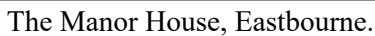




Family History Society for Eastbourne & District
www.eastbournefhs.org.uk



Vol. 39.3 February 2025



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COMMITTEE MEMBER:

We have four vacancies. Why not join us?

Copy deadlines for articles please.

January 15th, April 16th, July 16th & October 16th.

ENQUIRIES TO THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

(With s.a.e. Please)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (Due 1st May)

£14.00 Individual £16.00 joint (2 people at same address)

£18.00 overseas (Includes 4 magazines and air mail postage)

“HELP WANTED” £1.00 (Max 150 words) Free to members

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& NON MEMBERS £5.00 Quarter page

£10.00 Half page £20.00 Full page

ALL ADVERTISEMENTS SUBMITTED MUST BE

TYPEWRITTEN OR HAND-WRITTEN IN BLOCK

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The Society is looking for a new Secretary

Helen Lucas has agreed to take on the treasurer role which means that we need a volunteer to become the secretary. This is not an onerous position and the main job is to do the agenda for and the minutes of the monthly committee meetings.

The meetings are all recorded to make this job easier. There are occasional emails to forward or answer but these are few and far between. Thank you to Helen for agreeing to become the treasurer.

Could you take on the role secretary?

EDITORIAL

Welcome to your February magazine.

We have been asked to hold a workshop on basic family history research.

To this end we are offering a ‘Beginners Workshop’ on Saturday, 5th April 2025 from 11.00am to 3.00pm for anyone who needs help starting out in family history or who needs a fresh perspective on an area of research. It will take place in the JPK Hall, Church Street, Old Town (opposite St Mary’s Church). There is limited parking on site but it is on bus routes 1 & 1A or Brighton Bus 12 & 12A. You are welcome to stay for the whole period or just drop in to ask advice from other Family Roots members for a particular research query. WiFi will be available. Hot and cold refreshments will be available at the hall for a donation, but we recommend you bring a packed lunch if staying for the whole session. Entry fees: £1 for members, £3 for visitors.

A new CD will soon be available it is “The Parish Records for St. Andrew’s Church Alfriston 1800 - 1936” priced at £8.00.

Penny Walters has kindly agreed to allow us to record her February talk ‘Adding Social History to your Family Tree.’ it will be available to view in the member’s area of our website for one month. So for those of you that don’t Zoom you can watch on your device.

We now have a Blue Sky profile, follow us @ebfamilyroots.bsky.social

Till next time John Titmuss

ANTHONY NORMAN HODGE

1944 – 2024



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Anthony Hodge in December 2024. Anthony and his wife Rosalind joined Family Roots almost from its foundation in 1986. He was born in Eastbourne where his parents ran the Tally Ho pub in Green Street, the youngest of three children. He worked for GPO Telecommunications most of his working life, and was interested in engineering and finding out how things worked. He had many hobbies including CB radio, amateur dramatics, languages, music and walking. Anthony met Rosalind in 1967 and they married at Willingdon in 1968. Rosalind's interest in family history led to many holidays together in Yorkshire where they discovered they both had family connections, and in the West Country where Anthony also had

ancestors, and they both attended Family Roots meetings on a regular basis. In later years Anthony took up bell ringing at his local church St Mary's Willingdon, but as the practice evening was on a Thursday it clashed with Family Roots meetings so his attendance became less frequent. Anthony was churchwarden at St Andrew's Jevington for many years, where he also sang in the choir. He helped with fundraising for the major restoration of the church tower in 2005, overseeing the work to its successful conclusion. It was in St Andrew's churchyard that Anthony was buried on 16th January 2025 following a service at St Mary's Willingdon.

Jenny Wootton.

Family Roots Family History Society

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

This Safeguarding Policy will be followed by all members of Eastbourne Family Roots society and will be followed and promoted by the members of the Executive Committee. Family Roots hosts meetings for its members and visitors, which may be attended by those under 16 in the company of a parent or carer. Parents/carers remain responsible for children/young people's welfare throughout all interaction with the organisation.

This Safeguarding policy also applies to those adults who may be deemed vulnerable and who may be suffering due to neglect (including self-neglect) or abuse and are not able to be empowered to make decisions for themselves.

If any person has any safeguarding concerns about the conduct of anyone volunteering with Family Roots this should be raised with Graham Upton, Vice Chair and Safeguarding Contact or any member of the Committee.

Forms of Abuse

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Individuals working with Family Roots need to be alert to the potential abuse of children both within their families and from other sources including abuse by members of the organisation. There is an expected responsibility to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child in accordance with these procedures.

It is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns. However, you **MUST NOT** discuss your concerns with parents/ carers if you suspect parents or immediate family to be involved in abuse or neglect of the child and/or to do so would place a child, yourself or others at immediate risk.

Vulnerable Adults

Adults might be considered at risk if they are aged 18 years or over and:

- have needs for care and support (whether or not the local council is meeting any of those needs) and;
- are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs either are unable to protect themselves from the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Guidance on recording abuse

A safeguarding concern could come to your attention via a variety of means. You might observe something, someone might disclose an allegation of abuse about themselves or someone else, or someone might report something to you that they have seen or suspected. **You should not in any circumstance tell someone that you will keep a disclosure a secret**, as you have a legal and moral obligation to report any concerns that you have.

1. **Be a reassuring presence.**

One of the most important steps you can take to help children or vulnerable people is to

reassure them that they are safe and that they have done the right thing.

2. Recording and reporting

You may need to record an incident that you have observed or that someone else has reported or note down a disclosure prior to notifying the Family Roots Safeguarding Contact.

- **Never promise that you will keep it a secret.** Ensure you inform anyone about to give you information that you will share it with the relevant people to ensure the safety of everybody involved.

Key information to record:

- The **date, time and location** your notes were taken.
 - Make sure you record the **identity of the person** supplying the information, or the identity/description of the subject of your observations.
 - Record as much **factual information** about the incident, report or concern as possible. Take care to only record what is said or what is observed – do not draw conclusions or include your opinions in your report.
 - Record any **action that you took** as a result of the report or observation.
- Family Roots is committed to the principles wherever possible of empowerment for vulnerable persons at risk and to making safeguarding personal, ensuring that they are asked what they want to happen following a concern, that their wishes are taken into account and they are informed of actions being taken). Wherever possible adults should be empowered to take action on their **own behalf**.

Reporting a safeguarding concern

If you suspect that a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is the victim of abuse, you must report it as soon as possible.

In the first instance, unless someone is at immediate risk of harm, please report all safeguarding concerns to the Family Roots Safeguarding Contact Graham Upton or by contacting the Society. (Details on the website). All Safeguarding concerns will be treated seriously, and information will be shared with others on a need to know basis.

Consulting with or making a Referral to East Sussex Children's Services

In an emergency, call 999. Otherwise, the next step may be to contact the **Single Point of Advice (SPOA)** team at East Sussex Children's Services. **01323 464222**

If you are worried about an adult who may be being abused, neglected or exploited, please contact **East Sussex Adult Social Care and Health** on **0345 60 80 191** or report your concern online.

Photography

When working with under 18's you must gain opt-in permission to use their digital images and be clear about what the images will be used for. This includes photographs, videos or screenshots of online calls. Permission must come from their parent or responsible adult.

FAMILY ROOTS - EASTBOURNE & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

This policy was adopted on 26th November 2024

FIND MY PAST EXPERT ESSENTIALS

Family Roots Zoom meeting – Thursday, 1st August 2024

Speaker: Mary McKee

By: Jenny Wootton.

Mary McKee, UK Archives Manager for Findmypast, gave a talk on the new features that have been introduced on Findmypast (FMP) and tips on how to get the best help with researching your family history. FMP are owned by DC Thomson and are always looking for new material to add to their collections. They have different pieces of technology to bring new material together to seamlessly merge it with resources already on the website.

FMP is built on two sites, with the genealogy platform on one side and the entire newspaper archives on the other. When searching genealogical records it is possible to search the complete A-Z category list, which can be filtered down to display the record sets for individual counties or countries and the different records available in each. You can use a synonym search such as ‘war’ for military records, and ‘poor’ for workhouse records.

The ‘Category’ search allows you to search for just births/marriages/deaths, or all census records. When searching census records you can put the husband’s name and add his wife’s name under ‘Other household members’ to limit the number of records and easily find the whole family including children.

By using the advanced search for the 1921 census you get a long list of options and it is possible to look for specific locations or vessels, or occupations, or employers. You would then need to look at the original image, not just the digital list, as that contains so much more information about members of a household. You can use wildcards such as an asterisk (*) or question mark (?) if you are not sure about the spelling of a name. This also works for regimental names.

For the 'Newspapers' archives FMP has invested a lot of time with the British Library in digitising British and Irish newspapers going back to the 1700s, which is still an ongoing project, and searching their records has been improved over the last few years. Searching the Newspaper archives is free with an FMP subscription. You can search by a name and/or a keyword. It is best to start with a broad search before filtering it down to a specific article as often too much information in the search criteria will give a negative result. Once you have the range of articles for a name or topic you can then narrow the search down to by date range, county or town, or a specific publication. Articles are sometimes replicated by other publications all over the country as well as in the county where an event happened. Ticking the box 'exact' will look for the exact spelling or a name or word. By using the advance search you can select the 'phrase' search option to include all words in the keyword box.

Once you have found the article you have been looking for you can now

use the ‘clip’ function to cut out just that article or the whole page, and then attach it to a member of your family in your family tree or store it in a collection, from which you can download and print the article. The function also allows you to adjust the colour and brightness of a page.

You can create your own collection of articles in a folder, which can be private or you can share and search other people’s collections. You can also share on Facebook and social media.

By putting your family tree on FMP you will start to receive hints for other areas to search and link up with other family trees already on there. Mary offered a word of warning that the default on FMP is that family trees once loaded are automatically shared, but you can choose how you want to share your tree or change the setting to ‘private’ if you do not want others to see it. Living members on a family tree will never be shared publicly. You can import your family tree from GEDCOM directly into FMP.

Tree hints appear in two ‘bubbles’ – stories and hints. Stories can be what was happening in history at the time of your ancestor. Hints can be specific to your ancestor or suggested links for the whole tree, but you should always look at the original source to check the information before accepting it and adding the hint to your family tree. New records are released each week so it is worth regularly checking to see if the area you are looking for has recently been added.

Each ancestor on your family tree has his or her own profile. You can view

their full profile and add your own notes and look for the next steps in your research. You can save articles and photos into each profile, and look for other trees researching the same name, from which you can contact other members to share information. The new ‘explore’ function will take you to a street map of the area where your ancestor lived and you can toggle between three views of the area, from the 1880s to mid-20th century and overlaid by a modern-day map, all of which can be zoomed in to see the actual streets.

FMP now has an app which enables you to search on the go. Help and support is available by clicking the three bars in the top right-hand corner of your family tree screen and from the drop-down menu you can select ‘Help and more’ to find the range of support available from FMP and the FMP Community Hub. There is a separate support team for Scotland.

Findmypast offers different subscription rates for searching just British records and for worldwide records, which can be bought from their website <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/articles/subscriptions>.

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ALFRED WINTLE – AN ECCENTRIC BRITISH HERO

(precised by Jenny Wootton from a article submitted by Linda Wintle.)

Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Daniel Wintle MC was a British military officer who served in the First and Second World Wars. He was the first non-lawyer to achieve a unanimous verdict in his favour in the House of

Lords, and is considered one of London's greatest eccentrics.

Alfred Wintle was born in 1897, son of John Edward Wintle and his wife Emma Teresa (née King), in Mariupol, Ukraine, where his father was a diplomat. In 1901 the family moved to Dunkirk, where Alfred learned to speak French and German.

When the First World War broke out 16-year-old Alfred wished to see military action and in 1915 his father agreed to his entry into the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, from which he gained a commission in less than four months, and immediately was posted to the front. On his first night a shell burst near him, killing his sergeant to whom he had just been introduced. Alfred admitted to being petrified, but controlled his fear by standing to attention and saluting. He later wrote, "Within thirty seconds I was able to become again an Englishman of action and to carry out calmly the duties I had been trained to perform".

He saw action at Ypres, the Somme, La Bassée and Festubert. His luck ran out during the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917 as he helped manhandle an 18-pounder field gun across a "crater-swamp" when the gun-carriage wheel hit an unexploded shell. He woke up in a field hospital without his left eye, one kneecap and several fingers. At age 19, Wintle's right eye was so damaged that he had to wear a monocle for the rest of his life.

He was sent back to England and it appeared his war was over, but Wintle had other ideas. He planned his escape from the Southern General

Hospital disguised as a nurse, and with the aid of a warrant signed by a friend of his father he returned to France and saw action with the 119th Battery, 22nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. He was awarded a Military Cross, which was gazetted in the London Gazette on 2 April 1919, and the citation read:

For marked gallantry and initiative on 4th Nov. 1918 near Jolimentz. He went forward with the infantry to obtain information and personally accounted for 35 prisoners. On 9th Nov. he took forward his section well in front of the infantry and throughout the day he showed initiative of a very high order and did excellent work.

Wintle is said to have regarded the period between the First and Second World Wars as “intensely boring”, and when World War II began in September 1939, he tried everything to persuade his superiors to allow him to go to France. When he was refused, he planned to resign his commission and form his own army “to take the war to the Hun”.

After the French surrender Lieutenant Colonel Wintle planned to rally the French Air Force to fly their planes from Britain to continue fighting the Germans. He threatened an RAF officer, Air Commodore Boyle, with a gun in an attempt to steal an aircraft to fly him to France, threatening to shoot himself and Boyle. For this Wintle was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. The young soldier escorting him to the Tower lost the arrest warrant, which so disgusted Wintle that he declared the man

incompetent, and told him to wait while he went to get a new warrant. As there was no officer of higher rank in the warrant office, Wintle signed the warrant himself.

Wintle's description of his time in the Tower reads like a stay in an exclusive gentlemen's club. Once other officers heard of his exploits and realised he was not a traitor, his cell became the most popular meeting place in the garrison, and he describes himself as being well cared for as if he had been at the Ritz. He was allowed a certain amount of freedom and had visitors to lunch and to strictly formal dinners.

When his case was heard, Wintle was read the three charges against him. First, that he had feigned defective eyesight in order to avoid active duty, but this was dismissed on medical grounds.

The second charge was assaulting Air Commodore Boyle and drawing a gun in the presence of the RAF officer, and the third was conduct contrary to good order and military discipline. Wintle had threatened Boyle with a gun stating "people like you ought to be shot". He admitted the act in court and produced a list of other prominent people he felt also ought to be shot as a patriotic gesture, one of whom was Leslie Hore-Belisha, the Secretary of State for War. Embarrassed by his accusations, the government upheld the court's decision to drop all charges apart from the assault on Boyle, for which he received a formal reprimand.

Wintle was then sent abroad to re-join his old regiment, 1st Royal

Dragoons, and went into action gathering intelligence and coordinating raids on the Vichy French in Syria. After the Allied victory in Syria, he was sent to Vichy France in disguise to determine the condition of British prisoners-of-war held there, but he was betrayed and arrested as a spy and imprisoned by the Vichy.

During his captivity he informed his guards that it was his duty as an English officer to escape, which he successfully did by unhinging his cell door and hiding in a sentry box before slipping out of the camp, but he was recaptured within a week. They doubled the guard on his cell, and he protested the “slovenly appearance of the guards who are not fit to guard an English officer”. He constantly challenged the Vichy guards, accusing them of cowardice and treachery to their country, and informed them that he intended to escape again and anyone who called himself a Frenchman should come with him. He escaped a second time by sawing through the iron bars of his cell, and after slipping over the wall he made his way back to Britain via Spain. When Wintle appeared on “This Is Your Life” in 1959, Maurice Molia, the camp commandant, was one of the guests and claimed that because of Wintle’s constant challenge to authority the entire garrison of 280 men went over to the French Resistance.

Wintle married his wife Dora in 1944, and after the war he stood as a Liberal Party candidate for Norwood in the 1945 general election. He finished third with about 11% of the vote. After losing the election Wintle

was at a loose end. He had begun writing books in 1924 after breaking his leg while out riding. He wrote fiction under the pen name ‘Michael Cobb’ and much of his writing was done in the post war years.

Wintle made legal history when he brought a legal action against a dishonest solicitor named Nye, accusing him of fraudently appropriating £44,000 from the estate of Wintle’s deceased cousin, by persuading her to leave the residue of her estate to Nye in her will. Wintle was so infuriated by the solicitor’s dishonesty that in 1955, in order to publicise the case, he publicly embarrassed Nye by forcing him to remove his trousers and photographing him before throwing Nye into the street without them. Nye went to the police with the photographs and Wintle was arrested, for which he served six months in prison. He then pursued Nye through the courts, losing his case and the appeal on two occasions. By 1958 Wintle had run out of money and had to represent himself in the appeal court, and on 26 November that year the House of Lords announced that they had found in his favour. The written reason given was that it was up to the solicitor Nye to establish that the gift in the will that he had drawn up was not the result of his fraud, and that he failed to discharge this heavy burden so that the trial jury’s validation of the gift to Nye could not be allowed to stand. Wintle thus became the first non-lawyer to achieve a unanimous verdict in his favour in the House of Lords.

Roger Kerridge provided a comprehensive analysis in ‘The Cambridge

Law Journal’ of the legal issues raised in the Wintle v Nye lawsuit, in which he suggested that the ultimate victory by Wintle was “the right result by the wrong route”, because at the time of the appeal to the House of Lords “everyone was mindful of the newspaper headlines”. Wintle’s historic legal victory made him the toast of the land and he was invited by Eamonn Andrews to appear on ‘This is your Life’ in 1959.

AD Wintle died in May 1966 at his home in Wrotham the age of 68 and was cremated at Maidstone Crematorium, although he would have preferred a full military funeral at Canterbury Cathedral. He had been writing his autobiography when he died, which was organised for publication by his friend and military author Alistair Revie under the title *The Last Englishman*. He was one of the most unique characters in English history.

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COLLECTING POSTCARDS

Speaker: Kevin Gordon

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 5th September 2024

By: Jenny Wootton.

Kevin divided his talk into three sections: the origin of the postcard as a means of communication; the ‘golden age’ of picture postcards 1904-05; and details of some of the publishers and artists.

The Factory Act in 1802 aimed at improving conditions for factory

workers, including basic education for young workers, teaching the compulsory three 'Rs', which meant more people were able to read and write. The introduction of the penny post in 1840 made the writing of letters cheaper to post. With several deliveries a day writing a quick note in the morning to announce your arrival later that same day guaranteed that the letter would arrive before you did.

In 1869 Dr Emanuel Hermann, an Austrian professor, introduced a plain pre-paid card with space for an address and a short message. They were an immediate success and sold over a million in three months. In 1870 the British postal system introduced a plain card pre-stamped with a halfpenny stamp, and that same year saw the production of the first cards containing pictures.

When the Eiffel Tower opened in 1889 picture postcards of the tower were issued for tourists and posted from there. Other attractions and exhibitions produced picture postcards to commemorate the event, such as the Royal Naval Exhibition in 1891. Strict regulations governed the use of these early cards as you were only allowed to write the address on the plain reverse, with the picture on the front but no space left for writing a message. Some pictures were slightly offset allowing space at the bottom or side of the picture for a short message. In Germany larger cards were produced which gave a larger blank space for writing on the front. Millions of postcards were imported from Europe because the

printing was cheaper there until the start of the First World War.

Raphael Tuck started producing postcards in Britain in 1899 with an undivided back which could only be used for the address and showing artist's views of London and other places in Britain on the front, some with a space beneath the picture for a message.

The 'golden age' of postcard collecting began in 1904 when people started collecting the cards as a hobby rather than just using them as a means of communication. Collections of local views became very popular, as did photographs of family members produced as a postcard, for example of family weddings and bar mitzvahs, which could then be sent to other members of the family. Whenever there was a major event or exhibition hundreds of commemorative postcards were rapidly produced. Postcards from the turn of the 20th century can be very valuable. The condition of the card is important, but sometimes the subject depicted can make it even more valuable.

There are many different types of postcards – real photographs, art cards, sepia cards, multi-view cards, silk cards. Local photographers often produced cards in small numbers just to see if they were saleable.

Art postcards are not very valuable and are often reproduced from artist paintings. Multi-view cards have very little value as they show several small images of a view and are produced in thousands for the tourist industry. Silk cards show brightly coloured embroidered images

produced mainly in the First World War, usually made on the Continent for soldiers to send home to their sweethearts. If the image includes the name of a regiment this can make the card more valuable. Originally the images were hand-embroidered, but later they were mass produced.

Kevin also showed us examples of HTL (hold to light) cards, which are pierced with holes and when held up to the light show illuminated scenes such as the night sky or Christmas tree with lights. There were stereoscopic view cards showing two images of an almost identical view, which when fitted into a holder showed a 3D image of the scene.

Of the many early postcard producers Kevin showed us examples from James Bamforth, Francis Frith, Judges, Louis Levy and others.

James Bamforth started producing postcards in the early 20th century and became well known for his saucy seaside cards. Many contained innuendo and some were rather rude and had to pass the Blackpool Censorship Board before they could be printed.

Francis Frith was an established Victorian photographer who embarked upon a huge project to photograph every town and village in the United Kingdom, particularly any interesting landmarks or historic buildings.

Frith started out taking the photographs himself but as the project progressed, he employed other photographers to help and he set up his own postcard business, which became the largest photographic studio in the world. All of Frith's postcards are numbered and the Francis Frith

Collection was established as an archive, where it is possible to look up the number and find out when and where the photograph was taken.

Fred Judge was a Hastings photographer who took landscape photos of his local area and produced small quantities of the pictures in sepia. They proved so popular he produced them in larger quantities and went on to develop the postcard business Judges, which is still trading and based in Hastings.

Léon & Lévy was a French printer and photographic business based in Paris. They took pictures of every town in France before coming to the United Kingdom in 1904-05. Mistakenly known as 'Louis Levy' cards they are more easily recognised by the official 'LL' logo. They produced thousands of scenes around the UK and the USA.

James Valentine set up a photographic studio in Dundee and was appointed royal photographer to Queen Victoria, who commissioned a series of Highland photographic views. By the early 1900s the company Valentine & Son was producing Christmas cards and children's books, and in 1908 became the official postcard publisher for the international Franco-British Exhibition. They became a worldwide producer of high-quality Christmas and greetings cards.

Many artists became well known through postcards:

Mabel Lucie Atwell (1879-1964), known for her charming illustrations of children's books, also produced them as postcards. She lived in

Eastbourne at one time.

Bruce Bairnsfather (1887-1959) was a prominent British cartoonist, best known for his cartoon character 'Old Bill' which appeared on many WW1 postcards.

Donald McGill (1875-1962) was a water colour artist. He produced over 12,000 different designs for postcards. Most were light-hearted and humorous, but some were considered too saucy and obscene. On occasions he fell foul of local censorship committees and the cards had to be withdrawn from sale.

Louis Wain (1860-1939) is best known for his drawings of cats and kittens, and even after he was committed to an asylum with schizophrenia he continued to draw.

A.R.Quinton (1853-1934) was an English water colour artist known for his paintings of British villages and landscapes, many of which were produced as postcards.

Anything and everything have appeared on a postcard and can therefore become collectable. Photographs of disasters such as train crashes are popular, and postcards of early 20th century exhibitions are very collectable. So-called 'dirty' postcards of scantily clad ladies were produced in thousands in France and sold to the troops over there during the war. Military postcards also sell well, especially if they mention a particular regiment. A lot were produced in WW1, but WW2 military

postcards can be very rare and are therefore more valuable. Postcards featuring suffragettes and the Suffragette Movement are also valuable. There are regular postcard fairs around the country where you can browse dealer's collections by county and by theme. Postcards are also sold on eBay but one must factor in postage costs. The Picture Postcard Annual lists postcard fairs and details of dealers, as well as articles about collecting.

Sussex Postcards.Info gives a lot of helpful information about collecting Sussex postcards.

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WHERE THERE'S A WILL: Testamentary and probate records

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 3rd October 2024

Speaker - Christopher Whittick

By: Jenny Wootton.

Christopher Whittick, former senior archivist at The Keep (East Sussex Record Office), gave us a very informative talk on finding ancestors' wills prior to the establishment of the Principal Probate Registry of 1858. Proving wills before that date came under the various ecclesiastical courts. Estates over a certain value, initially £5, and any disputes over proving a will could be progressed to a higher court, and a county could have more than one church court.

The system became so complex that the State took over in 1858 and all wills now go through the Principal Probate Service. A calendar of wills and probates has been printed from 1858 onwards and all can be searched online through Ancestry.

In the past, wills and the disposal of inheritance (but not land) came under the exclusive province of the church. Up to the 17th century only wealthy people tended to leave a will, usually written by the parish priest or curate and often at the death bed of the testator and witnessed by the doctor in attendance or a neighbour. Once the testator died the family would take the will to the appropriate ecclesiastical court for the will to be registered. The court would then call for an inventory to be made of the deceased's goods and chattels and require the executors to enter into a bond to manage the fair distribution of the estate and submit an account of their management of the estate.

There was a hierarchy of ecclesiastical courts with a complicated system of jurisdictions. Where a will was proved depended on the value of the estate and where the assets lay. If the deceased had left goods in only one jurisdiction the will could be proved in the local church court, which would come under the local bishop or archdeacon. Sussex had two Archdeaconry Courts – Chichester and Lewes. There were also Peculiar Courts, which was a private

jurisdiction of a church official.

If the assets fell within two jurisdictions the will had to be proved in the senior Prerogative Court. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills have been digitised on Ancestry, but they are not easy to research online and it is better to look for the reference to a will at the National Archives (ref PROB12) and then use the reference to find it on Ancestry.

The Keep (East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Record Office) at Falmer holds probate records from 1518 to 1858, in five series. The Archdeaconry of Lewes wills and probate can be searched via their catalogue.

Latin was the standard language in the medieval period, with only the grant of probate written in English on the reverse of the document, but by the 15th century English became the main language. Until 1540 some wills continued to maintain the distinction between the testament, which dealt with the deceased's good and chattels, written in Latin, and the will, dealing with his land, which was written in English.

During the Commonwealth period (1653-1660) the church courts were abolished and wills from all over the country were proved in the Court of Civil Commission in London. The index of these wills provides an excellent guide to the distribution of surnames in 17th

century England.

Original 17th century wills are available to view online on Ancestry. The text of wills was written up into a Probate Register after they had been proved. The Probate Act Book can contain much useful information for family historians such as full name of the testator, names of the beneficiaries and relationship to the testator, name of the parish where testator lived, date of the will and probate, names of the executors and witnesses. Remember that up until 1752 the year ended on 25th March when transcribing dates.

The will is the original document prepared for the testator, who signs every sheet, which must be witnessed. Once the will had been proved most Courts wrote a copy of the probate on the back or bottom of the will, which would be kept in the archives. Grants of probate was written in Latin up to 1732, even if the will itself was written in English. Latin was replaced by English in all legal records from 1733.

When a person died intestate, but the family needed powers to administer the inheritance, the courts would grant Letters of Administration (Admons) giving the executors authority to administer the estate. The document had the same appearance as a will, and once proved the executors had to enter a bond with the ecclesiastical court to produce an inventory of the deceased's estate

and to deal with the disposal of it honestly.

The inventories can be fascinating documents. Up until the mid-18th century each item of the deceased's personal property had to be listed and valued. This was usually done by neighbours in the case of farmers and country folk, or by tradesmen in a similar line of business if the property was of a shopkeeper or businessman. The items would be listed room-by-room, and the total value of the goods and chattels would be written in the Probate Act Book. If the inventory survives this would also be filed with the court papers.

Executors and administrators also had to submit accounts of their dealings to the ecclesiastical court, especially if the beneficiaries were minors. The account would show the gross value of the inventory of the deceased's goods and chattels (the Charge) and how it had been distributed after settlement of debts (the Discharge). If these have survived they are usually filed with the will, and often contain useful evidence about doctors, lawyers and teachers.

Before decimalisation in 1971 all monetary values were quoted in pounds, shillings and pence (LSD) and would have been written in Roman numerals. Christopher has given two helpful guides to interpreting LSD and to reading Roman numerals, which have been included below.

If a will does not name an executor or executors it is invalid and the next-of-kin would need to apply for a Letter of Administration for authority to deal with the estate. Where an executor dies or renounces his executor's duties before completing the administration of the estate, an application for *a grant of de bonis non* must be made by the next-of-kin of the executor to enable completion of the administration.

Sometimes very young children were named as executors in a will, and if the testator died before they reached the age of majority a guardian would be appointed as executor on their behalf.

Not many East Sussex wills have been recorded on Ancestry but they can be searched in The Keep Catalogue if you have a name and think your ancestor may have left a will. It is always worth looking for a will, even if your ancestor was an 'ag lab

IDENTIFYING ROMAN NUMERALS

Christopher Whittick

M	1000	m
D	500	d
C	100	c
L	50	l
X	10	x

V	5	v
I	1	i (or j if at the end)

so

Mdcccclxxxiiij = 1883

You will hardly ever find higher numbers before lower numbers, apart

MCM for 1900, XL for 40, IV for 4, IX for 9 and XIX for 19

medieval orthography uses *iiij* and *vj* rather than *iiii* or *vi*

superscript ^{xx} multiplies by 20; *so* *iiij*^{xx} = 80, *iiij*^{xx}*xvj* = 96

superscript ^c multiplies by 100; *so* *iiij*^c = 300

When expressing sums of money, writers used pence up to 23, and shillings and pence thereafter; and shillings up to fifty, and pounds thereafter.

When tackling a list of sums of money, the first and essential thing to establish is that you can distinguish the symbols used by the clerk for pounds (usually *li*), shillings (*s*) and pence (*d*). Find a sum in which all three symbols appear. Since they always appear in descending order of value, that will enable you to work out which symbol is which. Although *li* is usually pretty distinctive, it's easy to confuse *s* and *d*.

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A SON CONTESTS HIS FATHER'S WILL.

Contributed by: Ailna Martin.

Following a recent talk to our society on the subject of wills, I am prompted to write about a case that I discovered within my own family.

Some time ago I wrote an article for the Family Roots Journal entitled "A Thoroughly Bad Egg". It concerned a certain Simpson Cooper, my maternal grandmother's younger brother. Over many years he had brought shame upon his family, his innumerable misdemeanours and crimes well recorded in the newspapers of the time. His father, also known as Simpson Cooper, was a prominent and well-respected public figure in the Lancashire town of Bolton, where he held the offices of Senior Registrar and Clerk to the Guardians of the Poor.

It would therefore not be surprising to learn that Simpson Junior had been disowned and cut from his father's will. When I applied to the Lancaster Probate Office for a copy of the will, a photocopy from a newspaper of the day was enclosed with the copy of the will, briefly reporting the case. Simpson Junior had challenged his father's will in the probate court, following Simpson Senior's death on his 70th birthday, in April 1901, claiming that his mother had encouraged her husband to change his will under duress.

Simpson appears to have been constantly short of money to fund his extravagant and often criminal lifestyle. No doubt he expected to receive an inheritance under the terms of the will. He was to be disappointed, as the judge ruled in favour of his mother who was the sole executrix and legatee.

The value of Simpson's estate was given as £2275/10/4 which today would equal the not inconsiderable sum of almost £350,500. No wonder Simpson Junior was miffed!

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RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF YOUR FAMILY HOME

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 1st November 2024

Speaker: Tim Cookson

By: Jenny Wootton.

Our speaker Tim Cookson had been a Town Planning Officer for Leicester, Eastbourne and Hastings and has had an interest in architecture and old buildings from an early age. He also trained as a building's conservation officer.

Tim had a particular interest in Peter Dulvey Stonham (1877-1942), who trained as an architect and designed many domestic and commercial buildings in Eastbourne. He was resident in Eastbourne from 1898 to 1942 and developed one of the largest architects'

practices in the town at 58 Grove Road, operating from the early 1900s through to the late 1930s. Business was only interrupted by the two world wars. In WW1 Peter joined the Royal Flying Corps, and in the 2nd World War he was on the reserve list but kept working in his practice during the day and worked in a munitions factory at night. Up to 20% of building plans in Eastbourne were submitted by him, and he built 200 detached houses in the town, mainly in Prideaux, Summerdown and Pashley Roads and some houses in the Meads area, as well as many commercial buildings such as T J Hughes and the Curzon Cinema.

Stonham lived at several addresses in Eastbourne, including in Tideswell Road, Upperton Road, Prideaux Road and Carlisle Road. Tim Cookson started researching the life of Peter Dulvey Stonham as he had a particular interest in the house where Stonham had lived in Prideaux Road from 1909 to 1940. He managed to contact another Peter Dulvey Stonham, who lived in Essex and was the great-grandson of the architect. He put him in touch with a surviving grandson of Stonham, a Mr Franklin, who lived in Surrey. He could remember his grandfather and gave Tim some background information about the family.

Stonham married Frances Ellen Davis in Rye in 1901. One of their homes, 'Cheynelea', 38 Prideaux Road, was named after her

(the name was a corruption of Chez Nellie, her nickname). Mr and Mrs Stonham supported many charities in the town, and he also designed buildings and hospitals with charitable connections. In 1934 he designed ten of the twenty houses in the exclusive Park Close, Eastbourne in the Arts & Crafts style. In 1930 he designed a house named 'Lynston' in Selwyn Road for his daughter Beryl when she married Arthur Franklin. Peter Stonham died in 1942 and is buried in grave J1257c in Ocklynge Cemetery.

Tim suggested you need to know what you are particularly interested to find out about your house. Its date and history? The families who lived there in the past? Its style and who designed it? Looking at the fabric of a house will help to date the exterior and interior of the building. There are several helpful books by Trevor Yorke on dating houses from different periods in history.

Number 11 The Goffs, Eastbourne is an Arts & Crafts building that was designed by Peter Dulvey Stonham in 1909 and is a Grade II listed building. A detailed description of the building can be found on the internet at <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101406935-no-11-the-goffs-eastbourne-ward>.

Clues to look for when dating a building could be found on a date on rainwater hopper heads. Manhole covers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries often included the name of the builder. A lot of

information can be found in The Keep, home of the East Sussex Record Office, which may include copies of original plans and architect drawings.

The Bye Law Approval System was introduced in 1870 which meant building plans had to be submitted to the local council for approval. There is no detailed index at The Keep but the plans are stored in date order, so may be difficult to search unless you know the date of the plans. The Compton Estate Office, as freeholder of much of the land in the town, also holds copies of some plans for Eastbourne properties, particularly those in Meads, the town centre and along the seafront which were built on land belonging to the Duke of Devonshire.

Originally house numbering did not exist but houses were named, and names could be changed before the numbering system began, making it even more difficult to trace plans. When you do find the plans of a house, they should give the name of the client and the architect, and sometimes the name of the builder.

When looking for details of people who lived in a house be aware that the name given as the owner could be the developer of the property who engaged the architect and not necessarily the first occupier. Sometimes you can be lucky to find correspondence relating to the property along with the plans.

Census data was useful when Tim was learning about Stonham and his family and where they moved around. Peter Dulvey Stonham was born in Ashford, Kent and went to school in south London. His father was a miller and he came from a fairly wealthy family. In 1891 he was working as an architect's assistant in Eastbourne, living in Tideswell Road, before starting his own practice in the town in 1907. Electoral registers are also useful for finding where ancestors lived as they were produced annually and can help fill the gaps between censuses.

Early maps and Ordnance Survey maps can help locate the actual property where an ancestor lived, and there is a large collection dating from roughly 1870 stored at The Keep. Smaller scale OS maps will also show individual buildings, and in more rural areas may actually name the properties.

After World War 1 people could not afford to keep large houses with servants, and many large properties were pulled down and the sites re-developed. Google Maps and Google Street Maps can be viewed online and will help you to see if a property still exists when comparing old and modern maps. Stonham designed several plots of developments for private investors between the wars, as well as much commercial property. He was also the architect engaged by owners of some of the large houses that were convert into individual

flats.

Another good source to search when looking for properties is newspapers. Newspaper articles and listings of properties can be searched online for free in local libraries and for a subscription to the British Newspapers archive and Find My Past. The “Eastbourne Chronicle” has a number of articles about Peter Dulvey Stonham and his family.

Technical publications also proved a good place to research Stonham’s career and the library of the Royal Institute of British Architects holds technical and architectural information about him, including photographs of some of the houses he designed. Illustrations for ‘Grasmere’, Pashley Road, designed by Stonham, were included in one of the journals.

Tim Cookson recommended a number of reference books that would be useful when searching for properties:

Trevor Yorke has written a series of books on researching the history of a house, from Tudor time up to the modern period, including “Tudor Houses Explained” and “1940s and 1950s Houses Explained”. He also wrote “Tracing the History of Houses” and several others, which may be helpful.

David Olusoga presented a series of TV documentaries of “A House Through Time”. He traced the history of an individual house

in different parts of the country through changes in its development and the families who lived in the house, giving hints of changes in style of building. It is worth watching again of BBC iPlayer.

It is worth looking for secondhand copies of books on tracing the history of your house on the AbeBooks and World of Books catalogues online to find copies at a reasonable price.

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ALFRISTON BURIAL REGISTER.

Contributed By: John Tyhurst.

12th Jan: 1816. Mildred Reed aged 24.

A rumour having gone abroad that this young woman was buried alive, her grave was opened eleven days after her interment in the presence of the minister of the Parish, one of the Church Wardens, the medical gentleman who attended her in her last illness, and a great multitude of people of whom on inspection of the body, were perfectly satisfied that the rumour was unfounded, although one old man who is very deaf said he heard a noise proceed from grave two or three days only before.

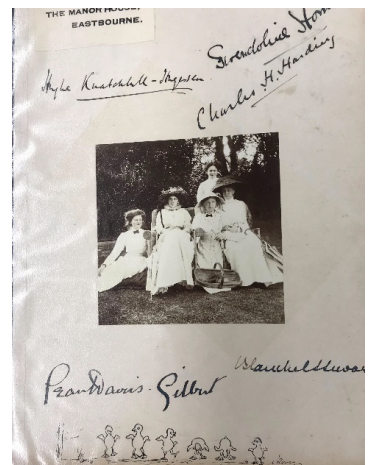
FAMILY ROOTS DECEMBER MEETING

By: Helen Warren

It was a great shame that there were not more present at our Christmas meeting on 5th December but thank you to those members who did brave the bad weather and came along to enjoy an informal, chatty get together with festive refreshments. This year the spotlight was on photographic memorabilia with a chance to share and talk about collections featuring postcards, local history guidebooks, family photos and ephemera.

Christine Worsfold brought along her fantastic collection of postcards and local interest memorabilia. Particularly interesting was the sheet commemorating an event in the early 20th century at The Manor House (now Gildredge Manor and formerly the Towner Gallery). On one side is a photo of a group of five women, five signatures and a funny drawing of ducks, while on the other side is a photo of Gildredge House with more signatures. (*used as this magazine cover picture. Ed.*)

The names include the Davies Gilbert and Prideaux families but we have no idea what the event was.



Two of Christine's postcards I had not seen before was this one of Friston Church, the long gone windmill can be seen on the left, and one of a 'carless' Whitley Road.



Helen Lucas brought along two holiday albums which had belonged to her mother-in-law, Dorothy Lucas, these included photos taken at English seaside resorts but also surprisingly of a trip to Calais. There was also Helen's local newspaper cuttings, when looking at these one member recognised her best friend!

I was particularly interested in one of Yvonne Salmon's old photos. The picture, taken on the beach, showed a group of fishermen, members of her Sayers family. With Yvonne's permission I posted this photo on Facebook and had a comment from Ann-Katrine Sayers, a newly discovered distant cousin!

It was a busy evening for Jenny Wootton who together with arranging all the refreshments, also brought along her postcard collection of Wannock Gardens, rekindling many happy memories.

BURIED IN WOOLLENS

Contributed by: Bob Maynard.

Funerals are now filled with personal choices, but for nearly 150 years in England one important choice was controlled by law....the clothing that people were buried in.

The Woollen Act of 1667 and 1677 decreed that all who died in the 17th and 18th centuries would be legally required to be buried in woollen. In Sussex parish records of 1789, it was written that James, son of William and Mary Maynard, was 'buried in woollens this day of April'. While researching your family history you may come across references in a parish record to an ancestor being 'buried in woollens', what did this mean?

For many centuries the woollen trade had been important to the wealth and prosperity of England.,but the introduction of new materials and foreign imports some people thought the industry was under threat; many of these sat in parliament as members whose constituencies were in woollen and cloth producing areas, or as landlords whose income came from rent paid by tenants who lived by relying on wool and sheep, They combined to pass an act to try and maintain the demand for domestic produce.

The first act was passed in 1666 and the second more famous in 1678 repealing the first, it aimed to lessen the importation of linen and encourage woollen and paper manufacturers within the Kingdom.

The act required that when a corpse was buried it should be only dressed in a shroud or garment made of wool, 'No corpse of any person except those who shall die of the plague shall be buried in any shift, sheet or shroud or anything whatsoever made or mingled with flax, hemp or salt and hair, gold, silver or any stuff or things, other than what is made of sheep's wool only'; failure to comply resulted in a £5 forfeiture (the equivalent of more than £889 today). one half of this went to the farmer, the other half to the poor of the parish where the body was buried.

Within eight days of the burial an affidavit had to be provided attesting that the burial complied with the act.

An affidavit had to be sworn in front of a Justice of the Peace or Mayor, or two credible people, if the parish did not have a JP or Mayor, the Parson, Vicar or Curate would administer the oath; in practice the affidavit would be sworn at the same time as the burial and certified by

the officiating priest, many people did not like this idea.

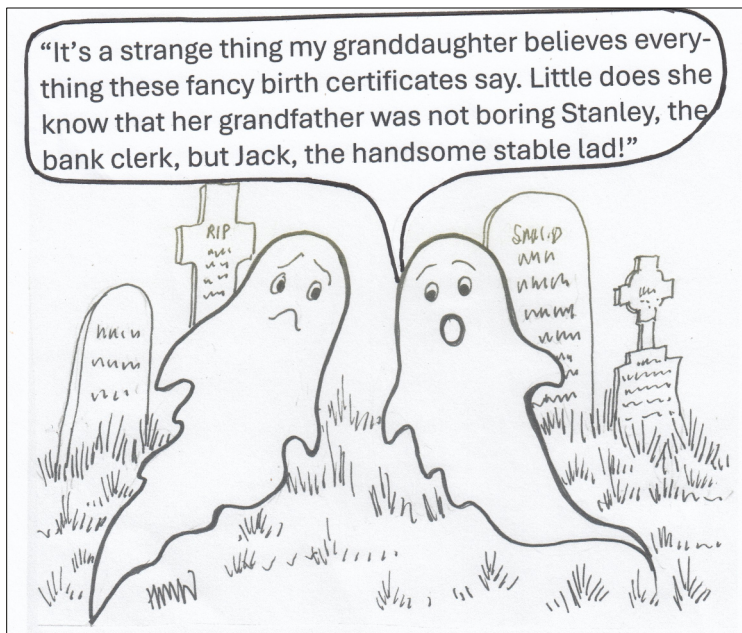
The affidavit took various forms, some appearing in registers, others appeared as a separate register or in a specially printed form; Affidavits do not survive in this form in the archives.

The Act was not very popular as people wanted to be buried in their finery, as opposed to a cheaper garment or shroud in an official white colour, and a very thin material. Many people were prepared to pay the £5 and a member of the family became the informer, so that in effect only half the fine would be paid.

By the end of the 18th century wool had become less important to the economy.

The start of the Industrial Revolution began to diversify the workforce as well as the types of textiles that could be manufactured cheaply... especially cotton, after the invention of the cotton gin and spinning Jenny.

The Woollen Act was becoming less relevant and was largely ignored the Act was repealed in 1814.



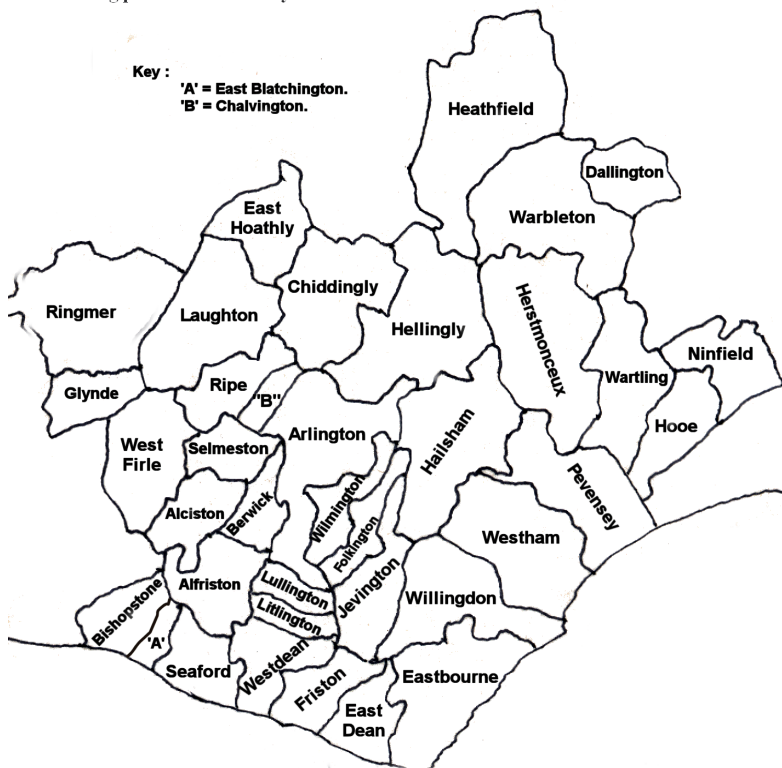
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PROGRAMME FOR 2025

6th March Helen Rimmer.	Back to Basics Family History. More details to follow,
3rd April AGM followed by- Warwick Davis (No, not that one!).	A Spoonful of (Victorian) Medicine.' More details to follow,
1st May Kevin Gordon	Eastbourne Ancestors.' More details to follow,
5th June. Alan Wenham.	Women who made a difference' & 'Winifred Barnes - Too racy for Meads.' The tales of strong women who had a real impact on life in Eastbourne. Plus How a star of musical theatre upset the gentlefolk of Meads.
3rd July	Outside event TBA
6th August Steve Simms.	A Blogg Blog's - the history of an Eastbourne family.
4th September Phil Gardner.	Eastbourne at Leisure' This illustrated talk looks back at the leisure facilities that have been on offer to visitors and residents of Eastbourne from the 1950s right through to the 1990s.
2nd October	TBA
6th November Jenny Flood.	Conscientious Objectors in WW1.
4 TH December	Christmas event TBA

MAP OF "DISTRICT"

Showing parishes for "Family Roots" local research.



Map reproduced by kind permission of East Sussex County Record Office.

Alciston * Alfriston * Arlington * Berwick * Bishopstone *
 Chalvington * Chiddingly * Dallington * East Blatchington *
 East Dean * East Hoathly * Eastbourne * Folkington*
 Friston * Glynde * Hailsham * Heathfield * Hellingly*
 Herstmonceux * Hooe * Jevington * Laughton * Litlington *
 Lullington * Ninfield * Pevensey * Ringmer *Ripe* Seaford*
 Selmeston* Warbleton * Wartling *Westdean * West Firle
 *Westham * Willington * Wilmington.

FAMILY ROOTS PUBLICATIONS

The following titles are obtainable from:

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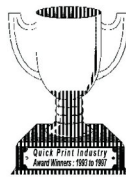
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