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in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire & the Isle of Ely

THE JOURNAL



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VOLUME 32 : 3

AUTUMN 2026

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

PRESIDENT: ELIZABETH STAZICKER MA (OXON), DIPL ARCHIVE ADMIN, FRSA

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS: NED WAYNE & CAROL NOBLE

A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION

REGISTERED CHARITY No. : 278815

The Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society exists to encourage the study of genealogy, heraldry and family history within the old counties of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, and Huntingdonshire. We reformed on 1 January 2020 when the separate family history societies representing Cambridgeshire (est.1976) and Huntingdonshire (est.1984) amalgamated into a single organization.

We actively support established guidelines for good practice and aim to promote considered, informed and quality research. Our projects teams continue to work to scan, transcribe and index name-rich resources of genealogical interest, to enable researchers to pursue their county ancestors wherever they happen to now live. Volunteer researchers will offer their collective opinion on almost any query.

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For latest news, and updates

WATCH THE WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER & FACEBOOK

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

All general correspondence via the Secretary, please :

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



CAMBS & HUNTS FHS JOURNAL

VOL 32 : 3

AUTUMN 2026



Welcome to the Autumn edition of the CHFHS Journal—with an eclectic mix of articles, reports and an important dates for your diary—the SoG Collaboration featuring Cambs & Hunts in September, and next year, FamilyTree LIVE 2027.

Feature articles in this issue include—from regular contributor, Graham W, a recounting of life and times of a distant relative and his attempts to emigrate to Australia in the 1880s; Fiona L brings us the second part of the lives of a C16th brewing family; some further reflections on the past fifty years of family history and our society; a report from the recent 50th Anniversary AGM and talk—with snaps illustrating what a great day it was; and finally, Fenland District Council announcing their Cemetery Records now being available to search online (via DeceasedOnline).

Regular updates include—research surgeries, the latest dates for the programme of the monthly research zooms, and meetings/talks diary; reports of past talks; book reviews—& much more. Watch out for the dates/venues of additional events to be announced via the website, newsletter and facebook, as and when they are finalised.

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

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cover photo : CHFHS 50th Anniversary Cake Cutting by Robert Adams



A WORD FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN



Which online database?

We often get enquiries at surgeries and through emails about the “best” online database to use for searching for ancestors, so I will use this opportunity to make some personal comments. The simple answer is - the one that will tell us what we want to find out, but the likelihood of success will vary from database to database, and the answer may not be online or even recorded. The Society has its own online searchable database which is a great starting point for Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, but is unlikely to record our family members when they lived elsewhere.

Free databases include FamilySearch, FreeBMD, FreeReg, FreeCen. Frequent additions are made to most databases so it is always worth revisiting. Databases that make charges include Ancestry, FindMyPast, The Genealogist, and there are many online guides showing the differing content of each set of data. I tend to use Wikipedia as a good starting point for topics new to me; their list and comparison of family history databases provides a useful overview, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_genealogy_databases.

Another consideration for the Society is how do we decide to share our data by adding it to external databases? Sometimes the decision is made by others – last year’s publication of parish register images alongside Society transcripts is on Ancestry because they were the successful bidders when the Council project went out to tender. Other Society content is on FindMyPast, and the royalty income we receive from both these major sites is an important part of our annual income and influences decisions we make about member subscriptions. Our members will have their own preference, but this will vary from person to person, so we always make decisions that are in the best interest of the Society, rather than taking into account personal member preference. We are at an early stage publishing non-conformist records on FindMyPast and adding to our parish register content, so please keep a look out for further developments.

All databases have their advantages and disadvantages and will have

particular search characteristics that can best be understood by regular use. Our research team use a wide range of sources for the enquires they receive, and members should do the same, so that they have a greater chance of finding the answers they want.

Fenland Cemetery records online

The Society has been liaising with Fenland District Council for several years about making the cemetery records they hold more widely available. 245,000 records have recently been added to the DeceasedOnline website. Searching is free although a charge is made to see the full record. Although the Society was not directly involved in this work, it is an important new resource for our members.

AGM and postal address

It was good to meet many of you at our AGM in May; to see the excellent display Sue Sampson and her archives colleagues had put on for us; and to hear Mia Bennett's talk. One of the key points for me in her talk was the personal benefit to her own research that she gets from chairing a family history society – new knowledge, thoughts, skills, and this strongly echoes my own experience.

It was also good to share a celebration cake and lunch. The content for our 50th anniversary publication that you will all receive **by post** is being processed. **Please make sure that you have your correct postal address recorded in our membership section** so we can post you a copy of the record of our past 50 years. If we don't have an address, we cannot post it to you either in the UK or overseas. If you are not sure how to check the address in our files, please contact either me or Chris Norton, our Membership Secretary.

The Female Refuge and Spinning House

We continue to receive media coverage including WhoDoYouThinkYouAre about the work we are doing with the Spinning House transcriptions, and this has led to contact with 'Capturing Cambridge' where the Female Refuge digital images from the Ely Archives have been published online. There are several women who feature in both organisation minute books, and we are starting to look at how we can bring together these two pieces of work.

Identifying people in photographs

Many of you will know that this is one of my interests, so I was very pleased to see Steve Gill's talk to the Society in June. I will be starting to use AI to compare known people in my collection with those I am uncertain about

identifying. If anyone else has experience of this, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

I would also welcome suggestions and ideas for future work, so we can follow these up. Please email me chairman@chfhs.org.uk.

David Copsey



Margery Young 1934-2026

The March Branch were saddened to hear of the sudden death of our branch chairman Margery Young, on 25th March.

Margery had been chairman of the branch since 2015 and been involved with the branch since its formation in 2004, principally as the organizer of our trips. From a first trip to the Family Records Centre in 2005, she arranged over 50 trips during the next 20 years to record offices, family

history fairs, museums, church tours etc., counting us all out and back again in true teacher style!

Margery was also present at our bi-weekly surgeries in March library and had attended one the week before her death. Her extensive knowledge of family history was invaluable at these and will be greatly missed.

Margery was born, and spent her working life in north London, where she was a teacher and cub and scout leader. But her mother was originally from Doddington, and it was here that she moved following her retirement in the 1990s.

Margery's family kindly donated her extensive collection of family history books to the society—some of which were re-homed at the recent AGM.

A private family funeral service was held in north London. Our condolences go to her sons Graham and Stephen and daughter Judith and the rest of her family.

Our thanks to Dave Edwards for compiling these recollections.



AGM SAT 23 MAY @ HUNTINGDON LIBRARY



The Spring Bank Holiday Saturday, 23 May, saw nearly 50 members gather in the Meeting Room at Huntingdon Library for the Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society 50th (1976-2026) Anniversary Annual General Meeting.

The events team had arrived early to set up the room, and ensure that everyone had tea or coffee on arrival when the doors opened at 10.30. The morning gave the opportunity for lively chat among new and renewed acquaintances. We were pleased to welcome “Member #1”, Robert Adams, all the way from Devon for the occasion, and Jane who came up from Tunbridge Wells by train to stay the weekend in Cambridge.

The Huntingdon Archives office, housed in the room next door, opened especially for that morning to put on an exhibition of documents for us to view—which was greatly appreciated and attracted much interest among the attendees. Our thanks go to Sue and Karis for preparing the display.

A large selection of pre-loved family and local history books was available for attendees to browse throughout the day, and to re-home whatever titles appealed to the individual. Many came from the large collection amassed by the late Margery Young of March Branch (see previous page), and kindly donated to the society by her family, for others to enjoy.

The AGM meeting was joined by a number of zoom attendees, to hear the business-of-the-day, with reports and elections overseen by our President, Dr Liz Stazicker (Chair’s report / accounts were published in the last issue)

Lunch was a tasty buffet organised by Muriel, with help on the day from the events team. A delicious anniversary cake decorated with our “50th” logo rounded off the meal. Bob Adams was invited to cut the cake (as he had also done for the 21st anniversary)—Bob recounted that he only became “#1” because they had decided to list the founder members alphabetically!!

The day concluded with a well-received hybrid talk by professional genealogist, Mia Bennett, entitled “Hidden In The Small Print” (summarised on the following pages—and a recording for members to see on the website)

HIDDEN IN THE SMALL PRINT

WITH MIA BENNETT

(HYBRID AGM MEETING : MAY 2026)

Mia Bennett was our guest speaker at our 2026 AGM meeting and celebration of the Society's 50th anniversary, held in the Huntingdonshire Archives.

Her talk looked at where additional information may be hidden within documents which we have already viewed, and demonstrated how this additional depth of investigation could often lead to clues that help break through the brickwalls we all have in our ancestry research.

Mia provided a very comprehensive document titled "*Hidden in the Small Print – Handout*", after the presentation which is available on our website, alongside the video of her presentation that I urge all our members to view.

The following is a brief summary of the highlights of this document—

Why Look in the Small Print?

- To find new details about ancestors and follow leads.
- To better understand lives and resolve research obstacles.

Where to Search in Records

- Always examine original images, not just transcripts, for additional or corrected info.
- Use record guides from sources like The Genealogist and The National Archives.
- Turn pages thoroughly in census, passenger, military, probate, pension, occupational, and poor law records.
- Follow clues from documents, annotations, and family memorabilia to locate further data.

Explore links to other websites, online books, and unindexed records, such as certain Poor Law records.

Research Strategies

- Create a research plan including known facts, gaps, and sources checked.
- Resolve conflicting information and keep records updated.
- Use detailed examples for census, 1939 Register, parish registers, and civil registration.

- For census, check pages before/after and street views; Irish census pages may have extra details.
- In the 1939 Register, note name changes, update dates, and district codes.
- Confirm parish register coverage and use online catalogues to identify available years.
- Use Map Explorer for property locations, tithe apportionments, and related records.
- Order original civil registration certificates and examine all details, especially informants.
- In passenger lists, look for relationship info and physical descriptions.
- Military records require service numbers, next of kin, and detailed physical info.
- Probate records reveal family members, land transfers, and probate dates.
- Newspapers provide personal stories, photos, and contextual life details. Trade union records, directories, coastguard records, and online books expand research options.

FamilySearch and Additional Resources

- Use FamilySearch's catalogue, microfilms, and "Full Text Search" for digitized records.
- Access microfilms at affiliate libraries; use image group numbers for detailed searches.
- Explore archives at the British Library, online books, and specialised collections.

Mia's presentation was very well researched and presented with much enthusiasm., and was enthusiastically received by the AGM attendees She included many examples of following these ideas which enabled the breakdown of her own brickwalls and led to much sharing of experiences and ideas with the audience.

Reported by John Bowness

CHFHS 50TH ANIVERSARY BOOKLET

The anniversary booklet is to be sent to all members by post. Please would all e-journal recipients check that we have your correct current postal address to ensure receipt. Many thanks.



Liz Staziker, David Copsey and Robert Adams cutting the anniversary cake

AGM MOMENTS

The audience awaiting Mia Bennett's talk "Hidden In The Small Print"



LET THE MEN WHO HAVE THE PLUCK AND ADVENTURE GO—

By Graham WEBSTER

Reading about the Cambridge Charity Organisation Society (CCOS) in December 2024's *The Journal* of the Cambs and Hunts Family History Society, a name leapt off the page – John WISBEY – whose application for funds to emigrate to Australia was declined.¹

My mother was a WISBEY, so were we related?

And did he ever get to Australia ...

It now emerges that John William (later known as Jack) WISBEY/WISBY was born in Cambridge in October 1865. His parents were William WISBEY and Harriet née SABERTON/SABBERTON/SOBBERTON; he was born in Ely, Cambridgeshire, she in Witchford, Cambridgeshire, on 9 April 1837; they were married at St Mary, Ely on 11 June 1855.

There is a record of a baptism of a John William WISBY (parents were William, a labourer, and Harriet) on 8 November 1857 at St Peter ad Vincula, Coveney, Cambridgeshire.² He was, however, buried at St Andrew the Less, Cambridge, on 29 July 1863.³

John William (of this story) was baptised at St Andrew the Less, Cambridge, on 17 June 1866 at an address in New Street, Cambridge.⁴ The family (as WICKEY) – parents, John, older sister, Hannah, and younger son Richard – were living at 21 New Street in the 1871 Census of England and Wales; father was a labourer.⁵

In the 1881 Census of England and Wales, the family (William was an addition from the previous census) were still living at 21 New Street. By this stage, William snr was a platelayer, and John an errand boy.⁶ As *The Journal* article then wrote, John, 21, approached the CCOS in 1887 for assistance in emigrating to Australia.⁷

John gave his address as 21 New Street, Cambridge, and he lists his father as a platelayer, having been in employment of 25 years.⁸ On his application form to the CCOS John stated that he had had a summer job in the Cambridge Botanical Gardens earning 15s a week, and had worked at the Royal Albert Docks, London.⁹ John stated he was in the Foresters' Benefit Society.¹⁰ Founded to assist men who fell into need 'as they walked through

the forest of life', the Ancient Order of Foresters was formed in 1834.¹¹ References in John's case file were given by Mr LYNCH (of the Cambridge Botanical Gardens), '*...steady and industrious*'; Mr HOLMDEN, '*...strictly honest and of good character*'; Mr William BIRD of Manor House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge, '*...been in class at Sunday School...and is an honest and deserving young man*'; and N S HAWKS of Albert Docks Engine Works, who confirmed John had worked there for eight months, '*...industrious and honest...*'¹²

In May 1887, the case was deferred on a couple of occasions. A letter dated 10 May 1887 to Rev A[rthur] G[erald] JOYCE from H[enry] BRANDON of Endsleigh, Carlton Road, Putney, London,¹³ writing that:

I want about half a dozen farm labourers to leave here for Mackay, Queensland on the S.S. Dacca ([British India Steam Navigation Coy]) on 1st June so can you supply their ages from 17 to 35. Wages for good strong, able bodied men, who are good ploughmen, £20, and for others £16 with board and lodgings. They will have to pay for their shipment [?] 20/mth. I am willing to advance this [from their] wages and I allow 5/each for their expenses to London.

Kindly let me know at once if you supply them as I must have them their passage being worked by this weekend. I shall not require to see them as I shall be quite satisfied with your selection and enclose forms of agreement and Gov't paper so that you can see what is required and will send you the lot if you can complete this order.

Henry BRANDON (b.1845-d.1899) arrived in Sydney in 1856 and began work with the Australian Joint Stock Bank in 1866. He was branch manager in Ravenswood, Bowen and Mackay, from 1875, retiring from Mackay in 1884.¹⁴ He partnered with John SPILLER in Mackay, in a number of enterprises, including the Pioneer Sugar Plantation.¹⁵ He then moved to the area, now known as Brandon in North Queensland, acquired land west of Sheep Station Creek and set about installing a Sugar Mill in 1883. The mill was in operation by 1884 so Henry returned to England and became involved with BHP Mining. In the 1891 Census Henry was living in Putney.¹⁶

A reply in the case file was dated 17 May 1887 from Rev JOYCE addressed to 'Dear Madam' started 'Mrs Joyce has handed me your letter...':

...if the young man you write about has done any farm work...I enclose the letter describing the conditions, and think it would be better for him to fill up a good application form...that Mr Brandon

might sat if he can accept him before he signs any agreement.

If accepted he will get a free passage to Mackay Queensland; but he must sign agreement to remain with Employer who provides the passage for a 12 month. He will have rations 14lbs butchers meat 8lbs flour 2 lbs sugar 1/4lb tea per week...and £16 wages per annum payable half yearly, at the end of the 12 month he will be free to shift for himself...¹⁷

The case file then has a letter dated 21 May 1887, started in the handwriting of Rev JOYCE but completed in a different hand possible by, and signed by, Ellen JOYCE:

We are unable to proceed in this matter because the Application form, otherwise correctly filled up, states that J.W. Wisbey has relations at Parramatta that is in New South Wales...inference of the Queensland Govt would be that he wishes to make use of the cheap passage simply to get to New South Wales easily...

[In a different hand] The Queensland government always refuse such applications. I do not think there is time to alter the application... Possibly this is only some stray acquaintance and there is no intention on Wisbeys part of ever [?] joining his friend...If he wishes to apply for the next selection for McKay...I must point out that 'general labourer' is not what is wanted...Let the men who have the pluck and adventure go – don't keep any man at home who has the courage to go. We have no failures amongst any men who are fit to go.¹⁸

There is no indication to whom this letter was addressed. Mrs JOYCE had founded, in 1884, the British Women's Emigration Association. She '*...was able to decide who was the right type of emigrants as she saw that the emigration could create a better British Empire*'.¹⁹ It is not known how Ellen JOYCE was involved in the CCOS.

Intriguingly, the case file records on 23 May 1887:

Case deferred with grant of loan with surety if required, to £1 and grant of clothes at the discretion of Sec...

Mr Anderson let him work his passage out on board the Ormuz. Earning 8/ a day, a labourer on an orange plantation at Parramatta...when last heard of him Feb 4th 1888.²⁰

For John to be in New South Wales (NSW) in February 1888 the only possible voyage of the *Ormuz* left Gravesend, Kent, on 14 November 1887, arriving Sydney on 16 November 1887.²¹ On this voyage, RMS *Ormuz* of the Orient Company's line, broke '*...every record at each stage of her steaming...*'.²² Unfortunately, there is no mention of John William WISBEY on the manifest!²³

What happened after his 1887 application to the CCOS? He is not living with his parents in the 1891 Census of England and Wales. William snr (a platelayer with the Great Eastern Railway), Harriet (as Harry) and William jnr who had been born in 1876 were living at 7 Nelson Street, Cambridge. There is a John WISBEY living at 18 Glasgow Terrace, in the district of St George, Hanover Square, Middlesex.²⁴ The county is relevant as John William declared in his enlistment papers in 1916 that he had served three years in the 15th Middlesex Volunteers.²⁵ Given how the CCOS papers seem to indicate he was in NSW in 1888 this is a red herring - but how are the three years accounted for?

The eight- or nine-year hiatus is interesting as there is no information on a 'John William Wisbey' (or variations of the name) in the UK passports data of the period or in the New South Wales immigration records.

We next hear of John when he married Ethel HOOKWAY (b. 9 February 1871, Newcastle, NSW) on 21 April 1897 in St Augustine church, Merewether, NSW.²⁶ The register gives Merewether as his residence, William WISBEY as his father, a railway worker. Ethel's residence was also Merewether, a worker in a factory, father James a blacksmith.²⁷ On 19 February 1898, son William Nicholson was born in Merewether, NSW. And in 1903, another son, Eris John, was born, also in Merewether.

At the end of 1905, John WISBY failed to be elected secretary of the Sea Pit Miners' Lodge.²⁸ He obviously eventually succeeded in becoming secretary, as his obituary cited he was Secretary of the mine's lodge.²⁹ In the summer of 1906, J WISBY, acting as the chairman of the Old Racecourse Yearly Fund, toasted J HOOKWAY, who had acted as the chairman of the fund for a number of years. Was this John's father-in-law?

The year 1907 was busy for John. In March, he was co-opted to a Merewether Council committee to consider the best method of assisting the Merewether band, recently re-formed after a dormant period (and was still on the committee in 1908).³⁰ Then in April, John was elected to the parochial council of St Augustine church.³¹ He was campaigning at Merewether Municipal Council in October 1907 to have lifelines placed in 'a convenient

place on [Merewether] beach'; he had promoted, amongst others, a previous petition to achieve this in August 1906.³² And, in November, John (WISBY) was elected to a local committee of the Sea Pit colliery, Merewether.³³

In 1911, in the Merewether Municipal Council election for aldermen, John William WISBEY only received 14 votes in the Grebe Ward – fifth on the ballot paper.³⁴ On the 1913 electoral roll, John and Ethel were living at Berner Street, Merewether; John was a miner.³⁵ Likely, he is still working at Sea Pit mine, an Australian Agricultural Company (A. A. Company), tucked between Cooks Hill and Merewether, the workings extended nearly four kilometres out under the sea. The colliery closed in 1916 and the land levelled and swamp filled to create a housing estate in the 1920s.³⁶

In 1914, in Merewether, John objected to an increase in medical fees, '*...it [was] extortion on the part of the doctors, as sixpence per week was ample remuneration for the services rendered*'.³⁷ In 1915, a record gives John as the secretary of the Burwood Yearly Club in Merewether.³⁸ Does this suggest he was now working at the Burwood Colliery?

On 6 November 1916 at Newcastle, NSW, John (aged 44 years and 1 month) enlisted in the Australian Imperial Army, as a private service number 4624, and was assigned to 'B' Company, Newcastle Depot Battalion.³⁹ He gave Berner (also Burnett) Street, Merewether, as the address for wife, Ethel.⁴⁰ John (age 44, ie b. ca 1872 – although later given as 52) embarked at Sydney, NSW, on HMAT A72 *Beltana*, on 25 November 1916, as part of the 12th Reinforcements of 30th Infantry Battalion of the 8th Infantry Brigade of the Australian Imperial Force.⁴¹ His next-of-kin (NoK), Ethel, was living at Garnet Street, Merewether.⁴² He disembarked on 29 January 1917 at Devonport, Devon, England.⁴³ In August 1917, he was assessed at Hurdcott Camp, Compton Chamberlayne, Fovant, Wiltshire, England, which was used by troops prior to being shipped home to Australia.⁴⁴ It was stated he had suffered from senile debility since October 1916 (cf enlistment date):

When he ceased work as a miner one week before enlisting he felt that he was in need of the rest.

Did not do more than 10 days training in Australia.

Arrived England 29 Jan 1917, did none month training and was then sent to work in mess hut pantry and has been working there since.

*Three months ago began to feel "run down" and unfit for work has continued to get worse for work has continued to get worse, and on some days now is unable to do anything.*⁴⁵

He was diagnosed with senile debility 'not due to...but aggravated by ordinary military service'. There was also mention of old 'Tb [tuberculosis] focus'. On 26 September 1917 John returned to Australia on HMT A30 *Borda* (NoK informed on 2 November 1917), arriving Sydney on 25 November 1917, and was medically discharged in January 1918 due to 'senile debility'.⁴⁶ In February 1918 his war pension was refused 'member's incapacity no worse than before enlistment'.⁴⁷

After his return, John (WISBY) despite the apparent health failures became involved in a number of organisations, initially in the Merewether Progressive Party, the secretary of which he was in 1920.⁴⁸ In 1922, John, a miner, stood as a Labour candidate in the Merewether Municipal elections, and was successfully elected an alderman.⁴⁹ In 1923, Alderman WISBEY spoke in a debate to extend a tram line out to Merewether, and responded to a comment that the extension could be done when the line was electrified '[yes], in the sweet bye and bye'!⁵⁰ In March 1925, president J WISBY spoke out against the split of the Merewether League of the Australian Labour Party (ALP) with the Communist Party.⁵¹ Later in 1925 he lost an extension for a further three years of an alderman in municipal elections of that year.⁵² On 14 February 1928, the annual general meeting of the Australian Labour Party, Merewether branch was held under the auspices of its president J W WISBEY.⁵³ He had been its president since 1922.⁵⁴ Whether he was not standing or did not receive enough votes, a new president was elected.⁵⁵

In December 1930, Jack (WISLEY), of 57 Berner Street, Merewether, working at Burwood Colliery, suffered contusion when a prop hit him.⁵⁶ The family had been living at that address since at least 1922; John gave this address in the 1922 elections, and son Eric was advertising his trade - electrical contractor - from there in 1925.⁵⁷ John/Jack, Ethel and Eric were probably still there in 1933/1934.⁵⁸

On 28 August 1939 John's wife, Ethel, died.⁵⁹ Their address was given as 58 Hickson Street, Merewether. Her funeral was at St Augustine's church, Merewether, (where she was a founding member of their choir, and where they were both members) and was buried on 30 August 1939 at Sandgate Cemetery, Sandgate, Newcastle, NSW.⁶⁰ Members of the Star of Glebe branch, Lodge 1736, (based at the Glebe Methodist church, Merewether), Grand United Order of Oddfellows Friendly Society, were encouraged to attend Ethel funeral as John/Jack had been a member.⁶¹

On 2 April 1942, John died in Newcastle Hospital, New Lambton, Newcastle.⁶² His death was registered in the district of New Lambton, NSW, on 4 May 1942.⁶³ His death was reported as:

Declining the offer of Ambulance Officer D. Evans to take him home on the night of March 23, John Wisbey, 75, old age pensioner, of Tudor-street, Hamilton, walked out of the ambulance station and fell on the concrete, striking the back of his head, it was stated yesterday at an inquest at Newcastle Courthouse.

*The Coroner (Mr. A. G. Chaplin) found that death was due to injury accidentally received when Wisbey, in an intoxicated condition, fell and struck his head on the concrete road.*⁶⁴

John was also buried at Sandgate Cemetery, on 4 April 1942.⁶⁵ In his obituary, it was stated he had lived in Merewether for over 50 years.⁶⁶ An inquest on John's death was held on 1 May 1942 which recorded his death as the '...[f]racture of skull accidentally sustained when he fell to a concrete road in an intoxicated state'.⁶⁷

John/Jack William WISBEY made good after the unpromising start to improve his life after his grant to emigrate was decline. Although there are holes in his history (how did he get to NSW, for example), he contributed greatly to the social and civic life of Merewether.

And, yes, John William is related to me, admittedly remotely, as a 5th cousin 2x removed.

NOTES and REFERENCES:

¹ HOUSDEN, Laura Catherine (2024), Opening up the files of: The Cambridge Charity Organisation Society, *The Journal*, vol 34, no 4, pp6-10

² Coveney Parish Register, <https://tinyurl.com/2pa6catm> ; *England, Births and Christenings, 1538-1975*, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:JM3Y-S4H>

³ *National Burial Index For England & Wales*, via Findmypast

⁴ *England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975*, via Findmypast; John William was also baptised at

⁵ *England and Wales, Census, 1871*, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VFF8-7KM>

⁶ *England and Wales Census, 1881*, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q27C-KXGT>

⁷ Cambridgeshire Archives, CCOS Case File no. 1427; the charity was established in 1880 and was the forerunner of the Cambridge Central Aid Society for the relief of poverty amongst Cambridge residents, *Cambridge Aid*, <https://tinyurl.com/yc88fj6x>

⁸ Address also confirmed in *Spalding's Directory for 1887*, via Laura HOUSDEN, email dated 29 November 2024

⁹ Apparently, a fitter's labourer, Albert Docks Indian Works, CCOS case file *ibid*

¹⁰ The Foresters Friendly Society is a British friendly society which was formed in 1834 as the Ancient Order of Foresters. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foresters_Friendly_Society

¹¹ *Foresters Friendly Society*, <https://www.forestersfriendlysociety.co.uk/about-us/our-history/>

¹² CCOS case file *ibid*; In the 1891 Census, William BIRD is listed as a vinegar maker

¹³ Arthur Gerald JOYCE was the son of Ellen JOYCE, a noted organiser of women's emigration from the UK. She started and ran the British Women's Emigration Association, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Joyce . A G JOYCE became a clergyman and was rector of St Martins, Winnall, Hampshire, from 1887, <https://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/news/23803679.hon-ellen-joyce-imperialist-promoter-womens-emigration/> ; Henry BRANDON, *1891 England, Wales & Scotland Census*

¹⁴ *Henry Brandon Papers ca. 1830-1900*, <https://tinyurl.com/mtmn6uzu>

¹⁵ SAUNDERS, Kay (1982), *Workers in bondage*, p50, https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:198631/Workers_In_Bondage.pdf

¹⁶ *Henry Brandon (1845 - 1899)*, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Brandon-2172>

¹⁷ In the 1891 Census, Arthur JOYCE is living with his mother, Ellen

¹⁸ CCOS case file *ibid*

¹⁹ Ellen Joyce, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Joyce ; The Hon. Ellen Joyce: Imperialist and promoter of women's emigration, <https://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/news/23803679.hon-ellen-joyce-imperialist-promoter-womens-emigration/>

²⁰ CCOS case file *ibid*

²¹ Via Plymouth (15 Oct), Naples (21 Oct), Port Said (24 Oct), Suez (28 Oct), Aden (1 Nov) & King George Sound (14 Nov), *Ormuz*, <https://passengers.history.sa.gov.au/node/971509>

²² Arrival of the R.M.S. *Ormuz*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 November 1887, p8, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13671561>

²³ <https://www.marinersandships.com.au/1887/11/089orm.htm>

²⁴ *Electoral registers 1832-1932*, via Findmypast

²⁵ Service record, John Williams, service no. 4624, <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8846736> ; *Mid North Coast Pioneers - Newcastle to Lismore and beyond*: John William Jack WISBEY, 1865–1942 (aged 77 years), <http://>

mncp.scss.dyndns.info/tree/mncp.ged/individual/I3111/John-William-Jack-WISBEY

²⁶ *New South Wales Marriages 1788-1945*, via Findmypast; *Mid North Coast Pioneers - Newcastle to Lismore and beyond*, *ibid*

²⁷ Marriage certificate, NSW #1897/3521

²⁸ Merewether, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 21 December 1905, p5, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136107881>

²⁹ Mr J Wisbey, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 13 April 1942, p4, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/140403035>

³⁰ Merewether, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 16 March 1907, p3, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136606921> ; *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 29 August 1908, p3, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136415114>

³¹ Merewether, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 13 April 1907, p3, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136602293>

³² Merewether council, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 24 October 1907, p5, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/134699825> ; Merewether council, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 30 August 1906, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136222069>

³³ Sea Pit miners, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 16 November 1907, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/134699688>

³⁴ Municipality of Merewether, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 1 February 1911, p3, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133797779> ; *Merewether Council*, <https://lachlanwetherall.com/newcastle-municipal-councils/merewether/>

³⁵ *Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980*, via Ancestry and Findmypast

³⁶ AA's Sea Pit, <https://uk.pinterest.com/pin/aas-sea-pit--14707136273132713/> ; *List of collieries in Newcastle (Australia)*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_collieries_in_Newcastle_\(Australia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_collieries_in_Newcastle_(Australia))

³⁷ The Medical Question, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 1 January 1914, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/137948059>

³⁸ Funerals, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 20 September 1915, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/137962802>

³⁹ Service record, John Wisbey, *ibid* ; *Mid North Coast Pioneers - Newcastle to Lismore and beyond*, *ibid*

⁴⁰ "Sunnyside", John Bull Quarterly Prize List, Tweed Daily, 10 February 1916, p4, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/190929272>

⁴¹ Service record, John Wisbey, *ibid*; the 30th Battalion was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Liverpool in New South Wales on 5 August 1915. Most of its recruits hailed from the Newcastle region and other parts of country New South Wales, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51470>

- ⁴² *Australian Imperial Force Embarkation Roll 1914-1918*, via Findmypast;
- ⁴³ Service record, John Wisbey, *ibid*
- ⁴⁴ Hurdcott Camp, Near Fovant, Wiltshire, England, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C45831>
- ⁴⁵ Service record, John Wisbey, *ibid*
- ⁴⁶ *Mid North Coast Pioneers - Newcastle to Lismore and beyond*: John William Jack WISBEY, 1865–1942, *ibid*
- ⁴⁷ Service record, John Wisbey, *ibid*
- ⁴⁸ Triennial Municipal Elections, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 26 January 1920, p1, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/139425134>
- ⁴⁹ Merewether Municipal election, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 18 November 1922, p3, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/140016945> ; Newcastle and suburbs, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 December 1922, p10, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/16049488>
- ⁵⁰ Western suburbs link: Tram proposal, *The Newcastle Sun*, 21 September 1923, p1, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163179864>
- ⁵¹ Communist expulsion resented, *The Workers' Weekly*, 13 March 1925, p4, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/209414569>
- ⁵² General Elections, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 7 December 1925, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163364017> ; Merewether, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 4 December, 1925, p9, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/139867562>
- ⁵³ Australian Labour Party, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 14 February 1928, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/135575573>
- ⁵⁴ Merewether. Australian Labour Party, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 29 September 1922, p8, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/139602836>
- ⁵⁵ Merewether A.L.P. officers, *The Newcastle Sun*, 15 February 1928, p5, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163764039>
- ⁵⁶ Hit by prop, *The Newcadstke Sun*, 18 December 1830, p7, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/164221315>
- ⁵⁷ Advertising, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 29 November 1922, p10, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/140020898> ; Advertising, *The Newcastle Sun*, 31 July 1925, p8, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/163351002>
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- ⁵⁹ *Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985*, via Ancestry
- ⁶⁰ Funeral notices, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 30 August 1939, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133734879> ; Mrs E Wisbey,

Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate, 2 September 1939, p16, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133735532> ; <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/193121020/ethel-wisbey>

⁶¹ Funerals, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 30 August 1939, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133734879>

⁶² Death certificate, NSW #1942/11399, father William WISBEY, railway official, mother Harriet SOBBERTON; *New South Wales, Australia, Registers of Coroners' Inquests, 1821-1937*: Registers of Coroners' Inquests and Magisterial Inquiries, 1834-1942, 1940-1942, via Ancestry

⁶³ *Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985*, via Ancestry

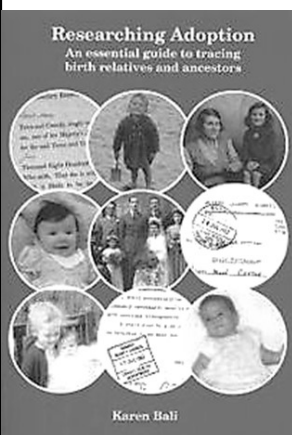
⁶⁴ Pensioner's Fatal Fall, *Newcastle Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 2 May 1942, p6, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/140409807> ; Inquest, *The Newcastle Sun*, 8 May 1942, p4, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/167561645>

⁶⁵ https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/193121024/john_william_wisbey ; Death certificate, *ibid*

⁶⁶ Mr J Wisbey, *ibid*

⁶⁷ *New South Wales, Australia, Registers of Coroners' Inquests, 1821-1937*, *ibid*; Death certificate, *ibid*

"RESEARCHING ADOPTION" by Karen Bali (FamilyHistoryFederation)



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As part of a series of FREE county-based online talks in collaboration with family history societies and local archives/libraries et al—an upcoming session will be featuring:

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Monday 7 September, 2-4

Visit the SoG website to book your place on this **FREE** event
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Researching in Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire

Are you researching ancestors in Cambs & Hunts?

Don't miss this **free** event where you can connect with experts from local family history societies and archives to discover the wealth of resources available.

This is a collaboration between the Society of Genealogists, Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society, Cambridgeshire Archives Service, Cambridge Collection, and Cambridge University Library.

**Join us to learn about family history resources for
Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire.**

SPEAKERS :

Else Churchill	(Resources at the Society of Genealogists)
Karen Orrell	(How Cambs & Hunts FHS can help researchers)
Sue Sampson	(Cambridgeshire Archives)
Mary Burgess	(Cambridgeshire Collection Libraries)
Kevin Roberts	(Cambridge University resources)

Plus : representatives of Vision of Britain, Historic Towns Trust,
and British Association of Local History

Jude Rhodes, Vanessa Harding, Paula Aucott, Humphrey Southall

HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF—in part, at least!!

The start of this piece, contributed by CJ to mark our 40th Anniversary back in 2016, has a certain ring of familiarity ...

If people are old enough to remember 1976, what really sticks in the memory? For the majority, I would suggest, 1976 was THE long hot summer – Britain's hottest and driest summer in over 200 years – together with the accompanying drought. Reservoirs shrank to puddles under the cloudless skies, to reveal the ruins of long drowned fields and farmhouses, and swarms of ladybirds unable to find enough aphids to eat started to nip people. Cars were left dusty as car washes were closed, a clean car was deemed anti-social. Hosepipe use was banned; not that it stopped keen gardeners sneaking out at night to surreptitiously water their plants by torchlight in the dark. It couldn't last of course.

The newly appointed Minister for Drought, Denis Howell, was given the task of persuading the nation to conserve water, including semi-humorous appeals to save water by sharing baths with a friend etc - to the general amusement of the public. He who laughs last laughs longest however and, by felicitous happenstance soon after his appointment, the heavens opened at the end of August and the rain persisted for weeks. The Cambridge Evening News of October 1976 reported 5½ inches of rain had fallen since the end of August, the wettest period for 73 years with September's rainfall 100% higher than average, and October's 60% higher. However both the Cambridge Water Company and the Anglian Water Authority felt compelled to put announcements in the paper appealing to the public for continued care in water use, in order to build up their greatly depleted reserves. The heavy rainfall caused widespread flooding in parts of Britain, and Denis Howell changed his title to the Minister of Floods ...

HUNTINGDON LIBRARY

Family History Research Day, Sat 24 Oct, 10-2

The Library at Huntingdon is, again, hosting CHFHS to offer knowledge, expertise, and resources to help researchers with their queries and problems

Bring along your problems and queries and we'll see what we can do

You can also email your query to the secretary in advance, if you like, as it would give the team the chance to have a quiet think before the day

IF YOU'RE IN THE AREA—DO DROP IN & SEE US

REFLECTING ON 50-YEARS OF FAMILY HISTORY—3

By Cambs & Hunts FHS Editorial Team

In this, the 50th Anniversary year of the founding of the then Cambridgeshire Family History Society, it's worth taking a little time out to consciously reflect on just how far we have come in the those five decades, and to appreciate the evolution of some of the resources which we now perhaps take for granted. Some of us will have been doing research for many of the intervening years, if not longer, others for a far shorter time, and all but the most recent converts will have seen great changes in the way we are able to research our family history. The longer we have been involved, the more changes we will have seen in the ways in which we are able to conduct our research—including: the ever-growing range of available records, better and easier access to them, resources to help find and use records and the adoption of technology to help widen access to, and search, records.

Third in this series is a brief overview of PARISH REGISTERS—

How have some of the more significant points played out across our area of Cambs and Hunts?

Anglican parish registers (PRs) together with Bishops' Transcripts (BTs) are, as we all well know, one of the key information sources used in family history research. However, unlike BMDs and censuses, these records were (and still are) not "centrally organised" and, therefore, the availability of records for any given parish for any given dates needs to be investigated on a parish-by-parish basis—and, even between adjacent locations, can vary considerably.

PR research, "back in the day", was very much a different affair and usually a matter of seeking out registers deposited at relevant archives, visiting, and working one's way through them, line-by-line, page-by-page, in the hope of finding sought names (smaller parishes at the time might well still be using 19C registers, and therefore necessitate a trip to the parish in person). Researchers might have been able to draw on a range of surname indexes to help focus effort (eg. Pallot, Boyd, IGI, local FHSs' indexes) if, that is, their places of interest happen to have been included. The "luck factor" was that some areas were far better represented in these indexes, than were others.

By the mid-1980s, many FHSs (but depending on the size of their "willing workforce"—another "luck factor"), were engaged in the systematic indexing and/or transcribing of PRs from their "patch". Line-by-line, parish-by-parish, all produced by hand—first with paper/pencil at the archives, then typed up,

checked, retyped if necessary, and finally, manually indexed with paper slips. Publishing of indexes etc helped researchers make better use of their time on archives visits, and opened up the ability to research remotely from home.

Printed booklets gave way to microfiche to reduce costs and, in turn, to the use of PCs and word processing—with CHFHS up there among societies quick to adopt and exploit successive new technologies. *Who remembers BBCs and Amstrads, dot matrix printers and 3.5" floppy disks with a then-whopping(!!) 1.44Mb of storage?? My fiche reader, Amstrad and a stash of floppies are still up in the attic!!* The Amstrad marked the start of a revolution in PR work and dissemination of “data” by family history societies. PR text is fairly standard in format and readily tabulated—type once, check, edit, sort, print, publish—job done. The advent of laptops, CDs, digital photography and scanning enhanced the process no end, as did the ability to provide researchers with digital copies of transcripts as CDs and internet downloads.

A number of FHSs (including CHFHS), and others, have further exploited ever increasing computer power and the internet to enable the collation of individual parish transcripts into huge searchable online databases, in-house. Meanwhile, pay-to-view data providers have been collaborating with county/area archives services to reproduce digitised images of deposited PRs—and collate with everything else in the data provider’s “stable” of records; a number of FHSs have also contributed records transcripts from their areas. Several million transcripts and images from Cambs/Hunts are now variously available online. The scope of these massive databases allow researchers to access material far beyond their wild imagination and reach in the 1980s—and to find ancestors’ relatives/descendants almost *anywhere* in the world ...

50 years on—while we can search online data platforms’ massive world-wide records collections from our armchair, day or night—a **word of caution**. Searching is now largely “name-driven”, and success with seeking out PR records does, however, depend on whether the register containing the record sought is included in the data base being used. The parish content and dates coverage of places included in databases is greatly significant and should be considered whilst searching. Similarly, any search for digital images first requires using search systems based on transcripts, and are therefore dependent on the accuracy of manual interpretation of often poor quality handwriting—not to mention spelling variations—*just as it was 50 years ago!!*

A vast selection of PR records is now available online via a number of providers. As the exact content/coverage, search parameters/fields and results formats do differ—it can be worth playing these differences against each other to optimise the range of returns—particularly if the person sought is not found through your first choice of provider.

The Spinning House Project—

by Project Team

The Spinning House Project has certainly captured people's imagination—following on from the BBC Radio Cambridgeshire interview with CHFHS Projects Officer, Terry, and the feature article on the BBC Local News Cambridgeshire web page (both reported on in recent journals), the story has now been taken up by the popular family history magazine, “*WhoDoYouThinkYouAre?*” ...

The July edition (#245) of WDYTIA magazine carried a full page article on the society's role in the project

YOUR PROJECTS

FORGOTTEN WOMEN OF CAMBRIDGE

Restoring Collins' 19th-century records of women who were unfairly ignored

Cambridge University has had a reputation for one of the greatest scholarly institutions in the world. But in the 19th century, while the university was seen as a place of learning and progress for the men of the nation, it was also a place where women were largely ignored.

The 18th-century Cambridge University was a place where women were largely ignored. The university's records of women were largely ignored. The university's records of women were largely ignored.

Women have been edited out of the history of Cambridge for too long

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ARCHIVES READERS TICKETS

PLANNING TO VISIT

CAMBRIDGE OR HUNTINGDON

ARCHIVES OFFICES??



Please note that the Cambridge and Huntingdon Archives are no longer accepting CARN card readers tickets (but do keep them for using other archives in the scheme)

An in-house readers ticket system has been introduced—please take a look at their website prior to making a visit to see what ID is required:
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/>

CERTIFICATES TO BE RE-HOMED

DO YOU HAVE NUNNs IN YOUR FAMILY

We've been offered a number of certificates for re-homing relating to the NUNN family—if you are interested, please email secretary@chfhs.org.uk

***IF YOU HAVE CERTIFICATES TO RE-HOME, PLEASE
SEND A LIST (AS BELOW) TO THE SECRETARY &
WE WILL PUBLISH THE DETAILS—WE ARE
CURRENTLY UNABLE TO STORE PAPER COPIES***

NUNN FAMILY

Birth Certificates – Certified copies

Year	Name	Place
1865	Charles Nunn	Melbourn, <u>Cambs</u>
1867	Mary Hannah E Nunn	Melbourn, <u>Cambs</u>
1898	Maynard Frank Nunn	St Andrews the Less, Cambridge
1906	Dorothy Kathleen M Nunn	St Andrews the Less, Cambridge
1906	Charles Victor M Nunn	St Andrews the Less, Cambridge

Marriage Certificates – Certified copies

Year	Groom	Bride	Place
1853	John Nunn	Ann Maria Kent	<u>Foulmire (Fowlmere)</u>
1891	Charles Nunn	Mary Hannah E Merrill	<u>Foulmire (Fowlmere)</u>
1922	Merrill John Nunn	Alice May Mason	Burwell
1954	Albert Edward Nunn	Joan Ada D Helie	<u>Cambs District Register Office</u>

Death Certificate – Certified copies

Year	Name	Age	Place
1873	John Nunn	43	Melbourn, <u>Cambs</u>
1906	Charles Victor Merrill Nunn	2 <u>mths</u>	St Andrews the Less, Cambridge
1913	Anne Maria Nunn	79	Melbourn, <u>Cambs</u>
1916	Maynard Frank Nunn	20	France (killed in action)
1934	Charles Nunn	69	Cambridge
1942	Dorothy Kathleen M Nunn	36	Redhill, Middlesex
1953	George Charles Nunn	61	Cambridge
1965	Merrill John Nunn	70	Norwich South
1971	Albert Edward Nunn	69	Cambridge
1988	Alice May Nunn	93	Norwich

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

CEMETERY RECORDS

<https://www.deceasedonline.com/>

As reported by David Copsey in his introduction to this issue (see p 3), Fenland District Council have now partnered with DeceasedOnline to provide online access to records from cemeteries under their control...

... and join records already available from Cambridge City Council—to make some 250,000 records for Cambridgeshire via this valuable pay-to-view resource for county researchers seeking burials or cremations

From www.deceasedonline.com re “Fenland District Council” :

“ We have almost 70,000 records available to view from the following cemeteries:

- Chatteris Cemetery - 11,000 records from 1856 to 2014
- Eastwood Cemetery - 6,600 records from 1939 to 2014 [1]
- Whittlesey Cemetery - 13,000 records from 1867 to 2014 (these records are divided into the Old part and the New part of the cemetery)
- Walsoken Cemetery - 4,000 records from 1883 to 2014
- Wisbech Cemetery * - 17,000 records from 1881 to 2014 [2]
- Wisbech St Mary Cemetery - 650 records from 1942 to 2014
- March Cemetery - 8,000 records from 1867 to 2014 [3]
- Mount Pleasant Cemetery (Wisbech) - 60 records from 2010 to 2014

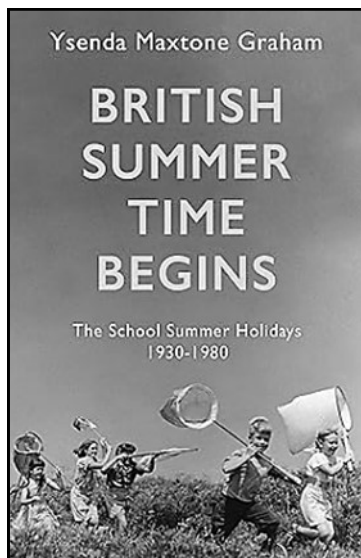
** The Wisbech records are divided into Eastern and Western sections of the cemetery, if the grave reference contains an E, this is from the Eastern section, if the grave reference contains a W, this is from the Western section. The Western section records also have either an 'a' or a 'b' after the register number. ”*

CHFHS adds the following regarding some of the above locations:

[1] This is the Eastwood Cemetery at March—see [3]

[2] This appears to be the bulk of the “Mount Pleasant Cemetery” Wisbech

[3] This is the “Station Road Cemetery” in March as distinct from “Eastwood”



British Summer Time Begins

school summer holidays

1930-1980

by Ysenda Maxtone Graham

An absolute joy to read!!

Having just finished re-reading this over some recent long hot evenings with a glass of iced squash and a gentle breeze through an open door—the recollections of many contributors prompted memories of my own 1960s summer hols to flood back. Do take a look for yourself ... Editor

REVIEW FROM WELL-KNOWN ONLINE BOOK SELLER :

British Summer Time Begins is about summer holidays of the mid-twentieth century and how they were spent, as recounted to Ysenda Maxtone-Graham in vividly remembered detail by people who were there. Through this prism, it paints a revealing portrait of twentieth-century Britain in summertime: how we were, how families functioned, what houses and gardens and streets were like, what journeys were like, and what people did all day in their free time. It explores their expectations, hopes, fears and habits, the rules or lack of rules under which they lived, their happiness and sadness, their sense of being treasured or neglected - all within living memory, from pre-war summers to the late 1970.

Ysenda takes us back to the long stretch of time from the last days of June till the early days of September - those months when the term-time self was cast off and you could become the person you really were, and you had (if you were lucky) enough hours in the endless succession of days to become good at the things that would later define your adulthood.

The 'showpiece' part of the summer holidays was 'the summer holiday', when families took off to the seaside, or to grandparents' houses teeming with cousins, or on early package holidays to France or Spain, siblings wedged into the back of small cars, roof-racks clattering, mothers preparing picnics. *British Summer Time Begins* is as much about the long weeks either side of that holiday as the trip itself: the weeks when nothing much officially happened, boredom often lurked nearby, and you vanished for hours on end, nobody much knowing or even caring where you were. Could it be that those unscheduled days were actually the most important and formative of your life?

AMBROSE PURCHAS —

16th Century Brewer of Cambridge & His Descendants [pt 2]

By Fiona Ligonnet

This second part of the early history of my North Yorkshire Purchas family continues with Ambrose Purchas' eldest son Thomas. Ambrose, born c. 1535, was a Brewer and sometime Treasurer for Cambridge who died in 1595.

For 'Part 1' ... see The Journal : Summer 2026 Volume 32:2

Thomas (I) Purchas, baptised 25.05.1574, was the eldest son and heir of Ambrose (I)'s first marriage. He married firstly Tomarzin sometime prior to 6 December 1595 since she is mentioned in the will of her father in law Ambrose (I) above. She was buried at St Peter's, Cambridge on 25 February 1614/15. There were seven children born of whom only the Rev. Thomas (II) and a daughter Sarah who married Francis Sheldrake, survived to leave any record. Perhaps unusually, their 5th child is recorded in the Parish burial register for St Peter, Cambridge as (unnamed) '*Purcas, buried 1st February 1606. Notes: the young child of Thomas Purcas being dead borne.*'

Thomas (I) married secondly, Elizabeth Keye, widow of [.....] Cripps in 1627 and there was no issue of this marriage. The marriage is recorded on 7th June in London at St Benet, Gracechurch Street. Elizabeth Purchas outlived her husband and married thirdly, John Barnes, in 1642. She was widowed for a third time and lived on until 1663. In her long and detailed will ¹⁴ she asked "*to be interred within the Church of the Parish of St Clements in Cambridge in the same plot of ground where Alderman Thomas Purcas my former husband deceased was buried or as near thereunto*". Her burial is recorded at the upper end of the ally in the church.

In her will there is a long list of bequests of £5 ¹⁵ to each to her children, grandchildren, cousins and forty shillings to the poor of the parish of St Andrews. To her daughter Elizabeth she left £20, her diamond ring, a mantle, a muff & her long scarf. However, there was a sting in the tail in her codicil ¹⁶ added the following January. The bequests to her son in law John Wilkinson & his wife Elizabeth were to be conditional upon him repaying a debt of £46 or any other debt at the time of her death, to her Executors

together with the amount of £40 p.a ¹⁷ he was bound to pay her each half year. Without these repayments the bequests were to be set aside by her executor William Frisby, Apothecary.

In 1622, Thomas and John Spirewoode were Churchwarden of St Giles. Cambridge when Humfrey Toney was minister. A silver chalice ¹⁸ was presented to the church to mark the occasion and is inscribed under the base:-

**FOR THE PARRYSHE OF SENTE GYLES in 1622 CAMBR +
H.T .MINISTER + I.S. + T.P. CHURCH W +**

Thomas (I) was elected Mayor and Alderman of Cambridge 27 September 1624 to September 1626 & again in 1634. His time as Mayor is documented in the Court Book of the Vice Chancellor and Mayor ¹⁹. There was initially some dispute over his election as Mayor by the Common Council rather than his fellow Aldermen. The problem was referred to the Lords of the Council in London who ratified his appointment on the 21 September. The Corporation ²⁰ ordered £40 to be paid to Mr Atkinson and 40 marks to Mr Purchas –

‘expenses about the difference in the choice of Mr Purchas Mayor in riding to the High Stewards and Lords of the Council for quieting & peace making in the body’.

In 17th century Cambridge the positions of Alderman and Mayor might well have been expensive. There were strict rules on the matter of dress and fines were imposed if not followed. The Mayor had to wear a scarlet gown to feast days & holidays. Aldermen and Mayors must also wear murrey ²¹ gowns and tippets and Aldermen had to be attended by at least one servant in church ²². There were however benefits of gifts & dinners!

In the Court Book ²³ of the Vice Chancellor (of the University) and Mayor and their assistants, are the detailed records which relate to the outbreak of plague in Cambridge and the enforcement of control measures in the years 1625-26. The entries below indicate the very important role played by Thomas (I) in dealing with the problem.

‘Plague was endemic in Cambridge in the first half of the 17th century, & the years 1625-6 & 1630 were particularly severe. This created problems of poor relief for the authorities. On 11 July 1625 the Vice Chancellor & Mayor agreed a series the Court Book includes presentments of breaches.....’

‘11 August 1625: Orders made by John Mansell, Vice Chancellor, Thomas Purchas, Mayor, Owen Gwyn, Leonard Manse & Thomas Bainbridge, doctors & Richard Foxton, Richard Lukin & Thomas

Atkinson, aldermen.

1. Authority conferred by Vice Chancellor & Mayor & representatives of all parishes on 1st August to continue until removed by the same, those refusing to obey it to be punished.

2. Household survey to be made by constables & overseers in the town & Barnwell to discover & report strangers.

3. Watch & ward to be kept continually in all streets & lanes to prevent strangers from entering & leaving:

The watches to be stationed at Castle End, near Bell Lane; at the Barnwell end of Jesus Wall, near Mrs Harding's Barns for Emmanuel Lane which leads to Ball's Folly near St Thomas' Leys for Trumpington Lane, the Spittel or Ellery House for the Black Lane under Cannon's Wall; The Cock near Queen's College for Small Bridges; two to watch in every other lane & street at the outermost houses & turn strangers to the fixed point of watch'.

All these measures taken by the Mayor and the University seem amazingly modern given our recent experience of a pandemic.

Following on from what must have been an exceptionally tough tenure as Mayor, Thomas was then elected MP for Cambridge Town from 6 February 1628 - at a time of political turmoil. James I had died in 1625 and his son Charles I had severe financial problems. He had launched a disastrous attack on the Spanish at Cadiz in 1626 and then raised a Forced Loan to assist his uncle, the Danish King Christian IV against the Spanish. This was a deeply unpopular act since it had not been passed by Parliament. Much of the money was put to other uses by Charles as he turned his attentions to his former ally France. The 1628 Parliament made further grants but in return expected the King to agree to the Rights and Liberty of the Subjects- i.e. The Bill of Rights. The Duke of Buckingham, unpopular with Parliament was murdered in 1628 and this improved matters somewhat. The argument over the King's levying of taxation in the form of Tonnage and Poundage continued until incensed by Parliament's continued refusal, Charles dissolved Parliament by Proclamation in March 1629. It was not to sit again until 1640 thus laying the foundations for the Civil War.

Thomas' time as an MP, although cut short, was at a very interesting time politically and historically. The only record left of his time as MP was the grant of one week's leave of absence on 22 May 'special occasions'. He received Parliamentary pay at 4s per day, totaling £21.8s 0d for the first session and £13.16.4d for the 1629 session.



There are no records of Thomas as MP but he must have been present at the opening of Parliament in 1628 and listened to the King's contemptuous harangue which ended with the words '*Take not this as threatening for I scorn to threaten any but my equals*'. In defiance to the Crown, members of the lower house formed committees outside the control of the Speaker, where they could talk freely, but I have found no mention of Thomas. He would have been present to witness members holding down the Speaker in his chair, followed by Charles' angry dissolution of Parliament. He must have returned to Cambridge wondering what the future held and never thinking that Parliament would only be summonsed again in 1640, two years after his death.

Oliver Cromwell had been elected in the same year, as MP for nearby Huntingdon. Also sitting was Christopher Wandesford, MP for Richmond and then Thirsk in Yorkshire, later to be Lord Deputy of Ireland. His granddaughter Catherine Thornton was to marry Thomas (I)'s great grandson, the Revd. Thomas (IV) ²⁴ of Great Langton, North Yorkshire, in 1682.

Thomas (I) was elected for a further term as Mayor in 1635 but I have found no records so far.

The list of his Cambridge appointments is impressive:-

Made a Freeman by 1607; Common Councillor 1609-1624; as Auditor he served 9 years between 1609 and 1636; Bailiff 1610-1613; Alderman 1624-1638; Mayor 1624-1626 and 1636; J.P. 1624-1638.

He held two other positions of importance. Firstly, as Commissioner for Gaol Delivery 1624-1638, relating to Assize and Quarter Sessions where the more serious cases were heard and overseen by the Commissioner. Secondly, as the Commissioner for overseeing fen drainage in the Great Fen 1631-1636 which warrants further research.

Thomas wrote his will ²⁵ on 9 November 1638 and was buried on the 16th. His son in law, Francis Sheldrake was executor and the will probated on 18 January 1639. He settled his freehold messuages and tenements in St Clement's on his widow Elizabeth, and then to Sarah, wife of Francis Sheldrake. The eventual reversion of this property in trust for his grandsons Thomas, Benjamin and John the children of his only surviving son the Revd. Thomas (II). He mentions in particular, provision for their education. There is a long list of monetary bequests to nephews and nieces, family members and servants and for the poor. (total £789.8.4d a considerable sum in those days). His son Revd. Thomas (II) was left £100. The detailed will is helpful in clarifying the family relationships and checking against parish records.

Apparently, a problem arose with the administration of Thomas' will which was then referred to the Court at Canterbury. However, by May 1639 the Courts pronounced that Thomas had been of sound mind when he wrote his will, that Sarah Sheldrake his daughter and her husband Francis were confirmed as the Executors and the will was valid. Monetary value of his estate amounted to £789.8.4d., a considerable amount.

So, with the death of Alderman Thomas (I) Purchas in 1638 the family's close connection with Cambridge came to an end. His son Thomas (II) did not follow his father either as an administrator or politician. His baptism on 17 June 1604 together with his burial in 1639 both at St Peter's, Cambridge, together with his education at Magdalene College ²⁶ are the only records in Cambridge.

In 1625 he was ordained Deacon on 14 September and priested the following day at Upton Chapel, Peterborough ²⁷. It is not known how Thomas (II) supported himself financially in the early years with no recorded parish and presumably no stipend. Perhaps with support from his father in Cambridge. We believe he was a roving preacher since there is no record of him having a parish until taking up his post at Kings Lynn in 1637. His book of Sermons, published the year of his death in 1639 ²⁸ must have been highly thought of to have been republished nearly twenty years later in 1657.

In July 1630 he received a license as Clerk in Holy Orders for the marriage of Brown and Heaward of Marton Cheshire and again in June 1631 for the marriage of Pass & Bromfield of Asbury Marr, Solemnised at Prestbury, Cheshire. *'There are no clergy call books among Chester Diocesan records for early 17th century and the Bishop's Act Book is incomplete so there is no easy way of checking on Thomas Purchas' position in the Diocese* ²⁹.

There is a family connection with the county since his first wife Katherine, gave birth to a son Thomas who was baptised 1.3.1624/5, at All Saints, Lawton ³⁰. She died soon after and was buried on 13.7.1626 at St Giles Cambridge. *'Katherine wife of Mr Thomas Purchas'*. His grandfather Thomas (I) had, in his will (9.11.1638), provided for his education *"Thomas Purchase my grandchild, shall be educated and brought up by executors until he is 17 and then to find fit place for him to be an attorns clerk"* Thomas (III) died at a time of plague and was buried at Kings Lynn on 24.3.1639, aged 14.

Thomas Purchas married again on 25.4.1627 to Margery, daughter of William & Margery Rowley of Church Lawton, *'License to Thomas Purcus Clerk & Margeria Rowley Spinster for Sandbach or Church Lawton'*. There

are no known children of the marriage and she too was buried at St Giles, Cambridge on 11.3.1632.

There was a third marriage, we assume in the north of England, to Elizabeth but date and place unknown. Family tradition says she was either a Norton or closely related. The two youngest sons were baptised at St Mary, Richmond, Yorks, Benjamin (I) on 11.2.1634 and John 12.4.1635. This son named John died in August 1636 and a second child "*John Purchas son of Thomas Purchas minister & preacher of God's word*" baptised at St Margaret's, Kings Lynn on 24.9.1637. Elizabeth's burial is recorded on 16.2.1636 at St Margaret with St Nicholas, Kings Lynn. The gap between birth and baptism is unusual. In his grandfather's Cambridge will he is described as ³¹ '*the child of my son Thomas, whose name I think is John, who was born in King's Lynn in Norfolk, who is the child to whom I have given £50 to be paid from the freehold houses in Cambridge, after the death of my wife £4 a year until he is 16*'. He vanishes from our records and we believe his death is recorded as John Purcase on 12.01.1640 at Sutton-in-the-Isle, 12 miles from Cambridge. He did not join Benjamin, his elder brother, in Richmond, North Yorks.

On 3.5.1637 Thomas swore his Oath of Allegiance ³² to Archbishop Laud '*Thomas Purchas Master of Arts appointed (licensed) May 3rd curate to the Parish of Lynn.... In the sacred Synod of London in the year 1552 and I subscribe to all the conditions. Signed Thomas Purchas*. His stay in Kings Lynn was quite short and at a time when plague was rampant and this may account for the deaths of his wife Elizabeth and son Thomas. The signature of Thomas Purchas as Minister appears at the foot of pages recording burials from Feb 1637 to March 1638. Pages recording burials from February 1639 are signed by Lionell Gatford curate, apparently no incumbent for the intervening year.

Thomas (II)'s burial is recorded on 22.1.1639, "*Thomas Pirkis son of Thomas & Thomazin*" at St Peter's, Cambridge. This is the Revd. Thomas, although it omits the words 'clerk in holy orders'. There is an enigmatic entry in the records of the Vice Chancellor's Court at Cambridge University '*an inventory unsupported by will or Admin. Bond and no indication of status or occupation for one Thomas Purchas dated 1639 it contains only 2 items books 6/8d wearing apparel value at £2*'. Meagre for a Clerk in Holy orders, it could apply to his son Thomas who died at Kings Lynn the same year.

Thomas (II)'s only surviving son Benjamin was baptised at Richmond, Yorkshire on 11 February 1633/4. Benjamin remained in Yorkshire to be raised at St Nicholas, Richmond by the Royalist and possibly Catholic family

of Major Maulger Norton and his wife Ann, née Wandesford--an indication that Benjamin's mother Elizabeth was a Norton or closely related. Benjamin lived to a great age, dying a Papist ³³ in 1718. He became Steward of the Middleham Castle Estate ³⁴ for Thomas Wood, a London Merchant and he managed the mining interests of Dr John Bathurst, Physician to Oliver Cromwell. He was active in managing Maulger Norton's estate and appointed trustee for Maulger Norton's youngest and only surviving son, Christopher. Benjamin's eldest son Revd.Thomas (IV) ³⁵ married Catherine Thornton, the niece of Ann Norton & grand-daughter of Christopher Wandesford. Catherine was the daughter of Dame Alice Thornton ³⁶ whose diaries are published.

A part of Benjamin's Yorkshire land holdings stayed in the family until the mid -20th century and his extensive archive survives.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Suzanne Tyson-Butterworth (also a Purchas descendant) for so tirelessly checking and adding to many of the Purchas family dates included above and for the updated family tree. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the late Arthur Purchas who, almost a hundred years ago, gathered so much of the information working from original parish registers and my parents, Sonia and Anthony Chapman-Purchas who continued the search.

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REFERENCES

¹⁴ Elizabeth Barnes Will 12.10.1663

¹⁵ National Archive: approx £525 today or 71 days wages for a skilled worker.

¹⁶ Codicil 18 January 1663/64

¹⁷ National Archive: approx. £4,207 today

¹⁸ 2020 in possession of St Giles. Exhib.1895, Fitzwilliam Museum: p.100 Catalogue Camb. Antiq.Soc.

¹⁹ Cambridge Univ. Library catalogue ref: code GBR/0265/UA/T.X.19

²⁰ Annals of Cambridge vol 3

²¹ mulberry coloured fabric

²² V.C.H: A History of Cambridge: vol 3 City & University pp 29-68

²³ Cambridge Univ. Library catalogue: ref code GBR/0265/UA/T.X.19

²⁴ Memoir of the Life & Writing of Thomas Comber DD by his nephew Thomas Comber 1799. ECCO reprint ed. 2022

²⁵ Will filed Prerogative Court of Canterbury 16 Hervey. Abstract Arthur Purchas

²⁶ Cambridge University Alumni on line: BA 1624. MA 1627.

²⁷ CC222540222539, ID Ed Record ID

²⁸ The Communicants Duty set forth in in 8 sermons preached at Kings Lynn by Thomas Purchas Clerk. Printed by John Norton for W. Edmonds 12mo 1639. Copies British Library & Princeton Theological College.

MARCH PROGRAMME Wednesday Face-2-Face Meetings		1st Wednesdays at 2.00pm March Library, March enquiries : march@chfhs.org.uk
Aug	<i>No meeting</i>	
Wed 2 Sept	Operation Market Garden with Richard Gibbons <i>The presentation relates to Montgomery's attempt to end the war quickly in 1945, intentions, plans, the failure of the attempt, and the aftermath</i>	
Wed 7 Oct	Art of the History of Medicine with Dr Martyn Thomas <i>The talk is about the important aspects of the history of medicine as told in paintings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.</i>	
Wed 4 Nov	Church Eccentricities with John Vigar <i>The odd and mysterious buildings and people associated with our parish churches.</i>	
Wed 2 Dec	An Old Manor Map—17C Doddington with David Edwards <i>The seventeenth century map of the Manor of Doddington is of historical significance as well as being of great local interest. It shows houses, fields, tracks and roads of Doddington and its hamlets of March and Wimblington as well as providing information about people who lived on the Manor.</i> <i>This will be followed by the usual end of year social get together.</i>	

St Neots Living History Festival

Sat 5 September, Market Place at St Neots 11-4

A **free** event by St Neots Museum—see their website for further details

<https://www.stneotsmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/living-history-festival/>

²⁹ Cheshire Record Office, Chester. Letter ex co Archivist 6.7.1979

³⁰ IGI Beta image no 531/Digital folder no 4003798 film no 1655594

³¹ Will of Alderman Thomas (I) Purchas 15.11.1638

³² Original doc. in Diocesan Records at Norfolk R.O.

³³ Catholic Ancestor : vol 18, no 4 April 2021 & vol 19, no 5 August 2023

³⁴ Wood Family Archive @ LMA; C-P family Archive; Purchas family archive NYCRO. TNA Kew.

³⁵ Memoirs of the life & writings of Thomas Comber DD. ECCO: Thomas Comber reprint ed. 2022

³⁶ Dame Alice Thornton Diaries: Surtees Society 1875. facsimile reprint 2019 USA Hardpress. See University of Edinburgh current research project on line.

³⁷ see 34 above.

RESEARCH SURGERIES—scheduled locations/dates/times CHFHS volunteers hold regular help & advice sessions at society meetings and at public libraries around the county there are no charges for these services enquiries : secretary@chfhs.org.uk			
Ely Library	3 rd Wed alternate mths	Jan / Mar / May / July / Sept / Nov	drop in between 10.30-3.00
Norris Museum St Ives	2 nd Wed alternate mths	Feb / Apr / Jun / no Aug / Oct / Dec	drop-in between 10.30 & 3.00
Cottingham Library	3 rd Mon <u>every</u> mth	Jan / Feb / Mar / Apr / May / Jun Jul / Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 1.00-4.00
St Neots Library	4 th Thurs <u>every</u> mth	Jan / Feb / Mar / Apr / May / Jun Jul / Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 2.00-4.00
March Library	1 st & 3 rd Tues <u>every</u> mth	TWICE MONTHLY	drop-in between 10.00-4.00

ONLINE HELP & ADVICE WITH CHFHS—

Zoom Research Surgeries : Sept'26—Dec '26

Now that the “area” research zoom sessions have come to an end—we are going to continue with the monthly online research surgeries, via zoom, but to a slightly different format ...

Going forward, each session will run once a month, and alternating between 2nd Wed mornings and 2nd Thurs evenings so as to optimise the opportunity to attend. We are looking at setting each session to a given theme—keep an eye on the newsletter and website for the topics. If you wish to, queries can be submitted in advance to give the research team the opportunity to look into potential solutions ahead of the session—

—or just join in on the day.

SEPT Wed 9 10.30-12.00

OCT Thurs 15 19.30-21.00

NOV Wed 11 10.30-12.00

DEC Thurs 10 19.30-21.00

Advance questions can be sent to secretary@chfhs.org.uk, please.

CAMBRIDGE PROGRAMME

3rd Wednesdays of the month at **7.30pm**
enquiries : programme@chfhs.org.uk

Cambridge Branch talks are Zoom only—book via the website

Aug	<i>No meeting</i>
Wed 16 Sept	“WeAre.xyz—Give Your Past A Future” with Simon Davies <i>The challenge of both preserving and ensuring future generations will experience and embrace our family histories requires a combination of technology and philosophy.</i> <i>Simon demonstrates the fabulous features and collaborative nature of this online archiving platform, and shows how it is transforming our ability to create a living legacy which engages our relatives both now and into the future.</i> <i>But setting aside the 3D fly-by maps and captivating childhood one place study modules, Simon explores the equally important application of philosophy; namely how best to engage relatives by focusing on recent nostalgic history, and events that will create the future past.</i>
Wed 21 Oct	“Mud, Sweat and Engineers: the making of the modern fens” with Alice Whitehead & Yaye Tang (Cambridgeshire Archives) <i>This talk will explore how the draining of the fens shaped the lives of local people in the seventeenth century. Beginning with a brief history of fenland drainage, including the creation of the Bedford Levels Corporation, and their mission to drain the fens, followed by focussing on the local fen community. How did drainage change people’s way of life? How did local people respond to the new, alien landscape? How did people resist and rebel against the work of the powerful BLC?</i>
Wed 20 Nov	“Genealogical Cambridge in 19/20C” with Caroline Norton <i>While many key genealogical records for researching in and around Cambridge are readily available through vast online collections, many are not and those that are can cause some confusion. This illustrated talk will provide an overview of what is available and what is not, and importantly, how and why. We will also look at how having an insight into the way Cambridge's records are inextricably linked to the expansion of the town, will help researchers better understand their searches and results.</i>
Wed 16 Dec	“Your True Story” with Oliver Delorie <i>How to turn names, dates and places into a story that your family will actually want to read ...</i>

MEETINGS REPORTS

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

WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

WITH ERIC JACKSON

(CAMBRIDGE ZOOM MEETING : APRIL 2026)

Eric Jackson's presentation was called "When the Saints go marching in" and covered the history of various saints associated with the British Isles and beyond and explored the origins of these saints' stories, their historical significance, and how their symbols and traditions evolved over time.

Eric began with St. George, the patron saint of England. He explained how St. George became associated with England through the Crusaders and the Order of the Garter, despite having Greek and Roman origins. He covered St. George's dragon legend and its pre-Christian origins, as well as the significance of his red cross symbol in English national symbols.

The talk then moved on to St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, including his background as an apostle and his later association with Ukraine. Next was St. Patrick's mission in Ireland and St. David's role in Wales. Eric also discussed the debate over potential patron saints for his home county – Yorkshire, his preference being for St. Robert of Knaresborough over St. William of York.

Eric made us think about the reason for sending Valentine's Day cards; what is the connection between St. Nicholas and Santa Claus, and why do we exchange gifts at Christmas; and another well-known saint, St. Christopher.

The speaker shared insights about various saints, including how some carols reference multiple saints and how different countries have different sets of recognized saints.

Following Eric's very entertaining presentation, the meeting focused on a discussion about saints and church dedications in their local areas, with mentions of St. Neots, St. Agnes, and St. Vigor in Huntingdonshire, and St. Martin's in Cambridge. The conversation explored how church dedications to saints originated, with Eric noting that the reasons behind these choices are often unknown, potentially involving local traditions, community professions, or individual preferences when building new churches.

There were also comments about female saints and how some of the traditions Eric had mentioned had carried over to the United States through the early settlers.

Reported by John Bownass

THORNEY & THE FRENCH CONNECTION

WITH DOROTHY HALFHIDE
(CAMBRIDGE ZOOM MEETING : MAY 2026)

Dorothy Halfhide, the curator at Thorney Museum in Cambridgeshire, spoke on the local history of Thorney and its French connections. She discussed Thorney's historical significance as an "Isle of Thorns" located in the fenlands, its Christian history dating back to 662 AD, and its current status as a small rural village on the outskirts of the city of Peterborough. Dorothy provided a detailed overview of the historic centre of Thorney, highlighting the significance of Thorney Abbey and its current state as being only about a third of its original length. She also noted the town's elevation of 7 meters above sea level and its status as an island due to managed drainage. Dorothy also mentioned the historical importance of the Thorney River, which hosted the first All England Speed Skating Championships in 1879, and discussed evidence of early human activity, including a prehistoric bucket found nearby.

Dorothy explained the history of Thorney Abbey, and that it had been declining since the early 1300s due to agricultural problems and flooding. She described the abbey's historical significance, including its unique records of Lenten book distribution among monks between 1324 and 1330, and mentioned a 1347 bishop's visitation regarding a scandalous book. Dorothy also highlighted how archaeology has been used to understand Thorney's activities, particularly through work with Carenza Lewis from Time Team. The excavations revealed that medieval evidence was primarily found around the abbey area, and she explained that after the monasteries were dissolved by Henry VIII, Thorney Abbey was demolished and its stone used for other buildings, mainly in Cambridge Colleges, though some restoration work was done by the Russell family in the 1630s.

Dorothy spoke about the historical settlement of French Huguenots in Thorney, explaining how they were brought in as skilled workers during the drainage of Hatfield Chase in the 1630s. She described how 14 families moved from Sandtoft to Thorney after local conflicts, and detailed the privileges granted to settlers including exemptions from military service and taxes. Dorothy explained that the French settlers were given a high proportion of the land, often the worst lands prone to flooding, and worshipped in the abbey where French preaching was licensed in 1640. She discussed how the French population declined significantly after 1710, with many families moving away or marrying into local communities.

Dorothy discussed the limited academic history available for Thorney, noting that while there are picture books and introductions in the Thorney Liber Vitae, a comprehensive history is lacking. She explained that the museum maintains family trees and a database of memorials in the Abbey graveyard, with plans to integrate this information for self-service grave location during visits.

Reported by Muriel Halliday

**‘ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE’ :
A HELP OR A HINDRANCE
TO PHOTO RESTORATION AND RESEARCH
WITH STEVE GILL
(CAMBRIDGE ZOOM : JUNE 2026)**

Steve Gill, a career photographer and Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, presented a talk on "Artificial Intelligence: A Help or Hindrance to Photo Restoration and Research." Steve demonstrated how AI tools like ChatGPT and LeChat (now called Vibe) can assist with photo analysis, language translation, and historical research, but also highlighted limitations and potential issues with AI in photo restoration, particularly for colour photographs from 1960-1980 which are the most endangered type. He emphasized the importance of human wisdom in interpreting photographs and expressed strong concerns about AI systems that alter historical images, believing restoration should aim to preserve original facts rather than enhance or falsify them. The talk included practical demonstrations using various AI tools and concluded with a mystery photograph of a child in European clothing that attendees were invited to help identify..

AI Energy Consumption Impact

Steve pointed out the impact of AI technology, focusing on energy consumption and water usage. He explained that AI requires significant power due to its speed and efficiency, but also highlighted how AI is helping address some of these challenges, such as in the development of electric vehicles. Steve compared current AI energy demands to historical industrial changes and provided context on water usage statistics related to AI, emphasizing the need for balanced perspective when evaluating new technologies.

Data Centre Industry Insights

Steve discussed the growing data centre industry and shared insights from AI research on optimal locations for data centres, highlighting Canada and

Greenland as surprising top candidates. He explained how mini-data centres could potentially provide heat and electricity benefits to households, using an example of an elderly couple who installed a computer in their outhouse. Steve also reflected on historical technology adoption, referencing the Luddite riots from 1826 and how technology adoption follows a cycle of resistance followed by adaptation. The discussion concluded with a practical demonstration of using AI for research, showing how AI can conduct comprehensive searches and provide source information, though Steve noted the importance of verifying information due to potential inaccuracies in AI-generated content.

AI Limitations and LeChat Demo

Steve said there are limitations to AI, explaining that while AI can learn from mistakes and process vast amounts of information, it is not always right and can provide incorrect results. He highlighted the difference between knowledge and wisdom, using the example of a tomato being a fruit. Steve mentioned switching from ChatGPT to LeChat, an AI search engine by Mistral, due to personal reasons and ethical policies. He demonstrated LeChat's ability to analyze and provide detailed breakdowns of information, such as census data, accurately.

AI Tools for Historical Analysis

Steve demonstrated the capabilities of AI tools like ChatGPT and LeChat for analyzing photographs and reading historical documents. He showed how these tools successfully translated a German text and identified details in historical photographs, including vehicle registrations and military contexts. During the demonstration, Steve used LeChat to analyze a photograph of people in what appeared to be an early 20th century industrial setting, with the AI providing insights about attire, setting, and historical context.

AI Family History Mystery Resolution

Steve told of his experience using AI, specifically ChatGPT, to solve a family history mystery about a photograph of his great-uncle and his wife. The AI correctly identified that the location mentioned in the photo, Mrs. Dixon Burnley House, was actually in Blackpool rather than Burnley. Steve also explained how AI can learn from corrections and emphasized the importance of privacy when using AI systems, noting that users must be careful about what information they share to avoid it being searchable by others.

AI Challenges in Facial Recognition

Steve discussed the current limitations and challenges of using AI for facial recognition and image restoration, explaining that the software is not yet

available to the general public due to cost and security restrictions. He demonstrated through various examples how AI struggles with tasks like restoring faded colour photographs, identifying specific details in images, and correctly interpreting historical photographs, highlighting the importance of human expertise and wisdom in these processes. Steve also shared insights into using AI for dating photographs and suggested that while AI can assist with certain tasks, it should be used as a tool alongside human knowledge rather than as a replacement.

AI in Photo Restoration Discussion

Steve discussed his experience with photo restoration and facial recognition software, noting that while AI can identify potential matches, it's not yet conclusive for historical photographs. He explained that he recently switched from Photoshop to Affinity software, finding it comparable in quality and more affordable. Steve emphasized that AI's ability to analyze photographs objectively, without emotional bias, makes it valuable for identifying details that might be overlooked by humans when examining family photos.

Historical Photograph Identification Discussion

Steve presented an intriguing discussion about unidentified historical photographs, specifically large format negatives of children in European-style clothing that he cannot identify by location. He expressed strong views against altering historical photographs, arguing that restoration should only repair damage without enhancing or falsifying the original content.

Reported by Muriel Halliday

FROM CHESHIRE TO THE A14—THE STORY OF SALT

WITH HELEN GREEN

(MARCH BRANCH : APRIL 2026)

Helen's talk 'From Cheshire to the A14 – The Story of Salt', provided an interesting and informative insight into the history of salt production in this country. Salt production is not a subject we tend to think about a lot, but our ancestors may have been workers in an essential industry in often gruelling conditions.

Before moving to Cambridgeshire, Helen lived in Northwich and worked at the Salt Museum, housed in the former workhouse. '-wich' in a place name can mean that it was once a source of salt. Here Helen learnt a lot about salt and its production. Rock salt is a crystalline substance – sodium chloride. The crystals are always the same shape although different sizes and

originate from the sea. Millions of years ago there was an inland sea in Cheshire that dried up forming deep deposits of rock salt.

Salt has been used by humans for thousands of years for food preservation and flavouring. The Anglo-Saxons Salted meat was eaten on Holy Days. The salt beds were originally discovered by the Romans and rediscovered in the 17th century by a local family searching for coal. The Romans paid in salt using it as currency. Men dug down where the brine springs bubbled from the earth and mined the rock salt. Improvements in tanning leather came from using salt in the process also in glass making. During the 17th and 18th centuries cotton manufacture involved soaking and stretching on 'tenterhooks'. Salt glaze is used in the pottery industry, today more for underground pipes. The massive increase in the Staffordshire pottery industry came about due to the availability of salt.

By the 19th century it became uneconomical to mine salt so hot water was pumped. This dissolved the salt into brine that could be pumped out. Eventually this process weakened the mines leading to subsidence. As the pits collapsed so did the houses. Helen showed pictures of houses lower than the road. Later houses were built on a frame or raft.

Open pan salt production was a traditional method of production where the salt brine was heated in large, shallow pans with a fire underneath. The pans were made of a type of lead using canvas buckets to pour the brine into the pans. Brine was pumped into the pans and concentrated by the heat. As crystals formed these would be raked out and more brine added.

There were many salt houses in the area situated along the channels often owned by individual families. The work was steamy hot, gruelling and dangerous. The men walked right on the edge of the huge pans. With improvements a man would control the temperature of the fire. If the brine boiled quickly this would produce fine salt. Slower heating produce larger crystals used in cotton, tanning and glazing. Wooden boxes were used to pack the salt, pushed down with a 'Muddling Stick'. Huge heavy rakes were used to muddle the crystals for drying. Job titles of Fireman, Stoker and Raker may be found when searching census records for workers in the salt industry.

The railways arrived in the Victorian era. Bigger companies with bigger premises resulted in increased production using coal rather than wood for heating. Cloth caps were worn by the pipe smoking workers. More modern methods involved dynamite being used as explosive to break the rock salt it is then crushed using machinery and travelled along a conveyor belt. Sometimes during the 1920s and 1930s Christmas trees were dipped in salt

to represent frost.

East Anglia had salt pits around the coast for salt production but these were not as productive as inland salt works. Helen concluded by saying the 'A14' in her title relates to salt being scattered on winter roads.

Reported by Linda Peckett

THE LONGTHORPE TOWER *WITH DON CHISWELL* *(MARCH MEETING : MAY 2026)*

The speaker for the May meeting was Don Chiswell who gave one of his interesting talks with the addition of pictures of Longthorpe Tower.

Longthorpe Tower in Peterborough displays one the most complete and important sets of 14th century domestic wall paintings in northern Europe.

The builder of Longthorpe Tower, Robert Thorpe – a descendent of William I was a tenant and lay steward of Peterborough Abbey. The lay steward was responsible for upholding the rights in The Liberty of Peterborough – the land around the town. He was also the legal officer and would have had several working under him. Robert's son Thurstan de Thorpe held land in the Longthorpe manor. After a lawsuit with Robert de Waterville the Thorpes became tenants. Unusually Thurstan bought the land from Robert de Thorpe. Thurstan built the village church of St Botolph at Longthorpe at about the same time the tower was probably built.

William II is believed to have built the surviving hall of the medieval house and cross-wing of about 1250 – 70. He also replaced the chapel which still survives. At about this time the wall paintings were added. Peterborough was a wealthy abbey, the bishop was a mitred abbot who paintings were added. The tower was built for show rather than being defensive. It could be seen from miles around across the flat land.

Robert's sons Robert and William were both distinguished lawyers. William was knighted and became Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1346 and Robert was appointed Chancellor of England shortly before his death. Robert had no children, but William had two, Robert and William neither had any children leading to the Thorpe family dying out by 1392. The manor was left to John Whittlebury who held it until 1502 when it was sold to William Fitzwilliam a London merchant. Meanwhile the house was lived in by tenants.

The wall paintings both religious and secular on the first floor are of

significance in a domestic setting. A unique set of circumstances preserved them. They were discovered under many coats of limewash and distemper in 1945 by the then tenant Hugh Horrell. The owner Earl Fitzwilliam's agent called in a wall-painting specialist who spent many months uncovering the paintings consolidating, and recording them.

The north wall of the painted room depicts the 'Seven Ages of Man' in the shape of an arch, representing boyhood, youth, manhood, middle age, old age and decrepitude, this frames a nativity scene. As would be expected much of the detail has worn away but some parts of the Latin names still remain. Below the Apostles are represented by standing figures. The only female figure is a woman holding a scroll, thought to represent the Mother Church. Below are an ostrich and stork as well as two more large birds.

The east wall has two apostles and a bearded older man teaching three young ones. This is not necessarily Joseph, but he is usually depicted as an old man. The main picture is of a large wheel that historians have called 'Wheel of the Five Senses', a monkey eating (taste), hawk (smell), spider's web (touch), a mammal and the head of a cockerel for hearing and sight. A crowned figure points to the rim and a spoke thought to represent reasoning and understanding. All the depictions are extremely rare.

The lower part of the south wall looks rather like a cloth hanging. It has an heraldic design in the form of the Thorpe coat of arms than includes a chequer board to represent the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Royal Coat of Arms of Edward III takes up a quarter who was a personal friend of Robert Thorpe and made him chancellor.

The west end of the room rafter trusses survive, and are possibly original. When they were exposed they were smoke blackened showing that the hall would have had an open hearth.

The walls of the tower are eight feet thick making it very difficult to knock down. During WWII the tower was used as a command post for the Home Guard, who left it in rather a mess. Today, Longthorpe Tower is owned by English Heritage and is managed by the Nene Park Trust.

Reported by Linda Peckett

Research Day at Eltisley in October or November

**We are hoping to be able to set up a research day later in the year—
it will be a Saturday, so watch out for further information
once details have been finalised, and we'll see you there.**

A-Z OF CAMBRIDGE :
PEOPLE, PLACES AND HISTORY
WITH SARAH DOIG
(MARCH MEETING : JUNE 2026)

Once again we were pleased to welcome Sarah Doig to give a talk and presentation on the '*A-Z of Cambridge, Places, People and History*'.

Sarah explained that her talk would be alphabetical, focussing on photographs she has taken, and information researched on Cambridge life, work and study as well as the mundane; and of many buildings that contain a plethora of academic books. Sarah aimed to give an alternative view of 'Town v Gown', some surprisingly funny aspects and former residents. She started by telling us that Cambridge is a place that tourists flock to, more than anywhere in the UK.

A – Apples, alumni Isaac Newton, a fellow and professor of Trinity College has a commemorative statue in the grounds. Lesser known is that an apple tree outside the gates is an apple tree, a descendent of the apple tree at Woolsthorpe Manor, famous for being the basis of his theory of gravity. There is also a second tree in the Botanic Gardens. Sarah dispelled a rumour that Isaac Newton, at the age of 22, designed the Queens' College Mathematical Bridge over the River Cam, it was actually designed by William Etheridge in about 1750, and built by James Essex with credit going to James King. It has also been wrongly claimed that the bridge has no joints, this was proved in 1905 when the bridge was repaired.

B – Books. Cambridge is crammed with books both ancient and modern. Trinity College library is the oldest in Cambridge. The book stacks on the first floor are aligned from east to west to protect the books from daylight. It remains a chained library as stipulated originally by William Bateman. The collection contains many notable books, medieval manuscripts, psalters and more recent manuscripts.

The Pepys Library at Magdelene College bequeathed to the college following Samuel Pepys death in 1703 to house his personal collection of 3000 books. His diaries give accounts of Pepys scandalous behaviour whilst at Cambridge both with drink and women.

The current Cambridge University Library is entitled to claim a copy of all published books, maps, printed matter and music.

C – Cold War. Spying and Cambridge University. John Dee the 'Elizabethan 007' was a scientist, magician and spy who attended the university from the age of 15 in 1542. Elizabeth I needed a spy to gather information on her

enemies. Dee, who was well travelled was recruited. He signed his letters to Elizabeth with '007' – the circles symbolised eyes (for your eyes only).

Trinity College famously produced spies recruited by Russia whilst studying, they all betrayed the country by passing vital information to the Soviets. Anthony Blunt was talent spotted for Russia. He recruited Kim Philby, Maclean and Burgess whilst teaching. They all went on to hold important intelligence positions allowing access to official secrets. Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean fled the country in 1951.

The Regional War Room was originally a large basement designed to withstand nuclear bombs but never needed and subsequently bought by the University. It is now used as storage for archaeology and anthropology.

G – Games. 1749 Town and Gown rivalry dates back many years. Modern rules for football originated in Cambridge including 11 players on each team and not handling the ball. The 1848 'Cambridge Rules' were pinned to a tree on Parkers Piece where the width of a goal mouth was determined by the width between two of the surrounding large lime trees – 15 feet.

The cruel blood sport of bear baiting took place in Petty Cury and banned in 1835.

H – Hobson's Choice. The term dates back to the 17th century. In 1610 Thomas Hobson, an owner of a livery stables in Trumpington Street, rented out horses. They all wanted to hire the strongest and best. To keep his animals from being over worked Hobson offered the couriers and carriers the horse closest to the door, or take no horse at all.

M – Milestones. The Romans were the first to introduce milestones. Later, in 1725 Dr William Warren (Trinity Hall) set the first marker at Great St Mary Church in a series of 16 milestones at one mile points, the last being at Barkway on the road towards London.

R – Rodents. 1348 The Plague was rife in the country when it came to Cambridge by 1349 it had arrived in Reach with more outbreaks from 1361 – 1369. Sites on Midsummer and Coldhams Commons were mass burial sites for those who succumbed.

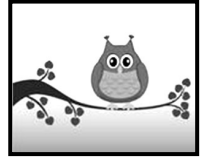
U—Ugly. 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'. Some of the newer buildings in Cambridge are considered ugly by some. Churchill College, a 1960 building is one. The college is constructed around a central space. The college holds trust records of Sir Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher. The sculpture of Talos by Michael Ayrton dating to 1973 is another example of an 'ugly' piece of art.

Reported by Linda Peckett



RECENT RESEARCH ENQUIRIES

we are not just all about Cambs/Hunts !!



The Research Team can be contacted in a number of ways—local library surgeries; events and fairs; facebook; email to the research team; by letter to the secretary; zoom sessions. Over recent months, we have received a wide variety of enquiries on a wide variety of topics ranging from simple “how to ...” queries from newer researchers, to complex “last resort” problems which have long-flummoxed their owners—from the on-the-doorstep local to down under and beyond. Recent receipts via the research surgeries and forum include:

- A visitor holidaying from overseas asked for help to find family graves and identify where the family actually lived. To help make good use of limited opportunities, we provided details about graves from the CHFHS MIs Collection, and collated a variety of sources to pin point a couple of extant houses where the family can be shown to have resided. The enquirer has since had a very successful and fulfilling trip to “their” village.
- Another overseas enquirer, also soon to visit, has been supplied with some suggestions to help with looking around the areas in which the local ancestors lived. While few cottages are likely to be still standing, a flavour of rural life was like might be had from visiting the likes of Farmland Museum, Ramsey Rural Museum and Wicken Fen Cottage; and, from photos and histories at the Cambs & Hunts Collections at the libraries
- An on-going enquiry brought a photo (all the way from Canada) purported to be the wartime double wedding of two sisters (aunts of the enquirer’s mother)—place unknown. But, we soon demonstrated that this family-held belief wasn’t supported by records. However, through collating records relating to the family group, we unravelled the mystery and showed that the two couples were in fact a brother and sister and their respective spouses—one bride was as thought, but not the other. The event was found to have been reported in the local newspaper of the time

REMEMBER—we’re here to help, so don’t hesitate to ask

Our thanks continue go to everyone who has sent in contributions—whether as articles about your families and researches, or just shorts pieces, please keep it coming—getting something down on paper to share “the story” with others is the key. Family history is so much more than just genealogical facts, it’s the stories which we either know or have deduced from the raw facts, and these need to be written down. Apologies if your piece hasn’t appeared as yet, it’s very much a jigsaw puzzle to fit the material into the available pages.

The Editorial Team

MEMBERSHIP

The Society offers a regular programme of meetings designed to appeal to the specialist and beginner alike; the quarterly members' journal is also available, if preferred, as a digital download. The UK subscription, due on joining and annually thereafter, is £12, and includes the member's partner. The overseas subscription is £17, which gives airmail postage of the Journal. If you chose to receive the e-Journal, the annual subscription for all locations is £9 (we also offer a life membership for x10 annual rate). Subscriptions/renewals may be made online through the CHFHS website via debit/credit card or PayPal, or by DirectDebit; alternatively, sterling cheque/etc payable to *Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society*, should be sent to the Treasurer. Changes of address/email and members' interests to the Membership Secretary, please. See p52 for contacts.

SEARCHABLE RECORDS & SHOP

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

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

RESEARCH SERVICES

The Society will undertake a limited amount of help for members who have reached a sticking point in the work. This can be done in two ways :

- # general enquiries can be addressed to the Secretary by email secretary@chfhs.org.uk (or by post, with an SAE please)
- # more detailed requests should be sent to our Research Team, preferably by email, via the request form on the website research@chfhs.org.uk

We will attend to requests as our time allows. We ask that you remember we are all volunteers, so please be patient and reasonable in your requests.

Please supply as much information about the topic/person as possible (such as the sources of “facts” you already have, and which records/resources have already been consulted (eg. BMDs, census, wills, parish registers, a family tree, Ancestry, FindMyPast, FamilySearch, etc)

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