



Family Roots

Family History Society for Eastbourne & District

www.eastbournefhs.org.uk



John Warren & Thomas Barsley Christmas Meeting

Vol. 40.3 March 2026



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Bet the vicar missed his Christmas dinner.

Contributed by: John Tyhurst

There were 10 marriages at Christ Church on Christmas Day 1902.

All spellings are as per the register

Herbert WILLER 25 m Annie RICHARDSON 23. (Willer is right not Weller)
George Thomas BILLINGS 20 m Edith Lillian REED 20
Leonee Herbert HUTCHISON 25 m Phoebe Emma Jane HOWSE 29
Frederick Lambert RAY 22 m Florah Kate POTTER 23
Charles BONIFACE 28 m Alice Farrant 24
Samuel HANCOCK 25 m Mary Sendonia VAISEY 25
Charles ERRIDGE 22 m Caroline Edith HANCOCK 22
George Charles BEST 22 m Caroline Harriett RUSSELL 22
James CLARKE 22 m Rosina Caroline ERRIDGE 19
Amos SMITH 32 m Jessie Jane VINE 32

Editorial

The AGM is on 2nd April, we would like more committee members also an editor for this magazine.

Family Roots will be celebrating its 40th anniversary on Saturday, 13th June 2026 with a tea party at the Willingdon Golf Club.

We are asking members to let us know if they wish to attend and will need to collect a £10 deposit to confirm your place. We hope to see you there.

Are you aware that the Federation of Family History Societies publish a 'Really Usefull Bulitin'? It is full of interesting articles, news from family history societies also updates on records available on Findmypast. You can get your copy by registering at www.familyhistoryfederation.com

Did you know? Members of Family History Societies can get 15% discount on subscriptions with FindMyPast. Simply use the discount code FHFMEM26 when applying.'

Thanks to everyone who has sent me articles over the past years and

PLEASE send articles, with out them there will be no magazine.

You can use the editor's email address as usual.

John Titmuss

MARK DANN Snr.

He Started work at only 6 years old

From the Eastbourne Herald dated 11th November 1944

with names and date additions

Contributed by: John Tyhurst.

On March 27th 1854 on the day before the outbreak of the Crimean War Old Mark Dann was born. He had no schooling and at the age of six-and-half he tended sheep and cattle at Willingdon & Jevington for three shillings a week.

Then he was married and settled in Eastbourne, worked at Motcombe Farm for thirteen shillings a week, became the first keeper in Gildredge Park, and ended up as landlord of the Black Horse.

That in briefest outline is his life story as told this week to a Herald reporter at his home 4 Willowfield Square.

Mr.Dann for all his 90 years is as nimble on his feet as any man half his age, and he can walk as briskly as the best. And what is equally amazing is the fact that his memory is in no way impaired. "I can remember almost everything in my life" he will tell you quite proudly. All this may be attributed to the austerity of his early years, and there was no pampering in his humble home circle.

Old Mark was born at Fairlight the other side of Hastings. He was one of

a family of thirteen. The youngest died when only seven, but several others have reached advanced years. Within the past year one of them was 95 when she died, she was Mrs.Dunstall and she lived at East Grinstead, another Mr.Albert Frederick Dann is now at Cowbeech, he is over 70 and his last job was an inspector on the parade at Eastbourne. Then there was Mr.William Dann he is turned 80 and resides just outside of London, last of those still living is Mrs.English; she married an Irishman and lives in Ireland

The same year that Mark was born he was brought with his parents to live at Willingdon where his father got a job as shepherd on Park Farm under Squire Thomas. It was a hard struggle in the home then to bring up a family on 15s a week.

In 1859, that was five years later the Danns moved to Jevington where the father worked for Mr.Fielder on Church Farm a big place with 1000 sheep to look after. As head shepherd Mark's father had a second shepherd, a teg shepherd and a boy under him.

"I was only six and a half when I was carried to work to mind cattle" Old Mark recalled. "I had to take out 24 oxen to Willingdon Hill, Sundays and weekdays alike throughout the winter from the beginning of November to March and I Got 3 shillings a week". "When winter was over I took the cattle to Ratton Warren. I used to start at seven in the morning and work until five in the afternoon, very often I would see nobody all day".

Afterwards as he says he got a Irishman's rise of 2s 6d for minding sheep at Jevington.

When he was 13 Mark became under shepherd at Church Farm, then he had to care for 300 sheep. He remained there till he was 30. Mr Fielder died and his widow kept the farm going for a year or two when it was taken over by Mr.George Homewood.

In the meantime at the age of 22 Mark married Clara Jones on the 20th May 1876 at St.Andrew's Church, Jevington, and eventually when Mr. Homewood came to Eastbourne and took over Motcombe Farm, he joined him. That was in 1884, Motcombe farm was then 750 and 800 acres. I had thirteen shillings a week and a house then recalls Mark.

EARLY EASTBOURNE.

His wife Clara died 15 years ago in 1929 aged 77 yrs, she bore him three children a son and two daughters. One daughter kept house for him until her death last year, his other daughter Mrs.Edith May Towner now looks after him, his son Mr.Mark Eckling (Ecklee) Dann is employed at the Hartington Hotel.

Eastbourne in those early days was a far different place from what it is today. There was nothing but ploughed land from the Parish Church down to Devonshire Park. Harking back to his childhood old Mark says he never had any schooling, well nothing to speak of. "I did go to school but there was nobody to teach me he declared. I went to Willingdon school

when I was four, but I left at six and a half, so I didn't learn much. I went to work then and I have been at work ever since". After he left Motcombe Farm in 1897 he got the first keepers job at Gildredge Park, and there he stayed for nine years. Following this he became landlord of the Black Horse and was there for 19 years, retiring in 1925.

A KEEN GARDENER.

But he did not retire from work altogether, he could not think of it, he took to gardening and now he is the proud owner of 12 rod plot at the back of Whitley Road. "I still work on it", "I expect I have grown half a ton of potatoes this year. I have enough to last me up to next July or August". Of course everything depends on the weather; if it's fine he puts in an hour or two in the morning or afternoon. "I don't know whether I will do a bit this afternoon" he remarked casually "I've some celery I want to earth up". "he's got a nice lot of sprouts too. Generally he grows enough vegetables to last him all year round. He gets up at eight in the morning and goes to bed at nine at night and can read the newspaper without the aid of glasses. Comparing the times Mark thinks the people of his early days were much happier and contented than they are today.

HOME COOKING

What we had to eat was good" he recalled with relish. " We always managed to get plenty when at home. I expect that is what built us up, we were luckier than some people. We kept pigs and had butchers meat once

a week on a Sunday. All the grub was cooked in one pot-vegetables in a net, with meat, plum or apple puddings or anything else that might be going”.

Old Mark has stood the trials of the bombings with remarkable fortitude. He did go to East Grinstead for six months but he has been back in Eastbourne for the past four years. “I’ve had two or three narrow escapes” he said and he mentioned one occasion when digging potatoes on his allotment a bomb fell not far away and “blew dirt and stuff” where he was working. Mark has his own ideas about the war. When it is finished I don’t think Germany should ever have another chance to rise again. Those countries which have been so badly treated should have part of Germany. He had great faith in collective action a strongly implemented League of Nations. He considered that the real reason the war lasted so long was that Germany was prepared and we were not.

Marks father who was 84 when he died worked for Eastbourne Corporation in his later years. He lived next door to the Blacksmiths shop in Ocklynge Road .

Marriage.1876

DANN-JONES. May 20, at Jevington, by the Rev. E.W.Foley, Mark eldest son of Mr.William Dann of Jevington to Clara eldest surviving daughter of Mr.Edwin Jones of Tewksbury

A Blogg's Blog

Speaker: Steve Sims

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 7th August 2025

By: Jenny Wootton

Steve Sims is the volunteer archivist for the Eastbourne Natural History and Archaeological Society. His talk related to the history of one Eastbourne family named Blogg across 220 years resulting from a letter addressed to E Blogg Esq posted through Steve's door at 71 Green Street, Eastbourne by Alex Read, but dated 13th December 1904, 116 years earlier. Mr Edward Blogg was an accomplished tenor and the letter was an invitation from Mr Hayes, the Manager of Eastbourne Pier Company to come and sing for them. Steve offered the letter to Kelly VanDoorn, the Heritage Collections and Digital Engagement Coordinator for Eastbourne and Lewes Councils.

Two weeks later Alex Read presented a box of old family papers and photographs to Kelly VanDoorn that he was about to throw out asking if they were of any interest. The first item in the box was another letter from Mr Hayes to Mr Blogg. Kelly quickly made the connection and approached Steve to ask if he would like to catalogue all the items in the box, which he was pleased to do. Each item was examined, a report giving full description and condition was written, and given a unique

reference number. There were over 300 items including such seemingly insignificant things as train tickets and receipts. The talk was as much about preserving documents as piecing together the Blogg family history, and Steve highlighted the importance of saving even those insignificant scraps of ephemera that can add to your family's story.

Steve gradually started to piece together a Blogg family tree, starting with Francis Blogg who was 28 when he married Mary Shorter in 1830 and they had a son Edward (born 1848). This is Edward I, who was the father of Edward II, the tenor who sang on the pier. Edward I married Jeanette Holman (born 1846) in 1872. She was the daughter of Urban Holman and Elizabeth Fielder. They had thirteen children between 1868 and 1893, four girls and seven boys, including Edward II (born 1877). The box contained several concert programmes of Edward's performances as a singer as well as family photographs, letters and diaries.

Edward II married Gertrude Josephine Aimee Crouch in 1901 and they have three children – Claude (1906), Irene (1910) who was called Roon all her life, and Cecil Lewellyn (1914). Edward II then joins the war and the archive includes letters from him to his family while on active service. He was a carpenter, and worked on the planes for the Royal Flying Corps as they were made of wood.

Gertrude died in 1926 and with a young family of teenagers Edward obviously felt he needed to find a new wife. In 1928 he married Ivy May

Dunster, the daughter of Benjamin Dunster and Florence Ella Franks. She is 28 years his junior and they quickly start having children of their own – Peter (1928), Joan May (1930), Brian (1931), Ena Joyce (1933), Geoffrey (1938), Margaret (1940) and Edward III (1947).

At this point in his talk Steve introduced Margaret Howell, Alex Read's great aunt Margaret, one of only two of Edward II's children who are still alive, the other being Peter who is in his 90s and lives in Scotland. She had loaned her own archive material to help augment the Blogg family history.

Edward II attended Holy Trinity School. The archive included his 1888 Certificate of Attendance. He was also very good at drawing and his Stage 4 Drawing and Excellence at Level 5 Drawing certificates are also with the papers. Edward II worked at St Andrew's School for 65 years. He started as a boot boy at the age of 12, and went on to teach woodwork to the boys and became Head of Maintenance at the school. Edward II followed his father's career and became a carpenter. Edward I was a carpenter and cabinet maker with a workshop in Meads and possibly helped out at the school as well.

In the First World War Edward II was in the Royal Flying Corps. In 1917 he was posted to Nucleus Flight No 7 Training Depot Station as a carpenter and worked on Airco De Havilland aircraft, which were used for the advanced training of pilots for operational duties on the Western Front.

Prior to the war Edward II had had opportunities to travel abroad. At the age of 19 he travelled to Brazil, and later to South Africa. Papers from his travels are covered in the Blogg archive, and in 1921 he needed a passport to travel back to England from Australia. His Australian passport is included in the archive, incorporating a good looking photograph of Edward II at the age of 44. It also included his ticket home on the Orient Line of Royal Mail Steamers from Brisbane to Tilbury via the Suez Canal.

Steve then gave us details of some of Edward II's ten children. Roon (really Irene) never married and lived into her late 80s. She was teaching at a school in Oxted, Surrey during the Second World War. The family archive included her diary from the war where she recorded with some humour how the bombing in Eastbourne produced interesting changes in the way of life during those difficult times.

Edward II's son Cecil Llewellyn married Mary Knight in 1938 and they embarked to Australia as 'ten-pound poms' in the early 1950s. He was a teacher and eventually established his own outback school at Wongalea. With his four children, Josephine, John, Stuart and Rosemary, he started a new Blogg dynasty downunder.

Joan May, who was Alex Read's grandmother, worked for Eastbourne Council in the Accounts Department and became a member of NALGO. She married Reginald Leslie Arthur Read in March 1941. He was 21

years her senior and had spent his wartime service in India. The archive contained a whole collection of information from his time abroad and his contact with former RAF colleagues. They had two children, Derek (father of Alex) and Gillian.

Peter grew up to become a Chief Petty Officer in the Fleet Air Arm. Brian lived in Cavalry Crescent, Eastbourne, near his father Edward II who was living in Downs Avenue. Ena Joyce became Mrs James and lived in St Mary's Road. Geoffrey went into the Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards & 1st Dragoons) in 1954 where he was a percussionist. Steve showed a handsome photograph of him in uniform when he played at Eastbourne bandstand in 1972.

Margaret Howell spoke about her own experiences as a member of the Blogg family growing up in Eastbourne, and thanked Steve for his talk and all the research he had done. Three of Edward II's children were teachers at St Mary's Primary School in Salehurst Road. Her younger brother Eddie (Edward III) was a keen motorbiker and was sadly killed in an accident in 1973.

Steve had compiled a Blogg family tree from the information he had found in the box of papers containing about 50 family members from Francis Blogg in 1804 down to Alex Read, with others yet to be discovered. Not a bad result from a box of papers, saved rather than destroyed, and he thanked Alex and Margaret for their contributions.

EASTBOURNE AT LEISURE

Speaker: Phil Gardner

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 4th September 2025

By: Jenny Wootton

Phil Gardner, a well known local historian, gave an illustrated talk on the leisure activities that attracted visitors to Eastbourne from Victorian times to the modern day.

The glory days for Eastbourne as a popular tourist resort and holiday venue was in the 1950s and 60s. This was the time when holidaying at the seaside in England was at its height and overseas travel had not yet become popular. Phil showed the events guide for 1964 advertising special weeks in spring and autumn for ‘Old People’s Holiday Period’, which was a quiet time around the busy summer period when hotels could offer special rates to attract customers. One of the favourite events was the weekly performance of a military band at the bandstand. The Congress Theatre opened in 1963 and offered a summer show of several weeks each year, together with the Devonshire Park Theatre, which had a programme of weekly plays and entertainments.

The original Eastbourne pier, which was designed by Eugenius Birch and was 1,000 feet long with kiosks and windbreaks down the centre, was finally completed in 1872. Visitors could get a unique perspective of Eastbourne as they walked along it. It was further developed in late

Victorian times when a ballroom was added at the front and a theatre at the end of the pier including a camera obscura. The pier ballroom was a major attraction in the town, and people would dress up to go there. It later became an amusement arcade, before being completely destroyed by fire in 2014.

The famous carpet gardens along the seafront were also started about the same time, adding an extra colourful welcome for visitors to the seaside. Eastbourne had its own gardening team to look after them and a large nursery for growing all the annual plants that were changed every season. The theatre at the seaward end of the pier gave regular shows throughout the summer season. The comedian Sandy Powell performed on the pier with his Starlight company every summer for over fifteen years in the 1950s and 1960s. He was such a regular figure in the town that he became known as Mr Eastbourne. He bought a house for himself and wife Kay in Elms Avenue, which now bears a Blue Plaque in his name. The theatre was badly damaged in a fire in 1970 but was restored and later reopened as a bar and bingo hall and amusement arcade.

Speedboat trips were run from the pier until 2003, taking visitors along the coast to the famous lighthouse. The boats were suspended from ropes at the end of the pier and lowered into the sea. Paddle steamers such as the *PS Waverley* and *PS Brighton Queen* operated ferry trips from the pier taking passengers across the Channel to Boulogne and along the coast the

the Isle of Wight.

Music was always popular with visitors to Eastbourne, and the old 'bird cage' bandstand on the seafront that used to be used for live bands was replaced in 1934 by the current bandstand, capable of holding an audience of 3,600. Performances of military bands were held every week during the summer, as well as fashion parades and beauty contests. It was a major attraction for Eastbourne and the shows held there were usually performed to packed audiences. Sadly time and tide has had its affect on the structure and the bandstand has fallen into decay, with the metal supports inside the colonade supporting the upper walkway rotting from the inside. The bandstand is a Grade II listed building and the local council is committed to restoring it but for safety reasons it is to be completely downsized.

The annual carnival along the seafront was another popular draw for visitors to the town. The first carnival in Eastbourne was held in 1895, known as 'Festival of the Flowers' held on May Bank Holiday. Carnival processions were a feature of many seaside towns in the 1950s and 60s. In Eastbourne the highly decorated floats on lorries were driven from the Meads end of town to Princes Park, along with marching bands and walkers dressed in all manner of costumes. The social clubs of many large employers entered floats decorated in a theme to raise money for their chosen charity, with funds and materials for making the float and costumes usually supplied by their business, and the planning and preparation took

place over many months. The floats were judged at the end of the procession with awards for several different categories. The carnival lasted a whole week with a funfair and stalls laid out in Princes Park.

Another seafront attraction for many years were boat trips along the coast in one of Allcorn's pleasure boats. When the weather was good and the sea not too rough the boats started from just near the pier and took visitors along to the Beachy Head lighthouse and back.

Devonshire Park in the centre of the town was another social hub for sporting activities. It was opened in the 1870s mainly as a cricket ground, but also included croquet lawns and a pavilion for roller skating. Eastbourne had the first lawn tennis association in the country and tennis tournaments started in the park in 1898.

At the same time the large Winter Garden and Floral Hall attached to the park were being built as a concert hall and roller skating rink for the town. Roller skating was a popular pastime in Victorian times and the skaters could enjoy music from the concert hall while they were using the skating rink. There were also facilities for taking refreshments both inside and outside on the park.

In the 1880s the new Devonshire Park Theatre was built next door to the Winter Garden to stage plays and musicals. In 1960 the Indian pavilion in the park was demolished to make way for the Congress Theatre, which had a much larger stage and which was opened by Princess Margaret in 1963.

Long running productions were held in the Congress during the summer season. The Fol de Rols was one which became a mainstay of theatre performances each summer. The Congress Theatre is an architecturally important building and is Grade II* listed. When it recently suffered major concrete failure a large scale renovation project had to take place to restore it.

Eastbourne is a popular town for all major sporting events. One of the big attractions is Tennis Week just before Wimbledon and even in the 1950s it would draw in hundreds of visitors for that particular week. Another attraction was County Cricket Week at the Saffrons. People would book their holiday in the town to coincide when their favoured sporting activity was taking place. Devonshire baths which were filled with sea water was another venue where regular swimming galas were held. In the winter the smaller pool was boarded over and used for badminton tournaments.

In the 20th century, when moving pictures became popular, Eastbourne had nine cinemas to offer entertainment. All have now closed but some of the buildings still exist. The two main cinemas were the Picturedrome (later Curzon) in Langney Road and the Luxor ABC in Pevensey Road, then there was the Classic, Trinity, Plaza in Old Town, and the Tivoli in Seaside which is now a funeral directors.

Coffee bars and nightclubs were popular in the 1960s and offered live music as well jukebox records. The Café Continental was one that

attracted large audiences from the younger generations which had a regular DJ and often had pop groups on stage for members to dance to. The Dave Clark Five, David Bowie, Van Morrison, and the Kinks all played there in 1966 before they became well known nationally and internationally. Ffinches in Grove Road was another popular coffee bar.

There were many attractions outside the town and the local coach companies offering tours from along the seafront by the pier provided easy access. Chapman's coaches, Berkeley's, Palmerstons and Jackson Brothers all offered daily trips into the countryside and one of the most popular destinations was Wannock Gardens near Polegate.

Visitors in the early 1950s mostly travelled to Eastbourne by coach or train as not many families owned a car. They came from all over the country and there were large coach parks around the town to accommodate the vehicles. Special trains were laid on in the holiday season to bring people to Eastbourne.

The Redoubt music gardens at the eastern end of the town was another popular venue for visitors, where coaches could park right outside and the people could enjoy the music in the fresh air. There were often art exhibitions in the Colnade, and Uncle Bertie was there with his popular children's show.

The Blue Grotto aquarium was next to the Redoubt, and inside the Redoubt Fort was a beautiful model village all laid out for people to walk around.

Sadly the site was vandalised in the 1970s. Next door there were the Redoubt bowling greens. Further along Treasure Island was opened in the 1970s which was enjoyed by families with children and was always crowded.

Another popular area was Princes Park at the far eastern end of Eastbourne which offered attractive gardens, a children's play area and a large boating lake where you could hire rowing boats. The children could enjoy donkey rides around the park there.

Even further along the coast was the Crumbles, a large open area of shingle and wildlife popular with walkers. In the 1950s Eastbourne Electric Tramways ran a tram service for two miles from Princes Park to the Crumbles providing easy access before the new road past the Sovereign Centre was built. The Sovereign Centre, with its larger pools and water slide, was opened in 1977. It quickly became a major attraction and soon put Devonshire Baths in the centre of town into decline.

When the development of Sovereign Harbour began on the Crumbles in the 1970s with its new road layout from the seafront, the use of trams was not deemed to be suitable for the town and all the trams were moved to Seaton in Devon.

Other modern attractions that have developed in Eastbourne since the 1970s include the Towner Art Gallery next to the Congress Theatre in Gildredge Park. Also Kings Country Club in Langney was a nightclub and

dining area which attracted well known performers such as the Three Degrees. Eastbourne Miniature Steam Railway started on the landfill site beside Lottbridge Drove in the 1990s.

As well as its reputation for being the sunniest town in England, Eastbourne had so much to offer to visitors from Victorian times right up to the modern day.

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Some Thoughts on Wills

Contributed by: Peggy Westwood.

When I began my Family History research I was thrilled to find each person and how they fitted into my tree but eventually I discovered wills and the information they supplied.

Some wills were very straight forward but the further I went back the more fascinating they became. Some were a challenge because of the handwriting but this became clearer with time and practice reading them.

I learned to not worry too much about the first part which is similar in most wills.

Example from the 1720 will of Jane Pierce:

“In the name of God Amen the two and twentieth day of August in the seventh year of the Reign of King George over Great Britain 1720 I Jane Pierce of Hurstpierpoint in the County of Sussex Widow being aged and infirm in body but sound of mind and memory (praise to be to God) in the

uncertainty of this life do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament”

Jane's will was interesting because of the way she disposes of her estate: “I give my son Robert Pierce one shilling sterling Item I give my son James Pierce one shilling sterling All and Singular the rest and residue of my goods & chattels personal Estate whatsoever after my debts paid and funeral expenses discharged I give will and bequeath all unto my beloved son John”

I assume that, as she was a widow, Robert and James had received gifts from their father and John stayed at home and cared for his mother and by leaving Robert and James both one shilling they could not challenge the will. It does seem a little unnecessary to describe her son John as beloved. I wondered how Robert and James felt about this.

I have never found a marriage for Jane or a will for a husband despite researching at The Keep. So another mystery is why she suddenly appears in Hurstpierpoint in 1720. There are no other Pierce families in Hurstpierpoint.

From her will I was able to trace Robert and James and link them into my family tree.

Robert Pierce's will dated 1756 is also informative:

“I give and devise unto my loving wife Mary all that my ffreehold and Messuage Shop Orchard Garden and premyses situate lying and being in

Hurstpierpoint aforesaid wherein I now dwell To hold the same to my loving wife her Assigns for and during her natural life and from and immediately after her death I give and devise the same to my son Thomas Pierce to hold the same to his heirs and assigns forever and likewise give and devise to my said loving wife Mary the use of all my household goods linen and furniture for and during the span of her natural life And from and immediately after decease I give and devise all of my said household goods linen and furniture unto my son Thomas Pierce and my daughter Ann Flint to be equally divided between them share and share alike I likewise give to my son Thomas Pierce all my timber working tools and stock in trade in the business of a cooper I likewise give and devise to my daughter Ann Flint all that customary cottage garden and premises called Cowdy lying in the parish of Hurstpierpoint and holden of the Manor of Hurstpierpoint”

From this part of Robert Pierce's will we know his wife is called Mary and his children are Thomas and Ann. Ann's married surname is Flint. Her husband was John Flint and they are in the will of Robert's wife Mary. It seems slightly strange now that he felt it necessary to leave his wife household goods, linen and furniture. Today we would assume they would automatically belong to the wife.

We also know that Robert was a cooper and it is probable his son was also a cooper.

The references to properties are interesting. He owned a messuage, shop and orchard garden. He could have sold barrels, fruit and other items in the shop. (A messuage is a house together with its land and outbuildings). I looked up Cowdy and it is mentioned online but I can't be sure whether it stills exists. The last reference was in 1952.

More snippets about wills:

Another thing I realised was that as most people couldn't read or write so information was recorded according to the information they gave to the scribe. I spent time looking for information on two men. One was Edward Buckman the other was Edmund Buckman but I have come to the conclusion they are probably the same person as I have a birth for Edmund and a will for Edward. In large families if someone was known by the name Ed for most of their lives they may not know if they are Edward or Edmund. Johns known as Jack would be another example of this.

Wills do not have punctuation. Spelling is not necessarily the same as it is today. Examples in Robert's will are ffreehold and premyses.

Old wills can be written in English, French or Latin. In one case I found a will in a mixture of English, French and Latin. I finally had help with it and discovered the testator had left money for his wife and daughter to have new dresses for his funeral.

A Sporting History of Sussex:
from the amazing to the bizarre
Speaker: Mathew Homewood

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 2nd October 2025

By: Jenny Wootton.

Mathew Homewood, a professional genealogist, gave us a fascinating talk about the sporting history of Sussex over the last 200 years. He included the traditional sports like cricket and football, but also the more unusual activities such as jingling matches and menagerie racing.

Another popular sport is horse racing which could be traced back to 1714 in Lewes. It coincided with the Lewes Assizes which brought a lot of people into the town, but the racing became a more important event, and continued in Lewes until 1952. The Brighton races started in 1784 and was brought to the town by the Duke of Cumberland and coincided with the local Whitehawk Fair. The Duke was the son of George III and racing at Brighton became a royal event when the Prince of Wales, later George VI, attended each year. George Fordham, the champion jockey in the Victorian era, won his first race at Brighton in 1850 at the age of thirteen. Cricket started being played at Lewes in 1800, and later in Eastbourne in 1847. Many Victorians thought that cricket was a boring game so a group from Covent Garden formed a team of clown cricketers, dressed in clown

outfits, who performed tricks and antics during cricket matches to entertain the crowd.

Brighton & Hove United Football Club was formed in 1901, but changed their name to Brighton & Hove Albion in 1904-05. In the late Victorian era football was considered a gentlemanly sport but it could be quite violent. Lewes Police Force held a charity match against a local side in 1921 dressed in fancy dress. It was a great success and became an annual event.

Cycling was a massively popular pastime in late Victorian times and many sporting cycle clubs were formed. There were four cycling clubs in Lewes before World War I, but reduced to three after the war when the cinema became more popular and football on a Saturday afternoon took over from cycling as a sport.

Stoolball was a uniquely Sussex sport, known by some as “cricket in the air”. It had been a popular sport in the 1600s but had faded in Sussex until Major William Grantham from Chailey revived stoolball as a team game in the 1920s. It did not need a flat pitch like cricket, and Major Grantham introduced it as a sport that injured servicemen from WW1 could play. You only needed one good arm and did not need to be particularly fit to play stoolball. Men of Sussex versus Sussex Downsmen played a charity match each year in the 1920s. It was a game that males and females could play and often there were men and women playing on the same

team.

The Victorians loved their amateur athletics – 100 yard races, sack races, egg and spoon races – and they were very popular in the towns and villages around Sussex. Cross country running and distance running was also popular as a more serious sport. Tom Mantell (1853-1928) was a long distance runner from Lewes and ran several miles every day. He ran for the South London Harriers. Alfred Shrubb (1879-1964) was another middle and long distance runner in the early 20th century. He broke many records and won races in America and Canada as an amateur athlete.

One of the more unusual Sussex sports was jingling matches. They started in Brighton in 1823, and involved one man with bells attached to himself and a team of twelve others who were blindfolded who had to catch the jingler. Once caught the jingler swapped places with the blindfolded man and the game continued.

Other bizarre sports and games included Catch the Train where the teams had to fold clothes and pack a suitcase to catch the train and the fastest time won. Also climbing a greasy pole and slow bicycle riding were other competitive sports.

Another was menagerie racing, where you trained your pet to race for you. Any animal could be included – pig, rooster, rabbit, mouse, frog, cat. All could race against each other, but not dogs in the same race with other animals, and there had to be handicaps.

Piano-bashing was another far-fetched sporting idea where teams had to smash up a piano to get it through a hole, and the first to get every piece of the instrument through was the winner.

Horse racing, cricket, football at Brighton & Hove Albion and Lewes Football Club are all going strong. Other competitions that have started in Sussex in the 20th century are the Brighton marathon and Eastbourne half-marathon. Sussex stoolball still handicaps the men in mixed team matches. Menagerie racing has transformed into dog racing in modern times.

A modern pub game of dwyle flunking has become popular where the players form two teams and one team dances round a bucket of stale beer. The ‘flunker’ from the opposing team stands in the middle with a rag on a stick (the ‘dwyle’) soaked in beer and flings it at the other team when the music stops to score points.

All forms of national and international sports are a big part of every day entertainment, but the more quirky local sports have been an essential part of social life for the last 200 years.

Report on Family Roots Workshop October 2025

By: Helen Warren.

On Saturday 18th October Family Roots ran another ‘Here to Help Workshop’. Unlike the very well attended workshop we ran in the spring this time we had more helpers than customers! The advertising, the venue

and times on a Saturday, were the same but only five people came to seek our help!

Many thanks to the long list of helpers, committee and members, who had the opportunity to chat together although they would have been happier investigating a family tree or two. Thanks too to Graham and Jan for



providing and serving refreshments and to Russell who waited patiently by the printer where nobody needed his services. Thanks also to Kevin who brought in

a 1920s photocopy of the 1817 Figg map, interesting to see how Eastbourne had developed in recent years.

Sadly, although we looked and looked, we could not find anything to help the one visitor who came to our table. All in all, a disappointing day. We have no answer as to why this workshop was so badly attended. Should we repeat it again next year? Please let us know your thoughts and any ideas for future events.

‘Conscientious Objectors in WW1’.

Speaker Dr Jenny Flood,

Family Roots meeting Report from Helen Warren

At our November meeting Dr Jenny Flood, a trustee and volunteer at Newhaven Historical Society and Museum, gave a comprehensive talk on Jenny began by explaining that the background to her talk was based on transcriptions from World War One. Sometimes Conscientious Objectors were referred to as Men of Conscience, sometimes C.O.s and sometimes conchies.

In 1914, before the war, there were 227,000 men in the army while in 1915 under Lord Kitchener’s recruitment campaign 557,000 men joined. Many of these were from villages, rather than towns, where groups of friends would join a Pals Brigade. By 1915 the National Registration Bill meant that all men and women between 15 and 65 had to complete a detailed form with a penalty of £5 for failing to comply. Reasons for appealing were various and included conscientious objection. Local tribunals were held to verify appeals against enrolment and if granted as being exempt the person was given an armband to wear showing they were ‘ready to serve’. In this way they did not receive local criticism or were given a white feather. Jane told us about two cases of Sussex women, one from Newhaven and one from Hailsham, who were taken to

court as they refused to fill in their pink form properly!

When conscription was introduced many rushed to enrol but when the number of recruits dropped to the lowest of the war so far there was a new scheme under Lord Derby whereby married men and some from reserved occupations were enlisted.

The reasons that conscientious objectors put forward were varied. Some objected on religious grounds being Quakers, Jehovah's Witnesses or Presbyterians, others were pacifists not believing in any war. There were three categories: Absolutists, who would not condone any form of conflict; Alternatives, who would take part in civil work and Non-combatants, who were prepared to work for the military as stretcher bearers etc.

Individual cases were taken by appeal to local tribunal courts., these courts were made up of JPs, Councillors and the military. One Eastbourne case was that of George William Stephenson of Cavendish Place. George appealed on hardship grounds and also for conscientious reasons. He maintained that his father needed him to help in his bicycle repair business and he was a devout Presbyterian, he added that he had believed that God did not agree with killing. George was asked if he would agree to clearing mines or helping with the injured. He declined and lost his appeal.

To promote the war effort pictures of men in uniform were everywhere especially in newspapers. Soldiers were encouraged to always dress in smartly in uniform even when on leave. This contrasted with the CO who was sometimes depicted as wearing dowdy civilian clothes or looking effeminate.

There were two local non-combatant camps, one at Seaford and one at Newhaven. Such was the bad feeling towards the C.O.s that Canadian soldiers tarred and set fire to a roof of a camp hut at the Seaford camp. In 1916 the Home Office Scheme was set up. The scheme aimed to relieve congestion in prisons and utilize the labour of the conscientious objectors for work of national importance, such as quarrying and road building. If non-combatants refused work, they were court marshalled and sent to prison. The rebuilding of the Seaford to Newhaven road employed C.O.s stationed at Seaford and part of this scheme.

One of these C.O.s was Philip Joseph Radley a Quaker and assistant master at the Friends School. It was from here that he was taken to the Warley Army Barracks and then transferred to the Seaford Camp. He was an Absolutist so when he was given orders and did not comply he was court marshalled at Newhaven Fort and then sent to Lewes Prison. There he spent the first month in solitary confinement. When interviewed in the 1970s he recalled wearing the ill-fitting uniform, unlike the military, and spending much time knitting socks.

In 1918 some C.O.s were sent to work at Newhaven Docks which was the main port of export for supplies going to the home front in France. When the civilian dock workers went on strike for more pay, the C.O.s mutinied as they refused to handle munitions.

Jane also spoke of other important Conscientious Objectors: Reginald Clifford Allen and Fenner Brockway who together formed a No-Conscription Fellowship in 1914, the aim was to attempt to stop the possibility of compulsory enlistment in the Army. They were joined later by their friend Bertrand Russell.

In 1918 the Representation of the Peoples Act gave all men over 21 and some women over 30 the right to vote but had a clause making C.O.s who had refused to obey orders and been court marshalled exempt for five years.

During WW1 many C.O.s suffered from their harsh treatment and 81 died as a result of their treatment. Today there are many memorials to these C.O.s around the country including the one that was opened in 2011 by Sheila Hancock in the Peace Garden, Seaford.

After the talk Jenny was pleased to answer member's questions. Several had queries about their own relatives' war service and the records available to search.

Mercy Morgan née Diplock als Everest.

Contributed by: Rosalind Hodge.

The grave of my husband's great grandparents, Richard Morgan and Mercy née Diplock als Everest is in Ocklynge Cemetery marked by a large headstone. Richard became a successful businessman and Mercy was the niece of Caleb Diplock an Eastbourne brewer, wine importer,



hotelier and farmer. Her mother was 1st cousin of James Peerless who built the Town Hall, St Saviours, All Souls and many properties in the town. However she was not that straightforward to research as there are a number of errors and wrong information recorded concerning her birth, name, birthplace and marriage. I eventually identified that Mercy Everest, as she was always

known, was in fact Mercy Diplock and I obtained her birth certificate. Mercy was the illegitimate daughter of Dinah Diplock of Rotherfield Sussex where she was born at Holly Bridge. Her birth certificate gives

this address and her date for birth as 1 October 1839, although on her headstone it is recorded as 4 October.

Mercy is recorded as Mary Diplock in the 1841 census by which time her mother had married Thomas Everest and there was a sister Bertha aged 4 months. It is not known if Thomas was Mercy's natural father. At this date the family is living at Eridge Green Sussex. In the 1851 census she is living with mother, 5 siblings and a new step-father at Holborn. She is recorded as Mercy Everest and her birthplace is given as Carriage [Eridge] Green Kent, although it should be Rotherfield Sussex, where she was actually born. In all other census returns her birthplace is recorded as Tunbridge Wells Kent, never Rotherfield Sussex. Possibly she thought this is where she was born although she never appears to have lived there and was definitely not born there.

Mercy married Richard Morgan at St Mary's church Marylebone 17 February 1856 both giving incorrect ages. Mercy gave her age as 19 when she was actually 16 years 4 months. Richard was 23 years not 25 as recorded in the entry. Mercy also used her step-father's name, Everest, not her birth name Diplock.

The Archery Tavern in Eastbourne was built for the Richard and Mercy in 1861 by Mercy's uncle, Caleb Diplock senior who built and owned The Lion Steam Brewery in Pevensey Road Eastbourne and a number of large establishments and public houses in the area. Richard and

Mercy already had three sons when they moved into The Archery. Charles was born 1856, 9 months after her marriage when she was just 17 years 1 month old. Richard was born in 1859 and Frederick 1861. Another 9 children were born at The Archery between 1863 and 1881: Leonard 1863, Emily 1865, Minnie 1867, Bertha 1869, Horace 1871, Grace Jessie 1873, Mercy 1875, Henrietta 1876 and Edith Caroline 1881. As well as The Archery Tavern, Richard had a large market garden with vast greenhouses and vinery on land surrounding the tavern, in the area known as Roselands. He supplied the grapes to the Grand Hotel. There was even a forge attached to the market garden. Son Horace writes in the Eastbourne paper of working at his father's florist shop in Eastbourne but I have been unable to trace that. A number of the sons worked in the market garden and went on to earn their livings in horticulture. Frederick started the Willingdon Lavender Gardens and large market garden at 'Hockington House' in the village. His son set up a market garden on what is now West Lords sports field during WW2.

On Richard's death 18 October 1895, Mercy took over from her husband as licensee and continued to run The Archery Tavern for a few years before moving into a newly built house on Elms Avenue which she named 'Daphne' after her favourite flower. She died there on 27 December 1904, aged 75 years, leaving estate of £5,966.12. 1d, her executor being her 1st cousin Caleb Diplock junior.

Her son Horace, one of the longest ever serving Eastbourne councillors, took over The Archery from his mother, continuing to run it until his death in 1936 when his son then took it over. Horace also took on the Tally Ho! in Church Street Eastbourne which had been built for his great uncle Caleb. In 1927 the original Tally Ho! building was demolished and the existing building erected with Horace paying 50% of the cost of construction with the Kemp Town Brewery. Horace was the first president of the Bowls Club in Motcombe Gardens. The Archery was run by the Morgan family for almost 100 years and the family ran the Tally Ho! until 1962 with my father in law, Norman Hodge, Horace's nephew being the licensee for 32 years.

The inconstancies of information with Mercy caused problems when her descendants were asked to prove relationship in connection with the challenging of Caleb Diplock junior's Will in 1936. She was his 1st cousin a closest relative as none of Caleb's siblings were alive or had issue. He left a vast fortune worth tens of millions today and a distant relative in Australia challenged it. It is the largest Trust Law case in English history going to the House of Lords three times before the Will was declared void due to a single word. It was therefore essential to produce Mercy's birth certificate. Using their knowledge the family applied for a birth certificate of Mercy Everest born in Tunbridge Wells Kent on 4 October 1839. They were unaware the family information was

hwrong and should have applied for the birth certificate of Mercy Diplock, born Rotherfield Sussex 1 October 1839. No matching record could be found for a Mercy Everest meaning they would receive nothing from the vast estate. So these errors cost the family a great deal of money.

It was some 60 years later with access to census returns that I discovered the errors and successfully applied and received Mercy's birth certificate. It was interesting discovering the recorded errors in the official documents and on the headstone and being able to record the correct details in the family history. Now I must try and sort out some details of Mercy's mother Dinah who married three times. Her first husband Thomas Everest died in 1846 and she remarried a John Hawksworth in 1849 and had another child. However I have now found her third marriage in 1857 to a William Crowe using the name Dinah Everest, a widow, not Hawkesworth. At this date her second husband was still alive living with their daughter Lydia. It's very doubtful there was a divorce at this date, so possibly Dinah will turn out to be a bigamist.



Christmas Meeting

By: Helen Warren

It was a good turnout at our Christmas meeting when twelve members (there may have been more) plus a visitor, displayed examples of their family treasurers, local directories, memorabilia and family history research. I am sorry but because there was so much to see I didn't get round to talk to everyone. Here's some of what was going on:

Ailna Martin brought in a beautiful oil painting of the barn at Rodmill Farm, this was painted by her in the 1960s. It is an interesting record as soon after Ailna made the painting the barn and farmhouse were demolished to make way for the Rodmill housing estate.

John Gowland's 2 x Gt Aunt Elizabeth Hopkins nee Gowland and her husband Frederick Hopkins ran Gowlands Library, Seaside in the 19th century. John brought along a collection of books: Frederick Hopkins 'Eastbourne Guide' published in 1860, street directories and 'Views of Eastbourne', all were printed by Gowland's. In addition, there were four books written by his Grandfather John Stafford Gowland, three were about his life in Canada and one about his experiences in WW1. Lastly, there were some recent books one 'The Rules of Water Polo' written by his Great Grandfather, John Steward Gowland, and another written by a cousin, the historian Jacquetta Hawkes.

Lynn Bedford told us about a family mystery! Although she had a photo

of her 2 X gt. grandfather, Charles B Johnson, he had disappeared when he was a sergeant in the 17th Lancers at the time of the Boar War. The last that was heard of him was a letter his mother received in 1901. There is no record of him being killed or taken a prisoner of war, he just vanished from anything official! However, before going out to South Africa he did live in Sydney, Australia so may have returned and set up home there with a new family! Do you have any advice as to where Lynn can look next?

Alison Selmes brought in a painting of her 2 X gt. grandfather, Peter Ebenezer Westgate, painted by Katherine Matilda Handyside. Also known as Kate Handyside the artist had strong Irish roots, and painted intimate domestic scenes and portraits, embodying the Newlyn style with her sensitivity and focus on everyday life. Don Selmes told me how the sitter went blind, so he probably never did see his portrait.

Rosalind Hodge showed an array of needlework, pieces created by four generations of her family. There was an exquisite, embroidered gold work and beaded tea cosy made by Jane Wooller nee Piper, Rosalind's 2 X gt. grandmother. Rosalind's 2 X gt. grandfather was the bailiff at Ratton Manor his family lived at the Gate House. This tea cosy was only used whenever the Hon. Mabel Thomas, Lord Willingdon's mother of Ratton Manor came to tea! Then there was a beaded offertory bag made by Emily Wooller nee Gander, Rosalind's great grandmother and three embroidered and beaded bookmarks made by Elsie Fielder nee Wooller, her

grandmother, and lastly a beaded footstool created by Rosalind's mother, Joan Barras nee Fielder. What a wonderful collection full of family history.

John Warren needed three whole tables to display his ancestor's original 18th century, 3.45-metre-long (11ft 4 ins) lithographic cross section plan for building the Grand Junction Canal, now called the Grand Union. The plan, dated 1798, with contemporary hand-written progress notes, starts to the North-East of Birmingham and runs down through the counties to join the Thames at Brentford. John's 4 x great grandfather was the engineer responsible for the stretch through the land of the Earl of Aylesford, for whom he was land agent and surveyor. This family treasure has been handed down through the generations together with family trees drawn up in about 1850, (one of which was also on view), and a host of other papers, Harrow school reports, drawings, books and correspondence relating to the name of Wedge.

Faith Chrystie brought along family photos from the Forest Hill area of London and told me that her American grandmother could trace her ancestry back to those first settlers that sailed on the Mayflower. Valerie Vincent told me the sad story about her gt. grandfather William Henry Lane who died, aged 30, in an accident at Hitchin Railway Station. Committee members Tony Pulman, Graham Upton and Shirley Moth showed local street directories and family memorabilia including

Shirley's mother's 123-year-old doll together with photos of pupils at Bedwell School.

Visitor David Aylward displayed his self-published book on his Suffolk/London family's history. He told me that working with the publishers was not difficult, they helped with the layout and sent a proof copy for him to check. David was able to send his book to relations across the world. This is a great way to preserve and pass on your research so do think about putting a publication together concerning your own research.

I took along several items inherited from two of my gt. grandmothers. These were two black silk dresses that were made and belonged to Lucy Waby nee Peasant in the 1910s. Before her marriage Lucy was seamstress at Hackthorn Hall, Lincolnshire, she kept her skills as can be seen by the intricate sewing and fine beadwork on the dresses. I also brought in Hannah Greaves nee Paulson's leather handbag and its contents.

Considering Hannah died in 1922 the bag is in remarkable order. The contents include old photos, a bag for keeping tobacco in and a small notebook. This notebook is particularly precious because it includes old addresses, family members dates of birth and death and a small drawing of a gravestone in Hoboken, NJ, USA with details of the deaths of two of her babies. A sad comment to end on despite it being a happy, informal meeting with plenty to think about.

Thanks to Jenny Wootton for serving tea, coffee, mince pies and biscuits.

A good evening all round. Now think about what you could bring along if we do it all again next year!

Programme 2026

5th March 'Making Sense of DNA for Family History: What to do with your matches' more details - Helen Rimmer.

2nd April AGM followed by 'Fishing, Boating & Smuggling' -.Alan Wenham.

7th May 'Eastbourne People' Kevin has discovered the stories about many interesting local people from Sioux to saints and glamour models and from politicians to pilots - Kevin Gordon.

4th June. 'The History of A Foundling' - Helen Warren.

July - date to be confirmed, Visit to the Keep, Falmer,

6th August 'Investigations at a WW1 camp at Cooden'. - Simon Stevens.

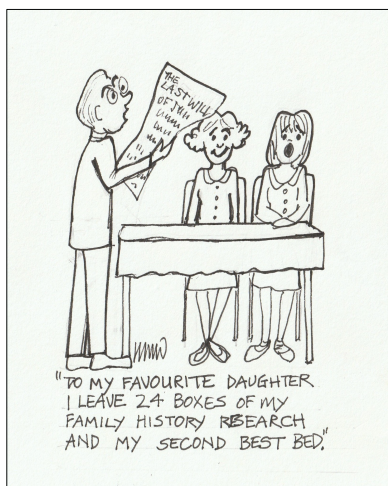
3rd September 'The Lost Farms of Eastbourne' - Tony Pulford.

1st October 'Brickmakers and Brickmaking' - David Cufley.

5th November 'A talk on the history of Chailey Heritage' - Helen Lucas.

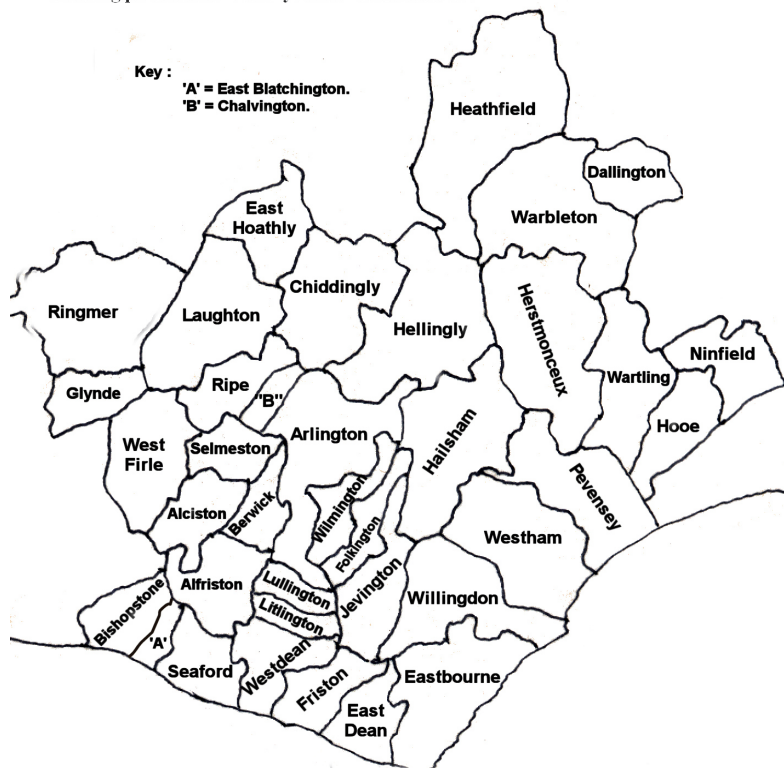
3rd December Christmas meeting - Details to be confirmed.

Cartoon by Helen Warren



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
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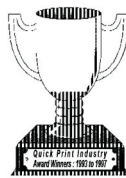
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