

CHESHIRE ANCESTOR



The Journal of the
Family History Society of Cheshire



In this edition:

Cryptic Cheshire ❖ *Was Your Ancestor a Foundling?*

BMD: Church Registers (pre-1837)

Early Football Clubs ❖ *Subscription Renewals*

Family History Events and more...

Website: fhsc.uk

Volume 56 June 2026 Issue No.4

ISSN 1460-0277

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CHESHIRE ANCESTOR

Registered Charity: 515168

Society website: fhsc.uk

Contents

Editor's Page	2	Macclesfield News (6)	19
View from the Chair	3	Family History Events	20
Macclesfield News (1)	5	Family History News	22
Society News and Notices	6	Was Your Ancestor a Foundling?	24
Group News and Information	6	Early Football Clubs	27
Society Diary Dates	10	Cryptic Cheshire	29
Obituary	12	Macclesfield News (7)	30
Macclesfield News (2)	12	Subscription Renewals	Centre Pages
Election of Officers and Trustees	13	Bringing a Character to Life	31
Macclesfield News (3)	13	Adoption	38
Volunteers Wanted	14	Macclesfield News (8)	39
Macclesfield News (4)	14	BMD: Church Registers (pre-1837)	40
Members' FREE Lookup Service	15	Macclesfield News (9)	46
Macclesfield News (5)	15	NTS: The Computer Section	47
Crewe Research Centre News	16	Cryptic Quiz Answers	59
Surname Interests	17	Macclesfield News (10)	60
Book Review	18		
Letters to the Editor	19	Back Cover: Macclesfield	

Cheshire Ancestor is published in March, June, September and December.

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

Editor's Page

by Rosie Rowley



I am sorry to report that Geoff Johnson has stepped down as leader of the Computer Club and editor of Net That Serf, roles he has held since 2008–09. The Computer Club committee will contact members with their proposals for continuing the club, and I will edit NTS myself. In future please send all articles to me and I will insert them into the appropriate part of the ANCESTOR. I wish Geoff well and no doubt we'll see him occasionally at future meetings.

This issue contains articles on a wide variety of subjects: foundlings, adoption, football players, and a statistical analysis of naming patterns in the Prescott family. If you have any thoughts on these or any other family history subjects, do write in and let me know!

Some items have had to be held over until the next issue, due to having insufficient time to type them in to the computer. If you can possibly send articles already typed, either as a Word document or just in an email, it would be a great help – thank you.

While I was searching the local newspapers on Find My Past for news to use as fillers, I came across the *Stockport Advertiser and Guardian* of 1st September 1876, in which was printed timetables for all the local trains to Stockport. Perhaps I should not have been surprised to see that trains from Macclesfield, both express and stoppers, now take about ten minutes less than 150 years ago!

ITEMS FOR THE CHESHIRE ANCESTOR

Articles and letters about family history or Cheshire local history 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 images, not copied from another publication or website. If using images of official records and documents, please check that you have publication permission. Please email images separately in a high quality (low compression) JPG format, minimum 300 dpi, and include the name of the copyright owner and source of the image. Please include your membership no. and say whether you want your email address to be published.

View from the Chair

*by Margaret Roberts
FHSC Chair*



I'm starting this issue with heartfelt thanks to everyone who responded to my call for volunteers back in March. Whether you've stepped forward to help with transcription and digitisation or offered your time at our new research centres within the Cheshire Archives buildings at Crewe and Chester, your support is already making a real difference. Work is well underway to ensure that as much material as possible from both Mobberley and Crewe is carefully digitised and preserved for the future. There is, as ever, room for more helping hands, so if you feel you could contribute, either from home or on site at Crewe, please do get in touch.

Easter marked the closure of our Mobberley Research Centre. This is, of course, a sad moment and one that carries with it many memories and friendships. However, it is also part of a long-term plan first agreed in 2016, and one which the current Board of Trustees is continuing to see through. The Crewe centre will also close in due course as we move fully into the new archive facilities. My sincere thanks go to everyone who has supported both centres over the years; your dedication, knowledge and generosity have been at the very heart of what FHSC offers. We now look ahead with genuine excitement to being part of the new Cheshire Archives buildings, where that same spirit will continue in a modern and accessible setting.

Our website continues to go from strength to strength following its recent refresh. With a brighter, more accessible design and improved navigation, it is increasingly central to how we communicate, share resources and support members. From event bookings to accessing handouts and discussion groups, the website is very much the hub of FHSC activity, and we will continue to develop it to meet members' needs.

It is with great sadness that I report the closure of the Bebington Group in April. Prior to 2020, the group regularly welcomed over forty members to its meetings, but like many groups and clubs, it faced significant challenges following the pandemic. Although the committee worked hard to adapt, trialling online meetings, new venues and even changing meeting times, attendance gradually

declined to a level where continuing was no longer viable. This was not an easy decision, but one made with careful consideration and supported by the Trustees. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who have been involved with the Bebington Group over the years, and especially to Bob Wright, who has led the group since 2001. That is an extraordinary contribution, and one we are immensely grateful for. Thanks also to Tony Culshaw, Alan Roberts, Jean and Alan Ingram, Mary Irving, Ann Jones and many others for their hard work over the years.

Our programme of events has continued to flourish. The Annual FHSC Quiz was, once again, a thoroughly enjoyable evening, with the small team format proving particularly popular, encouraging conversation, laughter and just a touch of friendly competition. Such was its success that we are now planning a Christmas Quiz later this year, and from 2027 we hope to make this a twice-yearly fixture, with quizzes in both June and December.

Across our Local Groups, there has been an excellent and varied programme of talks and activities. Recent subjects have varied widely, reflecting both local history and broader themes of family history research. Members have explored topics such as conscientious objectors in the First World War and Victorian surveying and mapping. Practical sessions have encouraged members to think about how to start writing up their research, while others have focused on planning, managing and recording family history effectively. There has also been plenty of opportunity for members to bring their own interests to the table, whether through *Bring Something Ancestral* sessions, open forums discussing ancestral occupations, or dedicated research evenings tackling those persistent brick walls together. Talks have taken us into the world of domestic service before the Great War, such as *The Real Downton Abbey* and into more localised studies such as the history of Sale, the Liverpool Blitz, and housing the workforce across town and countryside. Biographical and case-study talks continue to be a firm favourite, with subjects including Mary Fitton of Gawsorth and the coastguard Henry Deane, alongside broader explorations such as researching the women in your family history and the ever-evolving field of DNA testing. These sessions, whether in person or via Zoom, continue to offer something for everyone, combining expert knowledge with the friendly, supportive atmosphere that is such a hallmark of FHSC.

Our Seminar Series remains popular. Our opening presentation of the year welcomed back Nick Barratt, with over 140 members attending his engaging and informative talk on tracing industrial labourer ancestors. While our programme is carefully planned, we are always mindful that health comes first, and we wish

Chris Broom well following the postponement of his heraldry talk in February. We were delighted that Andrea Hetherington was able to step in with her fascinating talk on *British Widows of the First World War*, one that was both thought-provoking and very well received. We look forward to welcoming Andrea back next year with her talk on *Deserters of the First World War*. In March, Susannah Coster's presentation on the Royal Mail Archive provided a wealth of ideas and useful resources for researchers. As always, any available handouts are uploaded to the members' area of the website for you to access.

Our online community is as lively and welcoming as ever. The various discussion groups provide members with the chance to delve into subjects such as DNA, software, publishing and newspapers, all within a supportive environment where no question is too small. Alongside these, we have our Research Buddies sessions, offering more focused help on individual areas of Cheshire, and Zooming in on Family History, where recent conversations ranged from artificial intelligence in research to some truly memorable and occasionally eyebrow-raising causes of death as recorded on death certificates.

As we move forward, there is still much to do. The transition into the new archive buildings and our ongoing digitisation work will keep us all busy, but it is an exciting time for the Society. We are also delighted to be developing collaborations with other societies, including Shropshire and Devon, and to be representing FHSC at events and shows across the county.

Finally, my thanks go to everyone who continues to support FHSC in so many ways, our volunteers, group leaders, speakers and, of course, our members. A special thank you also to Rosie for continuing to edit the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR while we search for a new editor. Might that be you? As ever, this Society thrives because of its people and with so much happening, there has never been a better time to be involved.

Macclesfield News (1)

from the Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser, 7 October 1876

ASLEEP IN HIS CONVEYANCE - On Tuesday, at the Petty Sessions at Macclesfield, **Daniel Jackson** was summoned by **P.C. Hughes** for being asleep in his cart while passing through Chelford on the 21st of September, but he was let off with costs, because he had been fined 5s at the Borough court on the previous Monday for driving at a careless rate through Macclesfield on the same day.

Society News and Notices

For the Society's Latest News

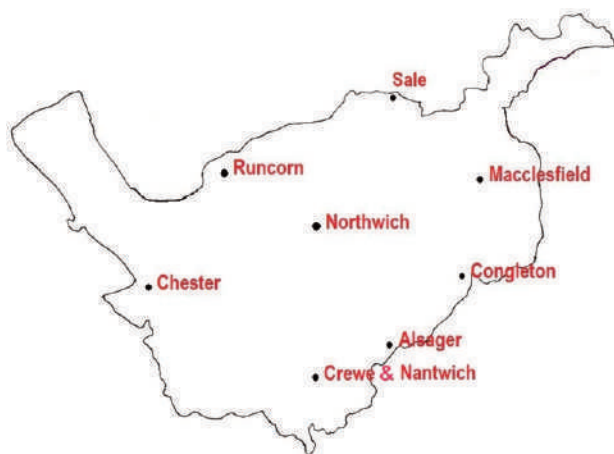
Keep up-to-date between journals by reading the society's email newsletters, or follow the FHSC on:

Facebook www.facebook.com/CheshireFamilyHistory

Blue Sky <https://bsky.app/profile/fhsofcheshire.bsky.social>

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.

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, photograph requests or 'brick wall' questions 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 just below the event headings. You will receive a confirmation email and Zoom access links will be sent out shortly before the meeting.

Discussion Groups

By Margaret Roberts

The Discussion Groups are open to all members to 'dip in and out'. The title of each group is self-explanatory, while *Zooming in on Family History* is a wide-ranging chat session which

members can attend for help with research, share success stories or just generally chat about family history. To join the mailing list for any of these Discussion Groups, simply log in to the FHSC website and click on *Discussion Groups* in the left-hand menu. In the window that opens click on *Subscribe* alongside the group you are interested in; you will then receive the Zoom links for each meeting and any news from that group.

2pm, 1st Friday: *Historical Online Newspapers*, led by Margaret Roberts

2pm, 3rd Monday: *Mac computers*, led by John Reed

7.30pm, 3rd Thursday: *Family Historian*, to be confirmed

2pm, 4th Monday: *Publishing & Disseminating our Family History*, led by Victoria Doran

7.30pm, 4th Monday: *DNA*, led by Diane Kuster

7.30pm, 4th Wednesday: *Zooming in on Family History*, led by Sheila Jones and Margaret Roberts

7.30pm, 4th Thursday of alternate months: *Family Tree Maker*, led by Tony Cox

Alsager Group

By Hazel Rugman

All meetings, unless otherwise indicated, take place at 7.30pm in Alsager Library (postcode ST7 2AF) and admission is £2 for FHSC members and £3 for visitors. Car parking behind the library is currently free of charge.

Bebington Group

We regret to announce that the Bebington group has now closed. We thank the organisers and members for their support over the years. The nearest groups to the Wirral area are in Chester and Runcorn, and members are also welcome to join any of the Society's Zoom meetings.

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 Helpdesk

A helpdesk is available in Storyhouse, Hunter St, Chester CH1 2AR on Tuesday mornings 10am - 12noon.

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.

Many thanks to Geoff Johnson, who has stepped down as leader of the Computer Club and editor of Net That Serf, roles he has held since 2008-09. From face-to-face meetings at Hartford to hosting our very first

group meeting on Zoom, Geoff has been at the heart of the group's development and success. The Computer Club committee are in the process of working out the best way forward and will be in touch with members. We hope to continue to see Geoff at various meetings, and of course we wish him all the very best.

For information or to join, please email computerclub@fhsc.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. Updates about meetings are emailed to subscribers on our newsletter list. Please sign up to the Congleton group newsletters on the FHSC website, or check the Congleton group pages.

Crewe & Nantwich Group

By Margaret Spate

Crewe & Nantwich F2F meetings are usually held starting at 7.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Jubilee House, St Paul's St, Crewe CW1 2QA. Admission is £2 for members and £3 for visitors, including refreshments. Nearby parking at the adjacent Victoria Centre Car Park, Crewe CW1 2PT (NB charges apply after 6pm).

Crewe Research Centre

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

Nantwich Helpdesk

A helpdesk is available at Nantwich Library 2pm–4pm on the fourth Monday of the month.

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.

Macclesfield Helpdesk

A helpdesk is available at Macclesfield Library (Jordangate) between 2pm and 4pm on the second Wednesday of each month to help anyone on a one-to-one basis either to start your family history or to solve queries. Please ring the library on 01625 374000 to make a one hour appointment.

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 Sue Bowden

Meetings are usually held on the 1st Wednesday of the month (except January), from 7pm until 9pm, at The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Clifton Road West, Runcorn WA7 4TE. Visitors are most welcome.

Our Research nights are fast becoming group discussion nights with advice from our advanced members. We are also engaging in one-to-one help between new and more advanced researchers.

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 Helpdesk

A helpdesk is available at Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre 2pm–4pm on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Please ring the Centre on 01613 424242 or check the FHSC website for details and to book.

Wallasey Helpdesk

A helpdesk is available 10am–1pm every Friday 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 welcome.

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). To join a Zoom meeting, please see the instructions in the Group News and Information pages which follow this Diary Dates section. **Please note, these dates do not include the dates of all the “Discussion Groups” – see page 7 or the FHSC website for details of these.**

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 News and Information pages, or see the FHSC website fhsc.uk

Date	Group	Subject
3-Jun	Runcorn	AGM
8-Jun	Northwich	F2F: TBA
9-Jun	Crewe & Nantwich	F2F: Progress report on ‘Cheshire Archives Crewe’ with Paul Newman
10-Jun	Sale	History of these Islands by Brian Groom
13-Jun	Society Zoom Mtg	Z: Walking With Your Ancestors by Sophie Kay (10.30am)
15-Jun	Alsager	Pills Potions and Poisons, a Nantwich Apothecary’s tale by Helen Cooke
16-Jun	Congleton	TBA
17-Jun	Society Seminar	Z: Evidence Analysis: Proving What You Think You Know by Linda Hammond
23-Jun	Macclesfield	Grave Matters: Using Burial Records and Memorial Inscriptions by Liz DeMercado
25-Jun	Chester	Old News – a Press Guide to Old Chester by Chris Fozzard
27-Jun	Research Buddies	Z: Malpas area
July	Alsager	Group outing for members and a guest only. Details TBA.

July	Congleton	Group outing. Details TBA.
1-Jul	Runcorn	Tracing Your Irish Ancestors by Tony Cox
8-Jul	Sale	Group outing. Details TBA.
14-Jul	Crewe & Nantwich	F2F: 1918-1930 Prosperity and Recession: Part 3 of my Grandad's Diaries by Edward Hilditch
15-Jul	Society Seminar	Z: British Festivals by Prof Ronald Hutton
25-Jul	Research Buddies	No Meeting
28-Jul	Macclesfield	Visit to St Michael's Church, Macclesfield
30-Jul	Chester	AGM and talk: Apprenticeships by Gill Campbell
August	Alsager	No Meeting
August	Chester	No Meeting
August	Congleton	No Meeting
5-Aug	Runcorn	Research Evening
11-Aug	Crewe & Nantwich	F2F: Workshop: Getting the Most out of your Newspaper Searches by Margaret Roberts
12-Aug	Sale	AGM followed by Open Forum: Bring or talk about any strange or unusual tools your ancestor used
19-Aug	Society Seminar	Z: What DIDN'T you do in the War Daddy? By Sheila Jones
25-Aug	Macclesfield	Parish Registers Exposed: The Fine Details that Get Missed by Liz DeMercado
29-Aug	Research Buddies	Z: Chester
8-Sep	Crewe & Nantwich	F2F: The History of the Polish Hospital in Penley by Rebecca Griffiths
9-Sep	Sale	Cheshire's Historic Houses by Tony Bostock
15-Sep	Congleton	AGM
16-Sep	Society Seminar	Z: A Strange Thing Happened on the way to the Police Station: an A-Z of Anecdotes by Martin Gaffney
22-Sep	Macclesfield	Streets & Buildings of Old Macclesfield by Dennis Whyte
24-Sep	Chester	Cheshire Maps and Map Makers by Jonathan Pepler
26-Sep	Research Buddies	Z: Macclesfield
13-Oct	Crewe & Nantwich	F2F: AGM and Quiz

Obituary

Wendy Betts

It is with great sadness that I have to report the passing of a longstanding Northwich member, Wendy Betts. Wendy had several health issues and passed away on 21st December 2025 at Leighton Hospital.

Born in Birmingham, Wendy's family spent many years in Banbury, Oxfordshire. Wendy moved first to Sutton Coldfield, then Leicester, before finally settling in Northwich. After a period of time as secretary to the Sales Director of Foseco (FC) Ltd in Tamworth, where she met her husband Bryan, Wendy decided to go freelance – she was a very good shorthand typist. Eventually, she became a medical secretary at a general practice in Winsford.

Wendy married Bryan in 1965, near Reading, and they have one son, Matthew.

Wendy and Bryan's interest in family history research began in the late sixties, with regular visits to Somerset House, and they joined FHSC in the mid eighties, soon after moving to Sandiway in Northwich. Both Wendy and Bryan were always willing to help others in their research and volunteered for the society, holding various positions on the Northwich branch committee. They also joined the Weaverham History Society.

A large number of people attended Wendy's funeral in February, testament to the high regard in which she was held. She will be sorely missed.

Dave Thomas

Northwich Group Leader

Macclesfield News (2)

from the Cheshire Observer, 1 January 1876

A CHARGE OF ABDUCTION – At Macclesfield on Tuesday, Frederick Rutland, a grocer's assistant, of Chorley, Cheshire, was charged with the abduction of Millie Hatton, a girl 14 years of age, against the will of her mother, Abigail Hatton. The case was adjourned by agreement, much amusement being created by the introduction of a spiritualistic element, it being asserted that the defendant had been controlled by spirits. Another summons, charging Herbert Hatton, the girl's father, with threatening Joseph Rogers on account of some alleged participation in the affair, was dismissed.

Election of Officers and Trustees

The following posts are open to election this year, all for a period of three years:

- Chair (3 years), vice Margaret Roberts
- Communications Officer (3 years), vice Margaret Spate
- Three other elected Trustees, vice David Guyton (3 years), Geoff Johnson (2 years) and Alan Turley (1 year)

Details of what is required for these roles and a nomination form are available on the website at <https://www.fhsc.uk/fhsc-library/governance-documents/476-roles-and-election-procedures> (you will need to be logged in to the website to access this section).

Nominations (which can be self-nominations) should be completed and returned by **no later than 30th September 2026** to the Hon. Secretary, Sheila Jones.

by email to: secretary@fhsc.uk

or by post to: Mrs S A Jones, Hon. Secretary FHSC, 11 Brancote Gardens, Bromborough, Wirral CH62 6AH.

Details of nominations received by 1st July 2026 will be published in the September edition of the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR. Election procedures, including a web link to a full list of those standing for election, will also be published in that edition.

Macclesfield News (3)

from the Cheshire Observer, 1 January 1876

ASSAULT OF AN OLD MAN – William Oldfield, cotton spinner, re-appeared before the Macclesfield magistrates on Monday to answer the charge of assaulting an old man named Briggs, whom he had struck violently in the stomach for having given a penny to a beggar, on the pretext that he was rendering the man liable to be locked up as a medicant. Briggs afterwards became so ill that his depositions were taken, and on Thursday morning he died. The case against Oldfield has therefore taken a more serious turn, and he has been further remanded, pending the result of the coroner's inquiry.

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.

CHESHIRE ANCESTOR Editor and/or Editorial Assistant

One person could carry out both of these roles, as at present.

Unfortunately the person who was going to take over as editor is no longer able to do so, so a new volunteer is needed for the role of journal editor. A good eye for detail is needed, along with an aptitude for word-processing on a computer. The DTP program we use is QuarkXpress; training will be given.

A volunteer is also needed to help the journal editor with tasks such as resizing images and converting them to greyscale, and collating meetings information into a spreadsheet. Again, training will be given, if needed.

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

Crewe Research Centre

More volunteers would be very welcome, to work either in the Research Centre at Crewe or at home working on projects. **For more information, please contact Margaret Spate, Crewe Group Leader (crewe@fhsc.uk)**

FHSC Governance Team Members

There are still vacancies on all of the Teams, except the Local Groups Operational Team, and details and an application form are available on the Society's website at <https://fhsc.uk/library-heading/governance-documents/486-operational-teams>

Macclesfield News (4)

from the Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 23 June 1876

FREE EMIGRATION TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA - THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA GRANT FREE PASSAGES to Artisans, Agricultural, Railway and other Labourers and Gardeners, Copper, Tin and Lead Miners, not exceeding 40 years of age, single or married with not more than 3 children; also to Single Female Domestic Servants. COAL MINERS ARE INELIGIBLE. All persons who are considered eligible... receive a Land Order Warrant for every adult above 12, and £10 for children between 1 and 12 years of age.

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 Crewe Research Centre 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 Centre is staffed by volunteers who also have other duties.

Lists of the resources held at Crewe can be found on the FHSC website at <https://fhsc.uk/library-heading/library-public/32-crewe-library-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 on the FHSC website**
You must be logged in to the website to access this page.
<https://fhsc.uk/fhsc-help/members-lookup-service>
- **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: *FHSC Research Centre, Units 3 & 4, Brierley Business Centre, Mirion Street, Crewe, CW1 2AP*
- **Email Contact**
Please send enquiries by email to librarian@fhsc.uk and they will be passed on to the appropriate person.

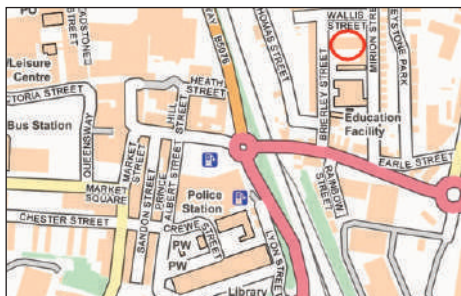
Macclesfield News (5)

from the Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 9 June 1876

*On Tuesday afternoon, a collision occurred between an empty coal train and a lime train, near Disley, resulting in the death of the guard of the latter and serious injury to three others... **John Dickinson**, the guard of the lime train; **John Taylor**, senior guard of the coal train; **Robert Craig**, under-guard of the coal train; and **William Allen**, a friend of Taylor's who was with him at the time, were very much injured and were conveyed with all possible speed to Stockport Infirmary... **Dickinson** survived only two hours after his admission, and Taylor lies in a precarious condition.... **William Allen**, 7 Flint-street, Macclesfield, [suffered] laceration of the sole of the left foot and scalp wounds.*

Crewe Research Centre News

Units 3 & 4, Brierley Business Centre, Mirion Street, Crewe, CW1 2AP
Tel 07352 454501



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, or if travelling from a distance, please phone before visiting to ensure the centre is open and a computer/film reader is available.

The Business Centre is situated on Mirion Street, about six hundred yards from our previous location in Crewe Municipal Buildings. There is free parking with disabled parking spaces.

We occupy units 3 and 4 on the ground floor. Press the doorbell button for FHSC and one of our volunteers will come to the door and let you in.

*FREE access to Ancestry, FindMyPast, British Newspaper Archive
and The Genealogist*

*Local parish registers on film - extensive library of books
Crewe Collection (formerly Crewe and District Local History Archives)*

*For full details of our holdings, please see
the Crewe Research Centre 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.uk at least 2 days in advance** to confirm their attendance. If no notification is received, the Research Centre 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.

Latest News

by Margaret Spate
crewe@fhsc.uk

The Crewe Research Centre remains open from 10am until 4pm on the usual days, Monday and Tuesday and our volunteers continue to welcome and help members with their research. We also have books on sale at very reasonable prices, which are either duplicates or surplus to requirements.

Work will be ongoing as we prepare for some of our resources to be moved into 'Cheshire Archives – Crewe' on its completion later this year.

Thanks for continuing to support us as we work through our next change – it will be our fourth home in the last twenty years.

Surname Interests

Are you researching any of these names? If so, log in to the FHSC website and click on *Research Tools*, then *Members Surname Interests*, to find 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 13 February and 30 April 2026:

Barnes, Bird, Brazendale

Courter, Edwards

Hampson, Harden, Heesom

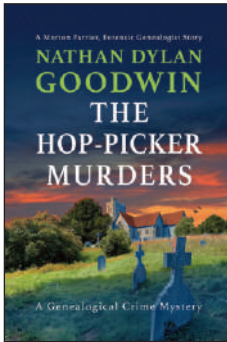
Leather, Parrish

Rutter, Strong

Book Review

by Margaret Roberts
FHSC Chair

The Hop-Picker Murders
by Nathan Dylan Goodwin



There is something rather comforting about returning to a Morton Farrier mystery, particularly for those of us who know that family history research can, at times, feel like detective work in all but name. In *The Hop-Picker Murders*, the latest instalment in this well-loved series, Goodwin once again reminds us just how thin that line can be.

Set in post-WWI Kent, the heart of the story concerns the disappearance of Ernest Partridge during the hop-picking season. What unfolds is a carefully constructed dual narrative, the contemporary investigation led by forensic genealogist Morton Farrier, and the voice of Ernest's sister, Nellie, whose quiet determination lends the historical thread real warmth and emotional depth.

For me the real pleasure here lies in the detail. The world of the hop fields is vividly drawn, not simply as a backdrop, but as a lived experience familiar to many families of the period. Seasonal migration, close-knit communities, and the unspoken tensions of working life are all woven into the narrative. It is social history at its most engaging, and one can't help but be reminded of the stories we encounter in our own research – those fleeting glimpses of lives lived just beyond the formal records.

It is, of course, the records themselves that Goodwin handles so well. Morton's research feels authentic and reassuringly familiar; the piecing together of fragments, the careful reading of documents, the occasional frustration when the trail runs cold. It reflects the very process many of us know, following a thread through census returns, newspapers, and local sources, hoping that somewhere, something will connect. Nellie's journal, woven through the narrative, adds an extra layer of intrigue. At times reflective, at times elusive, it captures that sense we often encounter in historical sources, that what is left unsaid can be just as important as what is recorded.

The mystery itself is satisfying and well-paced, with enough twists and red herrings to keep the reader engaged. Some may, as I often do, find themselves attempting to solve it alongside Morton (with varying degrees of success!), but as with all good genealogical research, it is as much about the journey as the conclusion.

In short, *The Hop-Picker Murders* offers exactly what many of us enjoy most: a well-told mystery grounded in the realities of historical research, where the past is not simply uncovered, but gently brought back into the light. A reminder, perhaps, that behind every record lies a story and sometimes, just sometimes, a mystery waiting to be solved.

The Hop-Picker Murders is available in paperback, hardback, and Kindle formats. At the time of going to press, an audiobook version was in production.

Full details can be found on the author's website:

<https://www.nathandylangoodwin.com/the-hop-picker-murders-11>

Letters to the Editor

Re. A Legitimate Question, CHESHIRE ANCESTOR, Dec 2025

From Michael J. Bourne

Membership no 4900

Following the recent article by Gren Dix, when I was researching a family baptism of some two hundred years ago, I came across the baptism of an illegitimate child where the vicar had added after the name of the mother the words (*husband transported*). It seemed that he did not wish to allow her to escape her shame!

Unfortunately, I did not take a copy of the entry as it did not relate to my family but it may have been in the Bunbury Parish Records.

Macclesfield News (6)

from the Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 15 September 1826

Informations were laid on Tuesday, of Macclesfield, and summonses issued against eight individuals, for emptying night soil at other times than those prescribed by the Police Act; the penalty incurred is five pounds for each offence.

Family History Events

For news of family history events, see these online calendars

<http://geneva.weald.org.uk/doku.php>

www.exploreyourgenealogy.co.uk/news-and-events

<https://conferencekeeper.org/>

The National Archives Zoom Talk: 1966: the Best of Times?

2pm - 3pm on Friday 5th June 2026, online

England – indeed, the United Kingdom – led the world in so many aspects in 1966: pop music, fashion, film; and to cap it all, England won the World Cup.

But beyond the accolades and success, the nation was also experiencing economic crisis and industrial strife.

Was it really a golden era? Contemporary Specialist Mark Dunton explores the events of this celebrated year.

All welcome – price from FREE up to £15 (pay what you can)

Booking essential via Eventbrite (link on TNA website below)

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/whats-on/events/1966-the-best-of-times

The Guild of One-Name Studies Seminar: Hops, Pubs and People

10am - 4.45pm on Saturday 13th June 2026

at Fradley Village Hall, Hay End Lane, Fradley, Lichfield WS13 8NL

A Celebration of our Brewing Heritage ...and where to find the names

We shall be covering hop pickers, maltsters and publicans
as well as those working in the brewery.

The seminar is open to both members and non-members.

Booking essential. Price: £27.50, including a buffet lunch and hot drinks.

Further information may be obtained on the website, by telephoning the Guild HelpDesk on 0800 011 2182, or by email from seminar-booking@one-name.org

<https://one-name.org/mc-events/hops-pubs-and-people/>

Families in British India Society:

Open Meeting and AGM

10am – 3pm on Saturday 27th June 2026
at the Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, London SE1 8UJ.

Three talks are planned:

Curzon's Chosen Men: Political Officers on the Periphery of Empire

Mutiny 1857 – the Indian perspective

With Ox Carts & Dooli Bearers – Medals of India to 1947

AGM is at 1pm and should take about 30 mins

All welcome – Booking essential via the FIBIS website – Admission FREE

<https://www.fibis.org/event/open-meeting-and-agm/>

University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre Conference

**Blood is the price of coal: Coal communities, health and welfare
in Britain from the 19th century to the present**

9:15am – 5.30pm on Thursday 18th June 2026

at the Faculty of Arts Building, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL.

This free one-day conference aims to bring together researchers to explore the history of health and welfare in Britain's coal mining industry. The event will run alongside an exhibition which will explore some of the themes covered by the speakers through the National Union of Mineworkers' archives.

Booking essential – Admission FREE

<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/exhibitions/upcoming/coal/>

The Guild of One-Name Studies Seminar:

Mapping your One-Name Study

10am – 4.45pm on 17th October 2026

at Cuddington and Sandiway Village Hall, Norley Road, Northwich CW8 2LB

Where did they come from? Where did they go? How did they get there?

Tools and resources for plotting and visualising a One-Name Study.

The talks should be of interest to any family historian
wishing to locate their ancestors on maps.

The seminar is open to both members and non-members.

Booking essential. Price: £27.50, including a buffet lunch and hot drinks.

Further information may be obtained on the website, by telephoning the Guild HelpDesk on 0800 011 2182, or by email from seminar-booking@one-name.org

<https://one-name.org/mc-events/mapping-your-one-name-study/>

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 Crewe Research Centre has 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.**

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.

Although Ancestry say they have made datasets such as parish registers available online, not all have been indexed! To be sure you have checked, find the dataset in the card catalogue and search or browse from there.

UK, Personnel of the Polish Air Force in Great Britain, 1940–1947

www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/63367/

This index-only collection lists over 16,000 Polish aviators who served in Great Britain during WW2. The index also includes those who worked in other divisions of the Polish Air Force (PAF) in Britain. Most records are in Polish.

England, Prerogative and Exchequer Court of York Wills, 1389–1858

www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/63000/

This collection contains images of wills proved in the Prerogative Court of York, England, between 1389 and 1858 and held by the Borthwick Institute for Archives at the University of York. The majority of wills are written in Latin.

Yorkshire, England, Bishops' Transcripts of Church of England Baptism, Marriage and Burial Registers, 1558–1912

www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/62231

Images of Yorkshire Church of England bishops' transcripts, held by the Borthwick Institute for Archives at the University of York.

Worcestershire, England, Calendar of Prisoners, 1839–1921

www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/63177/

Contains lists of prisoners who were incarcerated in Worcestershire city and county gaols between 1839 and 1921. The two volumes for the city of Worcester are dated between 1901 and 1921 only.

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 Salvation Army publication War Cry, 1875-1985

Our newspaper archive has expanded by 71,299 pages, comprising the new title *War Cry* and updates to *Social Gazette*, both from the Salvation Army.

College Of Preceptors, Student Registers and Diploma Exams, 1881-1931

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/college-of-preceptors-student-registers-and-diploma-examinations-1881-1931>

Did your ancestor train as a teacher during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Explore this unique collection of records to find out more about examination dates and results and schools attended.

University Of London School Register 1831-1890

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/university-of-london-school-register-1831-1890>

Search this unique collection of 19th century school registers for the University of London (later University College London) to learn more about your ancestors who attended this pioneering academic institution.

Britain, School and University Students, 1264-1926

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/britain-school-and-university-students>

These records come from digitised copies of school and university register books. Click on the above link, scroll down the page and click on *Discover more about these records* to see which educational establishments are included.

Australia, Navy Lists 1905-1985

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/australia-navy-lists>

This collection of Australia Navy Lists provides over 60,000 records of officers serving in Australia's naval forces.

The Genealogist

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

Chancery and related records

The Genealogist has released over a million records from a wide range of court and equity records, including Chancery, Exchequer, Star Chamber, Court of Requests and Duchy of Lancaster records.

Was Your Ancestor a Foundling?

by Dr. Anthony Annakin-Smith

Have you ever wondered if one of your eighteenth-century Cheshire ancestors might have been a foundling? Or have you ever considered that an ancestor might have been involved in some other way with the country's first Foundling Hospital? A new book gives details of hundreds of foundlings associated with Cheshire. In addition, a massive, free online archive gives plenty of scope for personal research as well as presenting an opportunity to uncover deeply moving stories of foundlings' backgrounds.

Strictly-speaking, foundlings were abandoned children, found and looked after by a stranger. However, London's Foundling Hospital, opened in 1741, generally took in children who were deliberately handed over, often very reluctantly by parents. Many were born to single mothers. Sometimes the parents left heart-rending notes, perhaps expressing the desire to be reunited with their child one day.

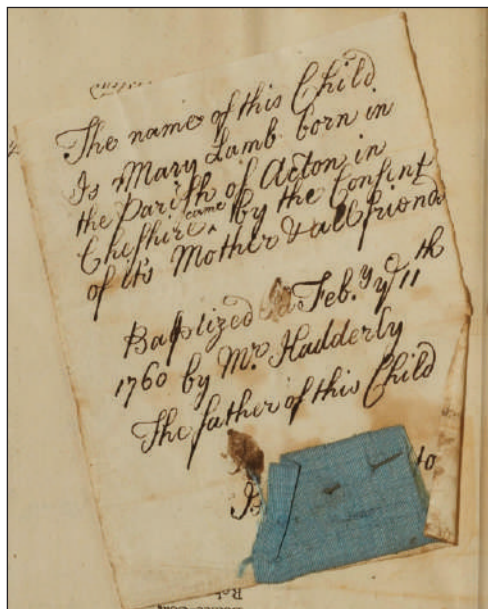
Demand for places was huge and, in time, branches of the hospital were set up around the country to cope with the numbers. These branches included one in Chester and another in adjacent Shropshire, at Shrewsbury (hospitals, by the way, were places of care, not specifically medical facilities).

I have recently written a book exploring Cheshire's links with the Foundling Hospital in the eighteenth century. Over 500 children are named, with links to towns and villages across the county. Let me explain the various ways these links arose.

The Foundling Hospital offered care and accommodation to children from anywhere in Britain but they could only be admitted in London. By 1760 over 16,000 children had been taken in and in a relatively small number of cases there is a record of their place of origin. I have identified as many as possible of those who came from Cheshire – from Chester in the west to 'Prest' (Prestbury?) in the east. As an example, one girl was abandoned under a hedge in Barton near Malpas and christened there as Susannah BARTON (*the name of our town*, officials said) before being taken to the London hospital. Elsewhere, I am particularly intrigued by two children left by different parents – a married couple and a single mother – with the surname FENNA from Bowdon (at that time in Cheshire).

Initially the children were mostly wet-nursed in the South-East but in time many of them were moved on to one of the six branch hospitals. A total of 306, mostly aged between four and six, came to the Chester branch. It was located in the still-standing magnificent Blue Coat School building in the city. About one-fifth of the children were looked after there but the large majority were sent to 'nurses' in villages across west and south Cheshire ('nurses' being, in modern terms, foster carers). These nurses were under the supervision of several unpaid local 'inspectors'. Perhaps your ancestor was one of these nurses or inspectors?

The children lived with their nurses until they were again moved on, to be apprenticed in a variety of occupations. Typically, this occurred when they were aged around ten or eleven with the role lasting until the age of twenty-one. The children became much more dispersed, mostly still in villages in the west and also the south of the county, though a few went further, to Warrington and to Lancashire and North Wales. One went to magnificent Hyde Hall (now in Tameside) to be a domestic servant. One might expect that many of those in Cheshire might have settled in the county when they were adults but, mysteriously, I have only been able to trace the fate of forty-six of the apprenticed children. Perhaps you can help fill in some gaps?

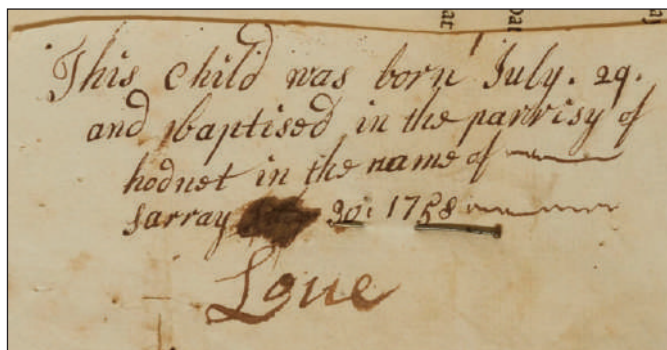


A note sent with Mary LAMB, born to unmarried parents (LAMB/HADDERLY) from Acton near Northwich, indicating the mother's consent to the child's removal to the Foundling Hospital. With kind permission of Coram.

Meanwhile, other branches of the Foundling hospital were sending children to be apprenticed in Cheshire locations including Macclesfield, Prestbury and Northwich, as well as Stockport (now in Greater Manchester) where, sadly, many appear to have been terribly abused by their apprentice master.

One other category of child to be found in records, some from Cheshire, are those whose parents had to write letters of petition to the Foundling Hospital setting out the circumstances of the birth of the child they were pleading to have admitted. Often these letters are heart-rending. My book gives an example from 1799 of a Cheshire servant girl who was desperate to hide her 'shame' and

'disgrace', having fallen pregnant with a man who then deserted her (a common tale amongst foundling mothers).

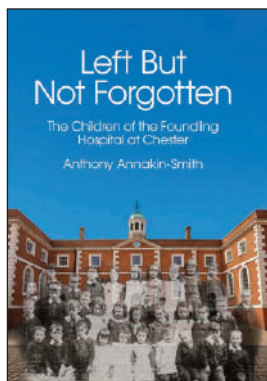


A note, probably written by parish officials in Hodnet, Shropshire, sent to the Foundling Hospital with a girl who had been baptised 'sarray' (Sarah BENNET/ARKINSTALL) in 1758. It is signed off with 'Love', probably written by the mother. The child was nursed and apprenticed at Handbridge, by Chester. With kind permission of Coram.

How, then, do you find out about foundlings or others associated with the Foundling Hospital and have connections to Cheshire one way or another?

My book gives as much information about each child connected to Cheshire as space allows including names, dates and locations. There is scope, however, for family historians to dig deeper, using the free online Foundling Hospital Archive. This consists of digitised and mostly transcribed images of around 100,000 pages of records from the Foundling Hospital running from 1741 until 1899 and covering 23,000 children (<https://archives.coram.org.uk/>). This is fully searchable using, say, just a surname, or a Christian name and surname. You can also search by location. You can find names not only of foundlings and petitioners but also apprentice masters and mistresses. Nurses' and inspectors' names have not been transcribed but you can search images in locations of interest to see if your ancestor was one of them. There are also many digitised receipts and invoices – was one of your ancestors a supplier to the Chester hospital, for example? More generally, you will also be amazed and quickly absorbed by the fascinating stories you can glean from the pages of the various documents.

Although focused on the Cheshire branch hospital, my book also looks at the origins of the Foundling Hospital – why it was so desperately needed and the long and difficult quest to get it established. Overall, the Foundling Hospital and its Chester branch present a fascinating and moving topic to read about as well as a superb opportunity for many to learn about their ancestors.



Anthony Annakin-Smith's book *Left But Not Forgotten: the Children of the Foundling Hospital at Chester* is published by the University of Chester Press, price £19.99.

Paperback, 412 pages, 210 x 147 x 20 mm

ISBN: 9781910481332

Early Football Clubs

by A J Sant
Membership no. 9314

During a recent conversation with friends the question arose about when the "Football League", as we know it today, was first formed. Opinions varied, but I was able to add some information about two local Cheshire teams: the Cheshire Yeoman Cavalry (CYC), and to a much lesser degree a team called Olympic.

A wealth of names, including those shown below, were mentioned in connection with the CYC and the Cheshire Rifle Volunteer Regiment (CRVR), as they appeared in the *Macclesfield Chronicle*.

- Adshead** 8th Bn. CRVR, played against Olympic on 29th November 1873.
- Arnold Pte.** 8th Bn. CRVC, played on 27th December 1873.
Also played for CYC on 21st December 1873.
- Balshaw J Pte.** Played as CYC substitute on 21st December 1878.
- Bond Peter Pte.** 8th Bn. CRVR, played on 29th November 1873 and 21st December 1873. He is also mentioned in a shooting competition at Danes Moss, Cheshire on 8th October 1881 when he scored 39 points.
- Brown Pte.** Played for CYC on 21st December 1873.
- Buckley Pte.** 8th Bn. CRVR, played 29th November 1873 and 27th December 1873. He was also very possibly a member of the regiment's Athletic Club on the 17th January 1874.
- Burgess Pte.** Played for CYC on the 21st December 1873.

Davies Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on the 27th November 1873.
Goodwin S Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on the 29th November 1873.
Goulding Pte.	Played for CYC on the 21st December 1873.
Heathcote Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on 29th November 1873. Also mentioned in CRVR Athletic Club 17th January 1874.
Hill Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on 14th February and 29th November 1873.
Hillman R Pte.	Played as substitute for CYC on the 21st December 1873.
Hudson J Pte.	Played as substitute for CYC on the 21st December 1873.
Hunt Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on the 27th December 1873.
Laidlaw Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played as goalkeeper on 14th February 1873 and on 29th November 1873.
Martin Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on the 27th November 1873.
Mellor Cpl.	8th Bn. CRVR, played against Olympic on 29th November 1873.
Morton Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on the 29th November 1873.
Moses Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on the 27th November 1873.
Mottershead Pte.	Played for CYC on the 21st December 1873.
Parrott W Cpl.	Played as captain for CYC on the 21st December 1873.
Riddlesworth Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on 29th November 1873 and 27th December 1873. Also a member of the Athletic Club.
Robinson Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played against Olympic on 29th November 1873, and on 21st December and 27th December 1873.
Simpson	8th Bn. CRVR, played on 29th November 1873 against Olympic, and as substitute on 21st December 1873.
Smethurst Charles	Professional football player. Present at the baptism of his daughter Adalina at St. Peters Church, Congleton in 1909.
Stanhope Pte.	Played for CYC on the 21st December 1873.
Thornley Pte.	Played as substitute for CYC on 29th December 1873 and 14th February 1874.
Thorp Lieut.	8th Bn. CRVR, played against Olympic on 29th November 1873, and on 17th January 1874. Also a member of the Athletic Club.
Wardle H Pte.	Played as substitute for CYC on the 21st December 1873.
Whiteside Pte.	8th Bn. CRVR, played on 29th November 1873, and in Athletic Club on the 17th January 1874.
Wood E	Played as substitute for CYC on 21st December 1873.

Wright Pte. 8th Bn. CRVR, played on 29th November 1873.

During the one hundred and twenty years of its existence, CYC functioned under fourteen different titles including “The King’s Volunteer Legion”, “The Stockport Gentlemen’s League” and “Earl Grosvenor’s Yeoman Cavalry”.

Ed.: According to Wikipedia, the English Football League was founded in 1888 by Aston Villa director William McGregor, and is the oldest football league in the world. It originally had just twelve member clubs from the Midlands and north of England: Accrington, Aston Villa, Blackburn Rovers, Bolton Wanderers, Burnley, Derby County, Everton, Notts County, Preston North End, Stoke, West Bromwich Albion and Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Cryptic Cheshire

by Sheila Jones
Hon. Secretary

**Can you find the 22 Cheshire place names hidden within the following tale?
Answers are on the last page of this issue.**

Captain Peregrine Trevithick pulled the collar of his greatcoat up more closely around his ears and hoped that he would not have to wait much longer. In the undergrowth of the nearby shrubbery, some nocturnal animal passed by, free from all constraints unless it were to be shot wickedly by a poacher. He wished now that he had not impetuously decided to act on the dictates of his heart which had led shamelessly to this astonishing midnight elopement plot with Miss Louisa Fitzowen. At long last, he caught sight of a petite figure carefully making its way towards him.

“You came! I thought you might have had second thoughts, particularly given the rain,” owned the Captain.

“I gave you my word that I would see this through,” Louisa said, a little sadness in her voice.

“Then come, let us make haste,” he replied, putting his hand forth to take a bag from her. “You have no other luggage? I thought you would have brought at least a trunkful of dresses.”

“I thought it best not to bring a chest, erring on the side of caution,” Louisa replied. “There is just that valise and this hat box. Given the rain, I’ve put on an old bonnet; I did not wish to spoil my best hat tonight!”

He led her through the park gate and into the lane beyond, where a hired driver and carriage awaited them. Once the small amount of baggage was stowed and they were seated, he gave the order to the driver to head north.

“You are sure that he knows the way?” Louisa said, tremulously. “He looks somewhat disreputable, I’m afraid.”

“Even if he does not know the route to Scotland, rest assured that I do, my love. I am not some clergyman or Oxford scholar, green to the art of navigation! My crew even admits that I am excellent at plotting a course whatever the prevailing conditions. When we reach a port, sunlight is not always there to greet us! A navy man I may be, but I am not incapable of planning a proper route on the land as well as over the seas. I do not pick merely random routes, nor do I navigate by ley lines.”

“I do not doubt you, Peregrine. I am just worried that my father will discover my flight earlier than I would hope and try to catch up with us!”

“We will be across the border before daybreak and in Greta Green by lunchtime if we make good time and do not stop.”

“Not stop? What about breakfast?”

“We will eat on the way. I brought a hamper full of good things – chicken cooked with spices from the East, ham, pressed tongue, quince jelly. And we will be back for dinner in Carlisle later on, once you are Mrs Trevithick. I remain hopeful that your father dares bury the hatchet and forgives us both in the end.”

Macclesfield News (7)

from the Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 1 September 1826

BUXTON – On Wednesday a serious accident occurred in this vicinity. About twelve o’clock, the Royal Oak coach left this town, by way of Macclesfield, for Liverpool; besides other passengers, there were the Rev. Mr. Sleigh, of the Wesleyan Methodist connexion, his wife and three children. It rained very hard, and the whole of the party, with the exception of Mr Sleigh, were inside. The coach had proceeded about six miles, and passed Stonyway Bar, White Moss, when the near fore wheel came off; the consequent falling of the coach occasioned the axle-tree to break, the horses turned short round, and the coach, by a sudden jerk, was thrown over on the other side; it is most probable that Mr Sleigh kept his seat when the coach first fell, but on the second overturn he was precipitated to the ground and was taken up in a state of insensibility... A man was immediately dispatched to this town for a post chaise, and soon returned with the wounded man and his distressed family. Mr Sleigh remained insensible during the whole of the night; on Thursday he uttered a few words quite coherently. Mrs Sleigh received a bruise on her face.

The Family History Society of Cheshire

Subscription Renewals and Methods of Payment



Dear Member,

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Location of Groups



Bringing a Character to Life

by Kath Gerrard
Membership no. 10594

As an enthusiastic family historian with aspirations to write a form of memoir, I have been fictionalising episodes from my family history, drawing on the known people and places to paint word pictures of their lives. My process involves imagining a scene or series of scenarios, then filling in or expanding the narrative with my research results to create a story rooted in the historical facts.

Participating in the Historical Newspapers and Publishing groups of FHSC has given me inspiration and confidence to develop my ideas to fruition. I'm particularly grateful for the way the Society works to include out of county members like me to feel welcome and involved.

The central story revolves around my 2x great-aunt, Mary Ann GERRARD, who was born in 1858, one of the nine siblings of my paternal great-grandfather William GERRARD. Her story particularly stirred my interest and compassion because I could see parallels with my own life although I was born almost a century later in 1954.

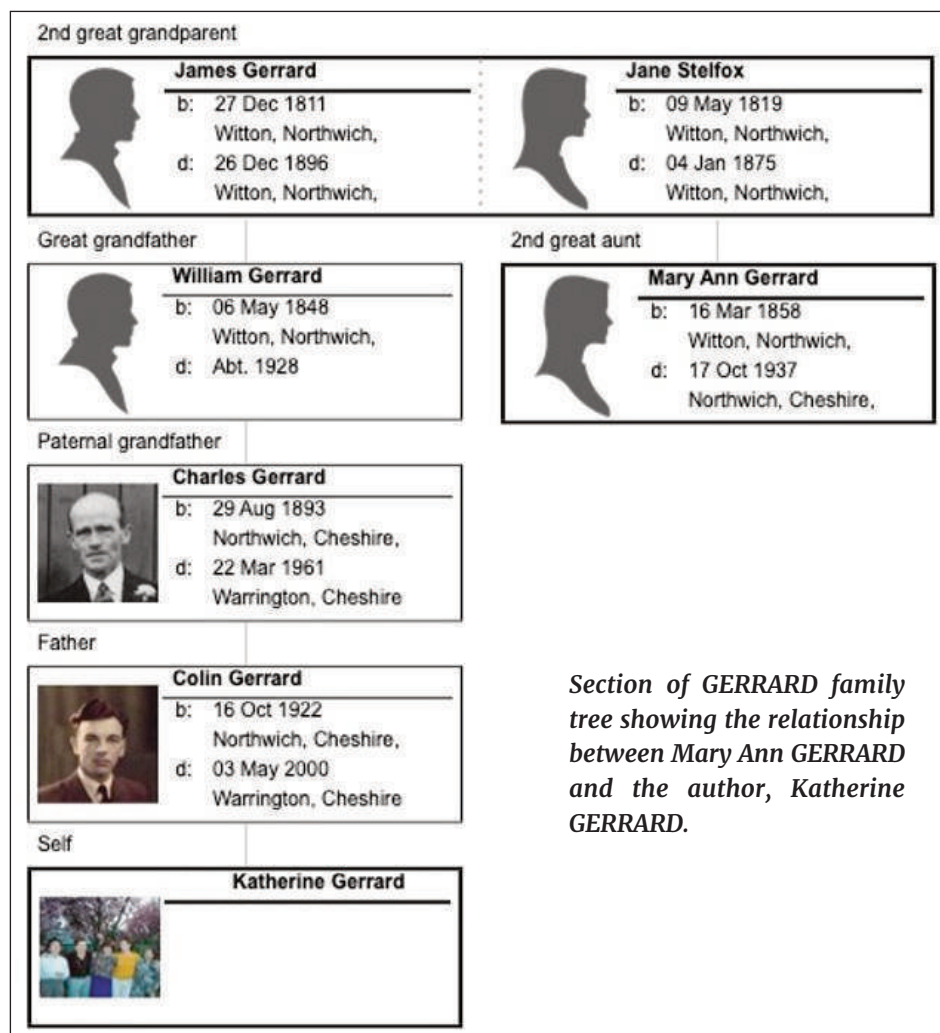
Background

Mary Ann GERRARD married John ROSE in 1878 and bore eight live children between 1878 and 1893. Three sons survived to adulthood, but all five of her daughters died between the ages of ten months and eighteen months.

Some echoes across the century include:

- I am one of five sisters, all still living
- I have my own experience of baby loss
- We both survived a global pandemic in our sixties
- After a career as a biomedical scientist in the field of microbiology and virology, I was shocked to discover the causes of death recorded on the girls' death certificates.

How did Mary Ann cope with the repeated tragedies of losing her girls? How did this impact her life, the lives of her wider family, the local community, and subsequent generations?



My father Colin GERRARD was fifteen when Mary Ann died in 1937. They were both born and raised in Castle, Northwich, where my father lived until he enlisted in the RAF in 1941, so it is very likely that he would have known her and members of the wider family. How would he have been affected by that communal grief?

These reflections have also led me to uncover the field of epigenetics (the study of how cells control gene activity without changing the DNA sequence), which offers other intriguing threads to explore. I can envisage potential sequels and twists to the story inspired by these ideas (watch this space...)

“Northwich Roses”

It is April 1888. Mary Ann ROSE, née GERRARD, now aged thirty, and her husband John ROSE, aged thirty-one, have been married for ten years and have three young sons: Willie, seven, Edward Albert, five, and John Arthur, three (see footnote). They have just buried their second daughter, Elizabeth Ann, aged thirteen months, in the churchyard of St Helen’s Church, Witton, Northwich, where she joins her sister Mary Jane who died eight years previously, in 1880, aged eighteen months.

From their death certificates I learned that both died of what are now regarded as preventable diseases: Mary Jane of *pneumonia*, Elizabeth Ann of *membranous croup* (probably diphtheria). I also discovered that their sisters Constance, Clarissa and Linda died of *pertussis* (whooping cough), *measles pneumonia* and *bronchitis* respectively.

Witton MI (NCS Ref no 810 – grave not found in 2005)

St Helen’s Church, Witton

(from FHSC CD Northwich Civic Society’s MIs of Witton Churchyard)

In loving memory

Thy will be done

Mary Jane daughter of John and Mary Ann ROSE of Castle

Died April 13th 1880 aged 18 months

Also Elizabeth Ann their daughter

Died April 27th 1888 aged 13 months

Also Constance their daughter

Died January 14th 1890 aged 11 weeks

Also Clarissa their daughter

Died December 26th 1891 aged 1 year

Also Linda their daughter

Died January 27th 1894 aged 10 months

John ROSE works on the River Weaver as a packet engine driver with his brother-in-law, William GERRARD, a waterman (my great-grandfather). As they meet, returning to work on the Monday after the funeral the day before, their mood is sombre. The story recounts:

Even the words of the priest, knowing only too well the burden this family carries, seem hollow this time ‘Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted’.

As the story develops, I wanted to more deeply understand this priest. Would he have been the parish priest, part of their lives as regular churchgoers? Who was

he, and how did they relate to him? Was he able to provide comfort to them? Their relationship with him and the church can tell me a lot about them, especially the role their faith may have had in sustaining them.

Elizabeth Ann's burial record gives the name of the person who performed the ceremony. It's rather difficult to decipher...a quick search helped me decide it is not HUBBARD, as I first thought, but maybe HIBBERT? After some further searching, the 1889 Electoral Register shows William Hibbert BINNEY residing at Witton Vicarage – that's him!

All the other burials on those pages of the parish register were performed by either Walter R (Richard) GARDNER, Senior Curate or W W E (William Walker Estcourt) HARRISON, Clerk in Holy Orders.

I'd like to think that this suggests that Rev William Hibbert BINNEY knew the family and wished to support them by being the one to officiate at their daughter's funeral. What kind of man was he?

Here I turned to historical newspapers to see what they can tell us about Rev Hibbert BINNEY.

Cheshire Observer, 18 June 1881 p6 (FMP)

William Hibbert BINNEY, BA of New College, Oxford, was ordained as Deacon at Chester Cathedral by the Lord Bishop of Chester, on 12 April 1881, and licensed to Tarporley. He was also reported to have read the gospel during the service. That was the 4th Sunday after Pentecost, so it is possible to imagine him delivering the gospel reading for that day, which would have been Luke 7:36–8:3 'Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman'.

Manchester Courier, 10 December 1886 page 6 (FMP)

The Rev William H BINNEY was reported to have been appointed as the new Vicar of Witton. He graduated from New College, Oxford in 1879 and entered Leeds Clergy School in 1880.

The 1881 census for Leeds lists him, aged 24, as a *Student of Theology*, birthplace Canada, with several other young men resident in the same lodging.

Illustrated London News, 21 April 1888 page 22 (FMP)

Probate was proved in March 1888 for the will of his father the Right Rev Hibbert BINNEY, Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia, who died in April 1887, so our vicar was definitely Canadian. The estate was substantial and lists several other family members, including, very helpfully, the name of his son-in-law, so I'll be able to trace William's sister too.

It is poignant to note that Rev William Hibbert BINNEY officiated at the burial of Elizabeth Ann ROSE a month later, at the end of April 1888, close to the one-year anniversary of his father's death.

There are records of his childhood in Canada:

1871 Canada census

District 196 West Halifax, Subdistrict B Ward 2, Division 1

Hibbert BINNEY	51	1820	b Nova Scotia	C of England Bishop
William BINNEY	14	1856	b Nova Scotia	

Evidence exists in census records of his father visiting the UK before he married, so there will be more family details to research to find their links between the UK and Canada.

1851 England & Wales census

Cambridge Terrace, Paddington, Kensington, London and Middlesex

Elizabeth G FRASER, Head, Wid., 55 (b. c.1796), Lady, b. Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland

Hibbers (sic) BINNEY, Visitor, U, 31 (b. c.1820), Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia, b. Island of Cape Breton

Mrs FRASER is the widow of the Honourable William FRASER, gentleman, but I have not yet been able to discover the link between the FRASER and BINNEY families. It is interesting to note that his father is Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia at the age of thirty-one, a young high achiever, perhaps setting a standard for his son William to aspire to.

Shipping manifests record a journey in November 1893 where Rev William H BINNEY took passage to Halifax, Nova Scotia on *Labrador*. He was appointed commissary to the Bishop of Nova Scotia (after his father died) and seemed to make several visits there over the years.

A 1903 Social History of Cape Breton reports on our Rev BINNEY's grandfather:

...the Rev. Hibbert BINNEY, who married a daughter of Richard STOUT, of Sydney, and whose first child was the late Right Rev. Hibbert BINNEY, the fourth bishop of Nova Scotia. He proved himself an indefatigable worker, and during his seven years' incumbency he visited almost every settlement in the island and baptized over six hundred persons.

This section of the book features a photograph of the Right Rev Hibbert BINNEY – William Hibbert BINNEY’s father – which elicited a whoop of triumph from me, luckily in the privacy of my study rather than in the public archives!

In May 1905 William Hibbert BINNEY again took passage to Canada on *Victorian*, a twenty-four-day voyage. His return two months later was celebrated by the people of Northwich:

***Northwich Guardian*, 26 July 1905 page 2 (FMP)**

Vicar of Northwich returns from Nova Scotia. A presentation was made in appreciation of his involvement with the schools in Northwich. The lengthy article describes the event and some of the reverend’s education and history.

***Northwich Guardian*, 30 Dec 1910 page 4 (FMP)**

New bells were installed at Witton Church to mark Rev BINNEY’s twenty-five years’ service as *a token of high esteem and warm regard for him, and in commemoration not only of his teaching and example, but also of very many kindly and generous acts done in the Parish and district.*

***Cheshire Observer*, 7 Jun 1913 page 12 (FMP)**

The Bishop of Chester appointed the Rev W H BINNEY to be Canon Residentiary of Chester Cathedral. *Canon BINNEY will resign the benefice of Witton but will continue to be rural dean and will undertake some diocesan work.* The article describes an impressive resume and accolades to his service... *There has grown up between Dr BINNEY and the townspeople (of Northwich) a bond of real affection.*

***Stockport Advertiser and Guardian*, 23 Jul 1915 page 3 (FMP)**

20 July 1915 the Rev Canon William Hibbert BINNEY was appointed Chaplain to the Northwich Battalion of the Cheshire Volunteer Regiment.

***Morning Post*, 6 May 1916 page 7 (FMP)**

Report of the death of Rev William H BINNEY on 5 May 1916, age 59.

***Chester Chronicle*, 1 December 1917 page 8 (FMP)**

An oak lychgate at the northeast entrance of the churchyard at St Helen, Witton was erected and dedicated as a memorial to Rev William H BINNEY (the cost was defrayed by his sister Mrs LANCASTER).

The lychgate at St Helen’s Church, Witton, Northwich is inscribed:

In reverence of the ever-blessed Trinity and to the dear memory of William Hibbert BINNEY DD Canon of Chester who entered into rest May 5th 1916. He was for 27 years vicar of this parish. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.



*Lych Gate, Parish Church of St. Helen, Witton
Repton1x, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons*

This series of snapshots paints a rich portrait of Rev William Hibbert BINNEY, providing copious material for me to draw on in fleshing out the imagined story of my ancestors' lives.

Footnote - Mary Ann's three sons:

Willie ROSE (1880 - 1951) innkeeper of *The Bleeding Wolf* in Crown Street in 1911, b. 19 Aug 1880, m. Clarice HOLLAND in 1903, d. 18 Apr 1951 in Davenham Isolation Hospital.

Edward Albert ROSE (1882 - 1940) unmarried, a ship plater at Yarwood's boatbuilders of Northwich, b. 18 Nov 1882, d. 18 Dec 1940 in Clatterbridge, Ches.

John Arthur ROSE (1884 - 1951) engine fitter, then foreman at Brunner Mond, b. 05 Dec 1884, m. Elizabeth BEECH in 1913, d. 24 Mar 1951 in Northwich.

Adoption

by Gren Dix
Membership no. 1806

I have seen that in the 19th century many women died in childbirth. What happened to their remaining children? Those who were fortunate relied on their family network. The baby of an unmarried woman who died in childbirth often remained in their grandparent's home. Sometimes a relative or the oldest child would act as housekeeper. Other times the children would be farmed out to siblings of either the father or mother. This is tantamount to adoption. Adoption of children had no formal legal status in England and Wales until the Adoption of Children Act in 1926, just one hundred years ago.

Some fathers remarried within a matter of months, sometimes to a sister of the wife who had died, even though this was illegal until 1907. I have one tragic/comic case where the wife died leaving the husband with eight children. He soon remarried, had two further children and then selfishly died himself, leaving his second wife with a hoard of children to bring up in a small two-up two-down house.

(Cornelius) Walter BASEY married Louisa JONES in 1895. By 1901 they had three children, as seen in the 1901 census:

1901 piece 2536, folio 157, page 9, Shrewsbury

Walter Basey	head	mar	37	Timber loader	Richards Castle
Louisa Basey	wife	mar	23	-	Knighton
Margery Basey	daur		4	-	Shrewsbury
Lily Basey	daur		2	-	Shrewsbury
Frank Basey	son		4m		Shrewsbury

Walter remarried in 1908 to Rose B LANT. I haven't found the death of his first wife. In 1911 we have

RG14 PN 34278 Henffactri Aberllefeni, Talylllyn, Merionethshire

Walter Basey	head	mar	45	Timber feller	Ludlow
Rose Basey	wife	mar	23	(m 4 years)	Llandovery
Walter Basey	son		4		Llandovery
Cornelius Basey	son		1		Llandovery

Also in 1911:

RG14 PN 16091 Shrewsbury

Emma Forrester	head	wid	53	Laundress	Prees
with her children (youngest age 19), and also					
Marjorie Basey	adopted	daur	14	shop assistant	Shrewsbury
Lillie Basey	adopted	daur	12	school	Shrewsbury
Frank Basey	adopted	son	10	school	Shrewsbury

Why didn't Walter try to reclaim his children after he re-married?

In one sad case a birth certificate registers the birth of Elizabeth in 1940, three weeks after her birth. As well as the usual ten columns (the final one signed by the registrar) there is a note after the tenth column. Just one word - adopted - signed by the superintendent registrar. Her mother's death was registered in the third quarter. Was she dying at the time of the birth registration? One wonders what trauma her family, especially the daughter, faced.

Macclesfield News (8)

from the Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 23 June 1876

A thunderstorm of short duration but of great severity visited Macclesfield and neighbourhood on Friday afternoon, about 4 o'clock. The ancient Parish Church of Prestbury was struck... The lightning struck the weather-cock on the top of the bell-tower, which is said to have been built by Mr Reginald Legh in 1343; the Vane was destroyed, the broken portion lodging on the top of the tower. The lightning appears then to have descended the north side of the tower, so shattering the window in the gallery staircase... it also carried away a portion of buttress, the debris falling with a tremendous crash...

It would appear as if the electric fluid [then] radiated in three directions; the first damaging the staircase, the second proceeding along the telegraph wire till it reached the telegraph post near Mrs Lomas's house, splintering the top of the post, while the third went in the opposite direction, along the wire to the post office. Arrived here, it shattered the back window in the house of Mrs Reed, postmistress, breaking the flower pots which, with their contents, adorned it, severing the telegraph wire in two places, and so injuring the batteries that it was impossible for the remainder of the evening to communicate with any other office. The destructive agent then appears to have passed down the side of the house, the bricks being much blackened... the shock at the telegraph office was so great that the postmistress had... "almost thought the end was come."

The storm is stated to have left traces behind it at Poynton and other places in the neighbourhood, where trees were struck by lightning.

BMD: Church Registers (pre-1837)

by Dave Williams

I have corresponded on this subject before but feel that a few more explanations might be helpful.

All these notes refer to the region of England and Wales – not Scotland or Ireland!

Parish Registers

Before the start of civil registration, there was no official record keeping of births and deaths. The nearest equivalent records are of baptisms and burials.

The most complete set of baptism records are those of parishes in the Church of England (C of E). As the C of E was the Established Church – effectively part of the English State – it had an administration system with extensive record keeping. It had parishes which covered practically all of the inhabited parts of England and Wales. The Church in Wales ceased to be the Established Church in 1920, but this does not affect anything in these notes.

On 5 Sep 1538 Thomas Cromwell issued a mandate to all parishes requiring them to record every baptism, marriage and burial performed. The very early records were all handwritten on blank pages (not pre-printed forms) and there was no standardised format. Some churches recorded baptisms, marriages and burials in a single register in chronological order. Other churches used one register for baptisms and burials, sometimes with baptisms recorded from the beginning of the book, and burials recorded from the back towards the front. The amount of detail recorded varied considerably. Sometimes you find only the name of the individual and date of baptism. Other records may show birth date, mother's maiden name and even additional information such as *third daughter of*...

Under Elizabeth I, an order was issued that from 1598 the records were to be kept in parchment books. Earlier records, which were largely made on paper, were to be copied into parchment books. It was, however, only mandatory that records dating from the start of Elizabeth's reign in 1558 had to be copied, so many churches only copied their records from 1558 onwards and most surviving records date from then.

Also from 1598, a second copy of all baptisms, marriages and burials that had been performed during the previous year at the parish church AND at any other chapels or district churches within the parish had to be made and sent to the Bishop of the diocese – these “Bishop’s Transcripts” or BTs are often in better condition and written more legibly. The usual method for pre-printed registers was to use pages that were arranged exactly as the pages in the register, but WITHOUT any pre-printed numbers. The parish clerk or incumbent would copy the relevant entries from the register onto the blank pages and would add the number of each entry by hand. When you look at the scan of a printed parish record, if the entry number is printed, you are almost certainly looking at the scan of an original register; if the entry number is handwritten, you are probably looking at a Bishop’s Transcript.

This can be important in the case where there is or was more than one church in the parish. In many parishes “chapels of ease” were built where there was a significant population at some distance from the parish church. From about the middle of the 19th Century “district churches” were created in some parishes. Chapels of ease and district churches were effectively what became known as “daughter churches” in the 20th Century. These churches would often have their own registers, but the Bishop’s Transcript would be sent from the parish church. There would usually be an indication that the record came from a chapelry or district church, but this may not be clearly visible – and if you are looking at a transcription, this detail may have been omitted.

Dade Registers

In 1777 the Archbishop of York directed that the system of recording baptisms proposed by Rev. William Dade should be introduced throughout the York diocese. The registers were to include child's name, seniority (e.g. first son), and dates of birth and baptism. Additionally, the father's name, profession, place of abode and descent (i.e. names, professions and places of abode of his parents) was recorded. Similar information was recorded about the mother, and her parents. Similar information was to be recorded in burial registers. These "Dade Registers" can be found in parishes in the counties of Yorkshire, Cheshire, Lancashire and Nottinghamshire. They can also be found in some parishes in Surrey, Gloucestershire, Devon, Essex and Dorset, all of which are in the Province of Canterbury. This type of register ceased with the introduction of pre-printed registers in 1812.

Pre-printed Registers

Following George Rose’s act of 1812, baptisms, marriages and burials were entered in separate, specially printed books, with eight entries per page (usually

three entries for marriages) and including more information. It seems that the first register in any parish usually had 400 pages (i.e. 3200 entries). Subsequent registers might have fewer pages depending on how frequently baptisms or burials were to be expected; 100 or 200 page registers were common – and cheaper to buy! It was usually the case that the registers were preprinted with sequential numbers, so that page 1 would have entries 1 to 8 and so on.

Non-Conformists

Of course, there were many baptisms in Nonconformist Chapels and in Roman Catholic Churches, but none of these had the administrative organisation of the C of E. Baptisms were usually recorded at the time of the event, but if a chapel closed, the registers might have been taken home by an individual or simply thrown away. A number of chapel registers have survived, but usually only because somebody thought “they might be useful one day” – a good source for chapel records is FreeReg.org.uk. Roman Catholic registers were usually kept by individual parishes. The Roman Catholic church in England and Wales was and is also organised in dioceses, but it seems that there was not any need for them to maintain a centralised or regional record system for baptisms, etc.

Methodist chapels were organised in *Circuits*, where ministers would be responsible for looking after several chapels, sometimes spread over quite a large area. *Circuit Registers* do not always indicate in which individual chapel a baptism or other ceremony took place.

Baptism could be performed on the day of birth, but more often a week or two later. Sometimes several children of a family might be baptised on the same day. Some people were not baptised until adulthood. If the person baptised was thought to be older than an *infant*, an approximate age or alleged birth date would often be entered in the register. So the date of baptism can often only give an approximation of the date of birth.

A child would normally only be baptised once. But sometimes a child that had been privately baptised at home would be *received into the church* at a later date. Both ceremonies might be recorded in the church register. Private baptism was often carried out if a newborn baby appeared to be very ill and might not survive long enough to be taken to church to be baptised.

Before about 1850, the options for burials were rather limited. Most C of E parish churches had churchyard burial grounds. Most chapels did not, mainly because funds had not been available to purchase the land required. Land was often not available where churches were constructed in already built-up areas. There were some burial societies, where burial plots were available to subscribing members.

From as far back as the 17th century there had been a small number of dissenters' burial grounds such as Bunhill Fields in London, and some Quaker burial grounds. But for most ordinary people, until the Burial Laws Amendment Act of 1880, the only option was burial in a parish churchyard. A person had a legal right to be buried in the churchyard of the parish in which they lived, providing that the churchyard was still open for burials. But this meant that you had to have a C of E funeral service, even if you were not a churchgoer, or you attended a different church (of any denomination). The 1880 Act allowed burials with funeral services from other Christian denominations, or burials without any service. These non-C of E burials had to be arranged with the vicar of the parish and had to comply with all fees and regulations that applied to anyone else. Details of the burials had to be given to the parish so that an entry could be made in the parish register.

Incidentally, suicides could be buried in consecrated ground (e.g. a churchyard) from 1823 (Right to Burial Act), but without a Christian service or a memorial. The 1880 Act allowed suicides to have a Christian funeral service.

Burial registers record that a person was buried on a given date; the date of death is not usually recorded. In most cases, the location of the burial plot is not recorded either – even if it is, you may need a burial plot plan to find it.

Municipal Cemeteries

During the 19th Century there were a number of outbreaks of diseases such as cholera and typhoid, particularly in poorer areas of towns and cities, where people had to obtain their water from streams or rivers. One potential source of contagion was considered to be the drainage of rainwater through the soil of burial grounds, especially those on higher ground. Many municipal cemeteries were therefore opened in the 1850s and 1860s. In many cases, churchyards were declared closed as soon as a Municipal Cemetery was opened for residents of a parish. In this sense, “closed” meant that no new graves would be dug. But for people who had purchased family burial plots before the date of closure, further burials could take place as long as there was space in the plot. Victorian family burial plots were normally dug about 12–13 feet deep to allow the burial of up to four adult coffins with a minimum of 30 inches of soil above the top coffin. Infant mortality was very high compared to the present day, and family graves could accommodate several small coffins.

Burial could take place on the date of death, but usually only if the person concerned was already considered to be “on their deathbed”. Until the availability of refrigeration, burial was usually within a week of the death date.

Cremation was legalised in the UK in 1895, the first crematorium being at Woking. The second was at Manchester Southern Cemetery in 1896 and several others soon followed in major cities. However, cremation did not become common until the 1950s. Burial and cremation were the only two legal means to dispose of a body. Cremation was seen as the end of the disposal process, with little official interest in the subsequent disposal of the cremated remains (“ashes”). Burials of ashes in churchyards was generally not recorded in burial registers until recent decades. Burial of ashes may not take place until several decades after the death. Funeral services in a church preceding cremation would not be recorded in the burial register, but in a parish Service Register – these records are not usually available online. Local newspapers are often the easiest way to find details of such funerals.

Baptisms and burials were often not recorded in the registers at the time of the service, particularly in the case of “private” baptisms or when services were being carried out by different clergy. Notes would be kept in a pocket book and the register updated later. For this reason entries in registers are sometimes not in strict chronological order – or may be completely missing.

Marriage Registers

Marriages, on the other hand, are usually recorded on the day of the ceremony, especially after 1812 with the requirement for couples to sign the register.

Before 1 July 1837 and with a few exceptions, legal marriages could only take place in a Church of England church. Marriages could be solemnised in all parish churches, but some C of E chapels were not licensed for marriages. There were no certificates of marriage issued; if you needed to prove that a marriage had taken place, it was necessary to consult the relevant parish register. For this reason, especially if either of the families concerned had property or other financial assets, some couples obtained marriage licences. These were in effect bonds or contracts stipulating where the marriage would take place and with significant financial penalty if the marriage did not take place as planned. These would provide additional legal records of the existence of the marriage.

Pre-printed marriage registers were used from 1812, but different parishes used different formats. There is a principal difference between these register forms and the forms used since civil registration. On the older forms the bride and groom signed (or made their mark) to certify that the marriage had taken place between them at the church or chapel concerned on the date specified, by banns or by licence. The form was signed by the officiating minister and two witnesses. At least one of the witnesses was often the parish clerk or other parish officer.

The details of bride and groom indicated *of this parish* (otp) or the name of the parish of residence. The groom may have his occupation entered, but often just *bachelor* or *widower* was written. The bride was usually just *spinster* or *widow*. There was an entry *with permission of...*, to be used if either of the couple was a minor; this may show the name of a parent or guardian, but otherwise there was no information about the parentage of the couple. Sometimes this had superfluous entries such as *those concerned*, perhaps to avoid leaving it empty.

The number of forms on a page can vary but was often three. Sometimes the form includes details of reading of banns, but often the banns are recorded in a separate register. Banns had to be read on three Sundays prior to the marriage and the marriage had to take place within a limited time after the third reading. The banns were read in the parish(es) where the bride and groom lived. Back in the days when marriages were low-key affairs without an elaborate reception or honeymoon, the marriage might take place on the day after the third reading.

It should be noted that some transcriptions (particularly on Family Search) confuse the dates of reading of banns with the date of marriage. Wikipedia tells us that in USA *By the 19th and 20th centuries, the practice of announcing banns faded, as most religious denominations abandoned the practice or made it optional*. This may explain why the confusion arose.

Once again, if you are looking at a marriage record with printed entry numbers, it will be a scan of the original register; if the numbers are handwritten, it may be a Bishop's Transcript.

Calendar Change

Before I move on to the subject of civil registration (in the next issue), I should mention the calendar change that took place in 1752.

Prior to this date, the first day of the new year began on the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when according to the scriptures, Mary received a message from the Angel *...and conceived by the Holy Ghost*. As the church celebrates the birth of Jesus on 25 December, the date of conception was taken to be nine months earlier on 25 March. So this date was seen to be appropriate for the date when the year number changed. The days in January, February and the first 24 days of March were considered to be part of the old year.

The 25th day of March was also known as *the day of Our Lady*, shortened to *Lady Day*. This was the most important of the four *quarter days* when many rents become due. In the days when agricultural workers (in particular) were hired on annual contracts, the contracts had to begin on Lady Day.

The Bishop's Transcripts for the year up to and including 24 March were prepared on Lady Day and submitted to the diocese soon after.

In 1752, two significant changes were made to the Calendar. New Year's day became 1 January, and we (i.e. the then "British Empire") switched from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar.

It had become clear that there was a problem with the Julian calendar. The orbit of the earth around the sun takes slightly less than 365¼ days, but the Julian calendar, with a leap day EVERY four years, was overcorrecting – the Gregorian calendar omits the leap day in years divisible by 100. Over the centuries the dates were getting more and more out of step with the seasons. Pope Gregory introduced a new Calendar to solve this problem, but England and other Protestant countries did not want to be seen to "obey" the Pope, so did not switch to the new Calendar immediately.

The people who were most affected by the distortion of the Julian Calendar were the farmers. They could not employ workers until Lady Day, which meant that they were losing part of springtime. To resolve the problem it was necessary to "lose" eleven days to bring the calendar back into sync with the seasons; to achieve this, September 2 was immediately followed by September 14. This didn't suit everybody as workers thought they would lose several days' pay.

Incidentally, the reason why the tax year starts on 5 April is that this is the date that Lady Day would have been when offset by the calendar switch – although as the Julian Calendar continues to overcorrect, it is no longer a precise match. In some places the submission of Bishop's Transcripts continued to be based on Lady Day for some time after 1752.

Macclesfield News (9)

from the Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 18 August 1876

ANTI-VACCINATION CASE FROM WILMSLOW – At the County Petty Sessions held at Macclesfield on Tuesday, the summons against **Henry Beeston** for refusing to obey a magistrate's order to have his child vaccinated was resumed... **Edward Earle**, vaccination officer, said the child was born in April, 1875, and he had received no notice of its having been vaccinated. When asked for his reason for not having the operation performed, defendant said that vaccination instead of being good for the child did it harm. **Mr Davenport** expressed his surprise at the statement, and asked defendant how it was the whole country was raging with small-pox before the Vaccination Act was passed, and since then the cases had been very few... The defendant said that when small pox was so prevalent, inoculation was in practice, and any old woman could go about and inoculate with a stocking needle...

Net That Serf

The Computer Section

Contents

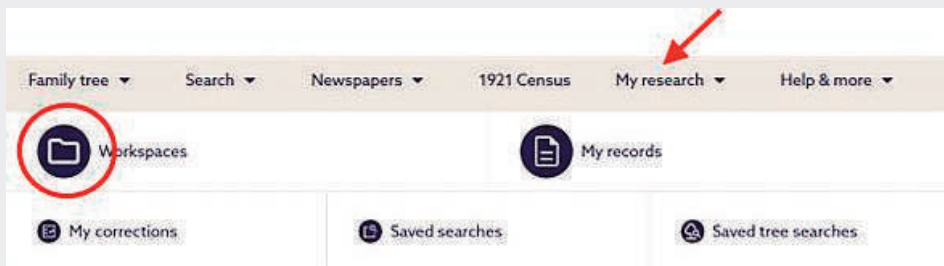
Workspaces on FindMyPast: A Smart Way to Keep Track of Your Research?	47	Patterns of Naming, Occupation, and Mobility in the Prescott Families of Cheshire, 1700–1900	51
Full-Text Searches on FamilySearch	49	Closing Snippet	58

Workspaces on FindMyPast: A Smart Way to Keep Track of Your Research?

By Margaret Roberts

If you've ever found yourself surrounded by open tabs, half-finished notes and that slightly uneasy feeling that you know you've seen that record before, just not quite where, then you are certainly not alone. Family history has a habit of spreading itself out across notebooks, folders and screens, and keeping everything organised can sometimes feel like a task in itself.

One of the more helpful tools available on FindMyPast is the Workspace feature, designed to bring a little order to that gentle chaos. In essence, a Workspace is your own digital research area, a place where records, notes and ideas can sit together, connected and easy to revisit. It acts rather like a research folder, but with the added advantage that everything remains linked back to the original source.



Creating a Workspace is simple enough. Once logged into your FindMyPast account, you can set one up in a matter of moments. Simply click on the *My research* tab>*Workspaces*>*Create workspace*, giving it a clear title that reflects what

you are working on – perhaps a particular ancestor, a family line, or one of those persistent brick wall problems. From that point on, as you search the records, you can save anything of interest directly into that space. Census entries, parish records, newspaper reports, all can be gathered together without the need to download files or keep track of where they came from.

What makes this particularly useful is not just the ability to store records, but to build up a picture of your thinking alongside them. You can add notes, jot down theories, record questions and, importantly, keep track of what you have already ruled out. It becomes, over time, a working record of your research rather than simply a collection of documents.

To see how this works in practice, let us take a familiar sort of problem. Imagine researching a man named Thomas JOHNSON, believed to have been born in Crewe in the mid-1870s and later employed on the railway. A quick search produces several possible matches, each plausible, but none immediately convincing. It is exactly the kind of situation where information begins to pile up without quite resolving itself.

By creating a Workspace, perhaps titled *Thomas Johnson – Crewe Railway Worker*, everything can be drawn together in one place. An 1881 census entry is saved, then a possible match in 1891 showing a young railway labourer. A baptism record is added, followed by a brief newspaper report of a railway accident involving a man of the same name. Individually, each record offers a possibility; collectively, they begin to form a pattern.

Alongside these, notes start to build, two possible birth years, a recurring connection to railway work, a reminder to check the occupation on a future certificate. Just as importantly, certain records are dismissed and noted as such, avoiding the temptation to revisit the same false leads later.

It is often only when everything is visible together that the pieces begin to align. A street name in one census sits close to the railway works; the newspaper report mentions an address only a few roads away; the baptism record, previously uncertain, now fits neatly with both location and occupation. What had seemed like several unrelated possibilities gradually resolves into a coherent story.

The breakthrough, when it comes, is not the result of finding a single new record, but of seeing the existing ones more clearly. With confidence in the evidence, the correct certificate can be ordered, the line extended, and one more brick wall quietly set aside.

Workspaces do not change the fundamental nature of family history research – there is still the same careful searching, the same weighing of evidence – but they do make the process feel more manageable. By keeping everything together, linked and easy to review, they allow us to spend less time retracing our steps and more time moving forward.

For those of us used to paper notes and well-thumbed folders, it may feel like a small shift in habit, but it is one that quickly proves its worth. After all, sometimes the answer is not in finding something new, but in making better sense of what we already have.

Full-Text Searches on FamilySearch

By Mike Smith

All archives have a backlog of documents they have yet to index and make searchable. The FamilySearch Archive in Utah is no exception. But over the last few years, improvements in AI technology have allowed them to automate the process of creating a computer searchable transcription of their archive. Full-Text search allows us to use the results of this process.

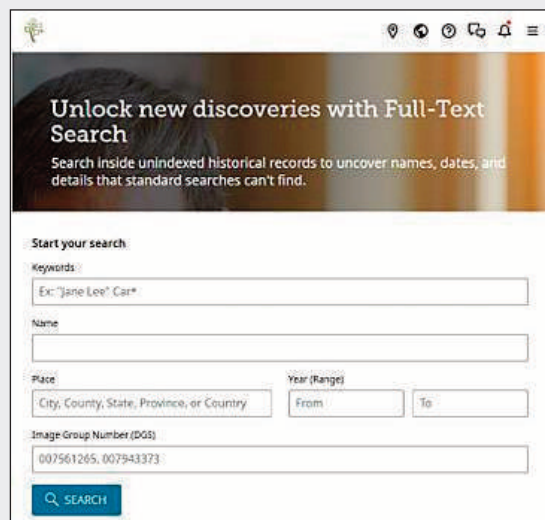
A presentation at this year's RootsTech discussed Full-Text Search and how to use it: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/familysearch-full-text-search-your-golden-path-to-ancestral-discovery>

I decided to test it by trying to find more information about one of my ancestors. With no Cheshire ancestors, I chose one from West Sussex. Having logged in to

the FamilySearch website at www.familysearch.org I selected “Full Text” from the Search Menu. This displays the form shown.

In order to limit the number of documents listed, and to ensure they were mostly relevant to my research, I refined my search with the following settings:

Keywords: Gardener
Name: “James Milton”
Place: Petworth, Sussex, England
Year (Range): 1770 – 1855

The image shows a screenshot of the FamilySearch website's Full-Text Search interface. At the top, there's a header with the FamilySearch logo and navigation icons. Below that, a banner reads "Unlock new discoveries with Full-Text Search" and "Search inside unindexed historical records to uncover names, dates, and details that standard searches can't find." The main section is titled "Start your search" and contains several input fields: "Keywords" with an example "Ex: 'Jane Lee' Car*", "Name", "Place" (with a sub-label "City, County, State, Province, or Country"), "Year (Range)" with "From" and "To" sub-fields, and "Image Group Number (DGS)" with an example "007561265, 007943373". A blue "SEARCH" button is at the bottom left of the form.

James MILTON was my 3x great-grandfather, born in 1777, died in 1850. He was employed as a gardener and lived in and around Petworth.

This search produced six results. Five of these relate to 'my' James MILTON.

The first and third results were two different images of the same document, a marriage register from the parish of Broadwater, on the outskirts of Worthing in Sussex. They show the marriage of Amy MILTON, James' daughter, in 1839 – see the figure below, where the search strings are highlighted. Note that the text search has found the name in the Father's Name box and as a witness; these items are not normally included in the usual indexes.

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the Time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
62	June 24	James Tuff Amy Milton	fuller fuller	Bachelor Spinster		Garnard Inn Worthing 12 Market St. Worthing	James Tuff James Milton	Sam Cooper Gardener

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, James Tuff and Amy Milton in the Presence of us, James Milton and Susan Moore by license The Rev. Mr. Smith

I Peter Brown Minister of the Parish of Broadwater in the County of Sussex do hereby certify that the foregoing

As well as the highlighted image, the full transcript is provided. This is not particular useful with forms like the above as the AI tends to jumble text in different boxes together. It is better with conventionally formatted text.

Two further results were Tax assessments, a Poor Rate from 1813 and a Land Tax from 1830 for a house James MILTON owned in the parish of Fittleworth.

The last relevant document was a marriage register from Pulborough showing the marriage of James' daughter Fanny in 1848. I had not been aware of this daughter!

I hope this article encourages you to explore the vast number of documents revealed by these automated transcriptions. In other searches I have explored Wills, finding names of legatees and witnesses and some US County biographies giving me potted summaries of ancestors' lives! The number of documents transcribed continues to grow, so it is worth repeating searches to find recently revealed documents.

Patterns of Naming, Occupation, and Mobility in the Prescott Families of Cheshire, 1700–1900

By John Prescott

Abstract

This study reconstructs the long-term naming, occupational, and mobility patterns of the Prescott families of Cheshire using a dataset of over one thousand individuals drawn from parish registers, occupational descriptions, and tenancy indicators. Canonical forenames show an exceptionally stable four-pillar structure (John, Thomas, Richard, George), confirmed by a highly significant chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 197.744$, $p \approx 8.6 \times 10^{-41}$). Occupational categories reveal a dual industrial–energy profile characteristic of the Weaver Valley and Chester–Winwick corridor, while parish clustering demonstrates strong regional continuity. Tenancy and migration flags indicate a semi-mobile working-class population with consistent smallholding patterns. Naming-cycle analysis identifies repeated two- and three-name sequences across multiple generations, suggesting a culturally inherited naming algorithm rather than random variation. The study introduces a novel dual-AI analytical method for working with aggregated historical data, offering a replicable framework for surname-based microhistory.

1. Introduction

The Prescott families of Cheshire present one of the most coherent cultural systems encountered in regional surname studies. Despite their presence across multiple parishes—Chester, Winwick, Middlewich, Weaver Valley, Budworth, Over, and Whitegate—the Prescotts behave as a unified group in their naming choices, occupational inheritance, and mobility patterns. This article examines those structures using aggregated historical data and introduces a new methodological approach designed to extract long-term behavioural patterns from incomplete or uneven sources.

2. A Practical New Method for Analysing Surname Groups

This study uses a new analytical approach developed specifically for family historians working with uneven or incomplete records. The method combines traditional genealogical practice with a structured analytical workflow that allows long-term patterns to be identified from aggregated data. It is designed to be transparent, replicable, and easy to adapt to other surname studies.

2.1. Why a New Method Helps Family Historians

Many researchers face the same challenges:

- parish registers vary in spelling and detail
- occupational descriptions change over time
- families move between parishes, leaving partial trails
- naming patterns are visible but difficult to quantify

The method used here was created to solve these problems in a practical, accessible way using tools that most family historians already have.

2.2. How the Method Works

The approach has three simple stages:

Stage 1 — Standardising the Records (Local Work)

All identifiable data is processed locally by the researcher.

This includes:

- standardising forenames
- grouping occupations
- assigning tenancy and migration flags
- creating family groupings

This ensures accuracy and keeps all personal data offline.

Stage 2 — Analysing the Aggregated Data (Excel-Based)

Once standardised, the data is exported as a 12-column CSV containing only:

- canonical forenames
- occupation categories
- parishes
- tenancy/migration flags
- family group codes
- birth years

An Excel-based workflow then:

- counts distributions
- calculates percentages
- performs chi-square tests
- detects naming cycles
- generates charts
- produces summary tables

This stage is fully transparent and easy to replicate.

Stage 3 — Interpreting the Patterns (Structured Modelling)

The aggregated results are then interpreted using a structured modelling approach that highlights:

- naming traditions
- occupational inheritance
- parish clustering
- migration behaviour

This helps reveal long-term cultural patterns that are not obvious from individual records.

2.3. Naming-Cycle Detection

A key innovation of this method is the detection of repeated naming sequences within families. These cycles—such as John–Thomas–John or Richard–Richard–Richard—can reveal cultural naming rules that persist across generations. This is a new analytical tool for family historians and can be applied to any surname group.

2.4. Availability of the Method

A full description of the analytical method, including the CSV structure and configuration options, is available on request for any researcher wishing to apply the framework to their own surname study.

2.5. Division of Analytical Roles

- Local Processing (Excel-based):
All raw data handling—counts, percentages, chi-square calculations, naming-cycle detection—was performed locally.
- Structural Modelling and Interpretation (Copilot):
Copilot was used to structure the analytical framework, interpret aggregated patterns, and model the cultural logic behind naming cycles, occupational inheritance, and parish clustering.

2.6. Why This Method Matters

This dual-AI approach offers:

1. Replicability
2. Transparency
3. Innovation

It provides a methodological template for surname-based microhistory.

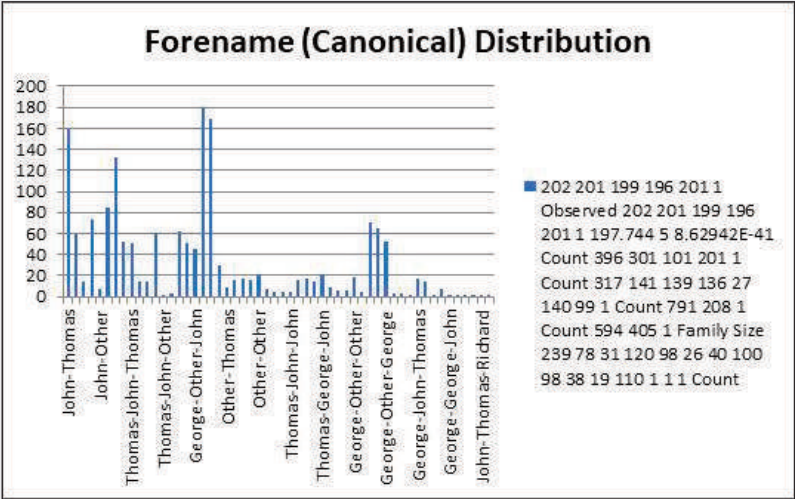
3. Forename Structure

3.1. Statistical Significance

- $\chi^2 = 197.744$
- $df = 5$
- $p \approx 8.6 \times 10^{-41}$

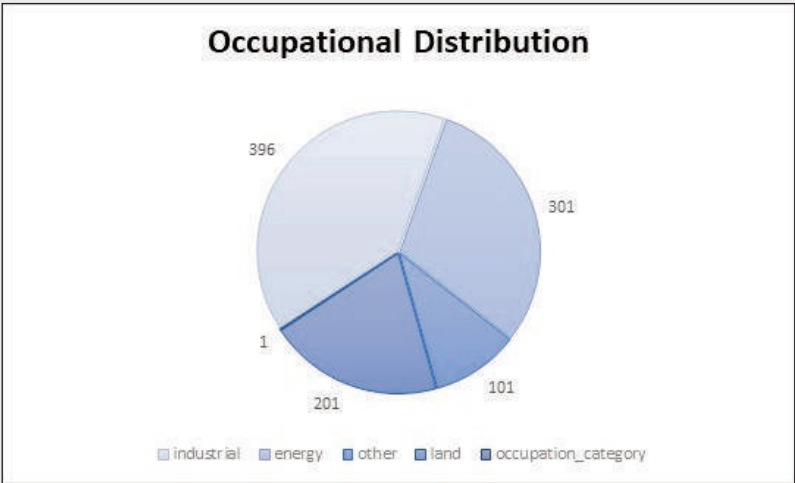
This is a deliberate cultural naming system.

FIGURE 1 — Forename Distribution



4. Occupational Categories

FIGURE 2 — Occupational Category Distribution



5. Parish Clustering

PARISH	Count	Percent
Chester	317	0.317
Winwick	141	0.141
Middlewich	139	0.139
WeaverValley	136	0.136
Whitegate	27	0.027
Budworth	140	0.14
Over	99	0.099
parish	1	0.001

6. Tenancy and Migration

- Tenancy 1: 20.8%
- Migration: 40.5%

7. Naming Cycles

Dominant 2-name cycles:

- John–Thomas (159)
- Thomas–John (60)
- Thomas–George (85)
- George–Other (133)
- Richard–Richard (180)

Dominant 3-name cycles:

- John–Thomas–John (52)
- Thomas–John–Thomas (51)
- John–Thomas–George (62)
- Other–George–Other (65)
- Richard–Richard–Richard (169)

These cycles reveal a culturally inherited naming algorithm.

8. Conclusion

The Prescott families of Cheshire exhibit a remarkably coherent cultural system across naming, occupation, and mobility. The four-pillar forename structure remains stable across the entire dataset. Occupational distributions reinforce the picture of a population rooted in industrial and energy-related work. Parish clustering shows strong regional anchors despite significant mobility. Naming cycles reveal a structured naming logic that persisted across generations.

This study demonstrates how aggregated historical data can uncover deep behavioural continuities within working-class families and offers a methodological template for future surname-based microhistorical studies.

9 Acknowledgement

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Gemini, used during early exploratory stages to test synthetic pattern-generation methods, and Microsoft Copilot, used for structural modelling, interpretation, and the preparation of this article. All identifiable data processing was performed locally by the researcher.

Appendix A — Forename Distribution (Full Table)

FORENAME (Canonical)	Count	Percent
John	202	0.202
Thomas	201	0.201
George	199	0.199
Other	196	0.196
Richard	201	0.201
forename_can	1	0.001

Appendix B — Parish Distribution (Full Table)

PARISH	Count	Percent
Chester	317	0.317
Winwick	141	0.141
Middlewich	139	0.139
WeaverValley	136	0.136
Whitegate	27	0.027
Budworth	140	0.14
Over	99	0.099
parish	1	0.001

Appendix C — Naming Cycle Types (Full Table)

NAMING CYCLE TYPE	Count
John-Thomas	159
Thomas-John	60
Thomas-Other	15
Other-John	73
John-Other	8
Thomas-George	85
George-Other	133

John-Thomas-John	52
Thomas-John-Thomas	51
John-Thomas-Other	14
Thomas-Other-John	14
Other-John-Thomas	61
Thomas-John-Other	1
John-Other-John	3
John-Thomas-George	62
Thomas-George-Other	51
George-Other-John	46
Richard-Richard	180
Richard-Richard-Richard	169
George-John	30
Other-Thomas	9
John-John	16
Thomas-Thomas	17
George-George	16
Other-Other	21
George-John-Other	7
John-Other-Thomas	4
Other-Thomas-John	4
Thomas-John-John	5
John-John-Thomas	16
John-Thomas-Thomas	17
Thomas-Thomas-George	14
Thomas-George-John	22
Other-John-John	9
Thomas-George-George	6
George-George-Other	6
George-Other-Other	19
Other-Other-John	5
Other-George	70
Other-George-Other	65
George-Other-George	52
George-Other-Thomas	3
Other-Thomas-George	3
Other-George-John	1
George-John-Thomas	17
Other-Other-George	14

George-John-John	1
George-George-George	7
George-George-John	1
Richard-John	2
Thomas-Richard	1
Richard-John-Thomas	2
John-Thomas-Richard	1
Thomas-Richard-Richard	1

Appendix D - Chi-square Test

Chi-square (forename vs uniform)

Category	Observed	Expected (uniform)	Component
John	202	166.6667	7.490667
Thomas	201	166.6667	7.072667
George	199	166.6667	6.272667
Other	196	166.6667	5.162667
Richard	201	166.6667	7.072667
forename_can	1	166.6667	164.6727
Chi-square total	197.744		
Degrees of freedom	5		
p-value			
(CHISQ.DIST.RT)	8.63E-41		

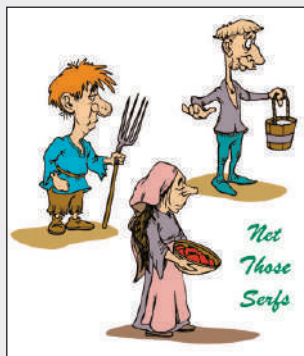
Closing Snippet

*The first computer can be traced back as far as Adam and Eve.
It was an Apple with extremely limited memory: just one byte.
Then everything crashed.*

I would like to thank Geoff Johnson, who has stepped down as leader of the Computer Club and editor of Net That Serf, for his contributions to the CHESHIRE ANCESTOR since 2008-9.

Please send all future articles for both NTS and the main journal to the FHSC Editor and they will be placed in whichever section of the journal is appropriate to the subject matter.

Rosie Rowley
FHSC Editor.



Cryptic Quiz Answers

Answers to the Cryptic Quiz from page 29.

Malpas	Shotwick	Acton	Ledsham
Aston	Rainow	Ness	Handforth
Chester	Hatton	Parkgate	Scholar Green
Crewe	Port Sunlight	Over	Pickmere
Byley	Eaton	Eastham	Ince
Backford	Daresbury		

Captain Peregrine Trevithick pulled the collar of his greatcoat up more closely around his ears and hoped that he would not have to wait much longer. In the undergrowth of the nearby shrubbery, some nocturnal animal **passed** by, free from all constraints unless it were to be **shot wickedly** by a poacher. He wished now that he had not impetuously decided to **act on** the dictates of his heart which had **led shamelessly** to this **astonishing** midnight elopement plot with Miss Louisa Fitzowen. At long last, he caught sight of a petite figure carefully making its way towards him.

“You came! I thought you might have had second thoughts, particularly given the **rain**,” **owned** the Captain.”

“I gave you my word that I would see this through,” Louisa said, a little **sadness** in her voice.

“Then come, let us make haste,” he replied, putting his **hand forth** to take a bag from her. “You have no other luggage? I thought you would have brought at least a trunkful of dresses.”

“I thought it best not to bring a **chest**, **erring** on the side of caution,” Louisa replied. “There is just that valise and this hat box. Given the rain, I’ve put on an old bonnet; I did not wish to spoil my best **hat tonight!**”

He led her through the **park gate** and into the lane beyond, where a hired driver and carriage awaited them. Once the small amount of baggage was stowed and they were seated, he gave the order to the driver to head north.

“You are sure that he knows the way?” Louisa said, tremulously. “He looks somewhat disreputable, I’m afraid.”

“Even if he does not know the route to Scotland, rest assured that I do, my love. I am not some clergyman or Oxford **scholar, green** to the art of navigation! My

crew even admits that I am excellent at plotting a course whatever the prevailing conditions. When we reach a **port**, **sunlight** is not always there to greet us! A navy man I may be, but I am not incapable of planning a proper route on the land as well as **over** the seas. I do not **pick** merely random routes, nor do I navigate **by ley** lines.”

“I do not doubt you, Peregrine. I am just worried that my father will discover my flight earlier than I would hope and try to catch up with us!”

“We will be across the border before daybreak and in Greta Green by lunchtime if we make good time and do not stop.”

“Not stop? What about breakfast?”

“We will **eat on** the way. I brought a hamper full of good things – chicken cooked with spices from the **East**, **ham**, pressed tongue, quince jelly. And we will be **back for dinner** in Carlisle later on, once you are Mrs Trevithick. I remain hopeful that your father **dares bury** the hatchet and forgives us both in the end.”

Macclesfield News (10)

from the Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 2 June 1876

GIFT OF A FREE LIBRARY TO MACCLESFIELD – There was much rejoicing at Macclesfield on Saturday, the occasion being the formal opening and handing over to the town of a public free library, which has been built and stocked with 10,000 volumes of books, by Mr David Chadwick, one of the members for the borough. Mr Chadwick first made known his wish to present his native town with such an institution in January 1874. The offer was cordially accepted by the Town Council and after considerable delay... the work was proceeded with...

The site of the library is at the foot of what is known as Park Lane, with a frontage to Park Green... The designs selected were those of Mr James Stevens, architect, of Macclesfield and Manchester; Messrs Neild and Co. of Manchester being the contractors for the whole of the works. The total cost, including the land, is £5140. The external appearance of the structure is very ornate. The style of architecture has been described as “Domestic Gothic.” In the selection of books the donor has had the advantage of the assistance of Mr Plant, of the Peel Park Library, Salford. They comprise works in almost every branch of literature, the preponderance being on the side of “novels, tales, and works of amusement.” Among those present at the inaugural ceremony were Mr Chadwick, M.P.; Mr W C Brocklehurst, M.P.; Mr Pennington, M.P. (Stockport); the Mayors of Macclesfield, Manchester, Salford, Stockport and Congleton; Sir Henry Cole, C.B.; Dr John Watts (Manchester), Mr Plant (Salford), Mr W E A Axon, and many local gentlemen.

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NOTE:

GL: Group Leader
AGL: Acting Group Leader
GC: Group Contact

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Front cover photo: The Blue Coat School, Upper Northgate Street, Chester, photo by kind permission of Coram. The building is Grade II* listed (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1375966>)

See *Was Your Ancestor a Foundling?* by Dr. Anthony Annakin-Smith on page 24.

Back cover photo: Town Hall, Macclesfield, taken Monday, 24 February, 2014 (cropped) © habiloid (cc-by-sa/2.0) geograph.org.uk/p/6672671

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Macclesfield



Macclesfield Town Hall

The historic market town of Macclesfield blends centuries of silk-weaving heritage with a vibrant modern identity. Its mills, medieval landmarks, and proximity to the Peak District make it one of East Cheshire's most characterful communities, and it was recently named one of the best places in the UK to live by the *Sunday Times*.

Macclesfield sits on the River Bollin at the edge of the Cheshire Plain, about 16 miles south of Manchester. Once recorded in the Domesday Book, it grew around St Michael's Church and received its market charter in 1261, cementing its role as a regional trading hub. From the 17th century onward, Macclesfield became synonymous with silk. By the 18th century, it had evolved into Britain's leading silk-manufacturing centre, with more than 70 mills shaping its skyline. The industry influenced everything from local architecture to social life, and its legacy remains visible in preserved mill buildings and dedicated museums.

The town centre showcases elegant Georgian architecture, the historic Town Hall, and the lively Treacle Market, held monthly and named after a local folk tale. Macclesfield also has cultural resonance as the hometown of Ian Curtis, the Joy Division singer, whose memory is marked by a plaque near his former workplace. Just beyond the town lie Macclesfield Forest and Tegg's Nose Country Park, offering sweeping views and walking trails that highlight the area's rural charm. Macclesfield today blends heritage, creativity, and natural beauty, an East Cheshire town with a distinctive past and a dynamic present.