free to browse.' The last sentence is a link.

Registered, pending approval.
Your login has been created and is now pending approval.
We will contact you when your account is ready.
Until then, [the rest of this website is free to browse.](#)

The Membership Secretary will verify the information and grant you access. You will receive an email once you have been approved.

Click on the link '**the rest of this website is free to browse**' to return to the home page.

BFHS RESEARCH CENTRE



LOCATION AND PARKING

Bedfordshire Family History Society's Research Centre is now open and located at the Community Voluntary Service offices at 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA.⁴

There is limited parking in the CVS car park at the rear of the building in Trevor Street. Alternative parking is available nearby at Greyfriars Surface Carpark and Allhallows Multi-Storey Car Park.



⁴ Map copyright openstreetmap.org, openstreetmap.org/copyright.

RESOURCES

An extensive library that will appeal to family and social historians.

Parish Register transcripts for all historic parishes in Bedfordshire.

Monumental Inscriptions.

Free internet access to genealogical resources including *The Genealogist*.

Microfiche collection including The International Genealogical Index, 1881 Census and Telephone Directories.



FACILITIES

The Research Centre is located on the first floor of the CVS building and can be accessed by a lift.

Kitchen and toilet facilities are available. The kitchen may be used for preparing drinks during your visit.

OPENING HOURS

Our research centre is open to members and non-members by appointment only. We will be open at the following times:

Wednesday and Saturday 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

In addition, we will be opening on some Monday and Tuesday mornings between 9:30 and 12:30. Please check the Research Centre calendar for details.

HOW TO BOOK A VISIT

Please use our Research Centre calendar on the society web page, bfhs.org.uk/researchctr.html, to see details of available appointment times and use the links provided to request an appointment.

Alternative times may be available subject to the availability of volunteers to staff the research centre. Please email Research.Centre@bfhs.org.uk for enquiries.

For members without internet access, bookings can be made by phoning the research centre on 01234 867216 during opening hours. Please note the phone will not be manned outside these times.

Membership Subscriptions 2026

If you are intending to pay your **2026** membership by Standing Order or Bank Transfer, please drop an email to **treasurer@bfhs.org.uk** to advise your name, post code, payment method and membership type. Your help would be appreciated.

Please use the new Barclays bank details for bank transfers to Bedfordshire Family History Society, using sort code 20-05-73 and account number 93516105. When convenient, please change any standing order from NatWest to Barclays and please remember to cancel your standing order to our NatWest account.

Please note that the 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society approved an increase in some subscription rates. Please see the rear cover for the 2026 subscription rates.

BEDFORDSHIRE HERITAGE TEA TOWELS

The Society has had a supply of Bedfordshire Heritage tea towels printed and these are sold to raise funds. These tea towels are really too nice to use for drying up; they are beautifully colour printed with some famous Bedfordshire landmarks forming a border for the County map. Even if you do not have any Bedfordshire ancestors, they make ideal gifts, see inside rear cover.

They are 100% cotton and at £5 each can be obtained from the bookstall at members' meetings, by email to **secretary@bfhs.org.uk**, or by post to Lynn Manning at 38 Risborough Road, Bedford, MK41 9QW, Tel. 01234 306482. For UK orders please add **postage and packing** as follows:

Up to 2 tea towels add	£2.10
3 to 4 tea towels add	£2.50

For orders from outside the UK please enquire before ordering. Cheques should be made payable to Bedfordshire Family History Society.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire

Family and Local History Research (including Probate Transcriptions)
undertaken by

COLIN DAVISON

66 Sudeley Walk, BEDFORD

Bedfordshire MK41 8JH

England

Tel: (01234) 364956

Email: colinndavison@gmail.com

*Member of the
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Professional Service Offered. All Enquiries Welcome

BOOK REVIEW

Jan Darts

ROBERTS, R. (1971) *The Classic Slum, Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century*. First Published by the University of Manchester Press 1971. Published in Penguin Books 1978, Republished in Penguin Books 1990.

Roberts, R. (1976) *A Ragged Schooling, Growing up in the Classic slum*. First Published by Manchester University Press 1976. Reprinted Fontana Paperbacks 1978. Fifth impression 1982, Flamingo edition 1984. Mandolin edition 2018.

Industrialisation in the 18th and 19th centuries created a need for a large workforce and the need for low-cost housing. This housing, centred on the industrial sites, was often densely packed, of poor quality and overcrowded. Whilst Bedfordshire was largely agricultural, industry in the likes of Bedford and Luton created slum housing much of

which did not disappear until the late 1960s.¹ Descriptions of life in the slums has largely been written by those who never experienced this environment. These two books by George Roberts document his experience as a child growing up in the Salford slums in the early 1900s. Although the books are focussed on Salford, they do give a fascinating insight into ‘slum culture’ of the time, much of which must be common to the slums of Bedfordshire.

Both books cover the same period of the first quarter of the 20th Century and are based on the author’s experience of living in the Roberts’ Corner shop. The first book, *The Classic Slum*, is more academic in relating his story, giving a wider context of his experience within developments on a national scale. One noticeable aside in this volume is his criticism of the historian A J P Taylor’s² interpretation of working-class culture - remarkable given Taylor’s communist leanings. The second book, *A Ragged Schooling*, is more personal and a much easier read.

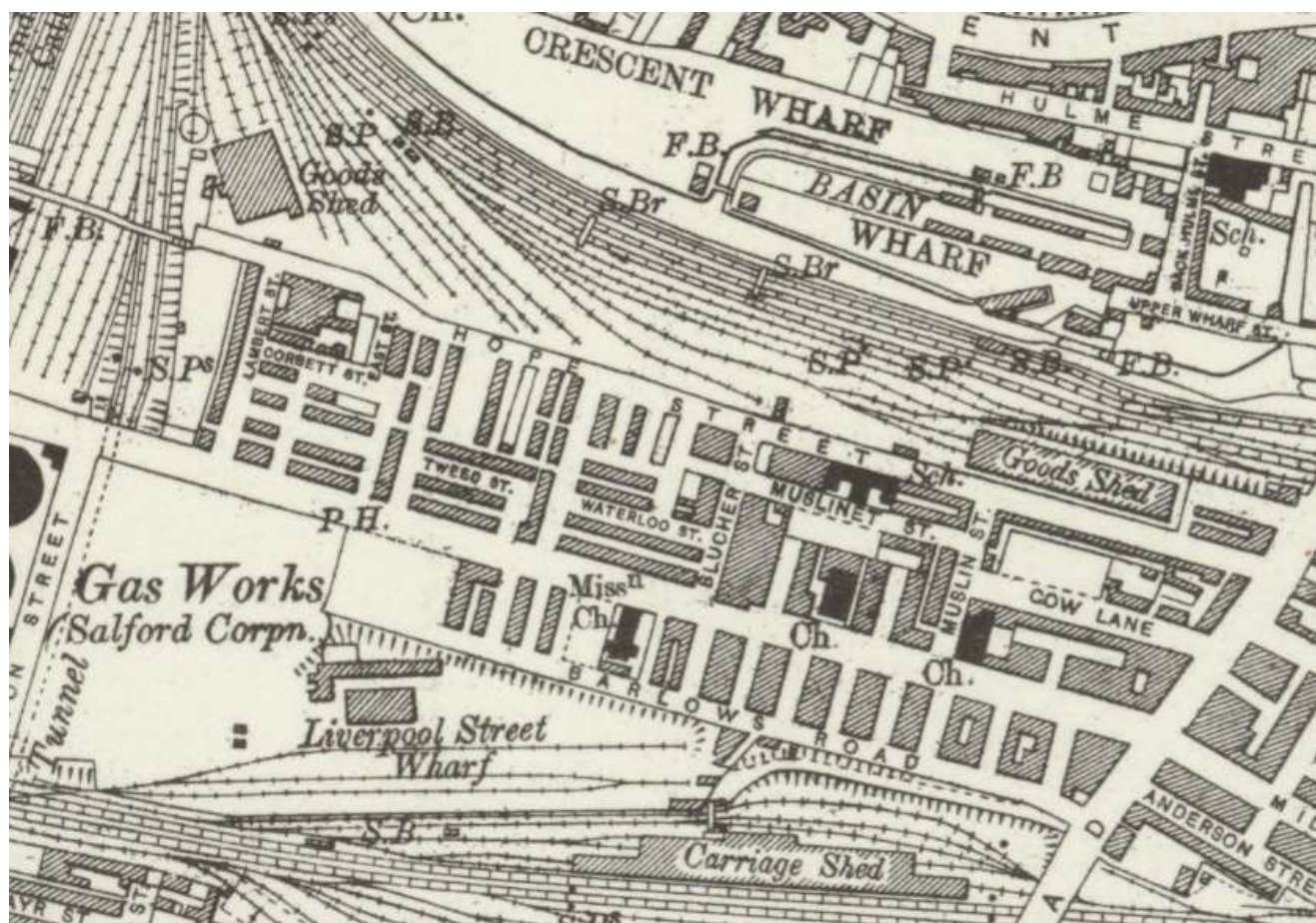
	1.	2.	3.	4.
1	Robert Roberts	Head	38	
2	Jane Elizabeth Roberts	Wife		38
3	Jennie Roberts	Daughter		13
4	Elsie Roberts	Daughter		11
5	Ada Roberts	Daughter		8
6	Robert Roberts	Son	5	
7	Arthur Roberts	Son	3 months	

Robert was born in 1905 to a family running a corner shop in a poor district of Salford. He is found in the 1911 Census with his brother Arthur, and sisters Ada, Elsie and Jennie, his mother Jane and father Robert Snr. The return identifies that one child in the family has died. The father is a ‘brass finisher’, and this is the role that Robert takes up as an apprentice after leaving school. This role is largely unskilled, and Robert explains how the mechanics of the task could be learnt with in a morning and the key skill was to overcome the boredom of the long hours spent at his station in the machine shop. Robert would go on to become an English teacher and social historian acquiring his love of books from his mother.

¹ [https://hansard.parliament.uk/%E2%80%8CCommons/1966-05-25/debates/0d423e43-c2c0-4593-998a-78c1e9adb437/SlumClearance\(Bedford\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/%E2%80%8CCommons/1966-05-25/debates/0d423e43-c2c0-4593-998a-78c1e9adb437/SlumClearance(Bedford))

² Alan John Percivale Taylor (1906-90) was an English historian who specialised in 19th and 20th-century European diplomacy. Both a journalist and a broadcaster, he became well known to millions through his television lectures.

The Census return has them living at 1 Waterloo Street, Salford. The map below³ shows the area of Salford at the time. From an illustration in *Ragged Schooling* the corner shop is the north-east corner of Waterloo Street. Redevelopment has seen all but a few of the street names erased and the slums replaced by industry.



The parts of his story that had most impact on me were the unexpected conservative politics of the working class in the area - ‘they know how to run the country’ attitude, the social ranks within the families in the area despite all of them living in near poverty, and the pivotal role played by the Roberts’ Corner Shop in the lives of the local area. I was also struck by the similarity in our early schooling experience (mine was from mid 1950s in Hertfordshire) with oversized classes (50+ in my case), slates for writing, and lack of ambition by the system for their pupils - except a privileged few.

You may be lucky to find these books through your local library, but they are also available to purchase second hand online from about £3 each, with postage extra. With the insight provided by these books, I am now looking forward to Nick Barrett’s talk on ‘*Tracing industrial labourers in your family*’ planned for 6 November.

³ Courtesy of NLS, Lancashire CIV.SW, OS Six inch to the mile revised 1905, published 1915.

WHY NOT WRITE SOMETHING FOR THE JOURNAL?

We are always on the lookout for contributions to the *Journal*, any size, short or long. To give you some idea, a *Journal* page takes around 450 words to fill. We would also welcome items shorter than a page. You might feel more comfortable writing a letter or email on a topic, and this would be included in a '**Letters**' page in the *Journal*.

There are very few requirements for a contribution. It must have a family history theme although this could be the story of a building that has a significance to a family history, for example a church where several members of a family were baptised, married, or buried. There needs to be a link to Bedfordshire, although if the research technique is interesting then it can be included as an example of 'what to do.' The best articles include copies of original records such as census returns and family photographs.

Concentrate on telling the story of the characters in the family history and highlight any successes, or failures in the research. Identify any unresolved issues that need further work. Something as short as 300 to 400 words is acceptable, and much longer articles are always welcome because they can be published over several issues. No need to worry if you are not used to writing. Do not worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar, or physical layout. The editorial 'team' will help you produce a polished article.

Seeing your own work in print can feel like a real achievement and others will appreciate your effort. Simply writing down your 'brick wall' can help you see the problem more clearly and, you never know, someone reading it may be able to help you move forward. A great way to start is to take a small part of your family tree and describe the main characters, where and when they lived and died, and any stumbling blocks you encountered in researching their history, such as name changes or document transcription errors. If you need ideas to get you going or would like to discuss your ideas, please send an email to journal@bfhs.org.uk.

REMINDER

CLOSING DATE for articles for publication in the *Journal* are as follows:

March: 31 January.

June: 30 April.

September: 31 July.

December: 31 October.

(Articles submitted near the closing date may not be published until the following *Journal*)



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CDs marked † also contain Monumental Inscriptions (MIs) from a graveyard in the parish

(church, chapel, or cemetery). Those marked * contain records from the registers or graveyards of Nonconformist chapels in the parish, photographs, and other records are included as available.

‡ Holwell: MIs and Burials only, not Registers (now in Herts).

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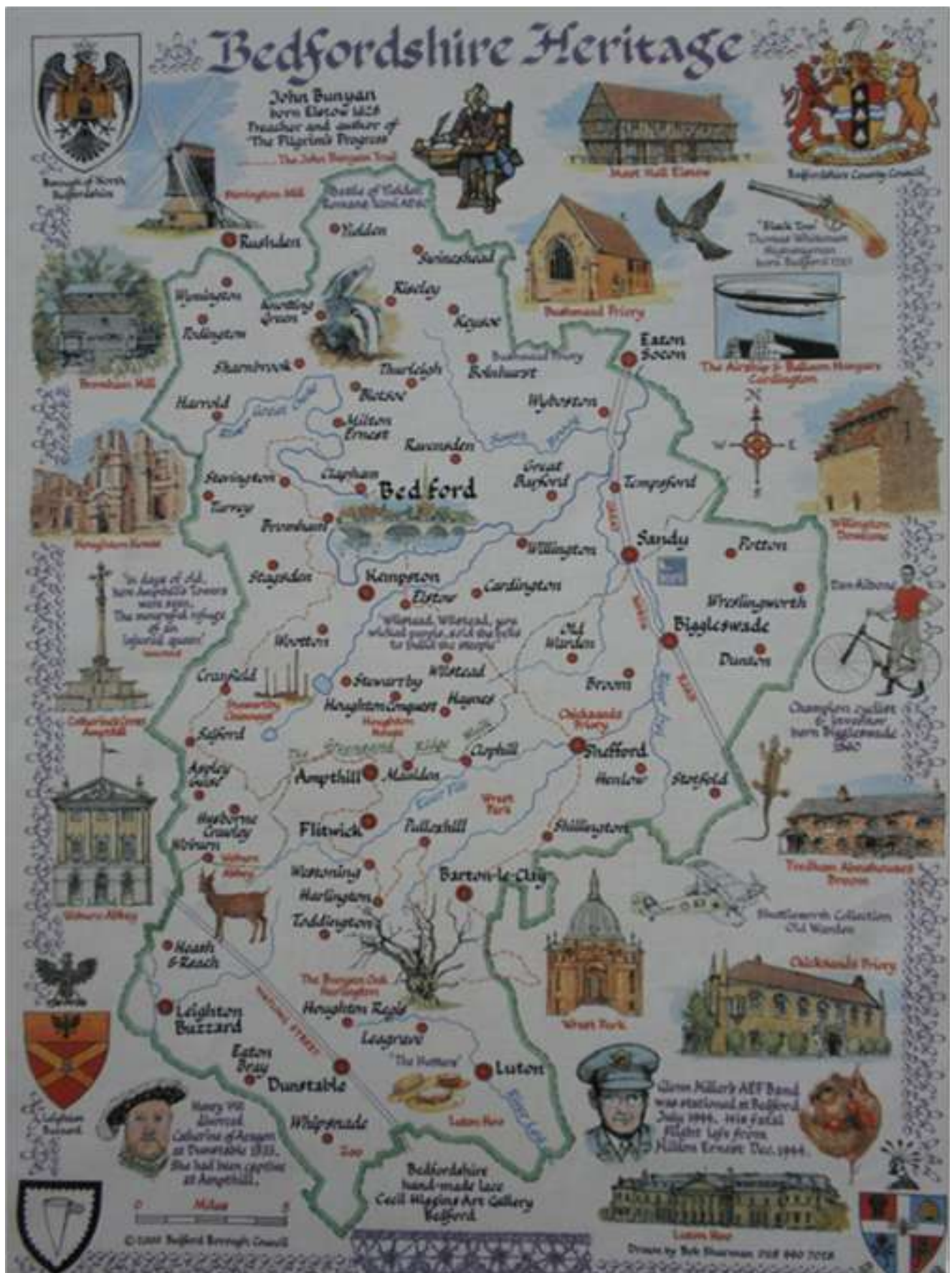
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