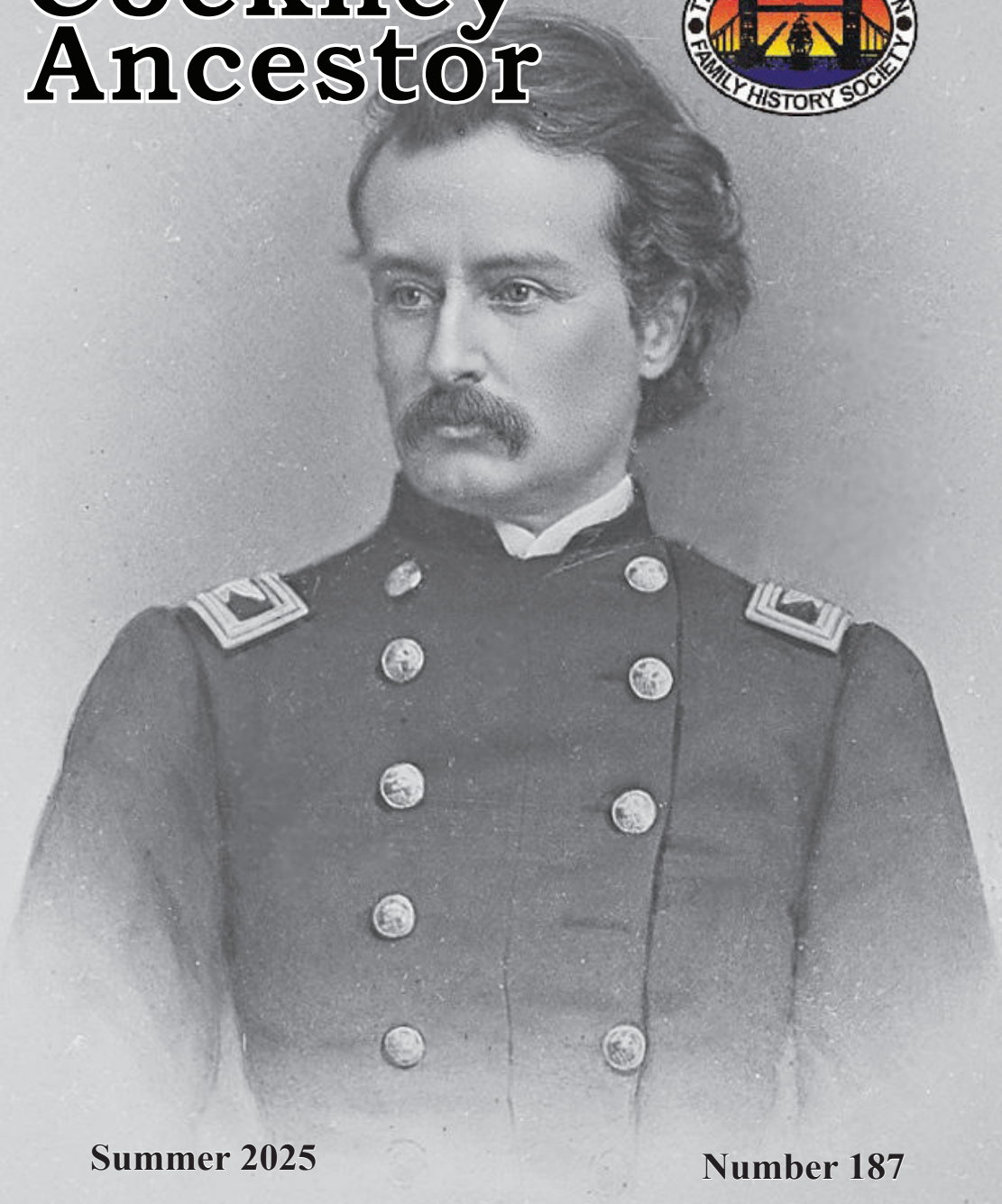


Cockney Ancestor



Summer 2025

Number 187

The East of London Family History Society

<http://www.eolfhs.org.uk>

Registered Charity No. 1094419

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Front Cover Illustration

The Front cover illustration shows Edward Serrell in the uniform of a Unionist officer, a lieutenant colonel. For more information read Peter Holford's article, *A Surprise Encounter*, on page 52.

Image courtesy of Peter Holford

Cockney Ancestor

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Your Society Needs You!

Janet Seward

As many of you may know, I resigned as Society Secretary after 14 years at the last Annual General Meeting (AGM). Since then, no one has come forward to take on the role and our Chairman, Gary Barnes, has asked me to give some insight into the duties of the Secretary. Firstly, I should say that I resigned because I thought that 14 years was long enough in a role and the society needed someone with new, fresh ideas. Secondly, although the job obviously requires commitment, when I first became Secretary, I was able to do it while working full-time. Thirdly, there is increasingly, a move to make committee roles less rigid and many can be shared. Zoom means that people can communicate with each other wherever they are in the world.

As the Secretary, you are the point of contact for the administration of society business, in particular organising and attending the AGM and Executive Committee meetings. The minutes are not a verbatim record but a summary of the discussion and the decisions made. Currently, the society has a member who takes the Executive Committee minutes so I just had to make minor corrections where necessary and ensure that matters arising were documented and monitored. The administrative duties also include being the second signatory to the society's bank account (the treasurer is the first signatory).

I always had the support of the Executive and much of the work is collaborative. You are not working alone whether it's reviewing the constitution or organising the AGM. In that case, the Secretary's job is to run the AGM in line with the constitution including publicity, attend the meeting and keep an accurate record of the proceedings. The theme of the day is decided by the Executive as are the arrangements for the rest of the day. It is up to individual preference how much the Secretary gets involved in this process.

Finally, the Secretary has an email account and either deals with enquiries directly or refers them to other Executive members.

If you are interested in all or part of this role, please contact me at *janetseward51@gmail.com*

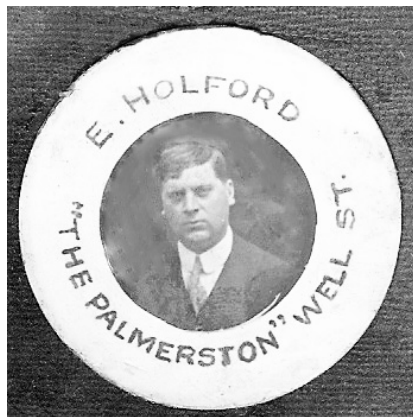
The Editorial Committee is a Sub-committee set up by the Executive. Members are:

Vera Bangs (layout), Audrey Neal (article preparation), Brian McDonald (grammar and postbox), Peter Holford (proof-reading) and Graham Keeler

My Family and their Pubs Part II

Ernest Holford and the Palmerston

Peter Holford No. 14359



Ernest Holford

Image courtesy of Peter Holford

In April 2023 I walked through Victoria Park, a place that my dad always spoke of with affection as somewhere he played as a kid. I was on my way to Well Street, Hackney to look at his birthplace. I walked through to Well Street and, opposite the Tesco superstore, I found the building that used to be the *Palmerston Public House*. His sister, Bet, was born in the same pub less than a year later. It is now the *Well Street Pizza*. I went in to have a look around. The open kitchen area is to the left while the dining area occupies the right-hand side. The walls are tiled over much of their surface in dark green and white but there are no obvious signs of its former use. The young woman behind the counter

asked me what I would like. I told her I was just looking and the reason why. She then said that they had been told that the building had been a launderette. It seems the folk memories are quite limited because it had been a dry-cleaners as recently as 2007. I told her it had been a pub called the *Palmerston*. A look of surprise: 'Another pub?' There followed some platitudes that included 'Wow!' and 'How interesting!' before I thanked her and left.

Ernest **HOLFORD** started working in the pub around 1908. Like his other brothers he had trained as a piano maker. That was a foregone conclusion as their father James was also a piano maker. My dad's story, told to me in 1990, was as follows. 'He found £100–£200 to buy from the two old ladies who owned it. He was the potman.' In 1997 he repeated the story but put the figure at £500. This is probably less reliable as he was very ill by then even if he was still quite lucid. But even so, whichever number it is, it represents a large sum of money saved by a 'potman'. A sum of £200 in 1908 is worth about £220,000 in 2023.

The 1911 census confirms that two old ladies did indeed own the pub. Eliza **MACK** was the licensee, a widow of 76 who had had two children, both of whom had died. The other 'old lady' was Emma **LOVE**, 59 who was single and the sister



The Palmerston in the 1950s

*Image courtesy of Kevin
at <https://pubshistory.com/>*

of Eliza. Intriguingly Eliza had been born in Stroud, Gloucestershire while Emma was born in Norfolk. Also in the pub was a single woman, Alice **UNCLE**, 28 from Bromley-by-Bow. She is described as a servant and so is an employee in the pub. The last person is Ernest **HOLFORD**, 27 and, also, single. Tellingly it is Ernest who has filled in the census form signing it and adding the words 'for Mrs Mack'. He describes himself as 'Public House Manager' while he describes his employer as a 'Beer and Wine House Keeper.' But some of the information entered by Ernest on the census form is totally

wrong. No doubt he did his best using the information given to him. So, what is wrong? Emma Mack was the widow of Thomas Edward Mack who was born in Elsing, Norfolk in 1842. He was the licensee of the *Palmerston* in 1900, the year in which he died. In the 1881 census he was a 'public beer seller' in Islington and his wife, Emma, is shown to be from Horsley near Nailsworth in Gloucestershire. This also happens to be the birth place of her sister, Eliza. In 1911 she had Stroud put on the census form, presumably as the nearest big town and better known. The maiden name of the two sisters was **MORSE** and not Love! In 1911 Eliza would have been 74 and not 76 while Emma was 61 rather than 59.

So why are there these errors? It's probably because of their age and problems of memory. It was also difficult for many folk to calculate their ages if they had forgotten how old they were. Obviously, Eliza had also mixed up her birth place with her husband's or miscommunicated it to Ernest. Whatever the reasons, it is a warning to always check information even when recorded in a census.

After Ernest became the licensee the two sisters moved to the Borough of

Wandsworth where they died: Eliza in 1913 and Emma in 1924.

There can be no doubt that George Holford, Ernest's elder brother and licensee of the *Duke of Devonshire* was pulling the strings in setting up his younger brother in the *Palmerston*. They were close as demonstrated by the photos of the day-trip to Land's End (CA136) and my dad's memories of his Uncle George. No doubt Ernest saw how lucrative the trade could be and decided to work in another local pub. It is almost certain that George would have loaned money to Ernest so that he could buy the business.

Dad remembered the *Palmerston* as a Charrington's pub and the old photo (previous page) shows that he was quite right about that. Being born in 1914 he lived in the *Palmerston* during WWI which

included his dad being away on service leaving his mum to run the pub. Dad only told two stories of his time in the pub. One was when there was great excitement when his Uncle Bill arrived one night in 1917 with all his family in a state of distress, covered in dirt. They had been bombed out on Morning Lane.

The other tale I made a record of in 1998: 'Ma **SMITH** (Mary Smith) used to come into the public bar of the *Palmerston*. She wore a flat cap, drank porter at 2d for a half pint and smoked a clay pipe. She would break off the long stem and soak the pipe in her porter to seal the clay! She was married to a 'nutter' who was 'let out now and again.' On one occasion when he was let out, he found that she wasn't at home. He went to the pub. He grabbed her by the hair and cut her throat. He was tried and hanged.' He said he was about 11 when he witnessed this event. I haven't been able to confirm this murder and there is the problem that they left the *Palmerston* in 1923 when my dad was just nine. So, either he was wrong about his age or the murder happened at the next pub that Ernest ran.

Ernest moved out of the *Palmerston* after his divorce from his wife, May. His daughter Bet (Beatrice) went to the *Duke of Devonshire* to live with her Uncle George. But when George died in 1928 Bet was moved on to live with other aunts.

The *Palmerston* is of a similar age to the *Duke of Devonshire*. It opened in 1872 but has been closed as a pub for many years, the last licensee being in 1963. But the structural quality of the building has ensured its survival and reuse—that



Alice aka May, Ernest's wife
Image courtesy of Peter Holford

and the fact that it wasn't in an area that was totally razed in the name of slum clearance. The three photos of the *Palmerston* show that there have been a few changes. The cornice has been removed and an additional storey has been added (photo next page). This didn't happen at the same time, the cornice being removed well before the extra storey was built.



The Palmerston used as a dry cleaners in 2007
 Image courtesy of Kevin at <https://pubshistory.com/>

In a photo from 2007 which shows it being used as a dry cleaners, the extra storey had not been built. The mouldings around the windows were probably altered when the cornice was removed.

The first photo was taken by the Charrington Brewery during an architectural survey of their pubs (probably early 1950s judging by the two cars). The next photo shows it used as a dry-cleaners in 2007. The photo on the next page dates from April 2023 when it was *Well Street Pizza*. It's hard to believe that any pub in the 21st century would now be named after a prominent politician. Would anyone fall into the Boris Arms (metaphorically) or the Blair Inn? But back in the 19th century when Britain was a world power it was very acceptable to name a pub after a prominent person. There are many examples of the *Queen Victoria* apart from the one in a TV soap. Sometimes a pub was renamed to honour a politician. One of the most distinctive ones that I know of is in Ashton-under-Lyme where a centuries old pub went from the *White Hart* in 1807 to the *Pitt & Nelson* following their recent deaths.

Lord Palmerston was a very significant Liberal politician of the mid-19th century serving as Prime Minister for nearly ten years from 1855, having previously been Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary. He died in office in 1865 at the age of 80. He was a social reformer introducing a new Factory Act, supporting Catholic



The Palmerston as a Pizzeria in 2023
Image courtesy of Peter Holford

emancipation, a law to make vaccination compulsory and penal reform where he reduced the levels of solitary confinement. So, a pub built a few years later had a reasonable chance of being named after him, especially in a Liberal area rather than a Tory one. There are pubs named after *Palmerston* in Dulwich and Tufnell Park. The Hackney pub opened just seven years after his death.

Forward to April 2023 and after a few snaps of the exterior of the pub, I decided to see where my nan lived on Killowen Road. She was the wife that George had divorced in 1923! I hadn't realised how close it was to the pub.

In 1911, before she was married, she was living with her father and step-mother, George and Rebecca **STAFFORD**, at 170 Well Street. The *Palmerston* where Ernest Holford was the manager at that time was 184 Well Street. Killowen Street is about 50 yards away. From Killowen Street I walked back to Well Street, past the *Palmerston*, to look for the *Duke of Devonshire*. Again, I found this pub literally around another corner from the *Palmerston* in the opposite direction to Killowen Road, just 300 yards away. The close-proximity of all these family addresses took me by surprise and there was still one to go.

<https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/relativevalue.php> – compares prices over time.

Next time – *The Bishop Bonner*, Bethnal Green

Email: countill@aol.com

Dr Muriel Jessie Lough Part II

George English No. 10383

The First Woman Doctor from St. Mary's in 1921



St Mary's Hospital, Paddington
Image courtesy of George English

In 1921, Jessie was still living at home at *Talbots* with her sisters, Dorothy and Grace. Their parents were visiting Harry and Ada **FINCH** in Felixstowe, Suffolk.

Jessie was a medical student in 1921 at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington. The original block of St. Mary's Hospital opened

in 1851. Jessie probably studied in the Clarence Memorial Wing. Alexander **FLEMING** had qualified at St. Mary's and then was a lecturer. He returned to St. Mary's in 1918 at the end of WWI. Alexander Fleming would discover penicillin in his laboratory in 1928.

In 1922 there was an inquest and verdict concerning the death from burns of Edith Catherine **WOOD**, aged one-year and ten months. Dr Muriel Jessie **LOUGH** was then a house physician at St. Mary's. Jessie had to report on Edith setting fire to her clothing with a match, resulting in burns over practically all of her body. This caused shock which was the cause of her death, following the severe burns.

Jessie Lough acquired an impressive number of qualifications. Having got her Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in London in 1910, she had registered for the London Medical School for Women in 1917. She got her Bachelor of Medicine (MB), Bachelor of Surgery (BS) at St. Mary's in 1921 when she became a Member of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons (MRCS) and Licentiate

LOUGH, Muriel Jessie, Glengariff, King's Avenue, Buckhurst Hill, Essex—B.Sc. Lond. 1910, M.B., B.S. 1921; M.R.C.S. Eng., L.R.C.P. Lond. 1921, D.P.H. 1923; (*Lond. Sch. Med. Wom. & St. Mary's*); Asst. M.O.H Barking Town.

Medical Directory 1925
Image courtesy of George English

was the first woman to be appointed to be a Medical Officer of Health—this was in Barking, Essex. It was a mixed experience.

In a letter from 5 Netherfield Gardens, Barking to her niece, Joan dated 31 June 1927 Jessie wrote:

I'm sure you must have heard that my pet abomination ceased work in Barking quite suddenly at the beginning of May. He had a few words with the Town Clerk, and resigned in a huff. I've been acting MOH since and have had a rather strenuous time. The new man should take over at the end of September, and I will not be sorry.

Dr Muriel Jessie Lough died 12 May 1929 of rheumatic fever while visiting her elder sister, Ruby **HOLTZ**, in Bremen, Germany. Her parents blamed the Director for tiring her out with too much work.

C. Leonard **WILLIAMS**, the Barking School Medical Officer, gave this report on Jessie: '*Dr Lough, whose name in Barking was a by-word for everything that was honest and homely and thorough, succumbed to an illness which had been threatening her for the past few years, and her death removed from amongst you one whose place it will be impossible to fill.*

Dr Lough had not only had a very thorough training in medicine and particularly in those aspects of medicine in which she had specialised, she had also a much wider training in many aspects of life and her outlook on her duties and responsibilities was correspondingly comprehensive, added to which she had a predilection for hard work.

Together with the members of the Committee who knew her personally, I feel I have indeed lost something more than an ideal colleague. I have lost a real friend.' Jessie Lough was buried 18 May 1929 at St. John the Baptist,

LOUGH Muriel Jessie of 22 West Way Finchley **Middlesex** spinster died 12 May 1929 at Willehad Hans Bremen Germany Administration **London** 12 June to Alfred Arthur Lough chartered accountant. Effects £722 19s. 4d.

Probate notice
Image courtesy of George English

Buckhurst Hill. Her estate would have been worth £55,000 today, using the Retail Price Index.

A Memorial Service was held at Barking for Dr Muriel Lough.

The funeral of Dr Muriel J. Lough, deputy medical officer of health for Barking, whose death was recorded last week, took place at St. John's Churchyard, Buckhurst Hill, on Saturday.

The body had been cremated at Bremen, Germany, where Dr Lough was staying at the time of her death and the ashes were brought to the home of her brother, Alfred, at Buckhurst Hill.

Among those present at the funeral, in addition to the members of the family and relatives, were Councillor J. W. **GARLAND**, OBE, JP, Miss **PODMORE**, Miss **HEDGCOCK**, matron of Upney Hospital, and Mrs **WILLIAMS**, of Barking. The beautiful floral tributes included *Gates of Heaven*, bearing the words 'At rest' from the mothers of the Barking Clinics and Welfare Centres; and wreaths and crosses from the Barking Maternity and Child Welfare Voluntary Association; Barking NALGO.; Barking Public Health Department; medical men of Barking; Matron, Sister, and nursing staff at Upney Hospital; Councillor Garland; Miss Podmore; and Mr and Mrs **SAVAGE** and family.

Barking Memorial Service

A memorial service was held at the Parish Church, Barking, while the interment was taking place at Buckhurst Hill. The Vicar of Barking, Rev. Leslie S. **HUNTER**, conducted the service, assisted by Rev Ashley D. **TURNER** of St. Martin's, Dagenham, and formerly curate-in-charge of St. Paul's Church, Barking and Rev C. N. **WARDLE-HARPER**, curate of Barking. There was a large and representative congregation present and the service was most impressive. A particularly touching spectacle was the presence of a large



St John's Church, Buckhurst Hill

Image courtesy of George English



St Margaret's Church, Barking
Image courtesy of George English

number of mothers, some of whom brought their babies, who attended to pay their last tribute of respect to the memory of one who had been to them a sincere friend and adviser. The church choir were present and Mr H. G. **BERRY** presided at the organ. The hymns sung during the service were 'O God of Bethel', 'The King of Love my Shepherd is' and 'From Thee all skill and science flow.' The lesson, which was from I. Cor. xiii, and in which the importance and value of charity are emphasised, was read by Rev A. D. Turner. A short address was given by the Vicar. *'We are gathered here this morning, he said, quite simply to remember with gratitude and commend to God's mercy one whose life for some years*

in this town was devoted to the service of its people, and one whose untimely death comes as a personal loss to a good many who are gathered here this morning – Dr Muriel Jessie Lough.

A slight figure, always fighting against precarious health, intensely shy, she believed in her work and did it well, and stuck to it up to the last. And here in this town there must be many parents and children who owe their health, possibly even life itself, to her care and wise attention; while outside of those who enjoyed her professional services there were many who admired her work and character and loved her for herself. Thirty-nine is an early age to pass out of this world. Most of us at that age are hoping that our most useful years of service are still before us; and I think it would have been true in her case had she kept her health, for with her the foundations of a life of public service were well laid in sound knowledge, a wisdom which comes from experience, tact that comes of strong human sympathy, complete integrity, and disinterested service. I think we shall all agree this morning that, apart from this memorial service, we shall all honour her memory best by trying to fight against the ignorance and the carelessness and the unhealthy

conditions of life which lead to ill-health and disease, with the same kind of faith and the same devotion which Dr Lough had. If the great body of people in a town like this had the doctor's faith in the cleansing light of scientific knowledge and instead of waiting for diseases to come, took steps to prevent them coming by making use of the means which were provided by the public health services, then the homes of Barking would be happier and better than they sometimes are. For the rest, let me just say this: Dr Lough gave this town devoted, disinterested service; and there is no better epitaph that any of us, who, also, are trying to serve, can have than that. The Vicar then asked the congregation, with the memory of Dr Lough's work in mind, to pray for the public health services of the town; for a greater readiness on the part of all to take advantage of it; for mothers trying to bring up children under adverse circumstances; for children handicapped by ill-health; for the victory of health over disease, of knowledge over ignorance and stupidity, and of a wise love over carelessness and cruelty.'

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The Churchill Connection

Melissa Ford No. 7658

Newham & Redbridge Connection.

I think it is fair to say that we all know who Winston **CHURCHILL** (1874 – 1965) was. But how much do we know of his political career?

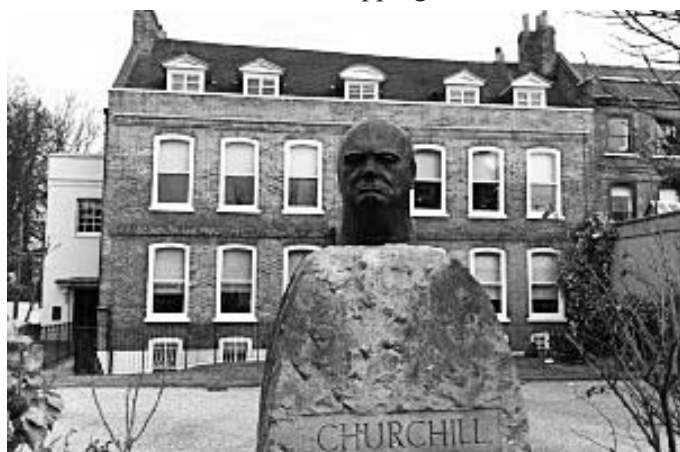
Churchill entered Parliament in 1900 with the Conservative party as MP for Oldham. By 1904 he was in disagreement with the Conservative policies so he joined the Liberals and won the seat for Manchester North West. He was very career driven and became Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, President of the Board of Trade, First Lord of the Admiralty and the main one that many people would have come across was in 1910 when he became Home Secretary.

It was during this role that he would be involved with the Rhondda coalminers strike and the Suffragettes agitation but the most talked about one was his responses to the siege of Sidney Street.

When WWI broke out politics were put to one side and he used his powers for the war efforts, but that is another story.

After the war Churchill rejoined government under David Lloyd **GEORGE** where he served in many more positions like Minister of Munitions and Secretary of State for Air but, by 1922, he lost his seat in Parliament.

In 1924 he won the seat of Epping under the New Constitutionalist Party which



Churchill's bust at the The Old Manor House

Image courtesy of Melissa Ford

he kept till 1929 when he won under the Unionist Party and by 1931 he won under Conservative.

In May 1936, Churchill spoke in approval of Wanstead and Woodford District Council application to become a borough. It was a success and he presented the new borough with a mace, which is still



Elizabeth Ann Everest

Image courtesy of Melissa Ford

today in Redbridge Borough hands. It was in 1940 that he became Prime Minister, a position he held until July 1945. From 1945 to 1965 Winston was the MP for Woodford.

Churchill was highly thought of so much so that in 1959 the Borough of Wanstead and Woodford erected a statue of him on Woodford Green by David MCFALL and it is still in place today. In 1968 a bronze bust, designed by Luigi FIRONI, was put on a plinth (once part of the old Waterloo Bridge) and placed outside the old Manor House, which was the Conservative Club in Wanstead High Street.

You must be now thinking what is the connection to Newham. The connection is Churchill's childhood nanny, Elizabeth Ann EVEREST (1834–1895), who he called 'Woom'. She was buried 5 July in square 81, grave 5455, at City of London Cemetery.

Winston writes about her in his autobiography *My Early Life*. She worked for the Churchill family from 1875 until 1893.

She passed away at 15 Crouch Hill, North London. This address is referred to as being her sister's address. But research states that her sister, Emma, and her family lived for over 40 years at 5 Cranmer Road, Forest Gate which is nearby to

General Register of Interments in							
No.	Date of Burial.		NAME OF PERSON BURIED.	Description, Avocation, and Parochial Residence of Person Buried.	Sex and Age.	District in which the Death is Registered.	From what Parish removed.
248082	1895 July	4 th	Emma Jane Hunt	37, Gloucester Road, Little Wymondley	Female 40 years	East Ham Green	Little Wymondley
248083	1895 July	4 th	Robert Clarke	123, Clifton Road, Finsbury	Male 78 years	Shoreditch South - Mile End	Shoreditch
248084	1895 July	5 th	Elizabeth Ann Everest	15, Crouch Hill, Finsbury Park	Female 61 years	Upper Holloway - Mile End	Shoreditch

Elizabeth's interment in the City of London Cemetery

Image courtesy of Melissa Ford

the cemetery. Probate states that her effects were left to her sister Emma.

Winston Churchill paid for her headstone and he also arranged for a local florist for many years to care for the grave. I have no idea if he attended her funeral, but I like to think he did.

Email: historymell14@gmail.com

Sibling Marriages

Brian Spear No. 883

When my researches reached back into the 19th century and beyond, I was surprised by the number of people who married people already related to them by blood or marriage.

Quite understandable in isolated rural communities where there was a limited choice of partners and most families were already related, but this continued in urban communities whose inhabitants were of diverse origins.

In particular, I found a number of cases where a pair of siblings married a pair of siblings from another family (often related in some way) and, in turn the children of these unions sometimes married within the network which led to some complex family trees not to mention problems with the laws against incest.

In some cases, these marriages were arranged (or at least strongly encouraged) to preserve family wealth or influence but in others there was no sign of that.

Recently however I discovered a situation where three siblings of one family married three siblings of another unrelated family!

My primary school was a large Victorian house on the outskirts of Bromley, Kent built in 1867 with many others after the railway arrived in 1858. From the 1880s it was occupied by the **AITKEN** family, widow, and children of a wealthy Manchester calico printer. A few doors along, was another large house occupied by Eley **SOAMES**, a wealthy retired Russian broker, and his large family. Of their respective children three pairs married in Bromley:

14 Feb 1890 Florence Aitken m Alfred Soames

3 Feb 1893 Evelyn Margaret Aitken m Edgar Soames

16 June 1894 Robert Bruce Aitken m Harriott Soames

Since both families were equally wealthy, and there were no obvious commercial advantages to be gained, one must conclude it was love. Can anyone find another example of three or more such pairs marrying?

Email: brian_spear31@hotmail.com



Post Box

The Editor reserves the right to edit letters due to space considerations.

- ☐ Jonny Wicken (jonwicken@yahoo.co.uk) says that he is interested in Bethnal Green and has done a lot of digging into records for the area. However he says that there is not a definitive list of surviving records relating to the workhouse and it is not known for certain if the asylum records are definitely lost. Jon has also been interested in doing a study of the burials at St Matthew's from 1746 to 1812, which are just a list of names with no further details, and trying to identify who these people were. He is wondering if any members are also interested in these areas of workhouse, asylum and church and if so would they please get in touch via email.

What Your Society Membership Offers You

Vera Bangs No. 2457

Website and Message Board/Forum

Our website contains up-to-date information about the Society. The Members' area gives access to our message board/forum where questions can be posted along with research hints and tips. <http://www.eolfhs.org.uk> If you don't have a login to this area then contact our webmaster webmaster@.org.uk

Projects

The Society has a continuing programme of projects to transcribe eg. important historic records including parish registers and monumental inscriptions. Members wishing to participate in this vital work can contact Gary at projects@eolfhs.org.uk

Surname Interests

Members' Interests, in particular surnames, are recorded and shared via the members' area of the website. This enables members to make contact with fellow researchers working on the same topic.

Helpdesk

The Society operates helpdesks at many of its branch meetings and other locations. Email helpdesk@eolfhs.org.uk for further details.

Cockney Ancestor

Last but not least our journal is published quarterly.

The Fabulous Virtual Family History Show

Plus special interest areas: Graham Bandy, DNA, maps

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From Bethnal Green to North Wales, via the Royal Navy, Edinburgh, and Yorkshire – Part III

Phillip Hollington No. 13326

This is the last of three articles tracing the life of my grandfather, Arthur James **HOLLINGTON**, from his birth in Bethnal Green to his death in North Wales. Part I dealt with his early life and WWII and Part II with his time in the Royal Navy between the wars.



Engraving of the Golden Fleece by Iris
Image courtesy of Phillip Hollington

Thirsk

In the last article we saw Arthur returning from Egypt and spending time in Edinburgh. In 1937 he and his wife, Win (Winifred Lothian Hamilton Hollington), appear in the electoral register for Thirsk in the North Riding of Yorkshire, with



Charlton marking the sole of a shoe with the room number

Image courtesy of Phillip Hollington

the address given as the *Golden Fleece Hotel*. *The Fleece*, as it was always known, was a traditional market town coaching inn. It is situated on the Great North Road between London and Edinburgh, and has a history as an inn going back to 1810. In the 1930s it was owned by *Trust Houses Ltd* who had many similar businesses around the country.

Arthur and Win worked hard to establish a high-quality hotel. Of course, just two years after their arrival, war broke out, creating many difficulties for such businesses, not least rationing. However, they made every effort to maintain pre-war standards and that they did so successfully is attested by correspondence from customers and from Head Office. We have a wonderful set of professional publicity photos from their time at the hotel showing all aspects of the

business. Prints of some are on display in the hotel today. The first picture shows an engraving of the *Golden Fleece* made by Arthur's niece, Iris Flora Hollington (West Ham 1924–Minehead 2017), the daughter of his younger brother, Charles (Bethnal Green 1896–Taunton 1992), who, amongst other things, was an etcher and engraver and it is likely he did the engraving for Iris's plate. A print of this is still displayed in the *Golden Fleece*. Clearly a talented woman, we have not been able to find any other examples of her work.

As was often the case, many of the hotel staff were long serving and jobs often passed down through families. I will never forget the time we were on a family holiday in Yorkshire in the 1960s. Obviously there had to be a visit to *The Fleece*, the first for Dad (Ian James Hollington) in 20 years. We had hardly stepped through the door when he was greeted by the porter, known to us only as Charlton, with the words, 'Mr Hollington, how are you? It is so nice to see you

again.' The photo shows Charlton marking the soles of a pair of shoes with the room number for safe return after polishing.

At the beginning of the war the many new regulations introduced were expected to create problems for the hotel trade. Head Office asked my grandfather to write a letter to the Times newspaper, pointing out the potential difficulties of regulating staff hours and conditions for small hotels such as *The Fleece*. Although nominally written on his own behalf, the letter was obviously intended to lobby for the interests of the group as a whole. Whether or not it had any effect we do not know.

By making full use of local production of fruit and vegetables, which were not rationed (although often in short supply), *The Fleece* was able to maintain high standards in the restaurant. This doubtless was helped by the good relations my grandparents had with local farmers and growers. I suspect as well that the occasional item of black-market meat found its way to the restaurant tables. Some of the publicity photos show the cook surrounded by bottles and jars of preserved vegetables and the high standards the tables in the restaurant were laid to.

Among the many letters that Arthur and Win kept, most complementing them on the high standards they were able to maintain during the war, one in particular stands out. A gentleman arranging a stay for a shooting party, already a year into the war, writes, 'I have noted your terms, which imply first class hotel service. Our first visit will be our last if we find any lack of comfort or service.' It goes on, 'Your charges are not commensurate with a small country town's usual hotel tariff, suggesting you are comparative with first class hotels in the provinces.' After noting that if they cannot obtain the best service then they will be happy to go elsewhere, he finishes by saying, 'I do not think you will find us difficult!' We do not have a record of how their visit went, but I imagine it was a nerve-racking time for my grandparents and their staff.

After 1942 there were two squadrons of the Royal Canadian Air Force based four miles away at Skipton-on-Swale. These operated Halifax and Lancaster bombers and their crews often spent time relaxing between missions in *The Fleece*. We have several letters from senior officers thanking my grandparents for their hospitality and consideration for these men.

At the time of the move to Thirsk, my father Ian was just 15 and at school in Edinburgh. During term time he stayed with family friends, Andrew and Edith **WESTWATER**, but returned to Thirsk for the holidays. Keen to follow in his father's footsteps, he applied to join the Royal Navy and began his training at *HMS Ganges* in May 1941, aged 19. Later that year he was posted to Freetown in Sierra Leone, West Africa, where, for reasons only known to the navy and given his almost non-existent French, he was assigned as a signaller to liaise with ships of the Free French navy. Dad loved his time in the navy. When he was discharged after the war he joined the Bank of England but was recalled for the Korean War which he remembered as the best time of his life, possibly due to

spending much of it on ‘showing the flag’ cruises around Scandinavia. He was particularly proud of his Morse Code skills and retained them well into the 1970s.

In common with many towns, Thirsk ‘adopted’ a warship, in this case the trawler *Arctic Ranger*, adapted for use as a minesweeper. The event was commemorated by a plaque presented to the ship and returned to the town after the war. This was carved in oak by the well-known local furniture maker, Robert ‘Mousey’ **THOMPSON**, and carries his signature mouse on the top. Robert was a customer of *The Fleece* as well as a good friend to my grandparents and our family still have a-number of pieces of his work, some of them personalised. It would be nice to think that the plaque was the idea of Arthur and Win. Adopting a ship involved a number of fund-raising events which they were involved in. One of these led to the purchase of a radio for the crew, which was duly delivered to the naval base at Portsmouth. However, the accepting signature was false and the radio was never seen again, presumably disappearing into the black market. Arthur used his naval connections to the full in trying to track it down, writing to Admiral Eric **FULLERTON** to whom he had been Chief Steward in Trincomalee, and even to the Board of the Admiralty, but to no avail.

In recognition of the connection, in June 1945 the crew of the *Arctic Ranger* presented the children of Thirsk with a bunch of bananas, a fruit that had not been seen since the start of the war. The photo overleaf shows Arthur with a bunch of rather over-ripe fruit—the inscription says *Presented to the children of Thirsk by the crew of HMS Arctic Ranger*. I have to say that, in this and other photos of the event, the children do not look particularly impressed.

Win (Lizzie), my grandmother, died of Hodgkin’s lymphoma in May 1946, aged just 46. We have a wonderful carved oak “Bishop’s chair” from “Mousey” Thompson that he engraved with her initials and dates, which my wife Ruth now uses for her writing. Lizzie’s older sister, Isabella, had died aged 30 of the same disease and her brother, Robert Pringle Lothian **HAMILTON**, died in 1942 while serving with the Pioneer Corps – he had been badly injured twice in WW1 (once thought to have died) but joined up again, was commissioned, and died as the result of an ammunition malfunction. The oldest sister, Janet (Aunt Netta), lived until the 1970s and her arrival at our home was always met with trepidation, quite a formidable character. In the late 1940s Arthur left *The Fleece* for reasons of poor health and moved to North Wales, first to Llangollen where he took over the *Royal Hotel* and then to Capel Curig in Eryri (Snowdonia) where he ran another *Royal Hotel*, now the Plas y Brenin National Outdoor Centre. In 1948 he married again, to Dorothy **KIRBY** (née **ROSS**) from York. The wedding was held in Conwy. Unfortunately the marriage was not to be a long one – Arthur died from progressive bulbar paralysis, a type of motor neurone disease, in the Astoria Nursing Home, Colwyn Bay in June 1949. He was only 54, but he did live to meet my mother, Jean **SANDERS** (Woodford Green 1925–Pembury, Kent 2018), who



Arthur with a rather over-ripe bunch of bananas
Image courtesy of Phillip Hollington

married Ian in 1950. Several of my parents' early holidays together, and their honeymoon, were spent in Capel Curig.

In his relatively short life Arthur had gone from the crowded streets of Bethnal Green to a long and successful career in the Royal Navy. He had survived two major battles and seen parts of the world that few of those from his background had seen. He married into a well-to-do family hundreds of miles from his home, successfully ran three hotels and, after my grandmother's death, had another happy but short marriage. To my eternal regret I never met him or my grandmother and Dad rarely spoke about either of his parents, but Mum thought very highly of him from their limited acquaintance. I hope these short accounts have gone some way to illustrating his life.

17 Tros yr Afon, Llangoed LL58 8AT

William & John Cornish: Bricklayers of Stepney & Suffolk

Dawn Adams No. 8923

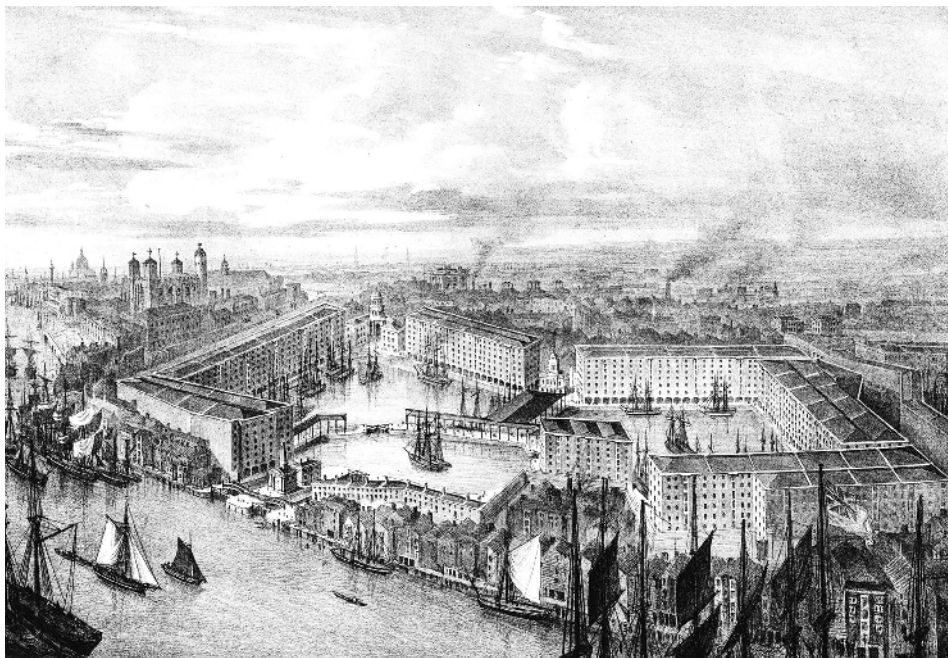
On 26 May 1869, my 3 x great-grandfather, William **CORNISH**, a widower, died in Mile End Workhouse of stricture of the oesophagus and bronchitis, aged 70. Oesophageal stricture can be an outcome of scarring from long-standing acid reflux: William would have suffered from severe heartburn and have had difficulty keeping food down. He had been a bricklayer all his working life, though that life did not start in Stepney.

On Monday 30 June 1800, two infants were baptised at St. Mary's Church in Woolpit, Suffolk, one being the uncle of the other. William, had been born 1 January 1799 and was the youngest son of bricklayer Edward Cornish and Ann (formerly **LEEVE**r or **LEVE**r or **LEAVE**r); his nephew, John, born on 20 November 1799, was the son of William's eldest sister, Ann, who was aged about 22 at the time. It is possible that William and John were brought up as brothers.

Woolpit was a centre for the production of Suffolk White bricks and, in addition to brick-makers, there were a good number of bricklayers, including William's father, Edward. Seven of Edward and Ann's eight children seem to have survived to adulthood. Of their three sons, I cannot find James (bap 1779), but Henry (1788–1845) and William almost inevitably followed their father as bricklayers, as did his grandson, William's nephew, John.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 brought difficulty for the agricultural sector. To add to that, 1816 was the 'year without a summer': the eruption of a volcano, Mount Tambora (in what is now Indonesia), filled the atmosphere with so much debris that global temperatures dropped by one degree Celsius and the sun was obscured, even in Western Europe.⁽¹⁾ The price of bread soared. While we may think of bread in terms of a slice of toast at breakfast or a sandwich for lunch, to a labourer then bread was most of the daily diet, supplemented by potatoes and washed down by tea. ⁽²⁾ There might be a little butter or cheese or bacon. The exact mix would depend, as today, on the availability of fuel.

While Edward Cornish did not work in the fields himself, an economic downturn would have an impact on all trades. And I'm not absolutely sure that he was still alive in 1816 as there are two possible burials in Woolpit, one in 1815 of an Edward aged 75 and one in 1830 of an Edward aged 86. (His date of baptism/birth is uncertain: two brothers surnamed Cornish each had a son named Edward baptised in the 1740s. Thus, I know his grandfather but not his father.) Three of Edward's daughters, and his son Henry, had already married by 1816; I



Bird's eye view of St Katherine's Dock shortly after it opened (TM Baynes 1829)

© The Trustees of the British Museum released as CC BY-NC-SA 4.0'

cannot trace his son James or daughter Ann (John's mother). Only William and William's nephew, John, remained, presumably at home with William's mother, Ann, who survived until 1843.

But William left his widowed mother before her death, and moved to London, as did John. Speculating on how they achieved the move, it seemed to me that two young bricklayers were unlikely to pay for the coach that travelled daily from Bury St. Edmunds, the nearest major town to Woolpit. They might have hitched a ride on the thrice-weekly goods waggon, or they might have travelled to the nearest port, Ipswich, and found a place on one of the coasters sailing regularly to the London Docks. But if they were off seeking work, I think they probably walked, a journey of about three days. Used as we are to cars, trains, and buses, walking such a distance does not spring immediately to mind. However, in the 1960s an acquaintance walked daily to her first ever job, as a ward maid at a large institution in Devon, nearly three miles each way. And the 1841 census shows sixteen shoemakers/cordwainers in Woolpit, in a population of under a thousand.

London offered many opportunities for bricklayers. In addition to the ever increasing demand for housing, St. Katherine's Dock was authorised in 1825 and opened in 1828, surrounded by brick-built warehouses (now converted

to fashionable loft living). A great contrast with Woolpit. By the time of the 1851 census there were about 260 Suffolk-born bricklayers in London aged 25-65, compared to about 1000 Suffolk-born bricklayers of that age in Suffolk. Some of those in London were already employers, or added the words 'and builder' to their occupation.

While I don't know exactly when the young bricklayers left Woolpit, I do know that William was in the East End in 1824, as he married Jane **WEATHERLEY** in Bow Church (St. Mary's, Stratford-le-Bow) on 14 July that year. Soon after, 15 February 1825, he witnessed John's marriage to Elizabeth **WALTON** at St. Dunstan's Church, Stepney. Both men were able to sign their names: both wives seem to have been London-born.

John and Elizabeth, living in Stepney, had six children who survived to adulthood, none of them a bricklayer, or married to a bricklayer.

Eliza Ann (1825–1913), married Fred **HEARD** a furniture dealer in 1851.

Ann (1828–1885) remained unmarried and lived with her mother.

John Philip (1830–1891) was a hawker and married Anna **WILD** or **WILES** in 1850.

Keziah (1838–1913), a sewing machinist, married John **CROCKER**, a Devon-born blacksmith in 1867 and later moved with him to the Isle of Wight.

Alfred (1841–1890) became a printer, married Ann **MOLE** in 1864, then, after her death in 1880, married Esther **WESTWOOD**, nee **FRANCIS**, in 1886;

Arthur (1844–1901) was a clerk in the docks and later a commercial traveller, married Frances **CLARKE** in 1876, then, after her death in 1881, married Hannah **MIHLENSLEDT**.

Confusingly, John began to call himself John Philip, and sometimes just Philip; even so, he and his family are traceable in the censuses. By 1871 he and Elizabeth lived separately. He was boarding with a family at 39 Nelson Street, a few streets away from Elizabeth, who was at 53 Russell Street. Elizabeth, working as a waistcoat maker, has had her census entry altered (inaccurately) from 'married' to 'W'. Living with her were daughter Ann 35, also a waistcoat maker, son Arthur 27 a clerk, and a boarder, James Bowen 48 a fireman. The household probably had a reasonable income. In 1873, John Cornish died in Mile End Workhouse, aged 73, of debility and bronchitis, perhaps a consequence of open-air working coupled with poor housing.

William's life in London was less straightforward. He and Jane had at least five children between 1825 and 1831, then Jane died and was buried at Wycliff Congregational Church, Stepney in January 1832. Their daughter, Jane, was baptised there 26 February 1832; 22 April 1833 Jane and Mary Cornish, aged 9-months were buried. This is the only reference to baby Mary who could be a sixth child (no baptism traced). However, I do wonder who was baby Jane's wet-nurse after her mother died: there is an intriguing gap in the birthdates of John and

Elizabeth's children between 1830 and 1836 (when they had a child who did not survive). After the death of his wife and baby, William was left with four young children to care for and support: Esther born in May 1825, Ann 1827, Edward Godfrey 1828 and Charlotte, 1830.

William married a widow, Susannah **SLADE**, 20 October 1833. If I have identified her correctly, she already had two, possibly three, children. William and Susannah had two sons together, James in November 1834 and Robert who died soon after his birth in January 1839. Later that year, in November 1839, Susannah herself died of pleurisy. By then William's eldest daughter, Esther, was fourteen, and old enough to keep house. The household in the 1841 census was William and the children (except for Ann, who may be the Ann Cornish living with a neighbour). William was out of work for a time in 1842 and admitted to the workhouse, though I found no admission for the children. By the 1851 census, all but 16-year-old James had left home. By the time of the 1861 census, William was a lodger in his nephew John's household. Following that, William had occasional spells in the workhouse, between 1863 and 1864, through destitution. One of many unanswerable questions is why he was not taken in by his children, some of whom were living locally:

Esther (1825–1901) had married a neighbour, Thomas **DORRELL**, a carpenter, in 1848; they lived in Bethnal Green and, by 1863, had six children.

Ann (1827–1910) had married the neighbour's younger brother, William Dorrell, a painter and paperhanger in 1845; in 1861 they shared a house in St. Vincent Street with two other families and, by 1862, they had five children.

Edward Godfrey (b 1828) became a general dealer and is shown in the 1861 census at 25 Pelham St., Spitalfields with a wife, Sophia, and a daughter, Mary Ann, born in about 1850, but that is all I have.

Charlotte (b 1830) married William Henry Gray **CASSON**, also a general dealer, in 1853, and had a son in 1854, but I cannot find them thereafter.

James (1834–1882) became a ship's butcher on the New Zealand service, married Jane **LIFFEN** in 1858 and was not at home for the 1861 census when Jane was living with her cousin, nor in 1871 or 1881, by which time they had had five children. James died at sea of a heart attack in 1882.

Perhaps William's children had not the space or means to support him.

References

Censuses & map data via *The Genealogist*, *FindMyPast*, *Ancestry*.

1. *Wikipedia* has articles on this
2. *Plenty & Want* by John Burnett, Scholar Press 1979;
3. *English Food* by Diane Purkiss, William Collins 2022

Email: fheast@adamslancaster.net

Message from the Membership Secretary

Sue Waine

Is it just me, or does a year go by quicker than ever before? It is hard to believe that it is time to remind you that annual membership renewal is approaching for a large number of our members who renew in September.

Email reminders are sent out about 30 days before membership is due to expire. Members who do not have an email address will receive a reminder by post.

If you want to check your renewal date just log in to the member only area of our website and go to the account page or you can contact me at *membership.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk*. If you haven't already disposed of the envelope that this magazine came in you can find your renewal date and membership number by the address details.

Those members who pay by standing order will have already received a reminder this year to ensure that they have updated their standing order to the correct amount, regardless of their date of renewal. Please ensure that your membership number is quoted as a reference when payment is made as it makes my life easier when dealing with hundreds of renewal payments coming in at the same time.

If you wish to make a card payment just go to our website and click on the *renew tab* at the top of the page (no need to log in), then click on *renew membership*, scroll down and click on the type of membership you require. Would members please note that if they wish to receive the *Cockney Ancestor* magazine by post **do not** opt for the online fee of £15. Members who live in the UK and wish to receive the magazine by post should opt for the £20 fee. Those members living in Europe should opt for the £25 fee and for those in the rest of the world the fee is £35.

If you prefer to pay by cheque, please send a sterling cheque (with membership number written on the back) made out to ***The East of London Family History Society*** for the correct amount, to me at the address shown on the inside front cover of ***this Cockney Ancestor*** magazine.

You can print off a renewal form by going to our website and clicking on the *renew tab* at the top of the page (no need to log in) then click on *download renewal form* which is at the bottom of the page. If you are unable to print off a form, just send a note of your name, home address and email address with your payment.

Please note The name of the Society should be written out in full on the cheque as the bank is sometimes reluctant to accept cheques made payable to EoLFHS. Members who choose the £15 online fee can read/download the CA magazine in the member only area on our website.

Annual Membership Fees for 2025/2026

£15 online UK and overseas members

£20 UK members

£25 EU members

£35 for members in the rest of the world

Thank you for your support this year and for the many notes of appreciation for the work the editor and her team carry out all year round, along with the Executive Committee and branch officials.

I do hope that you will continue your membership for 2025/26.



AGM Report

*Held on Saturday 12 April 2025
at the Museum of the Home (formerly the Geffrye
Museum) in Kingsland Road*

Janet Seward – Outgoing Society Secretary

Fifty-eight members attended in person and sixteen on Zoom.

The Chairman, Gary Barnes, gave his report. He thanked the Executive Committee and the Branch Committees and all the volunteers at the Central London, Havering and Newham & Redbridge branches. Gary said that all parts of the society face challenges but that we should continue to work together and support each other.

He thanked Janet Seward who stood down as Society Secretary after 14 years and presented her with some gifts. Gary asked if anyone was interested in being Secretary and stressed that all our Executive Committee meetings were on Zoom, so no travel was involved.

Gary went on to discuss projects. He said he has started a dialogue with students from Capital City College Group, asking them to look at the future of the society. Gary stressed that nothing is off the table. He said that we need to attract younger members. Gary promised to keep the membership up-dated on progress with this project. Gary mentioned other projects being undertaken:

- St Mary's churchyard East Ham which we are looking to finish
- Buckingham Road cemetery
- Manor Park cemetery

Gary also mentioned that the Executive Committee is considering creating an income stream by putting some of our database on *FindMyPast*.

With regard to membership, Gary said that although the numbers were steady, there was a gradual decline (1103 on 31 August 2024 and 1009 in April 2025).

Some of this decline can be attributed to the fact that online members were much more fluid and would often dip in and, after a year, dip out.

Once more it was the Chairman's sad duty to remember those the society has lost since the last AGM:

- Terry Kaye – Chairman of the Central London branch and who also held many other posts and would always keep us on our toes
- Alan McMasters who attended Newham & Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham meetings and, for a time, helped on the society bookstall, always very friendly
- Michael Potter who with his late wife, Jean, attended Newham & Redbridge and Barking & Dagenham meetings
- Reginald Carlier
- Barbara Piper
- Alan Raymond
- Patricia Howard
- Thomas Lee
- Colin Blanchflower
- David Couldridge
- Anthony Joseph
- Leonard Street
- John Adams-Murphy

Gary took a short pause so that we could remember them all.

The Treasurer, Kevin Dopson, presented highlights of the accounts from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. He said that we have been quite frugal this year and have managed to come in with a slight surplus and there has been no drawdown of reserves. He stressed however that our income is reducing because of declining membership. The *Cockney Ancestor* is our greatest expense, but that expenditure has reduced from about £10,000 to around £6,000. We are also facing increasing costs regarding the hire of halls and speakers. Our trustees and Executive Committee are unchanged with the exception of the Secretary's post.

Before the AGM closed, Gary announced that Michael Potter had left £10,000 to the society. Gary said that he wanted to do something with the money and asked members to email him with suggestions.

The theme of the day stemmed from our location and was entitled *It's All About Hackney*. We had two informative speakers. In the morning, Sean Gubbins, an authority on Hackney who has been leading walks around the borough for over twenty years, gave a talk on the history of the area and its trades. In the afternoon, Brian Johnson, a volunteer at the Canal Museum gave an overview of the Regents Canal with a particular focus on Hackney and Hoxton. We hope everyone who came or viewed on Zoom enjoyed the day. The Zoom recording of the AGM will be available on the website www.eolfhs.org.uk.

In Search of a Musical Gene

Madeline Seviour No. 14195

I haven't taken a DNA test. I'm waiting until they can provide one which identifies a musical gene.

I have always loved music. One of my earliest memories is of being lifted on to the piano stool and encouraged to pick out tunes on the keyboard. I was also given a recorder. Another pre-school memory is browsing the short waves on my father's radio set, tuning around the dial until I found a station playing classical music. Although no more than a reasonably competent amateur, music remains an important part of my life.

I had assumed that my interest in music came from my mother's family. My grandmother, Florence Mary **SINGLE** (nee **BOATWRIGHT**), sang and played the piano. My mother and three of her sisters learned the piano, though they didn't progress very far. Another sister took up the violin and did well—she had hoped to go to college and become a professional, but the outbreak of war in 1939 put paid to that.

My mother's brother didn't learn an instrument but, despite enduring his sisters' practice, he developed a deep interest in music. He had a large record collection and when on home leave from the Royal Navy frequently attended concerts at the Proms and the Royal Festival Hall.

WEST WALTON,
NEAR WISBECH.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, BY
C. C. Goddard,

ON MONDAY, the 10th of OCTOBER, 1853,
at the Premises, at the Bank Farm, West Walton, Norfolk, all the valuable

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE
and Cottage Piano-Forte, Dairy Utensils
AND OTHER EFFECTS.

By order of the Executors of the late Mr. Thomas Goddard.)

IN the PARLOUR and KITCHEN ROOMS
2 mahogany dining tables, with leaves to let

Farm sale auction notice
Image courtesy of Madeline Seviour

I have found little evidence of music in earlier generations of this family. However, my grandfather, Ernest Albert Single, in a letter to my grandmother in the summer of 1920, a few months before their marriage, writes that, 'tonight there will [be] a jolly fine band to hear, the Royal Irish Fusiliers with them the Royal Marines and I am told unless you get there early there won't be a ghost of a chance for a seat. I will be early you bet!!!'

I have to go back to the mid-

19th century for further evidence of music in my mother's family. This was my 4 x great-grandfather, Thomas **HUBBARD**, who died in 1853. He was a farmer from West Walton in Norfolk. After his death the farm was sold. An inventory of the contents of farm and farmhouse appeared in *The Lynn Advertiser and West Norfolk Herald* on Saturday 1 October 1853:

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, Cottage Piano-Forte, Dairy Utensils, and other effects.

The fact that the cottage piano-forte was headlined suggests that it was an impressive instrument, taking precedence over other household furnishings. The cottage piano was what we now call an upright piano. This one was made by Challen and Hollis, a leading piano manufacturer, and is described as *fine-toned*. Also listed is a square piano-forte—this was an earlier form of piano, popular in the last quarter of the 18th century.

In his book *The Toilers of the Field*, Richard Jefferies (1848–1887) states that every farmhouse would have a piano—in a rural area it would have been difficult for the daughters of the family to get to the nearest town to partake of whatever entertainment was on offer, so they had to make their own amusement at home. The fact that the Hubbards had two pianos suggests that there was considerable interest in music, though with eight daughters and three sons, two pianos was probably a necessity rather than a luxury.

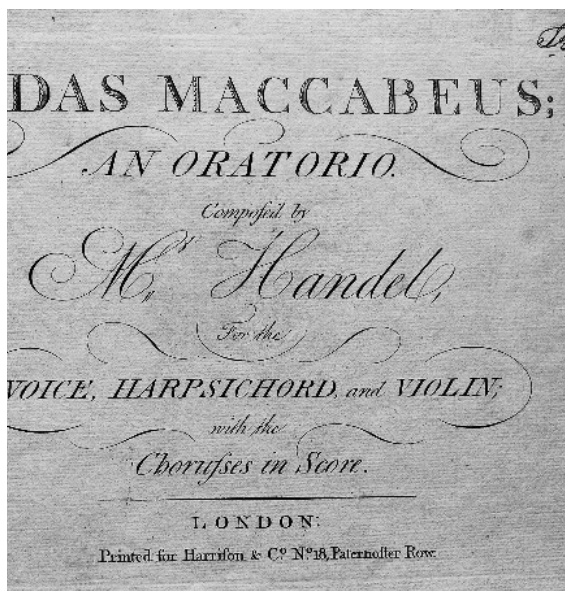
I always thought that my father's family was not musical, though there was a rumour that great-uncle Jack played the banjo in a dance band. So where did my father's love of music come from?

He, Edward Frederick **SEVIOUR**, attended the Proms (then held at the Queen's Hall in Portland Place) in the 1930s when he was a teenager. At that he joined *The Sibelius Society* and had a collection of 78 rpm recordings issued by the Society, conducted by Sir Thomas **BEECHAM** and others. He had an extensive collection of recordings of other composers, from **BACH** to **STRAVINSKY**.

He would have loved to learn to play the piano, but his family could not afford to buy an instrument or pay for lessons. But I think his mother would have encouraged him—when she visited us, she always asked to hear me play. Dad's Aunt Emma had a piano which she had promised to give to one of her nieces or nephews, but she was, I am told, a cantankerous old soul, prone to disinheriting the last person to upset her. Obviously, Dad managed to offend, as the piano went to a cousin.

There is one thing that unites both sides of my family musically—it's a family history mystery which I have not been able to solve.

About twenty years ago my parents' house needed to be re-roofed. This meant clearing the loft of fifty years-worth of accumulated 'stuff' and my brother nobly undertook the task. One day I received a call from Dad, 'We've found something you'll want to see.' It was a suitcase containing two volumes of scores



Judas Maccabeus title page
Image courtesy of Madeline Seviour

of works by Handel. There was *Messiah* and *Acis and Galatea*, with vocal parts and organ accompaniment—this was published in 1835 in one huge volume the size of a broadsheet newspaper, three inches thick and hard-backed. It must have been intended for a conductor or organist as it is far too heavy for a singer to hold. The other score was the oratorio *Judas Maccabeus*. This is a much earlier edition, not a full score, just the vocal parts with accompaniment for violin and harpsichord. I searched the *British Library Public Catalogue* but didn't find it listed. There was, however, an edition of *Messiah* with an identical title

page and this included the date of publication, 1784.

The mystery: who did they belong to?

The 1835 *Messiah/Acis* volume has a bookplate with the words W.A. **HARDINGHAM**, Yarmouth. Intriguing, as one branch of my mother's family, the Boatwrights, are from Great Yarmouth. The bookplate in *Judas* is that of Robt **BUTCHER**, but the name W. Hardingham is scrawled in pencil above it. On the title page is a monogram with the date 1847. I can't be certain what it is. A large B – B for Butcher or B for Boatwright? Might the preceding letter be J? It certainly isn't R. It looks as if the B is followed by a lower-case J. In 1847 my 3 x great-grandfather, James Boatwright, and his son, also James, were living in Great Yarmouth. Could JBJ be James Boatwright junior, or is this wishful thinking on my part?

I set about researching Hardingham in Great Yarmouth. I found William Hardingham, who was born around 1823, in the 1841 and 1851 censuses—he was a clerk in a silk manufactory. He had a son, also William, born in 1848. I also searched Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, but no Hardinghams there or in Hampshire.

A newspaper search produced something interesting. On 17 January 1849 the *Bury and Suffolk Herald* reported that a choir was to be formed at St. Nicholas' Church, Great Yarmouth. *A meeting was convened by the vicar to discuss the*

formation of a choir citing as a reason, 'many complaints have been made with regard to the present deficient state of its music; so deficient was it as positively to prevent the congregation from lifting up their voices in praise to God in a proper manner.' The congregation agreed to take the matter forward. The vicar stipulated that 'the Choir should be selected from the most respectable parties.' Six men and eight 'efficient' boys were selected and amongst the men was Mr W. Hardingham!

A further search of the newspapers revealed a marriage in February 1847 between Mr **FISH**, a professor of music, to Harriet Hardingham, eldest daughter of Mr W. Hardingham of Hingham. So here we have a musical connection. Hingham is several miles west of Norwich so, if this is the same family, they must have moved to Great Yarmouth shortly afterwards.

According to the parish register, Harriet's father, William, was a carpenter. Was it a coincidence that his daughter married a professor of music?

How does this relate to the JBj 1847 monogram in the score of *Judas Maccabeus*?

Brick wall!

So, it looks as if there might be a connection to my mother's family, but I can't find an explanation as to how these scores came into the possession of the Boatwright family. It does, however, discount the best explanation my father could put forward for his family. This was that the books had been given to his father by a friend. The friend worked for



Bookplate

Image courtesy of Madeline Seviour



JBj: 1847 monogram

Image courtesy of Madeline Seviour

a demolition company. The last owner of a property to be demolished would presumably have taken anything they wanted to keep and the demolition men would have thrown everything else into a skip, perhaps ‘rescuing’ anything that might be of value or interest. I wonder if this was how the books were acquired by my grandfather.

Finally, a brief word about my first piano teacher, Gladys Elizabeth **WITTICH** (1900–1960). She was a very fine pianist and singer. A few years ago, I heard mentioned on Radio 3 a German opera singer named Marie Wittich (1868–1931). Specialising in the works of **WAGNER** and Richard **STRAUSS**, most of her career was spent in Germany, but she sang at Covent Garden in 1905 in the role of Brunnhilde. Was she related to my piano teacher? Disappointingly I have not found a link. My Miss Wittich was descended from a line of East London bakers. So, no musical gene there.

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SCHRODINGER’S ALICE?

Peter Holford 14359.

On the night of Sunday 3 April 1881 my great-grandmother Alice **IFE** was staying at 4^A Upper Park Terrace in Belsize Park in North London.

On the night of Sunday 3 April 1881 my great-grandmother Alice Ife was also staying at 15 & 16 Salisbury Square in the parish of St. Bride’s, Fleet Street just to the west of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Two different people perhaps? No! There can be very little doubt that it was the same person. Both entries state that Alice was 16-years-of-age and born in Hampstead. The only difference was that in Belsize Park she was a scholar while in St. Bride’s she was a servant. The unusual surname means that there are very few other possible individuals with an identical name—three born in Suffolk who were two or more years older and one born in Southwark a year after her. Alice, was definitely, recorded twice in the 1881 census in places several miles apart.

How can it happen? The Belsize Park address was the home of the Ife family where Alice lived with her parents Nathan and Eliza (née **WATLING**) together with her three brothers. A Hampstead birth gives the impression that the family were well-to-do and possibly posh but this was not the case.

In the previous census of 1871 Nathan Ife was an agricultural labourer toiling in the fields around Saxmundham in Suffolk. But he seems to have been a smart guy who spotted how to improve life for himself and his young family. He moved to Hampstead and transferred his skills from the fields to the gardens and kept poultry and grew flowers which he could sell to the local middle classes. In the

19th century the class of people that served those with money were embedded in the same communities living in small houses and mews cottages rather than segregated as they tend to be now. Alice was the first of her family to be born in London in 1865. Nathan and Eliza had arrived the previous year from Suffolk with their two older children.

That explains one of the registrations in 1881. But what was she doing in Fleet Street at the same time? Numbers 15 & 16 Salisbury Square was the address of the *Church Missionary Home*. On the night of the census there were just two residents in the place. As well as Alice, who was a servant, there was Fanny **BROAD**, a 39-year-old spinster from Ash near Sandwich in Kent. She was the housekeeper.

I think it was likely that Alice, for whatever reason, was staying at the *Missionary House* on census day but that she normally lived with her family in Belsize Park. Nathan and Eliza therefore included her in their declaration to the enumerator. Either that or she really was in two places at once like Schrödinger's cat.

The *Church Missionary House*, shown here from *In Salisbury Square* by Irene H. **BARNES** published in 1906, was an imposing building constructed in 1861 for the *Church Missionary*, replacing three much older houses on the same site, that had become too small for the work of the Mission.

It was an organisation with a considerable presence taking the Gospel to the World as this passage from 1865 shows:

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was



The Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square

Image courtesy of Peter Holford



Salisbury Square

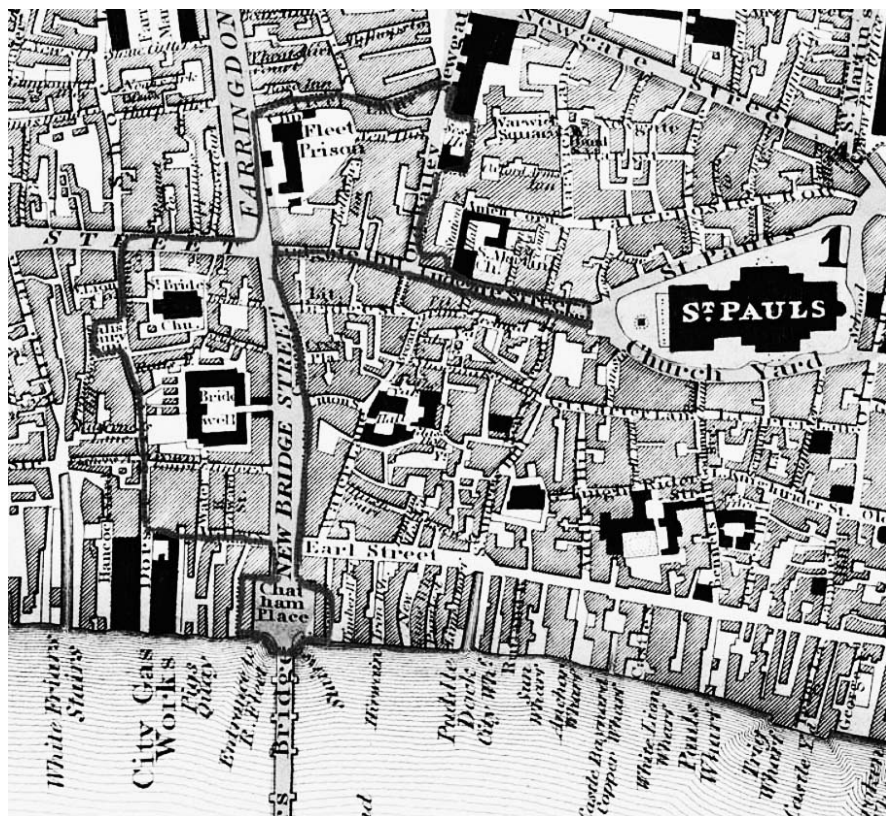
Image courtesy of Peter Holford

incorporated in 1701, but its efforts were almost entirely directed to our Colonies. Hence arose the necessity for this society, which, in 1812, was designated the 'Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East.' No less than £3,358,676 have already been expended in making known the Gospel to the heathen. There are about 36,000 children and adults, in upwards of 800 mission schools. The whole number of labourers connected with the society in its foreign missions, at the anniversary in 1861, amounted to 2419, of whom 258 are clergymen. At least £20,000. are annually received and expended in the missions. (*Cruchley's London: A Handbook for Strangers, 1865*)

Salisbury Square was in the parish of St. Bride's, Fleet Street which also included the notorious Fleet Prison which at one time was the location of a huge number of irregular and clandestine marriages each year. In the 1740s it saw over 6,000 marriages per year out of a total of about 47,000 across the entire country with up to one hundred clergy involved.

The shape of the parish of St. Bride's is very idiosyncratic as can be seen in the map on page 37. The parish is nearly divided in two where the east and west boundaries almost converge at the junction of Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, and Farringdon Road. New Bridge Street leads to Blackfriars Bridge. Salisbury Square occupies the small bulge on the left-hand side, opposite the church of St. Bride's itself.

I don't know whether Alice was simply working in the Missionary House or whether she was volunteering as part of a developing religious vocation, but it evidently didn't last. Four years later she married George **STAFFORD** and they settled in Camden Town. Three children followed in the next six years. But it was a short-lived happiness. Alice died at the beginning of 1901; she was 35-years-old. As with many others of that era, TB was the cause of death. It had also



The Parish of St Bride's
 Image courtesy of Peter Holford

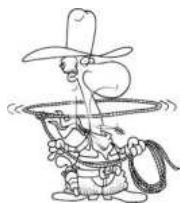
claimed her father, Nathan in 1885 at the age of 45. George decided to move away from Camden. He was a piano maker and he found work in the other great piano-making area of London – Hackney. And but for the early, tragic death of Alice Ife, I doubt I would be here writing about her ability to be in two places at once in 1881.

References—Fleet marriages – Wikipedia

In Salisbury Square by Irene H. Barnes, pub. The Church Missionary Society, 1906 (available online)

Schrödinger's Cat Paradox – a thought experiment. For the simplest explanation try <https://naturenoon.com/schroedingers-cat-experiment-simple/>

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Roundup

- ❖ The Guildhall Library Transformation project is underway, and they would like to hear from everyone who uses the library, whether it is for attending talks, using their collections or simply as a place to study or use their computers. Please take this opportunity to help shape the future of Guildhall Library. Survey link: <https://forms.office.com/e/ChSdMkPV8A>.
- ❖ *The London Archives* free exhibition about *London in WWII* is on until 30 October 2025. Book via their website <https://thelondonarchives.org>.
- ❖ *Essex Record Office* presents: *Workhouse People* on Tuesday 28 October. by Stephen Norris, Author of 'From a Borough to a City' a recent history of Chelmsford guides us through the workings of a Union Workhouse and the stories of those who worked and dwelt in them. He will use the stories of these and other 'Workhouse People' to show how the workhouse operated and changed from 1838 when it opened to 1930 when it became a *Public Assistance Institution*.
- ❖ *Tips from inside the Society of Genealogists (SoG)*. The following hints and tips for family history research were shared by members after SoG events.
 - *Order post-1857 wills and probate documents while they are £1.50 a go! I had no idea it was so easy to get the full wills online.*
 - *Another Family History Skills course attendee said, On the 1939 Register don't assume that people listed are married or related as there is no 'status' listed.*
 - *Don't be put off by new technology you don't understand – watch a SoG presentation (perhaps twice) and have a go!*
 - *Be brave and try AI – perhaps start with obituaries or short biographies*
 - *Voice recordings can be converted to text files using software such as Descript.*
 - *Try ChatGPT for free; you have nothing to lose – although check what it tells you.*
 - *Watch for bias when using AI. Being aware, questioning and critiquing*

are so important. The human leads and AI assists/follows. Verifying sources is still at the heart of research.

- ❖ Over half a million new Suffolk parish records launched on *Findmypast*. Exclusive to *Findmypast*, this huge new addition will give users a fresh opportunity to uncover their East Anglian ancestors. Records indexed in partnership with the *Suffolk Family History Society*, part of *Findmypast's* exclusive partnership with the *Family History Federation*. Plus, brand new Suffolk newspaper title, the East Suffolk Gazette comes online.
- ❖ *Guildhall Library*, Thursday 7 August, 2.00 - 3.00pm *City limits: Shoreditch and Hoxton*. There's more to Shoreditch than Silicon Roundabout, as Pete Smith will explain. Follow the thread of this diverse district's colourful history from holy well to London's first theatre land. *History and Treasures of the Guildhall Library*. Join our librarians to learn about the history of the Guildhall Library, and view some of the library's amazing treasures. Tuesday 12 August 2.00–3.00pm. For more information of both events please visit their website <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Things-to-do/guildhall-library-events-exhibitions-may-august-2025.pdf>.
- ❖ *Family History Books*—the publishing arm of the *Family History Federation*—is looking for people who are willing to share their knowledge and try their hand at writing. The existing range of booklets, especially the *Gibson Guides*, remain very popular for their factual help, lists of what is where and for attractive prices, too. New topics are needed! 'Niche' topics can be produced as digital downloads. Each format provides royalties for the author—you! If you do have an inkling you could provide the 'meat' for a booklet but feel you are not a writer, then help is at hand! *Family History Books* has a friendly, small team with access to copy editors and proofreaders who all want to make your knowledge into a best seller for you! Interested? Make initial contact with Debbie (admin@familyhistoryfederation.com).
- ❖ *U3A Peak District Family History Conference* Saturday 6 September 2025 held at the Palace Hotel, Buxton, Derbyshire. Despite significant increases in costs, the ticket price remains at £30 which includes all four talks, a buffet lunch and entry into the prize draw. This year the Conference has been organised in partnership with the Family History Federation and we warmly welcome all members of family history societies who wish to attend the conference. For more information and how to exhibit please contact geofftideswell@gmail.com

What's in a Name?

Howard and Vice Family update

Eileen Blythe No. 16058

Charles Vice/Howard 1800–1856

My research for the birth of Charles **HOWARD**'s family (my father's great-grandfather) in Clerkenwell, London, from Wenhaston Suffolk, has only been possible because of the 1851 census details which have given me Charles Howard's birth place and age.

So, looking for the birth of Charles Howard in Wenhaston Suffolk was my new hunting ground for this family, but he was not there; there were two baptisms of Howard children but not my Charles.

My next move was to ask for help and, after two different paid researchers did not find him, as I live in Kent, I went up to Suffolk to look myself. Thank goodness I did, as I found him.

I noticed that the two children baptised in the name of Howard had the same female parents as children baptised in the name of **VICE**, and that's how I found my Charles Howard, baptised as Charles Vice in January 1801 in Wenhaston.

Charles Vice, born December 1800 Wenhaston, the sixth child of William and Hannah (nee **FRANCES**) Vice, was a bricklayer and came to London and married Emma Frances in St. Marylebone church August 1822, using the surname Howard. I am descended from their ninth child, John Alfred Howard, born in Clerkenwell (1844–1921), a lady's hat maker.

Charles' grandmother was Virtue Vice (1735–87), born in Wenhaston. She had four illegitimate children in Wenhaston.

- William born 1758 who married Hannah Francis in 1786 in Bramfield. They had seven children in Wenhaston. William's will in 1830 is recorded as William Haward, a Suffolk version of Howard, and includes his son, Charles.
- Thomas born 1759, who married Sarah **SUTTON** in 1780 in Carlton Colville and had 12 children in Wenhaston.
- John born 1762, who married Mary **AUSTIN** in Wenhaston and had seven children.
- Elizabeth born 1765 in Wenhaston. She died young a spinster.

Two of Thomas's children were baptized in the name of Howard. Charles, his brother, used the name Howard only when he married and two of John's children

also used Howard as their surname. This leads me to assume that Virtue was a servant girl in a big house in the area close to Wenhashton and that the father of all her children was possibly the same man.

The family legend that has come down to me is that he was of noble birth, possibly of the Duke of Norfolk; this story is also known to another family member descended from Henry, born 1826 in Clerkenwell London, the third child of Charles and Emma Howard. One branch of the family went to live in Beccles and are recorded as **VYSE** in the Censuses.

Mr Howard's actions seem to have been common knowledge to the children and grandchildren of Virtue because many of them used the surname of Howard or Vyse later in life, although it seems only Charles went to live in London.

His father, William, died in 1830. His will is registered as William **HAWARD** and three of his children were still alive to inherit; Charles, Henry, and Lydia.

The workhouse records in Wenhashton show Virtue was getting money to buy clothes and food for her four children between 1768 and 1781. Virtue died in September 1787 and she was buried in Wenhashton, a pauper.

Virtue was the youngest child of Lawrence Vice and Elizabeth (nee **JERMY**). Her mother, Elizabeth, died in 1745 when Virtue was ten-years-old. Her father, Lawrence, later remarried twice more, in February 1746 to Jane **KERRICK** in Bramfield and to Sarah **MURREL** in 1750 in Halesworth. (This may not have been the same Lawrence, it's possible it's his father.)

I have been fortunate to find the village where the Vice family came from, before they turn up in Wenhashton in 1723.

Lawrence Vice and Elizabeth Jermy were married in Scole, Norfolk in December 1713; there they had six children, Mary born 1714, Lawrence born 1715, John born 1717, James born 1719, James born 1720 and Charles born 1722.

The family moved to Wenhashton about 1723 when Mary Vice, their eldest daughter, was recorded in the church burial records. Also two more children were born, Thomas b 1724 and Elizabeth Vice b 1726. Both were born in the village; no other children have been found until Virtue's birth in 1735.

Before moving to Wenhashton, the family had lived in Scole, a small town on the Norfolk border with Suffolk. The Vice family can be traced back in this village to 1665.

The marriage of Nicholas Vice to Mary **HELLHOUSE** was in April 1665 and is the earliest record of the family in the village church registers. The Vice family are on record there as gardeners and wheelwrights in a will of 1755.

Other references to this Vice family in Suffolk include a workhouse order of 1737 at Gislegham as returning Nicholas and Lettice, his wife, and Lettice, their daughter, back to Scole Norfolk. Nicholas was later a wheelwright.

A bit more work is needed to tie up the loose ends which surround Mr Howard.

Notes

Scole was a very large and busy coaching village on the main road of its time, once the old Roman salt road, later the A140, from London to Norwich via Bury St. Edmunds.

Wenhaston was a small village south of Lowestoft, close by the river Blyth with about 80 residents in 1638. 43 men are listed in the parish in the *Able Men of Suffolk* records available on CD.

1. In Suffolk Able Men records of 1638, Matt. Vice is listed in Creting St. Mary, Robert Vice is living at Mendlesham and a will of Thomas **SHEPPARD** of Mendlesham, witnessed in 1633, lists John Vice the elder living in the village.
2. A marriage between Thomas Vice and Ann **MOSSE** of Little Thurlow took place in Little Thurlow, Suffolk in June 1638.
3. In Framlingham, the name Vice was common in the 19th century but I have not found any connection to my family.
4. Charles Howard, bricklayer, was listed in the London Street directory of 1827 at 3 Gloucester Street, Whiskin Street. Charles's son, Henry, was born in Gloucester Street in July 1826.
5. In the 1846 Street Directory of London, Samuel Howard, artificial flower & feather maker, was at 60 Wood Street.
6. There is also a record of a Samuel Howard an importer of ostrich feathers but not a member of my family.
7. Also in London at this time is a straw hat company, 'Vice Howard' in Holborn. This family were from Luton, Bedfordshire.
8. My great-grandfather, John Alfred Howard, born in Clerkenwell 1844–1921 had his ladies hat-making business in Percival Street, Clerkenwell and employed many women as artificial flower and feather makers. He was an orphan in 1856 when his father, Charles, died and was in the Holborn workhouse with his younger brother, Samuel George Howard 1846–79. As John Alfred was deaf, I have imagined he was sent to work in the large feather factory in Great Alie Street as a boy where he met his future wife, Martha Amiela **STUHR** 1851–90, who was half German and from St. George in the East. She had attended the German School in Gt Alie Street before her father, Gerhart, had died in 1866. They were married in Holy Trinity Church, Grays Inn Road, Holborn in February 1869.

Cambridgeshire records.

In 1632 John Vice is a witness in the will of William **BUNTINGE** of Burwell. In a will of 1629, Thomas Vise the elder of Burwell, his wife Alice and children Thomas, John and Ann, inherit.

Kismet Stombers Lane, Hawkinge, Kent CT18 7AP

Cakes and Pictures: Juvenile Crime in the Edwardian East End

Peter Hamersley No. 874



Magistrate's Court, Old Street, Shoreditch
Image courtesy of Peter Hamersley

In the early years of the 20th Century a crime wave surged through London's East End following the introduction of coin-operated gas meters. The temptation of having a supply of ready money sitting in a box on a wall in the household seemed too much to resist. What might be surprising, however, is that the majority, of offenders who

went *up before the beak*¹ were young boys. What is striking about these crimes, and subsequent court cases, is the remarkable similarity of the stories told by the young offenders.

Cases were heard at the *Juvenile Court* in Old Street, Shoreditch, mostly before Magistrate Mr Clarke **HALL**, with Mr Lewis **MARGETTS** prosecuting on behalf of the *Commercial Gas Company*. What follows is just a tiny sample of the many weekly reported cases in contemporary newspapers.

Nine-year-old Freddie **GROVES** of Halley Street, Stepney appeared in February 1914. He was ordered to receive six strokes of a birch rod after being found to have stolen 2s 2d from the gas meter.² 'I opened it with a pair of scissors and took two lots of money out,' he said. 'I gave some to my brothers and sisters. We



**Birching stool, National Justice Museum,
Nottingham**

Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

bought some cakes and sweets and went to see the pictures.’³

The birch was made up of leafless twigs bound together to form a rod. It had been used as a punishment for juvenile crime since the mid-19th Century. It was normally administered at the magistrates’ court, in a private room by a policeman straight after the verdict, or at the nearest police station. The offender would be placed on a birching stool or sit backward on a chair to receive this primitive painful punishment. It remained in use up until 1948 in the UK. The scars from it would last much

longer. In June 1915, Tommy **CORDUROY**, 13, of Chad Street, Bow, avoided the birch after stealing 5s 2d from the gas meter. This was on the understanding that his father gave him *a sound thrashing*. He admitted opening the meter with a key he found in the street and said he had ‘Got rid of the money visiting picture palaces and buying sweets.’⁴

Three brothers appeared in August 1915. Robert **MORLEY**, 14, and his younger brothers, Charles and Harold, were found guilty of stealing 5s 7d from the gas meter. Harold, 11, said, ‘We took the money to buy food for the children. I bought the baby some chocolates, apples, fish and potatoes.’ The boys were severely cautioned and bound over.⁵

The ease with which gas meters could be opened was questioned by a magistrate in April 1915, during a case involving ten boys between the ages of 10 and 13 charged with six different offences. They had all opened the meters using nails or other *trifling instruments*.

The Gas Company was asked if it could produce meters a bit more theft-proof than the present ones which seemed to be an *incentive to dishonesty*. The Gas Company solicitor responded, ‘*If meters are too strong to break open, they are forced with some powerful weapon, which may destroy the meter and cause a dangerous escape of gas.*’ The company was in the process of making new ones. In this case, the boys admitted the thefts and said the money was shared between them and was spent either in sports shows or picture palaces.⁶

My grand-dad Bill appeared at the court in June 1915 when aged 12. He was found guilty of stealing 1s 10d from the slot meter in his home at 105 Heath Street, Stepney, and sentenced to five strokes of the birch. 'I am very sorry,' he said, 'I took the money and spent it on sweets: I opened the box with a poker.' His mother was quoted as saying he was a bad boy!⁷

Just one month later, undeterred by this punishment, his younger brother George, 10, was remanded for seven days after stealing 4d from the same gas meter. When arrested, young George said, 'I opened it yesterday with the poker. I spent the money on cakes and going to the pictures.'⁸ At the very least, young George was guaranteed regular meals for a week.

Unsurprisingly, these two stories were not passed down through family legend, and only came to light during my research!

These stories are as reported. There are countless others recorded in newspapers of major towns and cities around the country from the same era. Much the same explanation was given by the juvenile offenders. But was there something else going on here? Were the children really the offenders? I find it odd they are mostly saying the same thing. Was the lure of sweets, cakes and going to the pictures that worthwhile?

Could it possibly be adults who committed these crimes? Adults who would receive custodial sentences if found to be the offenders. The subsequent loss of income to poverty-stricken families would be devastating if this were the case. The children might have been treated to the pictures as a 'reward' for taking one for the team so to speak.⁹

On the surface, it may seem cruel to punish innocent children, but desperate times call for desperate measures. Was a punishment preferred to starvation? We may never know.

Endnotes: Sources & References:

¹ The 'Beak' is a slang word for a Magistrate..

² 2s 2d: UK currency before 1971: 12d—One Shilling: Twenty Shillings— £1. A family in regular work might earn about a pound a week in this era.

³ *The Eastern Post* 7 February 1914 p6 'Old Street : Bad Boy Birched'.

⁴ *The Eastern Post* 23 June 1915 p3 'Warning to Bad Boys'.

⁵ *East London Observer* 28 August 1915 p3 "Gas Cases".

⁶ *Illustrated Police News* 29 April 1915 p14 "Old Street : Ten Bad Boys".

⁷ *East End News & Chronicle* 18 June 1915 "Bad Boy Birched".

⁸ *The Eastern Post* 31 July 1915 p3 "Gas Meter Thefts".

⁹ The price of admission to a picture palace at the time was about 3d. Luke McKernan (2007) *Diverting Time: London's Cinemas and Their Audiences, 1906–1914*, *The London Journal*, 32:2, 125-144, DOI: 10.1179/174963207X205707.

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Frank Stanley Holmes (1921–1945)

Melissa Ford No. 7658

With the approaching 80th anniversary of the end of WWII I thought I would share this story of my dad's friend, Frank Stanley **HOLMES** aka Stan.

Stan was born on 9 April 1921 in East Ham, he was the second child and only boy to Alfred & Annie Holmes, another sister was born three years later.

The Holmes family lived at 58 Caledon Road, East Ham, and my dad and his family lived at 40 Caledon Road. I cannot say how the **LEVITT'S** and the Holmes families knew each other because all the children were different ages. But looking through my dad's photo album both families are in there.

Stan, along with his younger sister Edna, was baptised at St. Mary Magdalene Church in East Ham.

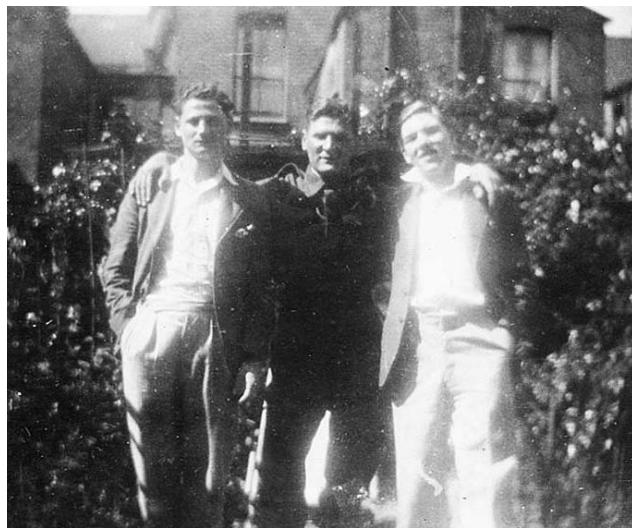
During WWII Stan served with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

History of Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve RAFVR

It was formed in July 1936 to provide individuals to supplement the Royal Auxiliary Air Force which had been formed in 1925 by the local Territorial Associations. Recruits were confined to men of between 18–25 and had been accepted for part

time training as pilots, observers and wireless operators. The object was to provide a reserve of aircrew for use in the event of war. When war broke out in 1939 the Air Ministry employed the RAFVR as the principal means for aircrew entry to serve with the RAF.

At some time between 1940 and 1945, the Holmes family moved to 47 Springfield Road, East Ham; this address was only round the corner to Caledon Road. The set of photos



Dad, Uncle George and Stan
Image courtesy of Melissa Ford



Stan, in uniform, with his parents
Image courtesy of Melissa Ford

that I have were taken before my father and his siblings all joined varieties of military orders. My dad went into the Royal Navy.

Stan, at some point, went to Canada and joined No 45 Group. This is a very interesting group as they were responsible for ferrying US & Canadian built aircraft across the Atlantic.

On 13 March 1945 at 17.56, Stan, an RAF navigator, boarded a

Douglas Dakota MK IV KN345 with RAF pilot Peter **ATROBUS**, Canadian co-pilot Floyd **GEORGE**, RAF radio operator Edward **WATKINS** and an American cadet Max **NELSON**, travelling to Sacramento, California. There was a light fog and the aircraft's radio reception was thought to be bad. The Dakota struck trees



Crashed plane
Image courtesy of Melissa Ford



Frank's grave
Image courtesy of Melissa Ford

about 50 feet from the summit of Saw Mill Mountain in Los Padres National Forest. All five people on board died. The plane was located by walkers on 13 May 1945.

Floyd George and Max Nelson's bodies were returned to their families but Stan, along with his fellow Englishmen, Antrobus & Watkins, were buried side by

side at Plot 35 of Santa Barbara Cemetery, California.

I do not know when my dad found out about the death of his friend as my dad was still in the Far East on board *HMS Indefatigable* and he didn't arrive home until 16 March 1946.

Already printed previously in Newham and Redbridge Newsletter

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Top 20 Tips for Researching a Family History

Originally compiled by Melissa Ford and Sharon Aylward

1. Work backwards through the generations to reveal your ancestors. You can then work forwards from the siblings of an ancestor to discover distant cousins. Be systematic in your research, working from one generation to the next.
2. Talk to relatives, especially the older ones, about your research. They may reveal details you don't already know about family members. They may also have copies of certificates and other documents which can help you. All of

this can save you time and money. Remember that your relatives will not be around forever. Talk to them now, before it's too late.

3. Note all information that could be relevant including any codes or reference numbers. Record the sources of all information you discover and where the sources are located. This will allow you to go back and recheck a source at a later date should it prove necessary. Information from different sources can sometimes be contradictory. Recording the source allows you to make a judgement about its reliability.
4. Always carry a notebook and pencil. Make sure that it's a pencil as many record offices and archives will not allow you to take a pen into their search-rooms.
5. Record things exactly as written, including abbreviations that have been used and any spelling mistakes. You can make a note that the original contains a mistake, but resist the temptation to record it solely in a corrected form.
6. Make a list of things to do. List people, events, dates and locations that you are searching for. Carry an up-to-date family tree with you if possible. These will help you when visiting record offices and archives. A *to do list* will help you focus on your research and save time.
7. There are charts and specialised forms such as a *family group sheet* or *individual summary sheet* which may help you record the information you discover. Store your information in such a way that you can retrieve it easily.
8. A good genealogy computer program can simplify recording your family history and help you make sense of it. There are plenty of different software titles and the choice can be bewildering. Start with one of the many free programs to avoid making the costly mistake of buying an expensive piece of software that doesn't suit your requirements. The websites *Cyndi's List* (www.cyndislist.com) and *GenSoftReviews* (www.gensoftreviews.com) both contain extensive listings.
9. At first you may find only a few names from part of a family. There could be others, especially children, who died in infancy or were fostered out and have been omitted or forgotten. In the past children were often produced at regular intervals. A gap may indicate an infant death.

10. Don't assume that a surname was always spelled the same way. There may be many variations. Make a note of similar names, particularly if they come from the area your ancestors lived in. Differences can result from transcription errors due to peculiarities of pronunciation, anglicization of foreign names, regional variations and changes over time. The ***Oxford Dictionary of English Surnames*** is a valuable reference work on this subject.
11. Don't overlook siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins. Their history may reveal important pieces of information which relate to your direct ancestor. If you are having difficulty tracing a particular ancestor, try tracing one of their siblings. That brother or sister may hold the key to finding your ancestor's whereabouts.
12. Don't forget the female line or a wife and mother's maiden name. Maiden names may help resolve names on records, for example witnesses at marriages, additional people in a household on a census record, godparents, or beneficiaries in a will.
13. Be careful when recording names. Many families used the same given names over and over again. Make sure you know which ancestor you are dealing with as several generations may have very similar names. Note that it was not uncommon for families to reuse given names. If a child died in infancy a subsequent child could be given the same name. Watch out for second marriages where the second spouse has the same given name as the first partner.
14. Be careful when using online family trees and published genealogies based on someone else's research. A well-researched genealogy will always include the sources of its information so that you can double check it. Make sure it matches your own records. If you copy someone else's work without checking you will copy all their mistakes and may reach the wrong conclusion.
15. Don't jump to conclusions, but if you don't have the evidence it can be beneficial to speculate. This may help you to continue your research in the right areas. However don't record speculation as fact, if you have estimated a date then show it as an estimate. If you have guessed at a location then record it as a guess. Treating speculation as fact can lead to all sorts of problems and risks linking up to unrelated families.

16. Remember our ancestors sometimes told little white lies, which may be revealed in official documents such as birth, marriage and death certificates. Don't treat everything you read in a document as the gospel truth. Check other related evidence to corroborate their story, especially about age, marital status, legitimacy, whether a person was really deceased, or for criminal activity.
17. Remember to review your research documents from time to time. A vital piece of information can be missed the first time around. When you reread a document it is possible that you may reach a different conclusion.
18. If you find the contact details for a distant relative, it may be worth getting in touch to exchange information. They may know something you don't. By exchanging information you will be passing on your knowledge and helping to ensure that your ancestors are not forgotten.
19. Don't overlook local record offices and local family history societies. Many have a wealth of information from unusual sources which may not be obvious to the distant researcher. Local knowledge can be the key to solving ancestral puzzles and breaking down those brick walls in your research.
20. Family History research is meant to be fun, but we are all limited with our time. So don't panic if you can't find something in the first few days, weeks or months. It can take years for the right piece of information to reveal itself. Don't give up. Try looking at a problem from different angles, and be prepared to put it to one side and go back later. New records are becoming available all the time. That missing piece of the jigsaw may yet turn up.

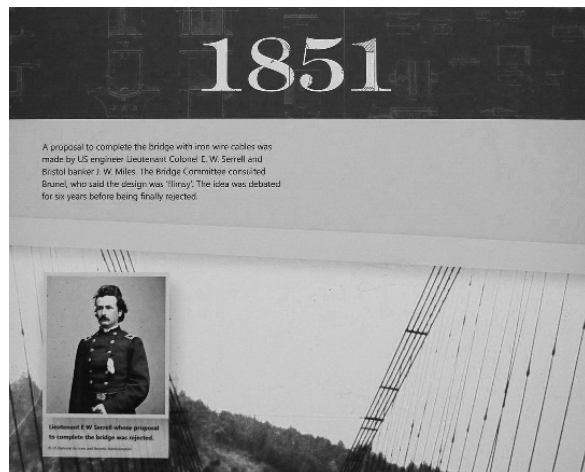
***Remember that a family history researcher needs
determination, stamina, perseverance, tolerance and patience***

Good Luck

The information in this guide is believed to be correct at the time of publication

A Surprise Encounter

Peter Holford No 14359



Information panel in Clifton Bridge Visitors' Centre

Image courtesy of Peter Holford

In May 2024 we were returning from a holiday in Somerset and decided to stop off in Bristol to visit the *Clifton Suspension Bridge*. It had been about twenty years since our last visit, and we thought it would be good to see this incredible architectural achievement again. We were stunned by the sheer number of tourists and the volume of heavy traffic crossing a bridge that is now 160 years old and wasn't designed for such heavy usage. It seems that Victorian engineering

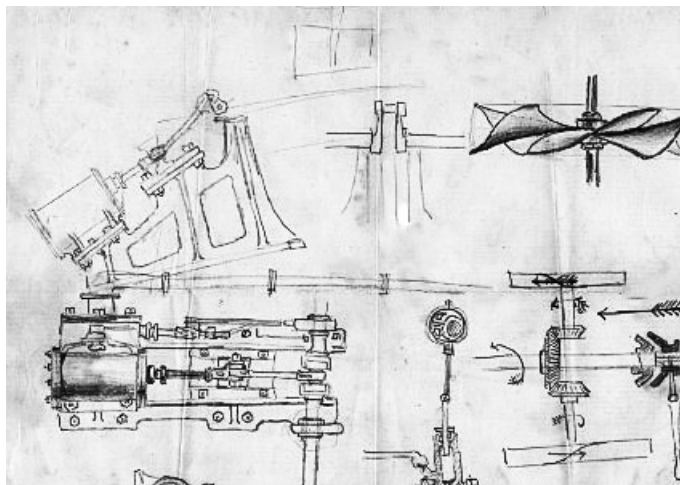
could be quite remarkable.

At the end of the bridge, we found a new visitor centre (completed 2014). Inside there are numerous displays and information panels. On reaching the 1851 panel I was suddenly confronted with somebody I recognised. It wasn't Isambard Kingdom **BRUNEL** who built the bridge. I'm very familiar with his face having spent a few years in his home city of Portsmouth. I'm confident I can pick him out in any police line-up. But this one was somehow out of context, but I knew him. After a few seconds I realised I was looking at somebody from my family tree—Edward Wellman **SERRELL**—a first cousin by marriage of my great grandfather James **HOLFORD**. James and Edward would never have met. It is unlikely that they would have even known of each other's existence! They lived



Jennie Pound

Image courtesy of Peter Holford



Engineer drawings
Image courtesy of Peter Holford

worlds apart. James had been born into a silk weaver's family in Bethnal Green and had apprenticed as a piano maker. He lived his entire adult life with his family in Hackney.

Edward was born into a large family in Stockwell, South East London and baptised at St. Giles, Camberwell in 1826. The Serrell family originated from Lymington, Hampshire. His

grandparents had moved to London around the time of their marriage in 1778. The Serrell's were evidently a middle-class family since although they died in 1852 and 1876 photographic images of them exist.

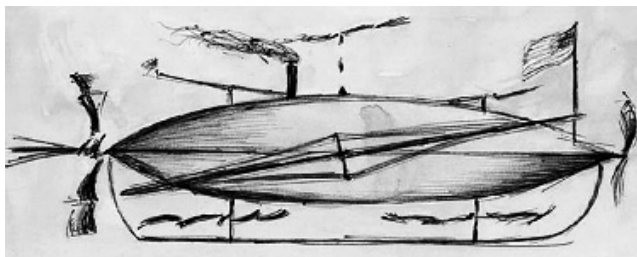
In 1831 they emigrated to New York, a journey that Jesse **POUND** had made with his family just two years previously. In 1848 Edward Serrell married Jane (known as Jennie) Pound (pictured) in New York. Jennie had been born in Maidstone, Kent in 1824. She was the daughter of Jesse Pound while James Holford was the son of Amelia Pound, Jesse's sister. Jesse may be a familiar name to the reader since I have written about him many times in *Cockney Ancestor* because of the wealth of information in his autobiography about life in London at the start of the 19th century. Jesse had been born in Bethnal Green in 1795 and Amelia four years later. Jesse emigrated to the USA in 1829 with his wife and young family.

So, what is the photograph of Edward Serrell doing on an information board in the *Clifton Bridge Visitor Centre*? The answer is that he was a very prominent engineer in New York and submitted plans for the completion of the bridge whose construction had stalled due to financial difficulties. Brunel didn't like Serrell's proposal to use a cheaper construction of woven wire for the supports, favouring large cast iron links instead. He thought Serrell's design was too flimsy. There is no evidence that Serrell visited England to view the site of the Clifton Bridge. The designs were probably posted.

The photograph on the front cover shows Serrell in the uniform of a Unionist officer, a lieutenant colonel. By the time of the American Civil War, he was

General Edward Wellman Serrell. He was in command of the New York Engineers engaged in civil engineering works building defences, bridges, railways, and all other constructions needed to wage war. He also became a pioneer in

the field of aeronautics, designing a machine based on the principle of a helicopter and, with the support of his commander General **BUTLER**, he conducted full-scale tests of metal rotor blades in the field using steam propulsion. He built various prototypes including the *Serrell Reconoiterer* (pictured) but eventually



Serrell Reconoiterer

Image courtesy of Peter Holford



Clifton suspension bridge

Image courtesy of Peter Holford

abandoned the scheme when it became apparent that steam power wasn't feasible for a flying machine. The images show his design for the *Reconoiterer* as well as some of his engineering drawings. He died in New York in 1906.

One of his descendants, John, was the source of Jesse Pound's autobiography, via his wife, Bev. John and Bev lived in upstate New York and John had a career as an architect in New York. He is

one of many who was stung by the voracious business practices of a certain D. **TRUMP**.

Footnote

I was told by General E W Serrell's descendants that the family were American and that in 1831 they were returning to the USA. There is a tendency among American genealogists to deny any English ancestry that has arrived in the USA after the Mayflower. Though they are proud of any Scottish or Irish ancestors that arrived later! It always pays to check any 'facts' you are told.

Email: counthill@aol.com

Recycle your printer cartridges

Recycle4Charity collect used printer cartridges and make a donation to the charity of your choice—preferably the East of London FHS.

Go to <http://www.recycle4charity.co.uk>. On the home screen click on Register Now.

Further down, on the same screen, type the word East in the Choose Your Charity box. A drop down list of charities beginning with the word East will appear. Select East of London FHS—C916.

Check you have selected the correct charity at the top left of the next screen. Add your name and address details so they can send you the envelopes for returning your used ink cartridges.

On the next screen choose envelopes rather than boxes.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND Epson or Kodak cartridges, damaged cartridges, cartridges that have been previously refilled, cartridges that have been labelled for another brand eg. Tesco, PC World or Office Depot, cartridges with labels removed or extra holes (signs that refilling has been attempted).

ADVERTISING IN COCKNEY ANCESTOR

For those offering personal or commercial services to members:

Full page £45

Half page £30

Quarter page £20

Eighth page £10

Lineage adverts—non-professional: 5p per word,
plus 50p per advert for non-members

Quotes for colour adverts on request

A 10% reduction if advert appears in 4 consecutive publications

Email: editor@eolfhs.org.uk or contact:

Mrs Vera Bangs

24 Alderney Gardens, Wickford, Essex SS11 7BD

Branch Information and Diary Dates

Haverling (H): First Saturday of the month at *Trinity Church, Gaynes Road, Upminster, Essex RM14 2YS*. Doors open at 1pm, meeting starts at 2pm.

Newham & Redbridge (NR): Fourth Wednesday of the month at *The Churchill Room, Wanstead Library, Spratt Hall Road, Wanstead, London E11 2RQ*. Doors open at 7pm, meeting starts at 7.30pm.

Central London (CL): Last Friday of the month at *St. Andrew's, Short Street, Waterloo, SE1 8LJ*. The meeting starts at 6.00pm. The meeting room will be available from 5.45pm.

AUGUST 2025

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|------|------|--|---------------|
| (H) | 2nd | <i>Ilford Murder (Z)</i> | Doreen Taylor |
| (NR) | 27th | <i>Members Evening – Our ancestors occupations. Members invited to give short talks on their ancestors' occupations</i> | |
| (CL) | 29th | <i>7 Famous Plaques in the East End – Gary introduces us to a variety of interesting people who lived in London's East End</i> | Gary Lewis |
| (Z) | 18th | <i>Zoom Branch Meeting
Understanding Your Old Photos.
Starts at 7.30pm</i> | Stephen Gill |

SEPTEMBER 2025

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|------|------|--|------------------|
| (H) | 6th | <i>tba</i> | |
| (NR) | 24th | <i>Incorporating AI into your family tree.
NB This talk will start at 7pm.</i> | Dr Penny Walters |
| (CL) | 26th | <i>Daniel Gould, surveyor and mapmaker 1749-1843. A absorbing story of how Michael used the archives to find a missing map of Clapham.</i> | Michael Tuffrey |

OCTOBER 2025

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|------|------|--|------|
| (H) | 4th | <i>tba</i> | |
| (NR) | 22nd | <i>Research using Commonwealth War Graves Commission archives</i> | CWGC |
| (CL) | 31st | <i>AGM - bring your items along to the meeting to share with others.</i> | |

Society Information

Surnames of Interest:

Until the Surname Interests position has been filled please follow the instructions set out below:

Members with Internet Access and an email address are encouraged to submit their Surnames of Interest via the Society Website. Members without internet access may send details of their Interests or request a search of the Surnames of Interest to the General Secretary, Janet Seward, at the address on the inside front cover. Please remember to quote your membership number and enclose a stamped self addressed envelope. The same service is available to non-members of the Society.

Contact Email Addresses

Chairman: chairman@eolfhs.org.uk

Secretary: society.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk

Treasurer: treasurer@eolfhs.org.uk

Membership: membership.secretary@eolfhs.org.uk

Projects: projects@eolfhs.org.uk

Helpdesk: helpdesk@eolfhs.org.uk

Editor: editor@eolfhs.org.uk

Enquiries and Correspondence:

In all correspondence with the Society, please quote your membership number. When writing it is essential to enclose a SAE for a reply.

Webmaster: Bill Hughes. Email: webmaster@eolfhs.org.uk

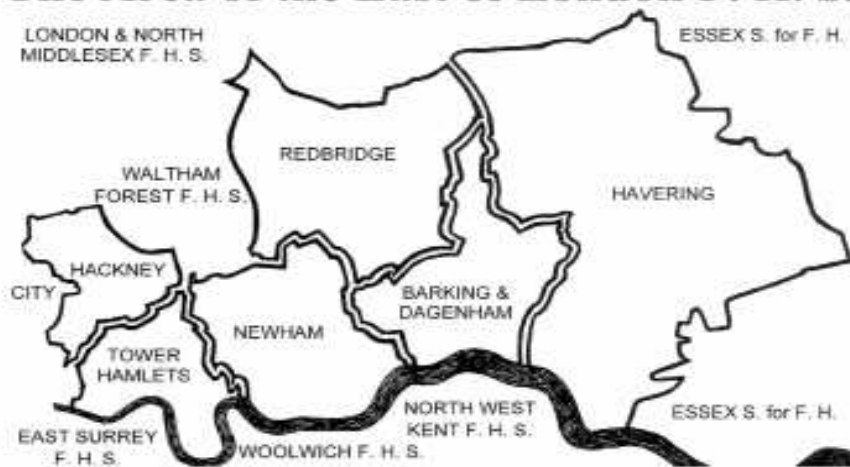
Website: Put <http://www.eolfhs.org.uk> into your browser and add it to your favourites or bookmarks.

Writing for Cockney Ancestor

All material for inclusion in *Cockney Ancestor* should be sent to the Editor, 24 Alderney Gardens, Wickford, Essex SS11 7BD or email to editor@eolfhs.org.uk. Please quote your name and membership number and enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for any returns.

There is no guarantee that an article will be included in any particular edition. Please do not send any original photographs in case they are lost or damaged. Your article submission will be acknowledged and you will be asked to complete and submit a copyright form. Further details can be found on our website at <https://www.eolfhs.org.uk/casubmissions/>.

The Area of the East of London F. H. S.



The Society's area is to the east of the City of London, and it comprises the London Boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham, and Havering. A selective list of places within these boroughs is as follows:

Hackney: Clapton, Dalston, Hackney, Haggerston, Hoxton, Kingsland, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington.

Tower Hamlets: Aldgate, Artillery Liberty, Bethnal Green, Bishopsgate, Bow, Bromley-by-Bow, Bromley St. Leonard, St. George in the East, Isle of Dogs, Limehouse, Mile End, Millwall, Old Ford, Norton Folgate, Poplar, Ratcliff, Shadwell, Spitalfields, Stepney, Stratford-le-Bow, Tower Liberty, Wapping and Whitechapel.

Newham: Beckton, Canning Town, Custom House, East Ham, Forest Gate, Little Ilford, Manor Park, Plaistow, Silvertown, Stratford Langthorne, Upton Park, West Ham and North Woolwich.

Redbridge: Barkingside, Chadwell Heath, Chigwell, Clayhall, Cranbrook, Fairlop, Fullwell Cross, Gants Hill Cross, Goodmayes, Hainault, Ilford, Great Ilford, Little Heath, Newbury Park, Redbridge, Seven Kings, Snaresbrook, South Woodford, Wanstead, Woodford, Woodford Bridge, and Woodford Green.

Barking and Dagenham: Barking, Beacontree, Part of Chadwell Heath, Dagenham East, Dagenham Heathway, Dagenham Village, Rush Green and Upney.

Havering: Chadwell Heath, Collier Row, Corbets Tey, Cranham, Elm Park, Emerson Park, Gidea Park, Havering-atte-Bower, Harold Hill, Harold Wood, Hornchurch, Rainham, Romford, Upminster, and Wennington.