Cheshire Ancestor

The Journal of the
Family History Society of Cheshire

In this edition:

The Black Greyhound Public House
Emma Street: a Woman who was Greatly Loved
Three Colonels Ashenhurst ❖ *What's in a Name?*
NTS: The Computer Section *and more...*

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SOCIETY CONTACTS

OFFICER TRUSTEES

CHAIR
Margaret Roberts
4 Dunns Cottages
Butterton Lane
Oakhanger
Cheshire CW1 5UU
Tel: 07587 007217
chair@fhsc.org.uk

HONORARY SECRETARY
Sheila Jones
Broomhill
11 Brancote Gardens
Bromborough, Wirral
CH62 6AH
Tel: 07799 510373
secretary@fhsc.org.uk

HONORARY TREASURER
Robert Brown
Tel: 07952 971554
treasurer@fhsc.org.uk

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
Margaret Spate
communications@fhsc.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES
Kevin Dean
7 Fields Drive
Sandbach CW11 1YB
renewals@fhsc.org.uk

TRUSTEES

Peter Davenport
fhsctrustee.pd@fhsc.org.uk

David Guyton
fhsctrustee.dg@fhsc.org.uk

Geoff Johnson
fhsctrustee.gj@fhsc.org.uk

Alan Turley
fhsctrustee.at@fhsc.org.uk

Ian Worthington
fhsctrustee.iw@fhsc.org.uk

ADMINISTRATORS

HONORARY EDITOR
Mrs Rosie Rowley
5 Davidson Avenue
Congleton CW12 2EQ
editor@fhsc.org.uk

JOURNAL DISTRIBUTION
Mrs Angela Moore
6 Woodlands Close
Stalybridge SK15 2SH
Tel: 0161 338 3129
magazines@fhsc.org.uk

MOBBERLEY RESEARCH CENTRE LIBRARIAN
Joan Irving
62 Orme Crescent
Macclesfield SK10 2HS
Tel: 01625 421545
librarian@fhsc.org.uk

CREWE FAMILY HISTORY UNIT MANAGER
Margaret Spate
2nd Floor, Municipal Building, Earle Street,
Crewe CW1 2BJ
crewe@fhsc.org.uk

BOOK/CD SALES & OUTSIDE EVENTS
Vacant; Temporary Contact:
David Smetham
Little Trees, Gawsworth Rd
Gawsworth
Macclesfield SK11 9RA
Tel: 01625 426173
book.sales@fhsc.org.uk

WEBMASTER
Alan Bennett
8 Barford Drive, Lowton
Warrington WA3 1DD
webmaster@fhsc.org.uk

WEB ADMINISTRATION
Gay Oliver
26 Woodville Drive
Stalybridge SK15 3EA
web.admin@fhsc.org.uk

ELECTRONIC PROJECTS
Peter Davenport
electronic.projects@fhsc.org.uk

CHESHIREBMD & UKBMD
Ian Hartas
webmaster@cheshirebmd.org.uk

Front cover photo: Chelford, St John the Evangelist's Church, Eastern Aspect
cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Michael Garlick - *geograph.org.uk/p/6985291*

The bright white war grave of Abraham Street can be clearly seen. See "*Emma Street: A Woman Who was Greatly Loved*" by Sylvia Baguette on page 45.

See also
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_John_the_Evangelist%27s_Church,_Chelford

CHESHIRE ANCESTOR

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Our society was founded in 1969—one of the first family history societies

Editor's Page

by Rosie Rowley

This issue includes a few short articles and one very long one. I would normally have divided the long article into two, but I have no more longer articles so please get your thinking caps on and keyboards out and get writing! Ideally, I need articles which are 2-3 A4 pages long. So if you have anything to share about family history or Cheshire history please do send it to me, preferably by email so you don't have to pay postage and I don't have to type it in! Guidelines for submissions are at the bottom of this page. I look forward to hearing from you.

If you use social media you may be interested to know that the FHSC now has a presence on Blue Sky. This is a platform which looks very similar to how Twitter used to be before it was taken over by Elon Musk and renamed X. This is not surprising, as it was set up by Jack Dorsey, the former head of Twitter. A huge number of genealogists have now opened accounts on Blue Sky, and you can find the FHSC at *https://bsky.app/profile/fhsofcheshire.bsky.social* There is genealogy chat on Blue Sky at 7pm on Tuesdays using the hashtag *#AncestryHour* and at 8pm on Thursdays using the hashtag *#GenHour* (both UK time).

Please note that this edition of *Net That Serf* includes an article about confirming ages in census records, which is of general interest to all and not just those who are computer club members or technically-minded. It's always worth having a look at *Net That Serf* to see what's there because it includes articles on a wide variety of subjects.

ITEMS FOR THE CHESHIRE ANCESTOR

Articles and letters about family history or Cheshire local history for the Cheshire Ancestor are very welcome. Deadline dates are the 10th of January, April, July or October, but please send items as early as possible. Publication is at the discretion of the editor and is subject to space being available. ***Articles should preferably be sent by email in Microsoft Word, Open Office Writer, or plain text, to avoid having to retype them****; or by post as a clearly-written manuscript. Suggested length of articles is 300-2000 words. Please write all surnames in CAPITALS. Illustrations must be your own, copyright-free images, not copied from a book etc. Please email images separately in a high quality (low compression) JPG format, minimum 300 dpi.*

View from the Chair

by Margaret Roberts

I was extremely pleased earlier in the year to be told by one of our Seminar Series speakers how positively FHSC was viewed across the family history world. Our talks programme was the envy of a lot of other Societies, which gave me a nice warm glowing feeling! Our new educational programme is getting off the ground and the annual quiz held in February was an excellent evening, something that will become an integral part of our online events.

Building work on the new History Centres in Chester and Crewe is underway and we are beginning to recruit and train volunteers for our new FHSC hub in the Crewe building and the helpdesk in Chester; if you are interested in volunteering then please contact me. Positions include volunteer helpers in the archive to assist people researching their family history as well as members who would like to help with transcription projects which can be undertaken at home. I am always looking for members to help out at shows and fairs across the county, so if you feel you can spare some time to help then again, please contact me on the email address on the inside of the front cover.

The last quarter of 2024 saw some very interesting talks at Group level and included the Golden Age of Stage Coaching, Mersey Pilots, Photos of old Macclesfield, Suffragette and Suffragists, the History of Domestic Sanitation, DNA Matches, The Genealogist Website, Exploring the Parish Chest and Christmas at War. On behalf of all members I'd like to extend thanks to our group leaders for the work involved in bringing these events to members.

The Cheshire Research Buddies sessions covered Wallasey and Holmes Chapel; unfortunately the December event, Ellesmere Port, had to be postponed and is now scheduled for May 2025. See pages 11-13 for more information. These monthly virtual helpdesks have been augmented with some extra events and in January we had an excellent talk on AI in Family History. There is a report on this meeting on page 29.

October's Seminar is styled *The Dorothy Flude Memorial Lecture*, in memory of the late Dorothy Flude, ex-Mayor of Cheshire East, and this year we were delighted

to welcome Nick Barratt, with his excellent presentation 'A March Through Time: Democracy Through the Ages'. Nick took us through eight centuries of rebellions, various iterations of earlier Brexits and demonstrations. It was a fascinating talk which held everyone enthralled. November saw Ann Larkham returning to our screens with 'Dating and Identifying Family History Photographs'. Unfortunately Ann was ill but furnished us with a recording of her talk, which was chock-a-block full of helpful hints and tips.

In December members were spoilt with two presentations, one of which we joined with Devon Family History Society when Simon Davies took us through his excellent website WeAreXYZ. 'Give your Past a Future' showed the capabilities of the website, which was a new concept in collecting, collaborating and sharing your family history stories.

Finally for 2024 Janet Few spoke to us about 'Marginalised Ancestors' and how you could find forebears who may have been discriminated against due to a raft of personal misfortunes, including those who were sick, illegitimate, poor, law-breakers, pilloried due to their ethnicity, struggled with alcohol or accused of witchcraft. Janet explained the resources available to find out more about such ancestors and the times in which they lived their sometimes very elusive lives. Certainly, plenty of food for thought over the Christmas period. We will be hosting more joint talks with other Societies as well as some exciting speakers and topics for the rest of 2025; the programme for the next few months can be found on page 11.

Please keep an eye on the website for the many new initiatives, courses and programmes FHSC will be offering, both online and face-to-face. I will close my report for this quarter by thanking all members and volunteers for the invaluable support, it means a lot to me personally and is what keeps FHSC the vibrant Society that it is.

Wilmslow News (1)

from the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser, 13 March 1925

Should a large number of people be seen in the near future standing round a mysterious looking machine in front of the Post Office ... [the reason is that] a mechanical stamp machine is to be placed [there]. This will serve a very useful purpose for those who require a stamp after seven o'clock. Exactly how the machine will work we do not know ... It may relieve the pressure of the last half hour in the Post Office, for it is surprising how many people seem to make the purchase of stamps their last point of call.

Minutes of the 2024 FHSC AGM

55th AGM of the Family History Society of Cheshire was held online using Zoom on 26th November 2024 at 3:07pm with 66 members in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence
Hilary Blanford, Paul Chiddicks, Wendy Durston, Sue Edwards, Mandy Geary, Sue Johnson, David Lambert, Rosie Rowley and Rowena Tucker

2. Elections
Motion: That Margaret Roberts be elected as Chair of the Family History Society of Cheshire for two years. - Carried with no dissent

Motion: That Robert Brown be elected as Honorary Treasurer of the Family History Society of Cheshire for three years. - Carried with no dissent

Motion: That Sheila Jones be elected as Honorary Secretary of the Family History Society of Cheshire for one year. - Carried with no dissent

Motion: That Margaret Spate be elected as Communications Officer of the Family History Society of Cheshire for two years. - Carried with no dissent

Motion: That Kevin Dean be elected as Membership Services Officer of the Family History Society of Cheshire for three years. - Carried with no dissent

Motion: That Peter Davenport, David Guyton, Geoff Johnson, Alan Turley and Ian Worthington be elected as Trustees of the Society (2 for 3 years, 1 for 2 years, 2 for 1 year; the precise periods of office to be determined in consultation with those elected after the AGM) - Carried with no dissent

3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 AGM

Motion: That the Minutes of the 2023 AGM held on Saturday 28th October 2023 be accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed by Ann Simcock, seconded by Angela Moore. Carried without dissent.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 27th July 2024

Motion: That the Minutes of the EGM held on Saturday 27th July 2024 be accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed by Geoff Johnson, seconded by Jane Hough. Carried without dissent.

5. Chairman's Remarks

Before I begin my remarks for this year, a number of our members have passed away since our last AGM, while others are suffering illness and loss. I would like us to start by having a moment or two of silent remembrance please.

This year, although perhaps seemingly quiet to the casual observer, has in fact been the complete opposite behind the scenes. The Focus Groups, set up prior to my becoming Chair, concluded their deliberations and presented their recommendations, which included the analysis of the responses to the membership survey, to the Executive Committee. The survey results presented an overwhelming impression that members were contented with the services offered by FHSC and indeed completing the survey meant that many members took the opportunity to evaluate what the Society offers, finding themselves pleasantly surprised. There were suggestions for improvements to services from the Ancestor to the Website but no indication that any services were to be curtailed. However, despite some interesting ideas being expressed, new initiatives need precious volunteer time to implement, problematic when all our current volunteers are all working to capacity, what the Society needs is more members to step forward rather than pile more work on the shoulders of the few. The Executive Committee, in considering the recommendations suggested by the Focus Groups agreed on changes to the Constitution and I was pleased to see these changes ratified unanimously at the EGM held in July. I look forward to seeing the new Operating Teams beginning their work to enhance the quality of the Society's activities during the next twelve months and beyond.

While any new initiatives will enviably draw on some of our existing financial reserves as will the rising costs that the Society is experiencing, for example, the printing and posting of the Ancestor, room hire at Group level, and speaker fees relating to the Seminar series, membership rates will remain stable for forthcoming year, thus benefiting every member of the Society, no matter how they engage. Every Society needs to regenerate its management on a regular basis in order to keep up with new trends, challenges and opportunities, so it is good to see that the makeup of the Trustees and Officers for the upcoming year appears to have mix of those with long experience of serving FHSC, alongside members willing to take on responsibility on behalf of the Society.

2024, the year that FHSC celebrated its 55th anniversary, has proved pivotal given the significant changes in our governance that lay the foundation for the next few decades. As we look ahead, I am confident that our society will continue to flourish, providing valuable resources and fostering a strong community for genealogical and family history research.

In closing, I would like to express some special personal thanks, firstly to my Seminar co-hosts Margaret Spate and Jean Laidlaw, without whom the Seminar series would be impossible to run, to our Honorary Secretary, Sheila Jones, for her unwavering support as I navigated my first year as Chair and to our retiring Honorary Treasurer, David Smetham, not only for his advice but also for the years that he has dedicated to the Society in this role. Finally, my thanks to ALL our dedicated volunteers, from Trustees to those that help at Group events. All these contributions make FHSC the organisation that it is today.

6. Hon. Treasurer's Report

The Honorary Treasurer's Report and the Accounts for the year 2023-2024 had been made available to members on the Society's website in advance of the meeting. The Honorary Treasurer summarised his report, noting:

The accounts were broadly in line with those for the previous (2022-2023) year, with a little over £8,000 being drawn down from reserves to cover deficits.

Comments had been made at the 2023 AGM about the apparently very high valuation of assets held by the Society, particularly those held by Local Groups. Accordingly, these assets had been re-evaluated over the last year, not without difficulty but with the conclusion that many of them should have been written off some time ago. The assets had therefore been down-valued with a substantial amount written off.

7. Hon. Secretary's Annual Report

In the year since the last AGM, the Executive Committee met on four occasions, continuing to do so online. The Group Leaders also met together online on three occasions. Of the four Executive Committee meetings, the one held in March 2024 was convened solely for considering the final reports from the Focus Groups, which were established towards the end of 2023. These Focus Groups were set up to consider a number of matters concerning the future direction of the Society and it was particularly pleasing that a number of members outside of those on the Executive Committee volunteered to participate, including some not just from outside the immediate area of Cheshire but also from overseas. Additionally, a member-wide survey was conducted in December 2023. The survey, which had 23 questions, was available online for two weeks and paper copies were also sent to some 100 members for whom the Society did not hold an email address. 561 members replied, representing around 40% of the membership, which was an impressive response rate. The results of the survey were fed into the Focus Groups, which covered Charitable Status, Committee Structure, Local Groups, Research Centres and the Society's relationship with

Cheshire Local Archive Services (CALS) and Services. A sixth Focus Group, covering the website, was put on hold in order to allow concentration on making swift improvements to the website as concerns emerged from survey responses. This Group, with a broader remit, may be relaunched in the coming year. On behalf of the Society, I would like to express our thanks to all who were involved in the Focus Groups and also those who took the time to reply to the survey.

Beyond the amendments to the website, the other major development arising from the work of the Focus Groups was the revision of the Society's Constitution, building on recommendations primarily from the Committee Structure Focus Group. Changes were made to augment the positions of Chair, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer with two additional elected Officers, to reduce the number of Trustees to ten, all of whom shall be elected (the five Officers plus five other Trustees, to designate the term of office of all Officers and Trustees as three years, with scope for re-election for a further three years, to replace the existing Executive Committee with a Board of Trustees to which a Management Committee will report, with a number of Operational Teams reporting to the Management Committee and to introduce procedures by which members unable to attend an AGM or an EGM can vote either electronically or by post. An EGM was held on 20th July 2024, attended by 48 members and the revised Constitution was approved. This took effect from 1st September 2024, with submission to and acceptance by the Charities Commission and the changes are further reflected by the elections being held at the AGM today. The new Board of Trustees and Management Committee can then be established and the Society will be inviting applications towards the end of this calendar year for any members who would be interested in serving on the new Operational Teams.

Outside of the governance business of the Society, its services for members have continued throughout the year, in support of its objects. The Mobberley and Crewe Research Centres have continued to offer open days each week, both for members and visitors and the assistance of all who volunteer at the Research Centres is, as always, very much appreciated. The year began with thirteen Local Groups continuing to run meetings, either as face-to-face meetings or through Zoom or through some hybrid arrangements. Sadly, a lack of volunteers has led to the decision to close the Wallasey Group at its summer AGM and, at the same time and for the same reason, for the Nantwich Group to merge with the Crewe Group. The Computer Group has also continued to run all of its activities online, covering a wide variety of topics both through the main Group and through a number of sub-groups.

The Society's Seminar Series continues to be very popular, allowing members from all of the country and beyond to access talks by some extremely good speakers on topics which have ranged from broad or specialist family history research methods to Cheshire-based topics. Equally, the Cheshire Research Buddies' sessions have continued online. Whilst these are less well attended because of their more narrow focus on particular places or areas of the old county, they have proven very useful for attendees, allowing members from outside of the area to interact with those living in the areas concerned to seek local knowledge to assist with tracing ancestors and understanding more about their lives.

The Cheshire Ancestor is available to all members on a quarterly basis, either through the post or through access to electronic download. Feedback is invariably extremely positive and, for the most part, contributions of articles are forthcoming; where on occasion there has been a shortfall in one edition, the membership has tended to react by coming forward more willingly to contribute to the next. The role of editor is therefore one which is crucial to the positive offerings of the Society and one at which Rosie Rowley, assisted by Rob Marshall and Geoff Johnson, has excelled.

The monthly newsletters produced by Gay Oliver and Margaret Roberts provide information to members on resources and stories relating both to Cheshire and to more general interest, including a résumé of information also provided on a more frequent basis via the Society's Facebook page and Twitter feed both to members and to other interested parties. Digitisation of records and other resources is done by Peter Davenport with David Smetham and Joan Irving carrying out the necessary checks before products go on sale via the website.

The Society has had a virtual presence at the various online Family History Shows and events that have taken place this year as well as a face-to-face presence at others. This is another source of publicity for the Society and provides an opportunity to recruit new members. David Smetham continues to represent the Society at North West Group and Margaret Roberts continues as a trustee of the Family History Federation.

Membership has declined slightly in comparison with the same point last year – 1255 members compared with 1322. It is hoped that the new Education and Research Operational Team, when established, will be able to put forward some suggestions to attract additional members.

Finally, I would like to add my personal thanks to the members of the Committee Structure Focus Group, the Executive Committee and Margaret Roberts and

David Smetham in particular for their support and encouragement as I have focused this year on the governance changes to the Society.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner
Motion: That the current Independent Examiner, Bright Partnership (formerly Messrs. Heywood Shepherd), Chartered Accountants, be retained for the 2024-2025 financial year.

Carried without dissent. It was **noted** that, following on from comments raised at the previous year's AGM, it was anticipated that a motion to appoint a new Independent Examiner would be brought forward to the 2025 AGM.

9. Proposals
Under its Constitution, the Family History of Cheshire invites proposals from its members. The Constitution states that the membership present at the AGM has the opportunity:

"To decide by simple majority upon any resolution which may be duly submitted to the meeting for consideration. No resolution, other than those relating to the adoption of reports and accounts, shall be moved at the Annual General Meeting unless a notice in writing, signed by the members who proposes to move it and stating its terms has been received by the Hon Secretary at least forty-two days before the date appointed for the holding of such Annual General Meeting.

The Chairman of the meeting shall, at his or her discretion, and with the consent of the majority of the members present and voting, have the power to admit resolutions of which notice has not been given, if such resolution shall not involve any alterations of the Constitution. Such resolution shall be decided upon by a simple majority of members present and voting."

No proposals had been submitted before the AGM.

10. Any other business relevant to the AGM.
No issues were raised under AOB.

The meeting was closed at 3:32pm.

Note that all reports and documents relating to the AGM can be downloaded from the FHSC website. Look on the main menu for "Governance Documents"

Society News and Notices

For the Society's Latest News

Keep up-to-date between journals by reading the society's email newsletters, or follow the FHSC on Facebook, Blue Sky or Twitter (now known as X). Provided that you have given us your correct email address and permission to contact you, you should receive society news by email. Log in to the FHSC website to choose which emails you wish to receive.

Society Diary Dates

Below is a list of events and meetings planned at the time of going to press; for full details, or for changes to seminars and group meetings, please see the FHSC website or contact your local group (contact details inside back cover).

Note: meetings are in one of three formats - online using Zoom (Z), face-to-face at a local venue (F), or hybrid, using both face-to-face and Zoom (H). If no format is stated please check on the Group pages which follow.

Date	Group	Subject
March	Runcorn Group	*Ladies in Family History* by Margaret Roberts
10-Mar	Northwich Group	F: *Britain After WWII* by David Walmsley
11-Mar	Crewe & Nantwich Grp	Z: *Advancing Your Family History Research using DNA* by Jane Hough
12-Mar	Sale Group	F: *Studying the 3R's* by Claire Moores
17-Mar	Alsager Group	F: *Chasing Paper Skeletons* by Marion Armstrong, a retired registrar.
18-Mar	Congleton Group	F: TBA
19-Mar	Society Seminar	Z: *Charles Booth Maps* by Indy Bhullar
22-Mar	Research Buddies	Z: Frodsham
24-Mar	Bebington Group	*The Beautiful Buildings of Birkenhead* by David Hearn
25-Mar	Macclesfield Group	*Manchester's Aviation Heritage* by Frank Pleszak
27-Mar	Chester Group	*Remembering the War Dead: The CWGC* by Alan Robinson
27-Mar	Tameside Group	Z: The National Archives Website
April	Runcorn Group	TBA

8-Apr	Crewe & Nantwich Grp	F: *Gertrude, her husband, her wife and her wife's husband* by Sheila Jones
9-Apr	Sale Group	F: *Made in Manchester* by Brian Groom
15-Apr	Congleton Group	F: TBA
16-Apr	Society Seminar	Z: *Tracing your Welsh Ancestry* by Gill Thomas
22-Apr	Macclesfield Grp	*History of Kings School in Macclesfield* by David Hill
24-Apr	Chester Group	*The Servants of Erddig* by Jill Burton
24-Apr	Tameside Group	Z: TBA
26-Apr	Research Buddies	Z: Wilmslow
28-Apr	Bebington Group	*Means Test Riots in Birkenhead 1932* by Chris Thompson
May	Runcorn Group	TBA
13-May	Crewe & Nantwich	F: *Queens of Crime* by Olivia Smedley
14-May	Sale Group	F: Open Forum: Families at War
19-May	Bebington Group	*The Royal Daffodil & Royal Iris* by Derek Arnold
20-May	Congleton Group	F: TBA
21-May	Society Seminar	Z: *The Victorian Legacy: What our Ancestors Did Next* by Helen Baggott
22-May	Tameside Group	Z: TBA
27-May	Macclesfield Grp	*Ursula Phillips – from Cradle to Grave* by Dave Phillips
29-May	Chester Group	Group contributions: Family Memories of WW2 - 80th Anniversary of the end of the war
31-May	Research Buddies	Z: Ellesmere Port area
10-Jun	Crewe & Nantwich	F: TBA
11-Jun	Sale Group	F: *Anecdotes of a Registrar* by Carole Cod
18-Jun	Society Seminar	Z: *Tracing your Policing Ancestors* by Tom Andrews
23-Jun	Bebington Group	*Victorian Villa Estates* by Elizabeth Davey
24-Jun	Macclesfield Grp	*From Roe to Roe-naissance: 250 years of Christ Church* by Sandra Hargreaves
26-Jun	Chester Group	*Stories from the Queen Hotel, Chester* by Liz Allen
28-Jun	Research Buddies	Z: Crewe area

Group News and Information

For the latest news from the Society's groups, please see the FHSC website or contact the Group. You can receive emails from any group; log in to the FHSC website to choose which emails you wish to receive.
Contact details for all groups are inside the back cover.

FHSC Seminars
By Margaret Spate, Jean Laidlaw and Margaret Roberts
These Zoom talks take place at 7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. An email is sent out on the first day of each month with details of the talk and how to register.

PLEASE NOTE - we are unable to record Seminar talks for later viewing.

Cheshire Research Buddies
By Margaret Roberts
Our online helpdesk takes place via Zoom at 2pm on the last Saturday of the month (except October). This is the ideal opportunity for members with research queries to talk to other members with local knowledge. Please check the topic each month and join us if you have local knowledge or a query.

Register for Seminars and Buddies meetings on the FHSC website. Log in, click on *Events* on the left-hand menu, find the event you want, then click the *Register [Individual]* button at the bottom left of the event details. You will receive a confirmation email and links will be sent out a day or two before the meeting.

Alsager Group
By Hazel Rugman
January and February meetings are held online via Zoom for FHSC members only, and are free of charge. Face to face meetings are usually held at 7.30pm on the 3rd Monday of the

month (except August and December) at Alsager Library, Sandbach Road North, ST7 2QH. Admission is £2 for FHSC members and £3 for visitors. Light refreshments are available. A large car park can be found at the rear.

Bebington Group
By Bob Wright
Meetings are held at 7.30pm on the 4th Monday of the month (excluding Bank Holidays) at St. Barnabas Village Institute (Church Hall), Church Square, Bromborough, CH62 7AB. Admission is £2.

Chester Group
By Helen Elliott
Meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month in the Pavilion, Wealstone Lane, Upton by Chester, Chester CH2 1HD. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for visitors, including refreshments. On site car parking is available.

Chester Group Helpdesks
We have a helpdesk in Storyhouse, Hunter St, Chester CH1 2AR 10am - 12noon on Tuesday mornings.

Computer Club
Meetings are held online via Zoom at 7.30pm on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, and are open to all members. The subject of each meeting is usually announced the week before, by email or on the Club's Events page on the FHSC website. The club also has some sub-groups which meet via Zoom:

Family History Recording & Publishing: 2.30pm, last Monday of the month
DNA: 7.30pm, 4th Monday
Family Historian: 7.30pm, 3rd Thursday
Family Tree Maker: quarterly, 7.30pm, 4th Wednesday
Mac & Reunion: 2pm, 3rd Monday
Online Newspapers: 2.30pm, 1st Friday
For information or to join, please email *computerclub@fhsc.org.uk.*

Congleton Group
By David Smetham
Meetings are usually held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at Congleton Library. Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start. Entry is through the lower door facing the bus station. Meeting details are sent out by emailed newsletter so please make sure that you subscribe to the Congleton Newsletter on the FHSC website.

Crewe & Nantwich Group
By Margaret Spate
The Crewe & Nantwich Group will continue our programme of meetings in one of three formats: Zoom, Face to Face (F2F), or Hybrid (a F2F meeting which can also be accessed via Zoom).

Crewe & Nantwich Zoom Meetings open at 7.15pm and start at 7.30pm. Please register each month for the Zoom meetings - send an email to *crewe@fhsc.org.uk* in good time before the meeting. Please do not leave it to the last minute before you register.

Crewe & Nantwich F2F meetings are usually held on the 2nd Tuesday of the

month at Jubilee House, St Paul's St, Crewe CW1 2QA. Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for visitors, including refreshments. Nearby parking (free after 6pm) at the adjacent Victoria Centre Car Park, Crewe CW1 2PT.

Crewe Family History Unit
Please see the FHSC website or elsewhere in this issue for information about the Society's research facilities.

Macclesfield Group
By Dennis Whyte
Meetings are usually held 7.30pm-9.00pm on the 4th Tuesday of the month at The Salvation Army Church, Roe Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6UT, opposite Churchill Way car park in the centre of Macclesfield. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for visitors. We usually visit a place of interest in July, and there is no meeting in December.

Nantwich Group
Although Nantwich Group has now merged with Crewe Group, members continue to run a free helpdesk at 2pm on the 3rd Monday of every month in Nantwich Library. All welcome. Please check the FHSC website for full details.

Northwich Group
By Dave Thomas
Meetings are usually held on the 2nd Monday of the month at Hartford Methodist Church Hall, Beach Road, Hartford, Northwich CW8 3AB. Doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. Admission is £2, and visitors are most welcome. Car park available.

Runcorn Group
By Peter Johnson
At the AGM in August Peter Johnson was elected as the Group Leader.

Meetings are usually held on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except January), starting at 7pm, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Clifton Road West, Runcorn WA7 4TE. Visitors are most welcome.

Sale Group
By Marion Hall
Our open forums allow members and visitors to share their research with the whole group, and they have proved extremely informative for everyone.

Meetings are usually held at 7.30pm, for the talk at 7.45pm, on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at Sale Moor Community Centre, Norris Road, Sale M33 2TN. Visitors are always welcome. Admission is £2 for members and £2.50 for visitors.

Tameside Group
By Gay Oliver
From the New Year our group has changed to purely online meetings and will be more like an informal club. It has been almost impossible to get enough people to attend face to face to be able to pay the cost of room hire. By the time you get this copy of the March Ancestor we will already have met via ZOOM in January and February.

Tameside Group Helpdesks
We hold a helpdesk on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at Tameside Local Studies and Archives Library to help anyone who is stuck or who wants to start their family history research.

Wallasey Group
Although Wallasey Group has now closed, members continue to run a helpdesk every Friday from 10am to 1pm at the Wallasey Central Reference Library, Earlston Road, Wallasey CH45 5DX. Step-free access to the library is available via a ramp and internal lift. All members and non-members are welcome.

Volunteers Wanted

The Society is run entirely by volunteers, without which it could not function. Please consider whether you might be able to offer your help in some way.

The society is seeking volunteers for the following roles:

Journal Editor

Rosie Rowley has now been producing the journal for nine years and intends to resign by the end of 2025 at the latest, by which time she will have completed ten years as editor. It is therefore vital that a new editor is found by October 2025 to allow time for training during the production of the December 2025 issue (or earlier if possible).

For more information, please contact Rosie Rowley (*editor@fhsc.org.uk*)

Book/CD Sales Officer

A volunteer is needed to manage our book and CD sales. David Smetham is fulfilling sales until we find a replacement volunteer.

For information, please contact David Smetham (*book.sales@fhsc.org.uk*)

Mobberley Research Centre

Unfortunately, due to a lack of volunteers we have had to temporarily close Mobberley on a Tuesday. If you are interested in joining the band of volunteers then please **contact the Mobberley Research Centre directly on 07712 103715** and leave a message.

Surname Interests

Are you researching any of these names? If so, log in to the FHSC website and click on *Research*, then *Search Surnames*, to contact the person or people who registered the name as one of their surname interests.

If you haven't already registered your surname interests on the FHSC website, why not do it today? You may make contact with someone who holds the key to your brick wall!

These names were added between 4 November 2024 and 25 January 2025:

Astbury, Bailey, Barrow, Collins, Crump, Hunt, Wakefield

Help Wanted

Elizabeth WITHERS (nee ROBINSON) died in 1867. I found the following probate entry, twenty-one years after she died:

WITHERS Elizabeth of Liverpool (wife of Richard Withers) died 12 August 1867 at Castle Street, Beaumaris Anglesea Administration London 11 March (1898) to Thomas Randle Withers stockbroker Effects £5.

Why did it take 21 years from her death to probate, given that she only left £5?

Her husband died on 29th January 1884.

Gren Dix
Membership no. 4174

If you can help with the answer, please reply to the editor so it can be published in the next issue of the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR.

Wilmslow News (2)

from the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser, 12 March 1875

ABOLITION OF THE TOLL BARS – The first meeting of the Committee appointed at the recent meeting of ratepayers to take the most effectual steps towards getting the bars on the Wilmslow and Lawton Turnpike Trust removed was held at the Ring o' Bells, Church Street, Wilmslow on Wednesday evening. The members of the Committee present were Dr Bower, Messrs Bourne, Wallworth, Maddocks, and Alcock.

Members' FREE Research Lookup Service

Note that this is a free service for members only, and is subject to the time available to volunteers.

We will search our research resources (held at the Mobberley Research Centre or at the Crewe Family History Unit) for specific information about one named person. For example: a search for a marriage, baptism or burial record or a search for a memorial inscription. We will also check other indexes that we hold. We will respond as quickly as possible but please remember that the Research Centres are staffed by volunteers who also have other duties.

Lists of the resources held at Mobberley can be found on the FHSC website at *Research Centres > Mobberley Research Centre > Mobberley Holdings*

Lists of the resources held at Crewe can be found on the FHSC website at *Research Centres > Crewe Family History Unit > Crewe Holdings*

Please note we cannot undertake in-depth family history research. Members wanting that sort of service should engage a professional genealogist.

Requests can be submitted:

- **Online at *www.fhsc.org.uk***
  Sorry, this option is not available at present while the website is being updated.
- **By post**
  Please include your name, membership number, contact details and a correctly stamped, addressed envelope (at least C5 size - 162mm x 229mm). Send to: *Family History Society of Cheshire Lookup Service, Mobberley Research Centre, Rajar Building, Town Lane, Mobberley, Cheshire, WA16 7ER.*

  Or to: *FHSC, Family History Unit, Floor 2, Municipal Building, Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 2BJ*

Why not ADVERTISE your

Cheshire or Genealogy BUSINESS** or **PRODUCT

in this quarter-page space?

Just £14 per issue, or £50 for four consecutive issues

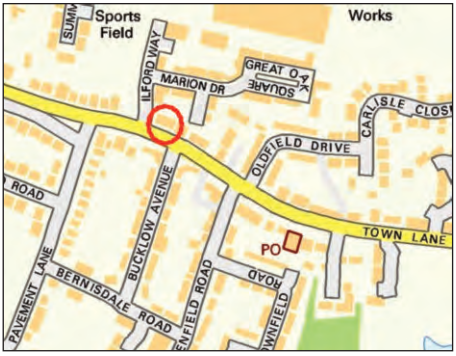
Please contact the Editor for full details

Research Centre News

Manned by experienced volunteers, visitors can obtain help and advice on family and local history research. Please see the FHSC website for holdings and up-to-date news about changes to opening hours, etc. If in doubt, please phone before visiting to ensure the centre is open and a computer/film reader is available.

MOBBERLEY FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH CENTRE

Rajar Building, Town Lane, Mobberley, WA16 7ER
Please note our new telephone number: 07712 103715
For non-urgent enquiries you can now email us on *researchcentre@fhsc.org.uk*



The Rajar Building is on the corner of Town Lane (A5085) and Ilford Way. The entrance is at the front on Town Lane, and the Research Centre is on the first floor (stairs only, sorry, no lift). Parking is on nearby streets. There is a bus stop nearby (Bucklow Avenue) for D&G Bus No. 88. See *www.dgbus.co.uk*

FREE access to *FindMyPast*, *Ancestry* and *The Genealogist*
Extensive library of books and films/fiche for many areas, not just Cheshire
Searchable computer archives * Small charge for printing/copying
Fiche/film scanning available

Usual opening hours: 10am-4pm Monday, Thursday and 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month.

Closed on bank holidays and over the Christmas-New Year period.
If the weather is bad, please phone to check we are open before travelling.

Daily admission charge £3 for members, £5 for non-members (refundable on joining the Society on day of visit), including FREE tea or coffee.

Non-members should please contact us in advance to book a place.

Mobberley Research Centre News

by Joan Irving
librarian@fhsc.org.uk

It's March, a time for spring cleaning at home and in your family history research. How many scraps of paper with snippets of family history have you collected along the way, probably kept in various drawers, files or boxes that may or may not belong to your family?

It's time to go through them and re-evaluate their importance to your research. Some will probably be no longer needed so can be discarded; those that might be useful could be kept but in a system they can easily be retrieved. A long-forgotten snippet may well be the breakthrough you need or the spur to urge you to follow a new path.

When was the last time you read through your research? A family history magazine once said it should be done at least once a year. As you learn more, you question more, and you find new information that can be added. Family history is like doing a jigsaw with no straight pieces – very apt as there is no definitive end; new documents are still being uncovered and made available. With DNA links to others in the wider family, more information never heard of or seen before may be disclosed.

So let the March air give you a renewed energy to tackle a spring clean and declutter of your family history research. With luck it will give you a new direction or breakthrough, or just confirmation your research is strong and true.

Wilmslow News (3)

from the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser, 6 March 1925

The establishment of public telephone call boxes at advantageous points in Wilmslow will remove a long felt want. After the closing of the Post Office at 7pm, unless a private 'phone is obtainable, the only recourse is that to the railway station, where only those who have experience can gather the utter futility of intelligent conversation, with the rolling stock of the Company doing its duty. The one at Finney Green will meet the requirements of the inhabitants to the north of the village, and the second in front of the Post Office, and a third at Fulshaw Cross are also advantageously placed for the people in the village and those on the south side.

Crewe Family History Unit News

by Margaret Spate
crewe@fhsc.org.uk

Our librarian (Diane) is still adding some newly acquired books to our library; these are being added to the library list and will soon be published on the website.

It is always interesting to volunteers and members when a 'gem' of information is found in our archives. This happened recently and revealed the original extent of a building. I am hoping that this story will appear in a later edition of the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR.

Thanks for your support, pay us a visit if it is possible and within travelling distance. Our volunteers are always ready to help with your queries and you will be made very welcome.

The Saturday morning openings will remain as a booked visit as shown on the website or in the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR. Thanks for your co-operation with this booking system.

Wilmslow News (4)

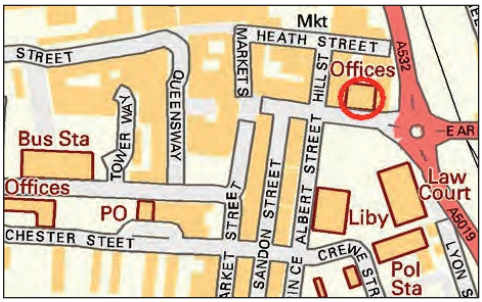
from the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser, 12 March 1875

RIFLE SHOOTING AT LINDOW – The first of a series of four competitions by the 27th (sic) Cheshire (Alderley and Wilmslow), to decide possession of the company silver medal, the three representatives at Wimbledon and the Battalion prize meeting, and the ten men to form the representative shooting team for the year, took place at Lindow last Saturday.... The conditions were seven shots each, at 200, 500 and 600 yards, and the result was:

1-	*Pvt Joseph Williamson*	*10-*	*Private W Gibbon*
2-	*Private John Burgess*	*11-*	*Private Griffiths*
3-	*Captain Towers*	*12-*	*Private Brown*
4-	*Sergeant Gatley*	*13-*	*Private Lennie*
5-	*Lieutenant Keyworth*	*14-*	*Sergeant Goodall*
6-	*Col-Sergeant Cooke*	*15-*	*Private Story*
7-	*Corporal Barrow*	*16-*	*Lance-Corpl Gatley*
8-	*Private Atkinson*	*17-*	*Private Garner*
9-	*Private Lingard*		

CREWE FAMILY HISTORY UNIT

2nd Floor, Municipal Building, Earle Street, Crewe, CW1 2BJ
Tel 01270 685699



The Municipal Building is situated near the market, opposite Memorial Square and the old library. Crewe Register Office is in the same building. All visitors must sign in and out at reception. A lift is available to take you to the 2nd floor.

FREE access to *Ancestry, FindMyPast, British Newspaper Archive*
and *The Genealogist*
Local parish registers on film - extensive library of books
Crewe and District and South East Cheshire local history archives
For full details of our holdings, please see
the Crewe FHU Library Holdings lists on the FHSC website

Usual opening hours: 10am-4pm Monday and Tuesday
plus one Saturday morning each month (see website for date)

We recommend arriving no later than 3pm. For Saturday dates and changes to usual opening hours, please see the FHSC website.

N.B. Anyone wishing to visit on a Saturday morning (between 10 am and 12 noon) **must email *crewe@fhsc.org.uk* at least 2 days in advance** to confirm their attendance. If no notification is received, the FHU will not open on that Saturday.

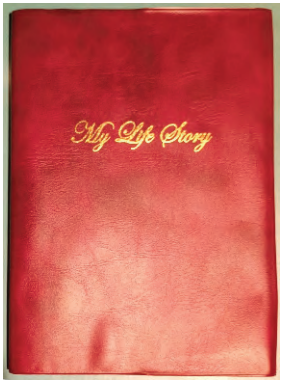
Non-members visiting for the first time will be offered (for a small donation) time with a volunteer to explain the facilities available and advice on family history research. Membership of the Society is encouraged for further visits.

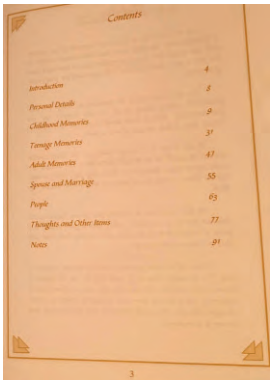
Letters to the Editor

If you have any comments about any of the articles in the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR*, or any aspect of the society, please share them – I'd love to hear from you! Just send an email to editor@fhsc.org.uk or post a letter to the address inside the front cover, including your name and membership number, and tell me if you also want your email/postal address to be printed so other researchers can contact you.*

CHESHIRE ANCESTOR, December 2024: 'My Life Story' Booklet

In the last issue, Sue Fryer asked about a booklet called *My Life Story*, designed and published in 2001 by Robert (Bob) Wright from the Wirral, which she bought many years ago.





About 90 pages long and bound in a red case, it had questions which acted as prompts about family relationships, friends, television, food, special events, etc.

Bob tells us that he still has some copies of the booklet and they can be purchased at a cost of £4.50 each plus £4 UK postage and packing for up to four copies. Those who live local to Bob in the Bebington area do not need to pay for delivery.

To order, please contact Bob Wright using the contact details for Bebington Group printed on the inside back cover of this issue.

Wilmslow News (5)

from the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser, 13 March 1925

WILMSLOW PEDAL CYCLIST INJURED – A Wilmslow man named Henry Street, of Sunny Bank, Wilmslow, was rather seriously injured on Tuesday. He was riding a pedal cycle round the junction of Whalley's Lane and Gravel Lane, when a collision occurred with a two-seater motor car. Street was injured about the face and was in a semi-conscious condition. Two wounds at the back of the head required stitching.

Family History Events

For news of family history events, see these online calendars

http://geneva.weald.org.uk/doku.php
www.familyhistoryfederation.com/events
www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/online/genealogy/
https://conferencekeeper.org/

RootsTech 2025

Thursday 6th - Saturday 8th March 2025
In-person at Salt Lake City, USA, or participate online free of charge
Talks are recorded and can be accessed on the RootsTech website
Chat online with other attendees worldwide
Download digital handouts

www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/

The Family History Show (Midlands)

10am - 4pm, Saturday 15th March 2025
at Severn Hall, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, WR13 6NW

Talks - Exhibitors - Ask the Experts - Free parking
Advance tickets £8 each or two for £14
Receive a FREE goody bag (worth £15) on entry

https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/online/

The Guild of One-Name Studies 'Gateway to the World' Hybrid Conference

Friday 25th – Sunday 27th April 2025
Holiday Inn, Lime St, Liverpool L1 1NQ

This conference will celebrate Liverpool's position as the 'Gateway to the World' and look at those who lived in or passed through the city in the past.

The conference is open to both Guild members and non-members.

https://one-name.org/mc-events/gateway-to-the-world-conference/

The Family History Show (Liverpool)

10am - 4pm, Saturday 3rd May 2025
Talks - Exhibitors - Ask the Experts
Aintree railway station just 5 minutes walk - Ample free parking
Wheelchair friendly site - Refreshments available all day
Advance tickets £8.00 each or two for £14
with a FREE goody bag (worth £15) per ticket on entry

https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/liverpool/

Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies 'Ken Your Kin' Summer School

Wednesday 4th – Wednesday 11th June 2025
Graham Hills Building, 40 George Street, Glasgow G1 1QE

The Ken Your Kin summer school will both celebrate and bring Scottish ancestry and heritage to life! The price of this seven day summer school is £1,000 not including accommodation. All lectures, coach transport and admission to museums, some lunches and gala dinners are included.

www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/centreforlifelonglearning/genealogy/kenyourkin/

The Halsted Trust Conference 'Secrets & Lies: More Hidden Voices of Our Ancestors'

Friday 19th – Sunday 21st September 2025
Holiday Inn, Peterborough West

This event will delve deeper into the lesser-known stories of our ancestors—stories of mystery, hardship, and resilience that have shaped the history of the British Isles.

https://secretlives.org.uk/

Wilmslow News (6)

from the Alderley and Wilmslow Advertiser, 15 January 1875

THE WILMSLOW TRADESMEN'S BALL – At the county police sessions at Macclesfield on Tuesday, Mr Warham, of the Railway Hotel, Wilmslow, applied for permission to be open until two o'clock in the morning on the occasion of the forthcoming tradesmen's ball. Mr Warham stated that the proceeds from this ball were always devoted to some worthy object, and on this occasion it was intended to apply them towards the funds of the Library and Reading Room, which is much in debt.

Family History News

A selection of recent updates to websites, and other family history news. Remember, if you don't have a subscription to *Ancestry, Find My Past* or *The Genealogist*, our Research Centres have free access to these sites. You may also be able to access *Ancestry* or *Find My Past* through your public library - and look out for offers of free access on special occasions such as Remembrance Day.
Bear in mind that record collections on the Internet may be incomplete.

Find My Past (FMP)

Go to *http://search.findmypast.co.uk/historical-records* to see a list of all record sets. Go to *www.findmypast.co.uk/blog/new* for FindMyPast news.

The Ladies' Who's Who (1924)
https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/ladies-whos-who
The Ladies' Who's Who documents notable women who were renowned for being academics or part of British high society in the 1920s.

United States, Passenger and Crew Lists - New York and California
https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/united-states-passenger-and-crew-lists
These records document people who arrived from overseas as passengers or crew in New York between 1915 and 1957, and in California between 1947 and 1952.

The Genealogist

Go to *www.thegenealogist.co.uk/news/* for *The Genealogist* news.

Historical Directory Additions
Thirty-nine new directories spanning 1935-1940 have been released.

City of London Cemetery Burial Records
This new database contains 492,465 burial records. Each entry includes name, age, date of burial, place of abode, parish and county. It also gives details of the burial such as who performed the ceremony and where the grave is located.

1910 Valuation Office Survey records for Kent (new) and other locations
Also known as the Lloyd George Domesday records, these images are now available for Kent, London, Middlesex, Surrey, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire & Wiltshire.

Ancestry

Go to *http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/cardcatalog.aspx* for a list of all record sets, and click on *Sort by > Date Updated* to find the latest additions.
Go to *www.ancestry.co.uk/cs/recent-collections* for *Ancestry* news.

1921 Census for England, Wales, Isle of Man and Channel Isles
www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/63150/ (and 63151, 63152, 63153)
The 1921 census is now available on Ancestry. It was originally due to be taken on 24th April 1921 but was delayed until 19th June due to industrial action. As a result, many families were not at home but instead can be found in boarding houses or hotels at holiday resorts. Passengers—whether British or not—on any ship that was docked in port on the night of the census are included. Members of the armed forces serving at military establishments, aboard ships, and overseas on the night of the census were recorded on the NM census form. This meant that no matter where a member of the British armed forces was stationed in the world, they should be recorded on the 1921 census.

UK, Corps of Military Police Index, 1800-2022
www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/63108
This is an index to an online database belonging to the Corps of Military Police. The original database can be found here: *www.corpsofmilitarypolice.org*

Ballymena, Antrim, Northern Ireland, Headstone Inscriptions, 1671-1996
www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62804
This collection contains headstone inscriptions from Ballymena, Antrim, Northern Ireland between the years 1671 and 1996. Most records are in English. The records were created by The Braid: Mid-Antrim Museum for preserving headstone inscriptions for historic graveyards in the Borough of Ballymena.

UK and Ireland, The Royal National Lifeboat Institution Records, 1824-1989
www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62701
This collection covers the records of the RNLI between 1824 and 1989. Record types include pension lists, honorary presentation books, legacy books, medal books, lifeboat donation records, crew lists, and applications. For information about the RNLI and its history, see *https://rnli.org/about-us/our-history*

England, Battle of Trafalgar Crew Lists, 1805-1806
www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62958
This is an index of information based on crew lists from the Battle of Trafalgar that were created in 1805 and 1806. The index is incomplete and may include the reference to the primary documents on the National Archives website.

Cheshire Archives

For *Cheshire Archives* news, go to *www.cheshirearchives.org.uk/latest-news-and-events/Cheshire-Archives-and-Local-Studies-Newsletter.aspx*

Searchroom News

Our amber-tinted Searchroom image on our website indicates that in-person access to the collections is now closed. Although the Record Office closed to the public on 8 August 2024 our online services are not affected, and you are still able to order copies of documents and request research services until the image turns red at the start of 2026 to indicate full closure. Libraries across Cheshire will continue to provide access to local history books and maps as well as providing free access to family history websites.

Historic vehicle licensing

www.cheshirearchives.org.uk/historic-vehicle-licensing.aspx

We hold Registers of Motor Vehicle Licences that were issued by Cheshire County Council (1903-1974), Chester City Council (1903-1974) and Warrington Borough Council (1922-1974). These cover registrations with the prefixes ED, FM, LG, M, MA, MB and TU. The registers issued by Birkenhead and Wallasey do not survive. We can supply copies of the documentation found in each register. There is a copying charge and an additional charge for us to certify it, if required.

Electoral Registers, 1832 to Present

https://www.cheshirearchives.org.uk/electoral-registers.aspx

Electoral registers were introduced in 1832, when only around 1 in 7 men were eligible to vote. This was gradually extended so that by 1884 around two-thirds of men over 21 appear in the electoral registers. Most women over the age of 30 gained the right to vote in 1918, and only in 1928 did all adults over 21 gain the right to vote. The qualifying age was reduced to 18 in 1969.

No registers were compiled during the wartime years of 1916-1917 and 1940-1944. Registers compiled immediately after both wars included 'absent voters' lists to allow serving military personnel to vote in their home constituencies. The Cheshire absent voters lists for 1919 can be searched on our database page.

Check what we hold using CCRg as Reference in our online catalogue advanced search. The registers can be viewed at the Record Office in person (when we reopen.) We cannot supply copies from registers published in the last ten years but you can consult them and handwritten notes can be made. Registers covering the years 1842-1900 are available to search and view on Find My Past.

AI and Family History with Andrew Redfern

by Ann Simcock
Membership no. 10111

In January Andrew Redfern from Australia delivered a Zoom talk on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to over 180 members. He discussed the far-reaching impact of AI, emphasizing its significance across various aspects of our lives, including family and local history research. Notably, AI isn't a new phenomenon; the term was first coined by John McCarthy in 1956, who proposed that machines could simulate human intelligence. Today, aspects of AI are integrated into everyday technology, from phone features, auto-correct functions and GPS systems to spell-check tools and hints on Ancestry. Andrew compared the development of AI to a train journey, where users can hop on or off at any point and along the way meet others with new thoughts; you can move from 'carriage to carriage' interacting with those already on the train and those who join later.

He posed an interesting question: Is AI already influencing family history research? Large genealogical websites like Ancestry and Find My Past (FMP) use AI to provide hints based on other users' family trees and Ancestry's Thrulines. AI has also accelerated the digitization of records; for instance, the 1950 US census index was produced in just nine days, and by 2024, over 60 billion records from 88 countries had been digitized. AI features on platforms like My Heritage allow users to colourise, transform, and even animate old photographs, although this remains a debated topic. Andrew quoted Harvard Business School professor Karim Lakhani, who said, *"AI will not replace you, but a person using AI will."*

Andrew explained that different computer systems perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, which involves three processes: input (gathering information), processing (decision-making), and output. AI builds upon this by forming knowledge and generating algorithms like ChatGPT to create new content, including audio, code, images, and text. While human intelligence is limited by brain capacity, AI intelligence can expand through additional processors. However, Andrew cautioned that AI outputs can exhibit cultural and gender biases similar to human ones, and it's important to recognise and respect the intelligence of other cultures and indigenous peoples.

In the second part of his talk, Andrew highlighted several AI programs, focusing on ChatGPT, which launched on 30th November 2022. The 'G' stands for

'generative,' the 'P' for 'pretrained,' and the 'T' for 'transformer,' indicating its capability to create new material. He stressed the importance of interacting with programs like ChatGPT to achieve the most authentic results. ChatGPT offers both free and paid versions, with the latter costing around £20 per month. While the free version can generate text and tables, only the paid version produces images. Andrew provided tips for using the program effectively, emphasizing that proper research involves thorough verification of AI-generated results.

He mentioned other AI applications, such as *Transkribus*, a German transcription program displaying images side-by-side for easy verification, and *Claude*, a new text-based program. He warned that AI programs sometimes 'hallucinate' or create false information.

Andrew concluded by highlighting seven key points:

1 Determine if the output is probable or factual

2 Recognize that AI programs are not search engines

3 Ask precise questions, think of them as prompts

4 Choose words carefully

5 Use a new chat for each topic

6 Edit outputs

7 Verify results

Overall, the presentation was highly informative, offering valuable insights for both novice and experienced family historians on the potential and limitations of AI.

Please note, computer technology is progressing at such a rate that AI features could well have changed since this article was written in January 2025.

Found in the Parish Register

by Gren Dix

In the middle of Baptisms for 1795 at Leintwardine, Herefordshire I found the following:

A great frost began December 16th 1794 and continued until February 7th and a great snow along with it and then it went off with rain and caused the biggest flood that was ever seen in Mans Memory.

The Three Colonels Ashenhurst

by Mike Hodgkinson
Membership no. 7929

Last September I read a book about the English Civil War. I had been researching a branch of my family tree on which I had found landed gentry. This included the ASHENHURST family of Leek. Sleigh's History of Leek mentioned a Colonel ASHENHURST who had commanded rebels in the siege of Biddulph House, Staffordshire at the time of the Battle of Nantwich in January 1644.

My 10th great-grandmother Joyce ASHENHURST (1565- 1646) was the sister of Ralph ASHENHURST who had three sons, namely Randle, Edward and Francis. Francis was Mayor of Macclesfield in 1642-3. Were Randle or Edward Parliamentary colonels? Some research was needed.

I found more information on the website *www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/cromwell-army-officers/surnames*

Edward ASHENHURST was the second son of Ralph ASHENHURST (died 1628), younger brother of Randle ASHENHURST and uncle of John ASHENHURST. By March 1644 he was a major and governor of Paynsley, Staffordshire. By November 1644 he had been promoted to colonel in the Parliamentary Army. In May 1645 he was ordered by the Staffordshire county committee to join Sir William BRERETON at Chester.

John ASHENHURST (born about 1620, alive in 1662) was the eldest son of Randle Ashenhurst (born 1585, alive in 1662) and nephew to Edward ASHENHURST. John ASHENHURST was a captain in Staffordshire in 1643; by December he was governor of Caverswall Castle, Staffordshire, commanding 20 foot and 20 horse. He refused to obey the county committee's order to slight Caverswall and the garrison was temporarily under the authority of ASHENHURST's colonel, John BOWYER. In 1645 Captain ASHENHURST was re-instated as commander of the garrison. He was commissioned colonel of horse in the Staffordshire militia, 14 May 1650.

Randle ASHENHURST (1585-1662) of Ashenhurst, Leek parish, Staffordshire, and Beard, Derbyshire. was the eldest son of Ralph ASHENHURST, elder brother of Edward ASHENHURST and father of John ASHENHURST. In 1639 Randle

ASHENHURST accused the Sheriff of Derbyshire, John SHALCROSS, of embezzlement in collecting the King's ship money levy for that year.

At the beginning of the war, ASHENHURST took out a commission as captain, later becoming major and colonel. He served as captain of Sir John GELL's forces but 'ran away with about forty of our horse, for which worthy service he has since become a major'. (Did he change sides I wonder?)

In late 1643, ASHENHURST was captured in a skirmish with the royalist Colonel John FRESCEVILLE of Staveley. Eventually released or escaped, he then raised a volunteer regiment of foot and was promoted to the rank of Colonel. After the surrender of Bolsover Castle in August 1644 Sir Thomas FAIRFAX made ASHENHURST its governor.

I made further searches on the web and found an article in the Derbyshire Family History Society magazine, September 2019, by a descendant of John ASHENHURST who lived in the USA. I quote sections of this article:

Great grandmother, Euphemia Ashenhurst MCDOWELL (1880-1997), told us about Ashenhurst Hall in England. For decades, I've told anyone who would listen that I'm descended from a Colonel John ASHENHURST, a Cromwellian cavalry officer who felt obliged to flee to Ireland after the restoration of the Crown. It turns out the story may not be totally accurate and is, certainly, somewhat more complex. In fact, there were three Colonels ASHENHURST during the English Civil Wars, and it's often difficult to determine which actions are to be attributed to which man.

The ASHENHURST family can be found in Staffordshire as early as the 13th century. Ralph ASHENHURST of Ashenhurst Hall, near Leek, married the heiress of Beard Hall in Derbyshire near the end of the 16th century. He had four sons. The two eldest, Randle and Edward, were elevated to colonels early in the first war. Edward, a Staffordshire Committee member, was apparently the first of the family to stand with the Parliamentarians. Captain John ASHENHURST, Randle's eldest son, was promoted to colonel in 1650 and given command of a cavalry troop. Randle had two other brothers: Francis, for whom I can find nothing more for this period, was the Mayor of Macclesfield in Cheshire from 1642 to 1643, and Edmund of Old Park in Staffordshire. Edmund appears to have been neutral, but possibly of Royalist sympathies, during the wars.

Not long after King Charles I raised his battle standard at Nottingham in 1642, Captain Randle ASHENHURST, then serving for the Royal army in Derbyshire

under Sir John GELL, defected with forty horses and men to the Parliamentary forces of Sir Thomas FAIRFAX. The next year, Randle was promoted to colonel and raised a regiment of foot soldiers. The same year, Captain John ASHENHURST, Randle's son, was installed as governor of Caverswall Castle in Staffordshire. The fortunes of the ASHENHURSTs were on the rise. But in December, Colonel Randle ASHENHURST was captured with one of his sons in a skirmish against Colonel John FRESCHEVILLE at Hassop Hall in Derbyshire.

In the meantime, the other ASHENHURSTs remained busy in Staffordshire. Randle's brother, Captain Edward ASHENHURST, was promoted to major in early 1644 and given the governorship of Paynsley. In February, Captain John ASHENHURST, Randle's son, began a month-long siege of Biddulph Hall. The heavily garrisoned building finally surrendered after the captain deployed "Roaring Meg," the largest cannon of its era, and felled a supporting beam. That August, father and son were released from FRESCHEVILLE's custody and Randle was given command of the newly relieved Bolsover Castle.

Up until this time, historians can distinguish between the three ASHENHURST men by their respective ranks: Captain John, Major Edward, and Colonel Randle ASHENHURST. By November, however, Edward was promoted to colonel, introducing some confusion as to who was whom. But it was Captain John ASHENHURST (not a Colonel ASHENHURST, as is often stated) who gained a bloody victory at Wolverhampton in July 1645.

Charles I, the second of the Stuart kings of England, was defeated in 1646 and executed in January 1649. During that next year, 1650, as Charles's son was crowned in Scotland as Charles II, Randle ASHENHURST was made Justice of the Peace in Derbyshire and his son John promoted to colonel of the horse. Confident of victory, Charles's Scottish allies quickly invaded England but were routed at Dunbar and defeated at Worcester on 3 September 1651, after which the King secured temporary shelter at Boscopel House just west of the Staffordshire border. None other than Colonel John ASHENHURST and his troop of calvary missed capturing Charles there by no more than a half hour.

The King had found cover inside a hollow of a nearby oak tree, now known to legend as the Royal Oak; then, after forty days on the run, gained his passage to France. In 1680, the King confided to Samuel PEPYS that a Roundhead passed the oak tree just beneath his hideout.

Charles was restored to the throne in 1660, two years after the death of Oliver CROMWELL, and the ASHENHURSTs began to disappear from the record. Randle

died in Derbyshire in 1666, and in 1667 John sold the Ashenhurst estate in Staffordshire to his cousin Francis HOLLINSHEAD.

But what of the American ASHENHURST's supposed ancestor, Colonel John ASHENHURST, the would-be captor of the King? Did he and his family flee to Ireland after Charles regained the crown in 1660?

Although there were likely other John ASHENHURSTs during Restoration England, it needs to be noted that a man of that name was transported, courtesy of the King, to Barbados in 1669 and is presumably the man of the same name to have stepped shore on the American mainland in 1675.

There is little contradiction between my two sources but we do know that there were three Colonel ASHENHURSTs. John, the youngest, was only a captain in the siege of Biddulph House, Staffordshire but, had he captured Charles II, our history would have been changed.

Seeing Double

by Gren Dix
Membership no. 4174

I found the following two apparently identical entries in the parish registers for the baptism of Mary UNSWORTH:

Mary Unsworth baptised 16 November 1826 St George Tyldesley P7 E50
dr of Joseph & Mary, abode Tildesley (sic)
occupation: farmer. Baptised by J Robson

Mary Unsworth baptised 16 November 1826 St Mary, Leigh P120 E954
dr of Joseph & Mary, abode Tildesley (sic)
occupation farmer, baptised by Jacob Robson
(Note performed at Tyldesley Chapel)

Was the baptism performed once but registered in both the Chapel register and the Parish register, or was she baptised twice?

Oswald Hedley, the Nature of the Man

by Gren Dix
Membership no. 4174

Sometimes you assume that a person must have been a chinless wonder who inherited their wealth and position. I originally thought this of Oswald William Edward HEDLEY (1884-1945) on seeing his entry in the 1939 Register.

Oswald's father Edward seemed to divide his time between Burnhopeside Hall, Lanchester, County Durham and Beckenham, Kent (now Greater London). Oswald was the eldest of three children, having two sisters, Eveline Margaret and Mabel Violet. Their father died in 1897 when Oswald was 13, leaving £23,268.

In 1891 Oswald and his siblings were with the housekeeper at Burnhopeside Hall. In 1901 Oswald, age 17, was a boarder at The Schools, Kingsland, Shrewsbury. His sisters were with their mother in Beckenham.

In 1907 Oswald, then at Burnhopeside Hall, gave a new organ to Lanchester Parish Church, at a cost of £700, in memory of his father.

Oswald married Marguerite Cecil WITHERS (daughter of Joseph WITHERS) at St Mary's, Ambleside in 1905. They had two children but Marguerite died in 1909. He then married Marguerite's eldest sister, Ethel Mary, in 1910 but she died in 1916. In 1911 they were living at Briery Close, Windemere - a property with 22 rooms - with his family and ten servants. Ethel Mary's married sister, Maud Lilian TROTTER, was visiting them.

During the First World War, the 4th Northumbrian V.A.D. Hospital, Dilston Hall was established through Oswald's generosity. He became an owner ambulance driver and was subsequently awarded the St John medal by the Red Cross. Later he equipped a ward at the Ethel Hedley Officers' Orthopedic Hospital, Calgarth, Windemere. I presume that the hospital was named after his second wife. In 1918 he was a 2nd Lieutenant living in Newcastle upon Tyne. In World War 2 buildings were erected at Calgarth to house aircraft workers. After the war, the buildings were used to house Holocaust victims.

In 1916 Oswald's second wife died. He married his third wife in London in 1918.

In 1917 he became a magistrate for Ambleside and was later awarded an OBE.

At some point he bought a mansion at Fell Foot, Windemere and razed it to the ground intending to erect a new building. This never happened. After his death the family donated 18 acres at Fell Foot.

His generosity was also to be found elsewhere. A soldier, in his memoirs, while on his way to India gave thanks to Oswald for providing (hot weather) clothing to him and other local lads.

About 1924 he was appointed High Sheriff of Westmorland. At the end of his year in office he gave a ball for 350 guests with an orchestra from London.

In the 1939 register he and his wife were living in Briery Close, Windermere with seventeen servants (eat your heart out Downton Abbey).

The obituary at his death in 1945 gave a glowing report. He was a member/patron of many local organizations and a keen tennis player. He left over one million pounds (£30 to £50m in today's money).

So back to my original thought. I was obviously wrong. He may have inherited money and an ancestral pile but he was a successful businessman and generous supporter of local events and people.

Ruyton of the Eleven Towns

by Gren Dix
Membership no. 4174

While looking for the baptism of John PERKIN(S) in the mid-1660s I came across the following:

Baptism 28 January 1668 at Ruyton of the Eleven Towns, Shropshire.

What a strange name. I looked a bit deeper into the name. It originates in the 12th century (although the hamlet of Ruyton is many years older) when a castle was built in the area. It became a major manor in the area for the eleven local townships. In more recent times the roman numeral XI was included in the name to reflect this. It is also referred to as just Ruyton.

More information can be found at *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruyton-XI-Towns* and *https://ruytonxitowns-history.org/*

The Black Greyhound Public House

by Raymond Walker
Membership no. 10901

Members who know the top road from Alderley Edge to Macclesfield will be familiar with the corner where the old smithy stands on a dog-leg bend. The old smithy stands at the junction of Birtles Lane and used to look across the road junction to the old *Black Greyhound* public house. The hostelry has long gone and was replaced in the late 1880s by the handsome Victorian Black Greyhound House that now stands. Only three remains of the old buildings exist — a well under the present kitchen floor, a large outbuilding and a roofed pigsty. The postbox in the wall will have existed from that time too.

Standing at the confluence of roads from Alderley, Macclesfield, Gawsworth, Hare Hill and Birtles, the *Black Greyhound* could have seen considerable trade. Horses and their charges would require refreshment and its outbuilding was a Clubroom for the Over Alderley residents. A couple of blacksmiths chose this place as a good spot for business. On the 1780 tithe map we find that a Joseph ALLEN owned the land, and had tenanted it to a Samuel, then an Ann, and finally a John POWNALL between 1785 and 1828. This information comes from a book *Cheshire's Alehouses* written in 1828 and found in the Cheshire Records Office.

Early records show that in 1749 the *Black Greyhound* was first run by Thomas COOPER. With ten innkeepers registered between 1749 and 1881, the public house was eventually closed in the mid-1880s. It was thought to have been closed by Lord Henry STANLEY (1827-1903), a Muslim, who despised alcohol. However, the pub stood on HIBBERT land and was not under STANLEY's control. The land and buildings had been bought by William HIBBERT of Hare Hill (brother to Robert HIBBERT of Birtles Hall) and was passed on to his son, William. Later, the land was sold on by William HIBBERT to Francis D BROCKLEHURST in 1879. So was the pub closed because the Edge mine managers complained of poor work following nights of heavy drinking by their miners? The *Eagle and Child Inn*, three miles away at Nether Alderley, was ordered to close by Lord Henry STANLEY around the same time, but that was because he was a Muslim.

When Col. BROCKLEHURST bought the estate in 1879 he let landlord James PASS remain until he died in 1886, then demolished the old inn and rebuilt on the site.

Photo thought to be the wedding of Susan, daughter of Henry Massey, the first occupant of the new Black Greyhound House, in 1903

Mr Henry MASSEY set up a timber, joinery and plumbing business at the new house. Two extant ledgers give a clue to the extent of his business. He was the person any local would go to for repairs to their cartwheels, well buckets, rotted window frames, barn and stable doors, broken locks, faulty water pumps, fencing or supply of firewood. A fine carpenter, MASSEY would make carts and barrows, mend wooden churns and barrels, re-lay floors or repair chairs and tables. Henry's brother John was the local dairyman and Henry would repair his milk floats. His company stocked a variety of woods — oak for window frames and well buckets, ash for handles, and larch for poles. In 1896 Arighi Bianchi bought large quantities of sycamore, a wood they favoured for furniture making. The most popular wood stocked was red or white deal, for planking, cabinet making and general purpose jobs. Little of this wood was probably forested locally. Although MASSEY sold quantities of oak, surprisingly he used little of it for his own work.

MASSEY had around eight workers and the nearby smithy would supply his metal needs of barrel hoops, hinges, or wheel-tyre hoops. Of interest is the blacksmith mending a lock with a broken spring. Regular accounts for Brocklehurst and Tatton & Co., who were property landlords, the District Council, Mr SMITH of Macclesfield and Mr OWEN of Prestbury Hall show there was regular work with jobs lasting up to three months at a time. In July 1901 the Revd. H. W. BRADLEY of Birtles Church was provided with 5 pieces of glass, 1 gill of putty and polish, along with time for taking an oak panel out of a door and fixing it in the pulpit; 28½ hours of labour @ 7d/hr. giving a total of £1 and 9 pence. 2/6d was required for smithy work.

Around 1900 the *Black Greyhound* provided all maintenance needs of Prestbury and Over Alderley schools, tending to their problems of guttering, down spouts, lack of hot water and laying tight boards *to stop a smell* (dry rot?). MASSEY's furthest customers were at Pott Shrigley to the east, Knutsford to the west, Hazel Grove to the north, and Siddington to the south. From ledger records we know that Prestbury's station master kept hens because his hen coop required mending for the sum of £1. Later, Henry MASSEY makes his oak coffin and directs the funeral. So coffins were made at the Greyhound corner, sometimes marked "strong". The full services of a funeral director were carried out by Henry MASSEY. Accounts show a coffin with polished brass rings or handles at £4, flannel shroud at 17/6, and flannel coffin lining at 2/3. Invitations were written and posted from the *Black Greyhound* post box. Much of this work was for Canon BELL at Prestbury Church. Nether Alderley is never mentioned because the STANLEYs had their own blacksmith and carpenter in Chorley (Alderley Edge).

Painting their repair work always used three coats, with paint measured in pounds (lbs).

The firm would also repair broken windows, as records refer to lbs of putty and squares of glass. In 1904 Over Alderley School had a broken window replaced in January and again in May, charging 6d for the glass and 1/6 for its fitting (2 hrs). The children's families would be expected to pay!

Michael BOWER's family lived in Greyhound House from the late 1950s until 2016 and knew the MASSEY family. As a teenager there he remembers that the kitchen has a well underneath the floor. This was boarded over when a new floor was laid. It is likely that the well was originally outside when the old *Greyhound* stood. Whether or not the old foundations were used for the handsome replacement building is not known.

Life at the *Black Greyhound* Public House

The hostelry stopped trading in the mid-1880s and only now the reason for this has come to light. The shadowy thrice married landlady Mrs GOULDEN suddenly found herself the focus of attention in the national press during the months of May and June 1874.

The 1871 census shows that Charlotte GOULDEN is a widow. Initially married to publican George POWNALL in 1831 at Prestbury Church, she is resident with her daughter, in-laws and servants. On POWNALL's unexpected death two years after their marriage, she married Joseph PRICE, and after his death, John GOULDEN. Charlotte's daughter, Sarah Ann POWNALL, was born at the *Greyhound* in 1831 and lived there all her life. At the time of the 1871 census the unmarried Sarah Ann is aged 39. The other residents are Edward HATTON, his wife Susan (a later daughter of Charlotte), their family, and three servants.

John GOULDEN, Charlotte's third husband, became landlord around 1850 and also ran Broadheath Farm across the road before he died in the 1860s. Edward HATTON was a butcher who had a slaughter house in Oak Road, fifteen minutes' walk away, and HATTON relatives ran Broadheath Farm after John GOULDEN's death.

In May 1874, the local Macclesfield/Manchester Chronicle newspaper reports that daughter and barmaid Sarah Ann is labelled a lunatic and put in Macclesfield's Parkside Asylum (opened in 1871). However, there is more to the case and national papers show an interest in carrying the story. The Asylum doctor finds her unclean and half-starved and she dies a month later. So in June

Mrs GOULDEN and the live-in HATTONs are accused of her death and sent to Chester Assizes Court on a charge of manslaughter. On grounds of '*lunacy*' they are acquitted of their crime. Her '*wasting away*' Sarah tells witnesses, who include blacksmith John PIMLOTT, yet who rarely see her, that she has only herself to blame. Mother Charlotte, now aged 66, says she is lame and had not seen her daughter for months because she can't climb the stairs.

The case will have brought notoriety to the Over Alderley area because two months later the papers report that Mrs GOULDEN is re-tried and sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour. This event seems to have caused the end to the public house and GOULDEN as landlady. She dies in 1879. James PASS, a Congleton landlord, takes over the hostelry until his death in 1886.

Landlord BROCKLEHURST will have decided to demolish the building to eradicate memories and so the new Black Greyhound House came into being with a happier future. One mystery remains though: why was the external Clubhouse where Sarah slept not included in the demolition, for it still stands today?

The author wishes to thank Michael Bower for his loan of the ledgers, and helpful newspaper/ancestry research.

What's in a Name?

by Gren Dix
Membership no. 4174

Some names can apply to both males and females (although the spelling may vary). For example, Leslie or Evelyn, or in more recent times names such as Charlie. Below is a more unusual case. The clue to why this strange name was used is in the forename of the mother.

Baptism at St Saviour's Church, Everton
Born March 8th 1869, baptised October 7th, 1869.
Walter Annie, parents Samuel and Ann Withers of 15 Abercrombie Square, Broker.

The announcement in the *Albion* newspaper dated 25 October 1869 of the child's death ten days after baptism confirms that he was a boy:

WITHERS - Oct 17, at No 15 Abercrombie Square, Liverpool, aged 8 months, Walter Annie, son of Samuel Withers, Esq.

Wither We Go

by Gren Dix
Membership no. 4174

I consider myself to be a passable genealogist – or I did, until I saw the sources used to create the WITHERS family tree. I served my apprenticeship trawling through miles of microfilm and hundreds of microfiches at various record offices or archives. When I started genealogy there were few online resources. One of the main off-line resources was the IGI fiches of baptisms, marriages and burials by county. Later a useful resource was the Lancashire online-line parish clerk (lan-OPC). These sources had no images. Many of the ancestors that I was interested in came from the Wigan or mid-Lancashire area. The Wigan History Centre - now called The Museum of Wigan Life - was a life saver. Many people in the Wigan area had transcribed parish records (PRs) and local censuses. Initially the downside was sparse indexing.

One side of my family came from Norfolk. At the time Norfolk FHS had a large collection of transcribed PRs. There were in the form of typed folders. Since my early days these have been digitized. Pre-computer it was a major task to find someone if they had moved away from their home village.

Now I make extensive use of online data, mainly PRs and censuses. Similarly online family trees act as a good starting point (although I always check the sources – it is easy to follow a wrong line). Not all PRs are on-line (as I have found the hard way). Usually county record offices have microform copies, but on occasions there are no copies. Sometimes you are lucky (or unfortunate) enough to get your hands on the original documents.

Other sources include monumental inscriptions (MIs) or obituaries. These can give you clues to other members of a family. Many MIs have been transcribed by family history enthusiasts. I have scrabbled round gravestones looking for some which were not transcribed.

The PRs, MIs and censuses (on microform or on genealogical sites) have been my main sources of data. On rare occasions I have looked at legal records. I have opened box files that haven't seen the light of day for decades. Only now and then have I looked at manorial records.

As indicated earlier, I thought that I was a reasonably proficient genealogist. That was until my cousin asked me to look into her aunt's family, the WITHERS. The first part, using online resources, was straightforward.

Then my cousin handed me a printed book about the WITHERS family. This had been produced by one of the family and was in effect a one-name study. In the preface the author stated that his interest had started as a young boy when his father had told him that his ancestors had lived in the area for four centuries. The author said that over the years he had gathered information and one winter decided to write up the results.

It turned out that the earliest occurrence of the name was in the early 1000s. The next was in the Domesday book. The main early records were 1200 to 1400 in Lancashire. Later the family spread out (mainly to Hampshire). It helped that the family were landowners and had a coat of arms. He had inspected dozens of PRs and numerous other records. Details of some of the sources are given later. His preface was dated 1907. Imagine his task. No censuses, no online records, no computers and no internet. Telephones and typewriters had not long been invented.

Additionally, the name in early records was spelt Wyðer (where ð is the old English letter eth), later becoming WITHER, then WITHERS.

WITHERS References

Within the *Withers Family Tree* book there are numerous references, both in the text and in the appendices. The author used about 30 PRs, various family trees, coats of arms and shields.

Some other sources are:

Coram Rege Roll: Historic legal records from the King's Bench (1273-1702)

Placita Coram Rege: similar to the above

Winchester Lay Subsidy Rolls: Historic records from 1586 recording Lay subsidies (tax) useful for genealogical research

Placita de Quo Warrants: Historic legal records specifically from the reigns of Edward I, II and III. A quo warrant was a legal document to challenge the legitimacy of a person's claim to a particular office and/or privilege.

Extracts from ancient documents mainly in the Record Office between the reigns of Ethelred II and Henry IV (979-1413)

Additionally:

Inquisitions post mortem or Escheats: A common law doctrine that deals with the revision of property to the state or Lord when the owner dies without legal heirs.

Subsidy Rolls (Records of the Court of Exchequer)

Hundred Rolls: Historic records dating back to 13th C. They are often considered an attempt to produce a second Domesday Book. The 1274-1275 survey focused on liberties and misdeeds. Used to record the adult population for judicial & taxation purposes The 1279-1280 survey focused on liberties and land ownership.

Testa de Nevill (Book of Fees): a medieval record of feudal land holdings c 1302

Book of Aids (1372)

Charter Rolls: Historical records created by the medieval chancery (1199-1517) Recorded grants of land, liberties, privileges, immunities, exemptions & peerages

Close Rolls: Historic admin records created by the royal chancery. They began in 1204.

Patent Rolls: A series of administrative records by Chancery start 1201. The records document letters patent issued by the Crown. They include grants of official positions, lands, privileges and pardons.

Fine Rolls (begun by Richard I): These document agreements to pay the king a sum of money for a specified concession.

Feet of Fines (Pedes Finium): Document agreements to settle disputes over land ownership (1195-1833).

Plea Rolls: They document the formal stages of legal cases.

Kemble's Codex (Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonic): A collection of Anglo-Saxon Charters. Used to understand the historic and legal documents of the Anglo-Saxon period. They cover governance, land ownership and social structures.

Domesday Survey: A.D. 1086

Looking back at what the author of the WITHERS book has achieved makes my efforts look puny!

Emma Street: a Woman who was Greatly Loved

by Sylvia Baguette
Membership no. 1260

It was with sadness that I heard of the closure of St John the Evangelist church at Chelford. It has played a large part in my family history. I was born in Manchester, but my grandfather who lived with us had grown up at Church Cottages, Chelford, Cheshire.

The village of Chelford is in north-east Cheshire, between Holmes Chapel and Alderley Edge. The village centre used to be near where the roundabout is now. The church, shop/post office, smithy, school, were around the crossroads but in 1840 the railway came and the station was built a mile to the west so new development was located near the station. In 1891 the village comprised 342 souls. It had a school for 100 children, a doctor, a vet, a blacksmith, a coal merchant, a post and telegraph office, a corn mill, a coaching inn, an ale house, a coachbuilder and wheelwright, and a cricket ground.

Church cottages are the group of cottages set off the road, some adjoining and some facing the Church of St John the Evangelist. This is where my great-grandparents lived. My great-grandmother's name was Emma DUNN and her married name was Emma WARD STREET. She is the subject of this article.

The only photo we had was of Emma sitting outside the cottage at Chelford, Cheshire, where she lived for 40 years. She is not famous, she has left no letters, postcards or diaries. She is ordinary. She is the kind of person who slips through history unnoticed but she held her family together through some difficult times; when I was growing up everyone who spoke of her said she had been *greatly loved*.

So why does this woman who was loved by her family not have her name on her gravestone at Chelford church, even though there is space for it? Read on...

Emma said she was born on the 12th August 1855 at Mill Fields, Wellington, Shropshire. This was recorded in the family Bible that her husband kept after their marriage. All the census records, after her marriage, give the same information regarding age and place of birth. Sometimes she adds Rockwardine. But I can find no record of her birth on the family history websites, Ancestry or Find my Past, despite checking five years each way of the date and other spellings of both her Christian and surname. I have looked for her all around Wellington in the 1861 and 1871 censuses but cannot find a suitable match.

So, what do we know about her? Most of the information comes from family accounts, passed down in the family. She does appear on the census from 1881 onwards but her early life really is a mystery.

Emma alighted from the 11:00 mail train at Chelford station, clutching her bag. She looked around for someone to ask for directions and saw a postman (known then as a letter carrier) on the platform. When she asked the young man for directions to the *Dixon Arms* he said, *If you will wait while I sort the mail from the train I'll carry your bag across for you.* He was as good as his word!

When Emma came to Chelford in Cheshire in the mid 1870s she was on her way to a job in service at the *Dixon Arms*, a pub on the main street in Chelford. At this time the pub was also a hotel with rooms to book. Ten years previously it had been the *Dixon Arms Railway, Commercial and Posting Hotel,* where you could hire post horses and carriages.

The postman who helped her was William STREET, also known as WARD - that's another story. He was born at Over Peover (Peover Superior) in 1854 and was now the postman/letter carrier at Chelford. Chelford at this time was a collection and distribution point for the Royal Mail. William must have made an impression that morning because on 25th December 1877 Emma DUNN and William WARD STREET were married at St Lawrence's church, Over Peover (Peover Superior) where William lived. The marriage certificate states that William is a letter carrier. Emma's father is named as William DUNN, labourer, deceased. William STREET signed the register, Emma made her mark. The witnesses were Elizabeth WARD (his sister) and Edward READE. William was of full age (21 or over) but Emma was not.

My grandfather did say Emma had brothers and he thought the family were not happy about her marriage. He did remember some brothers coming to visit when he was young. Whatever the reason, they do not seem to be involved in her life after her marriage. One reason may have been the fact that William only had one arm. He had lost the other one in a farming accident as a boy.

Emma and William began their married life at Over Peover. Their first child, Peter, was born on 17th Oct 1878. This was my grandfather. By the time their second child Frances Ellen was born on 21st Dec 1880, the family had moved to Church Cottages, Chelford where Emma and William lived for the rest of their lives. They lived in one of the cottages that was at right angles to the church of St John the Evangelist, next to the pathway (now one large cottage).

Emma had a busy life bringing up her growing family in a two bedroomed cottage. Her first two children were followed by Louisa (1882), Annie (1885 - died at 5 weeks), Abraham (1885), Frederick (1888), William Henry (1891) and John James (1894) - so seven children were raised to adulthood in the two-up two-down cottage.

Peter, the eldest son, remembered Emma bathing William's feet with surgical spirit in the evening when he came home from work. The loss of his arm in farm machinery when he was a boy meant he could not ride a bike on his postal rounds so he often walked eighteen miles a day to deliver the mail to outlying farms. When Peter was fourteen he too had a bad accident. He was working in the fields when his foot caught in a threshing machine. His father was summoned from the Post Office and Peter was put on a milk cart, his foot wrapped in towels, and taken seven miles to Macclesfield Hospital; people said they could see a trail of blood all the way there. The doctor wanted to amputate his foot immediately but William begged the doctor *Give the lad a chance, just take the toes*. The doctor amputated the three inside toes, leaving the small and big toes. Peter was in hospital for fifteen weeks. Emma certainly nursed him back to health when he came home, well enough to return to work on the farm, minus three middle toes.

In the 1920s Peter was in Manchester Royal Infirmary with a stomach ulcer when a doctor brought a group of students to his bed, not to look at his stomach but to look at his foot! The doctor asked Peter when and where the amputation had taken place. When he was told the operation had been carried out in 1893 at Macclesfield Hospital, the doctor said he was very lucky. He must have been an excellent surgeon as it was one of the best amputations and reconstructions he had ever seen.

One cold, extremely windy evening, 22nd Dec 1894, Emma was at the range preparing a meal for all the family (the range is still there in the cottage today.) Son Peter had just come in from a long day at work on the farm. Suddenly, there was an enormous bang that shook the cottage and rattled the pans on the iron range. Emma realized it was from the direction of the station. The older boys and William ran off to the station, a mile away. It was hours before they came home

to tell Emma about the terrible train crash and the horrific sights they had seen amongst the steam and smoke. People were carrying and sorting the dead and badly injured in the ticket office and the waiting room. Farmers brought their wagons and milk floats to help. William and the boys did what they could. The wooden carriages caused awful splinter injuries. Peter never forgot the sights he saw that night.

The "Chelford rail accident" occurred on 22nd December 1894 at Chelford station. The stationmaster was supervising shunting operations when a high-sided wagon was shunted into a siding in strong winds and fading light. Another six wagons were being shunted on a nearby track. The stationmaster saw the high-sided wagon being blown out of its siding by the wind. A collision occurred derailing the wagon which then fell across the main line just as the 16:15 Manchester to Crewe express approached, drawn by two locomotives, *Zygia* and *Express*. The stationmaster ran towards them waving a red lamp but the drivers thought he was signalling to the shunters. *Zygia* derailed and fell on her side. *Express* remained upright but the first carriage demolished the front of a signalbox. Thirteen passengers were killed and around one hundred were injured.

One hundred years later Dr ROYCROFT, the Chelford doctor, wrote a detailed account called *Reflections on the Chelford Railway Disaster*, available through the Cheshire library service.

The inquest was held at the *Dixon Arms* in Chelford. One body was never claimed. It was that of a young teenage girl called Margaret ELLKS, who was an orphan and worked at a restaurant in Manchester. Her name and description were printed in all the papers along the train's route but no relative ever came forward to claim her body so she was buried in Chelford churchyard. George DIXON of Astle Hall paid for a memorial to the dead of the crash. It is at the side of the church overlooking the cottages; the inscription reads:

This memorial is erected by
George Dixon of Astle
To the Memory of
Margaret Ellks
And 13 others who were killed in
The Railway accident at Chelford
On 22nd Dec 1894

However, my grandfather said that local people also contributed towards her burial because they felt so sorry for the girl.

Emma always welcomed visitors, one of which was William DAVIES, a friend of William and Emma, who had worked on farms in the area including one at Nether Alderley. When he married, William DAVIES moved to Manchester, but he brought his wife Hannah to visit Emma and William STREET regularly. In the early 1900s they brought their niece Annie MURPHY, who lived with them. Annie got to know all Emma's children except Peter, the eldest. Peter was living and working at Piggott Hill Farm for the VENABLES family, about three miles away from home, and only came home twice a week. His love was the horses and he spent hours plaiting manes and tails for shows, as well as ploughing. He had beautiful copperplate handwriting, thanks to Chelford village school, and also painted signs on carts.

In the summer of 1910 King Edward VII died and churches all over the country were asked to hold a special memorial service for the dead King. We still have the memorial card and the order of service booklet that was used in Chelford Church that day. Emma was sitting in St John's Church, Chelford with all her family for the memorial service. It was unusual to have all her family together. Peter was only allowed time off work that day because it was the special memorial service. William DAVIES, from Manchester, had brought his wife and niece for the service. Was Emma aware of Annie, her friend's niece, and Peter, her eldest son, exchanging glances across the church? It was love at first sight. Peter said he never forgot his first view of Annie, who was wearing a large black straw hat with roses on it and a grey suit. She had *such a slim waist you could spin your arm right round it.*

Emma must have been pleased when Annie and Peter married on 17th Oct 1911 but she may have been disappointed that the couple set up home in Manchester. Annie wouldn't leave her aunt and uncle in Manchester, even though they'd been offered a cottage at the farm. Mr VENABLES, his employer, gave Peter a written reference which we still have.

Peter swapped the dangers of the farm for the dangers of the railway shunting yard at London Road station. When two shunting wagons collided and burst his ear drums, leaving him permanently deaf, Emma must have wished he'd remained nearer to his roots. Now he couldn't work near the engines because of his deafness so he had to take a drop in wages - no compensation then. Instead, he went to work with the railway horses.

I said at the beginning that Emma did not leave any letters and she made her mark on the marriage register, but we see glimpses of her from letters William wrote to his son Peter after he married.

May 21st 1912- Mother has been very poorly again this day or two but she seems to be a little brighter tonight but you know that she is very changeable at this time of year.

July 14th 1912- Mother, I am sorry to say, met with a small accident last night, Saturday. She was cutting a few sticks for fire lighting and the axe slipped and caught her on the end of her left thumb and took almost part of the top off. She went to the Doctor this morning for him to dress it and he bound it up for her. So she has to carry it in a sling as much as she can which makes it very awkward for her in doing her household duties.

Emma's son William Henry (Billy) was a quiet boy and had become a postman like his father. Emma must have needed all her strength to comfort and support him in April 1914. Billy was on his early morning rounds when he discovered the body of a man at Knowsley Farm, Chelford. He had been murdered. An account of the murder was kindly sent to me by Rosie Rowley, journal editor. It was taken from the *Liverpool and Mercury Daily Post* of 12th May 1914; if you wish to read it, it is quite explicit and not for those of a nervous disposition. The *Manchester Evening News* of 1st May 1914 also printed information relating to Billy:

POSTMAN'S DISCOVERY – William Henry Ward, postman, of Chelford, said that at 6.10 on Wednesday morning he went to Knowsley Farm, and on going round the house he saw first of all a pair of boots, and then the body of a man lying full length. He noticed a large quantity of blood lying about the body. He was blood on the kitchen window. He did not touch the body. He went and gave information at Mr Gledhill's shop. He did not see anybody about the farm. After a trial the perpetrator was found guilty and sentenced to be hung but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life on 22nd July 1914.

In the First World War Emma saw three of her sons go off to join the army. Peter, my grandfather, was called for a medical. He told the doctor he was completely deaf but the doctor said that did not matter - *Everyone's deaf after 3 weeks at the Front*. But then he saw Peter's foot with three toes missing, said *You couldn't march 20 miles a day!* and sent him away. He didn't know Peter walked four miles each way to work each day and spent all day walking round with the horses. Clearly, the loss of his toes as a youth possibly saved his life.

Emma's youngest son John James joined the Cheshire Regiment on the 1st September 1914 and served in the 16th platoon, D Company, 12th Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment until 1919. We have his attestation form. John trained for a year and wrote home just before embarkation from Folkestone for France on 6th Sept 1915: *We have only the suit we stand up in and one pair of overseas boots... they weigh about half a ton.*

On 28th October 1915 John sailed from Marseilles; he arrived in Salonika on 6th November. His letter says, *We are now up in the Balkan States, it's a lively place... We had a fine sail on the boat across so it took us 8 or 9 days to come so you bet we're enjoying it alright, it was a little change from the trenches.*

John was hospitalised *in the field* in October 1916 and transferred to a hospital in Malta, sending letters and postcards home from there. Emma must have been worried, but eventually John was discharged back to duty on 8th April 1917 and returned to Salonika.

A story John told about his time in Salonika was about one hot day when they were waiting to be sent to fight. They were on a hillside but had run out of water. There was a stream nearby trickling down the steep hillside but they had been forbidden to drink any water not in their canteens. As the day got hotter they went to the stream and were drinking some of the water when an officer ordered them to stop, saying, *That is waste water coming from the hospital on top of the hill!* But Uncle Jack (John James) said it was the best water he had ever tasted!

More worry for Emma. In John's army record is an account of a facial wound he received in February 1918 when he was in the Trench Mortar (T.M). Pit, cleaning ammunition. One of the cartridges in a shell exploded, hitting him in the face. The Commanding Officer and Jack had to give written accounts of exactly what happened, in case it was self-inflicted in an attempt to get sent back to England. The officer concluded that Jack struck the cap of a cartridge in a shell on the rack with the shell he was replacing. It was confirmed it was an accident.

On 29th September 1918 John had influenza and did not rejoin his regiment until 28th November 1918. He was finally discharged in January 1919. Emma must have been so glad to get him home. I have found his Casualty Form giving Record of Service and his Protection Certificate, supplied to him to prove he had served and been discharged.

Emma's son Abraham had been a gardener and carter and attested under Lord Derby's scheme in November 1915. I have his attestation paper. After attestation he was allowed to return to Chelford and await his call up, which was in March 1916. Abraham was recorded as being aged 29 years 10 months, 5 feet 2½ inches tall, weighing 8 stones 12 pounds and of good physical development. He was sent to train at Prees Heath camp in Shropshire with the 14th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment.

Emma must have felt he was safe for the time being but she was shocked to hear a few weeks later that he was desperately ill at Sealand Isolation Hospital near Chester. She went with her husband William to visit him. What a journey that must have been. When they got to the hospital Emma and William had to put on gowns and masks; even then they could only look at Abraham through glass. She said he looked terrible and was in great pain. She said she could not even touch him! They came home and never saw their son again. Abraham died on 6th May 1916 of Cerebro Spinal Fever that had lasted 25 days. Emma's suffering was increased when some of his comrades said he and others had been deliberately poisoned by a German doctor - that's yet another story!

In the army records are:

- A telegram to Prees Heath from Isolation Hospital at Sealand, Chester
- A form for Personal Possessions.
- A very detailed form listing next of kin

My grandfather Peter and his wife Annie travelled to the family home, Church Cottages, Chelford for the funeral. Emma and William had a house full of people who had come for the funeral. They were waiting for the undertaker to collect Abraham's body from Chelford station. It was being sent by train in a sealed coffin from Sealand Isolation Hospital, with strict instructions it must not be opened under any circumstances as it was highly contagious.

William and the undertaker went to the station and then to the siding where the closed wagon containing the coffin had been isolated. William saw that the name on the brass plate fixed to the coffin lid was that of a stranger. The undertaker telegraphed Sealand Isolation Hospital and was told there had been a mix up. How did Emma feel when William told her that her son's coffin had gone to South Wales and could not be returned until the next day? That the stranger's coffin in the locked wagon would stand in the sidings all night? Where would her son's coffin be that night? Somehow Emma coped with the task of putting up many of the mourners overnight in her two bedroomed cottage, including my grandparents. They said people slept everywhere.

Next day Abraham's coffin arrived from South Wales, was collected from the station and the funeral went ahead at St John's Church, Chelford. But as the coffin was lowered into the grave Emma had misgivings. She said *What if they only mixed up the coffin lids. Is it my boy in that coffin?* She was never sure and often spoke of her doubts.

John James, Emma's other soldier son, finally returned in 1919 but I believe all the worry had taken its toll on Emma. Emma was taken ill in July 1919 and took

to her bed in the cottage that had been her home for forty years. One blessing was that her daughter Frances now lived in another of the Church Cottages, directly opposite the family home. One day Frances and her daughter Nora came back from shopping. Nora, who was nine years old, ran over to Emma's cottage and ran upstairs to see her grandmother, who was ill in bed. When she went in the bedroom Emma smiled and said, *Look at that beautiful angel in the corner*. Emma was smiling and staring at the corner of the ceiling. Nora was frightened and ran downstairs to her mother. When Frances came up, Emma said the same thing to her. Emma was not afraid; the angel seemed a great comfort to her.

Frances sent for the village doctor who had served the village for many years - Nora said it was Dr Arthur SHEPARD. He went up to see Emma and when he came downstairs he said she could still see the angel. Frances was upset and thought she was hallucinating but the Doctor said no; he had come across this many times with patients and he believed she could see an angel; they had to be prepared that it was a sign she would die within days.

Emma died two days later on 17th July 1919 and her coffin rested in her downstairs room at Church Cottages, the home she had lived in for forty years. Before the service, the family gathered in the room and sang a hymn. Then they carried her next door to Chelford Church for a service and buried her in the churchyard. The grave already had a gravestone and they did not put her name on it, even though there was space. Emma was greatly loved by all her family, so why was she buried without her name on the gravestone? Well, she was buried in the war grave with Abraham, her son, and it had a Commonwealth War Graves Commission gravestone.

Thirteen years later, in August 1932, her husband William WARD STREET - Billy WARD the Postman - was buried in the war grave as well. My mother had been at his funeral and told me they were both buried in there but I am ashamed to say I didn't believe her. I thought my mother had made a mistake because I did not believe family members could be buried in a war grave.

In the late 1990s, Chelford villagers were preparing a book to celebrate the Millenium and the retirement of the vicar at St John's. My mother and her older cousin, Nora, helped me with memories and information for the book. Sadly my Mother died in 1999 before the book was published. However, in the year 2000 I was invited to a service at Chelford Church and I was shown the burial register in the vestry at Chelford to prove Emma and William WARD STREET were in the war grave. The vicar at Chelford then asked me a strange question: *Who is under Abraham? His grave is in the wrong place.* It appeared that Abraham's grave was

in the wrong row in the churchyard to be the first burial in the grave. He was too close to the church - in the 1880s row and not in the row for 1916 burials. I must admit I shivered. Nothing was ever straightforward with poor Abraham.

While I was trying to take this in, the vicar said *Who was Annie?* and everything made sense. When we checked the church register again we found Annie, Abraham's baby sister who had died at five weeks old, was the first one in the grave. Emma and William had found the money to pay for a full grave in 1885 and used this grave for their soldier son Abraham thirty years later. So there were four people in the grave, including Emma, but only one name on the gravestone.

At the beginning I said Emma had left no letters or diaries and only one photo. In 2014 her last grandchild died, my uncle Alan STREET. At his funeral his son showed me some family photos and there was a different photo of Emma, taken in her back garden at Chelford. I felt as though I'd won the lottery! I was given a copy of the photo.

Emma, an "ordinary" wife and mother who held her family together through some dramatic times. No name on her grave – but I know she was LOVED. St John the Evangelist church was constantly there as part of their lives. In later years Emma's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren would be bell ringers, carry the cross at services and many are buried in the churchyard. In 1960 my Dad brought his heavy reel-to-reel tape recorder on two buses and the train, carried it from Chelford station to the church and recorded the Chelford bells ringing, to play for my elderly grandad Peter back in Manchester. We still have the tape.

What about Abraham's supposed poisoning? Why was William Street always called Billy Ward? Perhaps these memories will make a future story.

Sources:

Family stories, interviews, letters, photos, postcards
Birth, marriage and death certificates
Family Bible
Parish registers (Chelford Church)
Chelford 19th Century- A demographic and historical study by W K Plant
Reflections on the Chelford Railway Disaster by Roger Roycroft
Newspaper Reports – *Liverpool and Mercury Daily Post*, *Manchester Evening News*
Army War Records

Net That Serf

The Computer Section

Compiled by Geoff Johnson

Email: nts@fhsc.org.uk Tel: 01829 760422

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From the Desktop

There are just three articles here. I received two more but I've held them over due to lack of space and needing a bit more structure. Disappointingly, nobody has emailed comments about previous articles, or brought up any useful observations for my Inbox. At the December Club meeting I decided to write an article highlighting the benefits of a digital note-taking program - here it is. I thoroughly recommend that you find or download a copy of OneNote on your system and have a dabble! Gren Dix comments on the varying ages given by individuals, and the need to take care. Paul Reeve's thoughts on interpreting the numerous 'matches' he's being given by Ancestry DNA provide another logical and time-saving method of approach.

OneNote

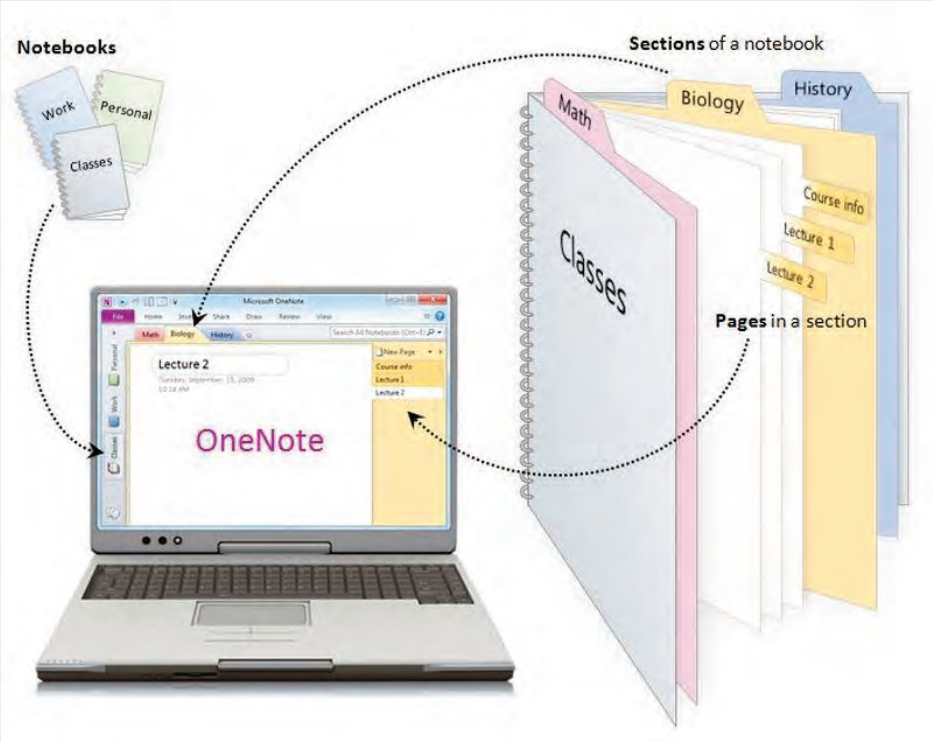
By Geoff Johnson

I have a library of notebooks. Well, they are akin to a notebook; a bit like those little exercise books we used at school, although in today's world they'd be like the 'Black and Red' ruled, comb-bound books that sometimes get used in a working environment. They might, of course, be pages in a ring binder! All too often though, notes congregate on your desk or around the house, on scraps of paper, backs of envelopes or scribbles of many kinds.

The biggest single problem with these sorts of systems is finding something that you know you have a record of, but have no way of locating, apart from using your memory and thinking about likely dates.

The notebooks I work from are very different. The big difference is that they don't need paper or pencil to write in them. My notebooks are in digital form on both my computer and my mobile phone. They are managed by me and a commonly available program called OneNote. In OneNote, notebooks never run out of paper. More importantly, once you've written something in it, you can easily find it again. You invariably can't do that with bits of paper!

Inevitably the transition from old envelopes and paper scraps does require you to carry out a considerable rethink. It's very important to establish the hierarchy of your OneNote file to make sure that you reap the full benefit of its structure. This picture should give you an idea of how things need to be organised.



The chances are that at the start you'll get it wrong, but you can't easily lose anything in OneNote. With a good understanding of how it's put together, you can move pages from one notebook to another.

A Really Important Point

To maximise your OneNote structures, you MUST start at the Notebook level, i.e. the highest level - just give it a key name. That then leaves you with the whole of the rest of the hierarchy, through Sections, Pages, and Subpages to make things meaningful. Compare getting it wrong to errors at the start of your genealogy research where you misunderstood the right way to use a family history program and didn't use it the right way! The work involved in correcting your structural errors can be large.

Far be it from me to suggest how you construct your notebooks topic-wise, but this is how just one of my 26 notebooks is put together.

The notebook's title is *Computer Club*. It has eleven Sections (Sections can be thought of as Chapters): Computer Club Information, Meetings, FH Sub Group, DNA Sub group, Lost Cousins Masterclasses, Websites Stuff, Net that Serf, Zoom Factors. Each one of those Sections has related Pages and there are more than 50 of those!

Other notebooks in my OneNote are:

FHSC (basic info), My Family History, Family History Info, PC Stuff, OneNote Information, Things to Order, Mobile Phone Stuff, Cars, Jubilee Hall (involvement in maintenance), MCSME (Model Club), Model Engineering, Medical, Dog, PPG (GP patient assistance).

Further Setting-up Information:

There are many places to go to in order to best understand how to construct your OneNote installation. I tried Googling *Structuring OneNote*, and came up with the following:

Beginner Notes: *www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABvrs4Geyw8*

Hierarchies: *www.youtube.com/watch?v=Poepoh1b_3k*

Effective Use: *www.quora.com/How-do-you-use-Microsoft-OneNote-effectively*

Microsoft - Organize your notes: *https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/organize-your-notes-c3c8b098-7f9c-4c2a-a0dc-ebb83bc76364*

Free eBooks for Microsoft OneNote: *https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/download-free-ebooks-for-microsoft-onenote-4e08cf8b-dc37-4229-bdef-1f58022ob6f5*

Quick Notes

A final positive point. The Quick Notes feature provides a quick 'back of the envelope' place where you can just jump in and type or paste in information, brief or otherwise. Those will stay there until you get to a time where they can be expanded upon and placed in the correct Notebook.

Is OneNote Free?

It's possible that the program is sitting unused on your system already! Apparently, the OneNote app for Windows 10 is pre-installed on all editions of Windows 10. I'd never noticed that because I'd dumped my copy of MS Office on top of it. Have a look, but if it's not already part of your system, you can download OneNote.

Microsoft Support tells me that you can install OneNote for free on your Windows, Apple, or Android devices and access your content wherever you go. You will however need to create a Microsoft account if you don't already have one.

My best advice is:

- To look around and check if OneNote is already on your system
- If not, Google 'Install OneNote' and see what you find

The next best version of OneNote is embedded within all versions of MS Office from Office 2019; the best of all version is included with Office 365. There are various older versions of OneNote that should function perfectly well for a beginner.

iPad users will be pleased to know that if you don't have a Microsoft 365 subscription, you can sign in with a free Microsoft account to get full access to OneNote.

Synchronising All Your Devices

This is where your setting up efforts really pay off. Initially you may well have set up your OneNote files within your own PC folders. The real benefit for me came about as a result of transferring that storage to a Cloud service - in my case, OneDrive. It could easily be DropBox, iDrive, Google Drive, et cetera. You can then set up OneNote apps on your phone (Android or iPhone). From that point on I was able to access my data anytime I wanted, provided I don't forget my phone!

Users of MS Office, both 365 and standalone packages, are automatically given a usable chunk of storage in OneDrive.

Alternatives

You can stick to your bits of paper for nothing as well.

There is an alternative program called Evernote. The free version is very restrictive and cannot be shared with other devices online. Otherwise, it's an £80 a year job.

So, why not OneNote? Unlike many other Microsoft Office apps, you can download and use OneNote without paying for a Microsoft 365 subscription or buying a one-time-payment Office suite. It's free for anyone to download and use. OneNote offers flexibility that Evernote's free plan doesn't.

I thoroughly recommend that you should consider using OneNote. I wouldn't be without it now, and many users in Computer Club tell me the same.

Delving deeper into DNA

by Computer Club's Paul Reeve

Well, trying to, anyway! I had a disadvantage with my Ancestry DNA results right from the start, in that my closest match is a 3rd/4th cousin with 68cM. I have nine results of 50cM and above; of these, three are common ancestors, one has no trees, one has an unlinked tree and one has a private linked tree (this person is related to my highest match). Of those that have trees, the number of people range from 2 to 9!

To try to persuade myself to look at these results logically, I turned to Excel. I wrote some code in visual basic which did something similar to a "Google Sheet" which came up in one of the very early DNA subgroup meetings. At that time, this was easier, but Ancestry has now put a lot of obstacles in the way. It used to be possible to select as many results as you needed just by holding the control key (in windows) and pressing page down repeatedly. As long as you gave the Ancestry results page time to catch up with itself, this didn't take too long. You could then copy it and paste it into Excel as text, and the code would split up the raw text, dealing with spaces, blank lines and duplicate names, for example. This worked well with my own results, and (to a lesser extent) with my wife's results, but then Ancestry decided to make some of those `improvements' which are only improvements for programmers. You can no longer just press page-down, you have to open pages individually. The default number of entries on a page is set at

20, with a maximum of 50, and every time you leave the page it resets to 20 again! And you can no longer directly filter, say, common ancestors – it is necessary to go to the `Filter' menu first. All of this adds time to your enquiry and if you've got a few hundred (or worse, a few thousand) matches to look at, the time adds up. Oh, and most of the time, rather than returning to where you were in a list of 50 people, the back button now sends you to the top of the list!!

Anyway, having extracted the results into a spreadsheet, I decided that initially, the best thing to do would be to look at all the common ancestors – I only have 143 even going right down to 8cM, which isn't much of a match, and my wife's results (even though she has 7 matches of 100cM or more) give 179 (down to 9cM). I then added to the sheet all the ThruLines which Ancestry reckons we have and grouped them all together. I also added some colour coding to show which ones I have queries about, which ones I do not have in my Family Historian tree, and which family group they fall into. This I shall use to amplify the groupings which I have allocated within Ancestry – a bit easier now as one of their improvements which was actually good for users increased the number of groups you can have to 64 instead of 16. I originally decided to have a group for each 3x great-grandparent, but may now consider changing this to 4x great-grandparent when time permits.

My next task has been to add shared matches, which will allow me to add rather more people to the aforesaid groups. I've used a lookup table, which helps by adding in the individual levels of cM. That is taking rather longer than I had hoped, but possibly by the time the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR appears, it will be almost complete. Of course, I can only go as far as 20cM as that's all Ancestry gives you. I can then go through these and add them to the relevant group on my Ancestry tree. So far, I've reached a match level of 24cM on both trees. Thankfully, it is helping as I can already see some patterns developing.

I'm also hoping to make some sort of meaningful comparison with the results in MyHeritage, to which I've uploaded my Ancestry DNA test results. I took advantage of an offer which allowed this free of charge, but I'm not sure if I can do this with my wife's results or whether I will need a paid MyHeritage account.

Figure 1 on the next page shows the people that ThruLines picked up on part of my wife's tree. I've allowed for eight people which is certainly the most that Ancestry has picked up so far.

The tables are colour-coded; to see the colours please download the digital edition of the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR from the FHSC website.

		Questionat	Changed match name	Not on my DNA tree/F	DNA match		Needs investigation	Needs checking	
Name	cM	DNA Group	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3		Person 4	Person 5	Person 6
Graham Hines	331	Hines	William W Hines 1861	Harry J Hines 1901	John G Hines 1929		Graham Hines		
mary wheeler	329	Hines	William W Hines 1861	Nellie E Hines 1895	Frederick W Feaver 19		Mary Wheeler		
Susan Lewis	197	Flanders	George M Flanders 18	Thomas G Flanders 18	Thomas G Flanders 19		Susan Lewis		
johnclayton180	118	Dunning	Henry Dunning 1840	Sarah J Dunning 1867	Annie B Reid 1904		John Clayton180		
Alexander Clough	103	Cabeldu	Frederick C Cabeldu 1	Douglas G Cabeldu 19	Private (Barbara Cabe		Michael H Clough 1963	Alexander Clough	
Laura Dunne	53	Gale	Thomas Gale 1822	Christopher W Gale 18	William E Gale 1893		John H Gale 1926	Private	Laura Dunne
Margaret Lorraine	52	Findlay	Francis Findlay 1778	James Findlay 1812	Francis Findlay 1835		Margaret L Findlay 186	Isabel D Upton 1898	Roy U Massey 1925
jburrows72	50	Hacking	John T Hacking 1808	Mary Hacking 1841	Charles J Wolfreys 186		Harold F A Wolfreys 1	Dorothy R Wolfreys 1	J Burrows 72
Patricia Coomber	46	Gale	Thomas Gale 1822	Mary J Gale 1851	Margaret M Spencer 1		Herbert S Miller 1901	Patricia Coomber	
F.R.	44	Cabeldu	Frederick E Cabeldu 1	Walter J Cabeldu 1872	Edward H Cabeldu 190		F R		
D.R.	44	Findlay	Francis Findlay 1778	Helen Findlay 1810	William Dunlop 1834		Mary R Dunlop 1877	Doris R Minson 1904	Adrienne M Warren 1926

Figure 1

Name	cM	DNA Group	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6	Person 7	Person 8
Esther Bonner	15	Vellam	Absalom Vellam 1716	John Vellam 1751	Hannah Vellam 1787	Rebecca Bell 1824	John C Evison 1849	Esther Evison	William E Bonner	Esther Bonner
PamHill66	11	Vellam	Absalom Vellam 1717	John Vellam 1752	Hannah Vellam 1788	Rebecca Bell 1825	John C Evison 1850	Mary J Evison	Isabel Harrison	Pam Hill66
Thomas Wigginton	9	Lamin	Ann Alcock 1742	William Allcock 1766	Joseph Allcock 1803	Hannah Allcock 1846	Eliza Wigginton	Walter Wton/Clayton W	Thomas Wigginton	
J.N.	42	Ferguson	Archibald Elliot 1793	Mary Elliot	Mary Bunyan Park	Mary Nims	Robt. Elliot Nims	JN (Nims)		
Robert Nims	46	Ferguson	Archibald Elliot 1793	Mary Elliot	Mary Bunyan Park	Mary Nims	Robt. Elliot Nims	Robert Nims		
PhillipDon	29	Ferguson	Archibald Elliot 1794	Robert Elliot	John Elliot	George L Elliot	Judith D Elliot	Phillip Don		
Robert Gartland	23	Ferguson	Archibald Elliot 1795	Robert Elliot	John A Elliot	James Ogg Elliot	Nancy J Elliot	Robert Gartland		
Bill.grandpa	18	Ferguson	Archibald Elliot 1796	Mary Elliot	Mary Bunyan Park	Mary Nims	Arlene E Nims	Bill.grandpa		
Bob Colfer	16	Ferguson	Archibald Elliot 1797	Thomas Elliot	Ann Elliot	Jessie E Holden	Elliot J Colfer	Bob Colfer		
Janet Carlsen	16	Ferguson	Archibald Elliot 1798	Thomas Elliot	Ann Elliot	Jessie E Holden	Elliot J Colfer	Janet Carlsen		

Figure 2

Figure 2 on the previous page shows shared matches. The most shared matches on my tree is 54 (nearly all below 25cM) but I record ten; if anything really interesting crops up I will add the remainder. Here I've indicated where there is a common ancestor.

The same basic colour coding as above. This table is already sorted by the first ancestor to appear in ThruLines. The Common Ancestor tables include everyone down to a match of 8cM for completeness.

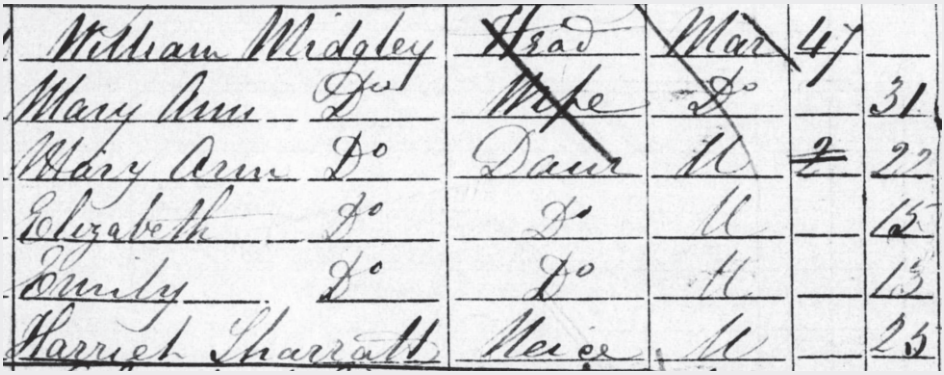
Hopefully this will prove useful to some. It has certainly helped me become more organised – and, for me, it is far easier to look at a spreadsheet than to plod through Ancestry screens!

Age is just a Number

By Gren Dix – Computer Club

I started by thinking some (most) of my ancestors were 'forgetful' when giving their age and that of their family. This is perhaps understandable if they have a dozen or more children. But sometimes they forget a decade or two. *(In my opinion they're often just plain fibbers! – GJ)*

I was looking for the MIDGLEY family in Warwickshire. I could not find them in 1841 so I looked for them in 1851. A transcript is given on the next page.



William Midgley		Head	Mar	47	
Mary Ann	Dot	Wife	Do		31
Mary Ann	Do	Daur	U	2	22
Elizabeth	Do	Do	U		15
Emily	Do	Do	U		13
Harriet Sharratt		Mercer	U		25

On the image the wife's age is clearly written as 31.

HO107/2051/470-47, Summerhill, Birmingham

Name			Age	Occupation	Born	Calculated DOB
William Midgley	head	m	47	Brass Founder	Birmingham	1804
Mary Ann Midgley	wife	m	31		Birmingham	1820
Mary Ann Midgley	dau	u	22		Birmingham	1829
Elizabeth Midgley	dau	u	15	scholar	Birmingham	1836
Emily Midgley	dau	u	13	scholar	Birmingham	1838
Harriet Sharratt	niece	u	25	servant	Lichfield	1826

What would you deduce from the data? I know some of them had strange habits but I doubt that William married a nine-year-old wife. Perhaps he married for a second time? What strategy should I follow?

I can see four approaches:

- Look for a marriage, probably 1837 onwards.
- Look for the baptisms of the children.
- Look for the 1841 and 1861 censuses.

The following baptisms were found for children of William (a plater) and Mary Ann MIDGLEY:

William George MIDGLEY, born 28 June 1824, bap 1 Aug 1831, St Martin, B'ham

Mary Ann MIDGLEY, born 20 Sept 1828, bap 1 Aug 1831, St Martin, B'ham

James MIDGLEY, born 1 May 1831, bap 1 Aug 1831, St Martin, B'ham

Rebecca MIDGLEY, born 18 Jan 1834, bap 27 Dec 1838, St George, B'ham

Elizabeth MIDGLEY, born 16 Jan 1836, bap 27 Dec 1838, St George, B'ham

Emily MIDGLEY, baptism not found

Clearly, Elizabeth and Emily are the children in the 1851 census. Did William marry a second Mary Ann or is the age wrong?

I could not find the family in the 1841 census, but found them in 1861. It would appear that someone had a 'senior moment' for the 1851 data.

RG9/2020/10-15, Hale Road, Handsworth

Name			Age	Occupation	Born	Calculated DOB
William Midgley	head	m	57	Brass Founder	Birmingham	1804
Mary Ann Midgley	wife	m	62		Staffs, Hints(?)	1799
Rebecca Midgley	dau	u	27		Birmingham	1834
Elizabeth Midgley	dau	u	25	scholar	Birmingham	1836
Emily Midgley	dau	u	23	scholar	Birmingham	1838
Harriet Sharrett	niece	u	36			

I couldn't find a marriage for the couple, but I found the banns, read in March 1824 at St Peter and St Paul, Aston: *William Midgley aged 19 years, a bachelor and Mary Ann Sharrat aged 23 years a spinster, both of Ashton* (sic)

Note that in the census, the niece's surname is also SHARRATT. The banns entry indicates that William was born about 1805 and Mary Ann about 1801. This makes the ages in the 1861 census plausible. This would also indicate that Mary Ann's age in 1851 should be about 51, not 31. William was a widower in 1871; Mary Ann had died in 1867 at the age of 67.

The moral is to check and double check, and where possible use more than one source.

Closing Snippet

An old man was close to death. His family - a beautiful wife and four children - stood around his deathbed awaiting the inevitable. Three of the children were tall and blond, but the fourth and youngest looked completely different.

"Darling wife," the man whispered, "assure me that our youngest child really is mine. I want to know the truth before I die."

The wife said, "Yes, my dearest, you are definitely his father."

The man then breathed his last, happy that he had finally asked the question that had bothered him for so many years.

Later, the wife thought to herself, "Thank goodness he didn't ask about the other three!"

I rely on your input to keep this forum active, so keep the responses coming please – GJ

GROUP CONTACTS

ALSAGER GROUP
GC: Hazel & Peter Rugman
157 Sandbach Road North
Alsager
Cheshire ST7 2AX
Tel: 01270 876386
alsager@fhsc.org.uk

BEBINGTON GROUP
GL: Bob Wright
9 Lough Green
Bebington
Wirral CH63 9NH
Tel: 0151 334 6345
bebington@fhsc.org.uk

CHESTER GROUP
GL: David Guyton
Springfield
22 Lache Lane
Chester CH4 7LR
Tel: 01244 675978
chester@fhsc.org.uk

COMPUTER GROUP
GL: Geoff Johnson
Garth Nook, Well Lane
Little Budworth
Tarporley CW6 9DA
Tel: 01829 760422
computerclub@fhsc.org.uk

CONGLETON GROUP
GL: David Smetham
Little Trees, Gawsworth Rd
Gawsworth
Macclesfield SK11 9RA
Tel: 01625 426173
congleton@fhsc.org.uk

CREWE & NANTWICH GROUP
GL: Margaret Spate
FHSC Crewe & Nantwich Group
2nd Floor
Municipal Building
Earle Street
Crewe CW1 2BJ
Tel: 01782 659435
crewe@fhsc.org.uk

MACCLESFIELD GROUP
GL: Dennis Whyte
29 Thirlmere
Macclesfield
SK11 7XY
Tel: 01625 617557
macclesfield@fhsc.org.uk

NORTHWICH GROUP
GL: Dave Thomas
1 Arley Court
Wrenbury Drive
Northwich CW9 8RX
Tel: 01606 46938
northwich@fhsc.org.uk

RUNCORN GROUP
GL: Peter Johnson
runcorn@fhsc.org.uk

SALE GROUP
GL: Angela Jenkinson
41 Keswick Road
Timperley WA15 7DU
Tel: 07970 174388
sale@fhsc.org.uk

TAMESIDE GROUP
GL: Gay Oliver
26 Woodville Drive
Stalybridge SK15 3EA
Tel: 0161 338 5241
tameside@fhsc.org.uk

NOTE:
GL: Group Leader
GC: Group Contact

Back cover: *Wilmslow Church, Cheshire* by David Wilmot (CC BY-SA 3.0) at English Wikimedia *https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wilmslow_Church.jpg*

The church is dedicated to St. Bartholomew. For more information about the church, see *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Bartholomew%27s_Church,_Wilmslow*

www.fhsc.org.uk

Wilmslow

St Bartholomew's Church, Wilmslow. Photo: David Wilmot

Wilmslow boasts a rich history stretching back centuries; its journey weaves from an ancient agricultural settlement through industrial growth to the present thriving town, a journey that mirrors the broader story of Cheshire's evolution through the ages.

Evidence of nearby Bronze Age and Roman communities suggests ancient habitation, while the first recorded mention, as *Wighelmeslowe* in the Domesday Book, points to medieval roots as a rural village. The name likely refering to a clearing associated with a figure named Wighelm.

Throughout the medieval period, Wilmslow remained a small agricultural village, part of the wider lands held by various noble families. The 18th and 19th centuries saw significant changes as the Industrial Revolution swept through England. The arrival of the railway in the mid-19th century connected Wilmslow to Manchester and Crewe, boosting local commerce and stimulating growth. Industries like textiles and manufacturing sprang up, transforming Wilmslow from a quiet village into a bustling town.

By the early 1900s, Wilmslow had evolved into a desirable residential area for wealthy industrialists and merchants from nearby Manchester seeking a more tranquil lifestyle. This period saw the development of elegant Victorian and Edwardian homes, many of which still stand today, contributing to the town's distinctive architectural character. The proximity to Manchester Airport bolstered the appeal of the town, attracting businesses and residents alike.

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t. 07795 075 914 e. *steph@dxgmedia.com*