

LANCASHIRE

VOL. 48

FEBRUARY 2026

No. 1



Steve Williams who was appointed
Poet Laureate for the Historic County of Lancashire 2020

THE LANCASHIRE FAMILY HISTORY & HERALDRY SOCIETY

Formerly Rossendale Society for Genealogy & Heraldry
(Lancashire)

Inaugurated 1973. Registered Charity Number 513437

President: John Dalton

Vice-Presidents: Rodney Hampson, Terry Walsh, Tony Foster,
Margaret Purcell

Visit our Website on www.lfhhs.org.uk

Subscriptions:

Ordinary Membership £14

Family Membership £15

UK Pensioners & Students £12

Overseas Membership from 2022

= Members choosing electronic journals

Pensioner £12 (one year) £36 (3 years),

Non-pensioner £14 (one year) £42 (3 years)

Family £15 (one year) £45 (three years)

**Overseas Membership choosing the paper journal = £20
(one year), £60 (3 years)**

**Renewals are due on the 1st January. Cheques should be
crossed and made payable to Lancashire Family History &
Heraldry Society and sent to the Membership Secretary.**

MEETING VENUES

**BLACKBURN &
DARWEN**

**Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom
Possibly First Thursday of the month**

BURY

**Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom
Second Tuesday of the month at 7.00pm**

CHORLEY

**Primrose Gardens, Fleet St., Chorley PR7 2EE
Second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm**

FYLDE

**St. Martin's Church, Fleetwood Road South,
Carleton, Poulton-le-Fylde FY6 7NL
First Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.**

HERALDRY GROUP Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom

HYNDBURN Accrington Sea Cadets, Harvey Street,
Oswaldtwistle, Accrington BB5 3LT
First Wednesday of the month.
Doors open 6.45pm ready for 7pm start.

IRISH ANCESTRY GROUP

2 Straits, Oswaldtwistle BB5 3LU
Saturday Workshops 1 pm – 4.30 pm
Every 2 months as per Branch Programme,
Website and Members Forum
(or Virtual Branch Meeting by Zoom as advised)

LANCASTER & MORECAMBE Morecambe Heritage, Unit 29 Arndale Centre,
Morecambe LA4 5DH
First and third Friday 11 am–1 pm and
Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom
Third Thursday of the month at 6.45pm for
7pm start.

LONDON & SOUTH Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom
Five meetings a year on Saturdays at (1.00pm for
2.00pm as advised.

PENDLE & BURNLEY Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom
First Thursday of the month at 7pm

PRESTON Kingsfold Methodist Church, Padway,
Penwortham, Preston PR1 9EJ
Last Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm.

RIBBLE VALLEY Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom
4th Thursday of the month at 6.45pm for
7.00pm start as advised.

ROCHDALE St. Andrew's U.R. Church, Entwisle Road,
Rochdale OL16 2HZ
Last Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm.

ROSSENDALE Longholme Methodist Church (opp.Bus Station)
Bacup Road, Rawtenstall BB4 7NU
First Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm.

SOCIETY VIRTUAL GROUP MEETINGS by Zoom
Second Tuesday of the month 6.30pm for 7pm start
as advised.

CONTENTS

Page	3	Branch Programmes and More Members' Articles
	8	Do you look at and use our Exchange Journals? - Stephen Benson
	9	Legacies and LFHHS – Mike Coyle
	10	The Sad Story of a Sister – Rex Watson
	17	Was John Fowler Really a Foole? – Tony Haley
	23	The Origins of William G. Stewart – Peter Loach
	26	Churchtown Children's Festival 2024 – Ron Chapman
	27	Our Society Needs Help – Mike Coyle
	28	Deaths notified
	29	Members' Interests
	34	Notes and News and Book Reviews
	38	Branch News

PULL OUT CENTRE PAGES – BOOKING FORM FOR SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM

Front Cover Picture Steve Williams

Poet Laureate for the Historic County of Lancashire since 2020

Rear Cover Picture Photographs taken at the 2024
Children's Festival at Churchtown – Ron Chapman

All contents of this magazine are the copyright of Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society and individual authors. No such content may be reproduced in any form unless prior permission to do so has been given by the Editor and the author/authors concerned.

When sending items or articles for inclusion in the journal it is now necessary for you to give permission to print your e-mail or contact details. Thank you

BRANCH AND VIRTUAL MEETING PROGRAMMES

2026

- 10 Feb – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
The Heraldic Glass (c.1300) in the chancel
at Norbury, Derbyshire – John Titterton
- 12 Feb – Chorley – Sir Edward Watkins, Victoria's Railway
King & Manchester Benefactor – Geoff
Scargill
- 14 Feb – Irish Ancestry Group – zoom by Carol Lee (Log in
12.45pm for 1pm start). Following the fire
in the PRO, Dublin in 1922, many records
were destroyed. We explore records
available and how to access them.
- 19 Feb – Lancaster & Morecambe Virtual Branch meeting by
zoom, 6.45pm for 7pm start
- 20 Feb – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am –
1pm at Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit
29 Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe
LA4 5DH
- 25 Feb – Preston The Man Who Shod War Horses –
Martin Jones
- 25 Feb – Rochdale – Research Evening
- 4 Mar – Fylde – AGM (first meeting of 2026)
- 6 Mar – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am – 1pm
at Morecambe Heritage Centre,
Morecambe LA4 5DH
- 10 Mar – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
Is AI your friend? – Ron Chapman
- 12 Mar – Chorley – AGM and talk by member Anne Lowe
- 20 Mar – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am –
1pm at Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit
29 Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe
LA4 5DH

- 25 Mar – Preston Tales of a Customs Officer – Brian Topping
- 25 Mar – Rochdale – AGM
- 10 Apr – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am –
1pm at Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit
29 Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe
LA4 5DH
- 11 Apr – Irish Ancestry Group – 1pm at Oswaldtwistle for
Advice and Research
- 14 Apr – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm – The
1826 Lancashire Weavers Uprising – David
Scott
- 24 Apr – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am –
1pm at Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit
29 Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe
LA4 5DH
- 29 Apr – Preston Fred Parr – Dunkirk and Beyond 1940-
1945. My own story of a young man from
Bretherton taken prisoner at Dunkirk.
- 8 May – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am – 1pm
At Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit 29,
Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe LA4
5DH
- 12 May – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
Albert Isaiah Coffin, Doctor or Quack?
Healing or Harming? You decide. – Gay
Evans

16 May – Society Conference and AGM in Oswaldtwistle

- 22 May – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am –
1pm at Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit
29, Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe
LA4 5DH
- 27 May – Preston Fylde Military Hospitals – Jennifer Ray
- 30 May – London & South Virtual Branch Meeting by Zoom
(Log in from 1.30pm for 2pm start)
Studying the 3 Rs – Claire Moores
- 9 June – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
Lancashire Lasses – Steve Williams

- 12 June – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am –
1pm at Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit
29 Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe
LA4 5DH
- 13 June – Irish Ancestry Group – 1pm at Oswaldtwistle for
Advice and Research
- 24 June – Preston Scenes and History of Old Preston –
Peter Smith
- 26 June – Lancaster & Morecambe Help Desk from 11am –
1pm at Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit
29 Arndale Shopping Centre, Morecambe
LA4 5DH
- 14 July -Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
A Priest In The Tree – Kate Hurst
- 29 July – Preston To be confirmed
- 8 Aug – Irish Ancestry Group – 1pm at Oswaldtwistle for
Advice and Research
- 11 Aug – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
Historical Graffiti – The Writing is on The
Wall – Colin Perry
- 26 Aug – Preston No meeting
- 5 Sept – London & South Virtual Branch Meeting by Zoom
(Log in from 1.30pm for 2pm start)
Using a Research Methodology for Family
History – Phil Isherwood
- 8 Sept – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
Confessions of a Country Lane Researcher
– Tony Foster
- 30 Sept – Preston To be confirmed
- 10 Oct – Irish Ancestry Group – Zoom at 1pm speaker to be
advised.
- 13 Oct – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
Crime and Punishment, from the Anglo
Saxons to present day – Eric Jackson
- 28 Oct – Preston Talk by Alan Crosby
- 10 Nov – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
The Poppy – symbol of remembrance – Bill
King

14 Nov – London & South Virtual Branch Meeting by Zoom
(Log in 1.30pm for 2pm start)
Christmas Food – Mike Coyle
25 Nov – Preston Jacobs Join and Quiz
8 Dec – Society Virtual Meeting by Zoom 6.30 for 7pm –
The Victorian Fair: freak shows and
fisticuffs – Dr. Ann Featherstone
12 Dec – Irish Ancestry Group – No meeting.
30 Dec – Preston No meeting

SOCIETY VIRTUAL BRANCH TALKS BY ZOOM

Contact: Marian Crossley

e-mail: mariancrossley74@gmail.com

**or societytalks@lfhhs.org for more information or check
our website.**

**Hopefully you will be able to join us on the 2nd Tuesday
of each month at 6.30pm for 7pm start sometime.**

Joining Zoom Meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84756643309?pwd=CtayHpHBtoCbawW3vaAbAFDs3u29HD.1>

Meeting ID: 847 5664 3309

Passcode: 161771

10 February – The heraldic glass (c.1300) in the chancel at
Norbury, Derbyshire by John Titterton

The glass in the chancel of the church at Norbury is a
remarkable survival. The talk investigates the knightly families
represented and comes to a surprising solution as to why their
arms are included.

10 March – Is AI your friend by Ron Chapman

Discover how AI is revolutionising family history research, from
handwriting recognition and photo animation.

14 April – The 1826 Lancashire Weavers uprising by David Scott

Handloom weavers' patience broke in April 1826. Faced with high food prices and low or no wages, responded to the very real threat of mass starvation they took action.

12 May – Albert Isaiah Coffin, Doctor or Quack? Healing or Harming? You decide by Gay Evans

Albert Isaiah Coffin styled himself as a Professor of Medical Botany, a M.D., a Physician, and a Herbalist. He was born in America and arrived in England around 1832-1838. He travelled around the country, delivered various lectures, and published several books and leaflets. He engaged agents and encouraged people to join his friendly societies. He was often a witness at various inquests and trials where he or agents were accused of manslaughter. He was considered a thorn in the side of the established medical profession, especially by a Dr. Letherby. Did his medicines kill or cure? How will you judge him?

9 June – Lancashire Lasses by Steve Williams

A range of women from the county – from Gracie Fields, to Suffragettes, Mill 'Girls' and sportswomen (including the famous Dick Kerr Ladies football team).

14 July – A Priest in The Tree by Kate Hurst

An overview of the anti-Catholic legislation which affected the lives of English men who trained as priests between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, followed by a summary of five members of the Hurst family who trained as priests.

11 August – Historical Graffiti – The Writing is on the Wall by Colin Penny

We are surrounded by graffiti, and you will probably pass at least one example even on the shortest of journeys – though you might not notice it. Over the last ten years or so graffiti, or street art, has consistently hit the headlines as the work of some artists, such as Banksy, has fetched record amounts at

auction. But graffiti is nothing new, as anyone who has visited Pompeii will tell you. This illustrated talk looks at some of the motivations behind graffiti through the ages, such as love, hate, fear, and persecution, and how it used to be seen not as vandalism but (in some cases) as an act of religious devotion or house decoration. It can also provide us with something which almost no other historic document can – that is, an insight into exactly how a person was feeling at a precise moment in time. We will look at many stunning examples found throughout the UK, ranging from the ancient to the modern.

8 September – Confessions of a Country Lane Researcher - Tony Foster

When researching our family trees it is possible to get distracted. Sometimes this can result in some interesting stories that does not add to your family tree but may say something of what your ancestors were aware of.

13 October – Crime and Punishment, from the Anglo Saxons to present day by Eric Jackson

A journey through crime and punishment from the time of Alfred the Great up to the present day. What crimes were committed in Saxon England and how they were dealt with, the development of the jury system to replace trial by ordeal or combat. Punishments of old, the arrival of the Normans, some typical cases from the middle ages and later 18th century. The establishment of the Quarter Sessions and Assizes, the introduction of prison as the principal means of punishment, capital punishment and its abolition. Well illustrated with over forty PowerPoint slides, and some thought-provoking statistics at the end.

10 November – The Poppy – symbol of remembrance by Bill King

Across the UK, poppies are worn each year to mark Remembrance events and commemorate those who lost their lives in two world wars and other conflicts.

8 December – The Victorian Fair : freak shows and fisticuffs
by Dr Ann Featherstone

Think of the Victorian fair and the exhibitions, shows and booths which made it so popular. This talk looks at the history of the fair and explores some of the fascinating amusements on the 19th century fairground.

Any alterations will be advised on the website and the members forum.

MEMBERS' ARTICLES

DO YOU LOOK AT AND USE OUR EXCHANGE JOURNALS?

By Stephen Benson, Exchange Journals Co-ordinator

The Society runs an Exchange Journal scheme with approximately 70 other Family History Societies where we provide them with copies of our journals and they provide us with theirs.

These were originally circulated as paper copies and could be read at our Oswaldtwistle Research Centre but as postage, storage and printing costs have risen many societies have moved to changing to electronic journal copies in pdf file format being e-mailed.

Where they do this for Exchange Journals both parties have an agreement that the copies are only made available through a "Members Area portal" and cannot be e-mailed on to individual members.

Since 2021 LFHHS has moved to supplying and receiving our Exchange Journals as pdf files.

These are available to all our members worldwide through the

Members Area of the website.

A list of societies/titles can be supplied on request – e-mail: Stephen.t.benson@btinternet.com for the list. If you need help in getting into the Members Area just e-mail the same address.

Have a look at the areas you are interested in and see if their journals can help you knock down any brick walls there. If we do not exchange journals with any society in the area of interest e-mail me and we will see if (a) they issue an electronic journal and (b) they would be prepared to take part in the exchange scheme.

The scheme also includes current and back issues of the Family History Federation's Really Useful Bulletins, News from the (Lancashire) Archives, newsletters of the Friends of Lancashire Archives and Lancashire Local History Federation.

These are long standing arrangements so several years of back issues are available for most titles.

LEGACIES AND LFHHS

By Mike Coyle, Education Co-ordinator

Background

Our Society was set up to help its members trace their family's stories; to learn about where they came from, and the times they lived, as well as helping to preserve historical records and documents. The Society has been able to do this because of its members financial contributions and generous donations. We are in an era where costs are increasing and revenues decreasing, particularly as we face competition from internet providers. We are working hard to manage these challenges and one area where members could assist the Society would be to make a gift in your Will. UK members may be interested to know that if a donation of at least 10%

of the net value of their estate is made to charity the Inheritance Tax rate decreases to 36%.

What information should I include in a Will leaving a legacy to the LFHHS?

In order to reduce the possibility of error or confusion, the following should be included:

Name: **Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society**

LFHHS main office: **2 Straits, Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire BB5 3LU**

Charity Registration Number: **513437**

What next?

If you would like to discuss a legacy for the LFHHS, please talk to the Treasurer.

There is more information at:

Advice from the Government:
www.gov.uk/make-will

Advice from Money Saving Expert:
www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/free-cheap-wills

Advice from Which Magazine:
www.which.co.uk/money/retirement/guides/writing-a-will/

Advice from Age UK
www.ageuk.org.uk/products/financial-products-and-services/legal-services/

Advice from CO-OP Funeral Service
www.co-oplegalservices.co.uk/partners/online-wills-start-page-v471/

UK members may be interested to know that if a bequest of 10% of the net value of their estate is made to charity the Inheritance Tax will not apply to that bequest.

Link to the Gov page:

How Inheritance Tax works: thresholds, rules and allowances:
Overview – GOV.UK

THE SAD STORY OF A SISTER

By Rex Watson

As family historians we tend to look for 'successful' lives, interpreting that in a variety of ways perhaps. But arguably we should give a rounded picture overall, and be prepared to research, and indeed write about, those in trouble of various sorts, including of course with the law. Some lives fail to achieve 'success' for reasons beyond control, not least health ones. My grandfather's sister in what follows comes into this last category.

I knew my paternal grandfather Richard Bright WATSON well, as I was 18 when he died at the age of 94 in 1963 in Burnley, having lived all his long life there. He was very interested in the local history, including that of his own family, and left some very useful information at a time when 'family history' was not really established as a pastime. Also of course if you did have a mind to 'do your tree' records were not so easy to access. I wrote a fairly brief story of Richard's life some years ago [1].

Richard had three full sisters and three full brothers, as well as half-siblings, the marriage of his parents James WATSON and Susannah (nee GREEN) being the second one for both. Richard was the first child of the marriage. One brother and one sister died in infancy. The two other brothers Albert and Ernest I remember. The last-born of the seven children, Beatrice, died a little short of her majority (21) in 1901. This leaves Helena, born in 1875, of whom I knew little, but notes

made by my grandfather give her death as in May 1914. She was buried at Haggate Baptist church, where many of my family had been buried for the previous century or more. The photo shows parents and the five children who achieved adulthood, and will have been taken about 1890. Also shown is a small copy of the New Testament, given by Helena (in 1902) to her niece, my aunt.

Helena was with her parents in the censuses of 1891 and 1901, unmarried, a cotton weaver : no surprise there of course, Burnley often being quoted as the largest weaving town in the world around the turn of the century. In 1911 however she and the others had flown the nest, parents James and Susannah being the only two in their household. Susannah died in 1915, and James in 1916, with James managing to squeeze in a third marriage! But they are buried together at Haggate, along with Beatrice and Helena.

My initial attempts to find Helena in the 1911 census and to find her death (rather than burial) drew blanks, perhaps because I naturally expected to find her still in Burnley, knowing her to be buried at Haggate. I was pretty sure she never married, but kept an eye out for a different surname.

To deal first with the death. It is so much easier these days to obtain a death (or birth) record, from 1837, by using the General Register Office site, an image online costing £3. I eventually tracked the death down to 13 May 1914, in the County Asylum in Winwick, way off NE Lancs! However in the 'Rank or Profession' box is noted not only 'Cotton Weaver, Spinster', but also the address of her parents, namely 84 Every Street, Burnley. The cause of death was broncho-pneumonia. The informant was a cousin, who I have not been able to place, living in Newton-in-Makerfield. She may have been the main family contact.

Prior to this investigation I did have a rather vague memory that one of my grandfather's sisters had had mental health problems, but knew no detail. The County Asylums were set

up one by one from the mid 19th century, following an Act of Parliament in 1845, and were often known as 'Lunatic Asylums'. See [2] for much detail of conditions, etc, and a comprehensive list of the asylums countrywide.

Ancestry holds Admission Registers for the asylums. Helena was admitted on 28 February 1910, her age when she was first diagnosed as 'Lunatic' being given as 33, so on this basis she seems not to have been admitted for a year or so after diagnosis. Actually, she had been admitted to Burnley Workhouse just four days earlier (see Lancashire OPC), and the move to Winwick would have been organised from there. It looks as if she spent the last four years approximately of her life at Winwick. Also it should be noted that Winwick was one of the asylums requisitioned during WW1 for military purposes, the residents being dispersed to other asylums in the broad area. Helena at least escaped this trauma.

The 1911 census was now easy. The patients are not named, only identified by initials, this being common in many institutions such as hospitals, workhouses and prisons. And it can now be seen why my earlier searches were fruitless.

It is unfortunate that Helena was so far from her home town. The asylum at Calderstones near Clitheroe was much closer to Burnley, but did not open till after the Great War.

A sad story, but I am glad that Helena was a loving aunt to my aunt.

References:

- [1] Richard Bright Watson (1868-1963), in Retrospect (Burnley Historical Society), 2014, pp6-16.
- [2] County Asylums, www.countyasylums.co.uk

Presented To my dear
little neice Eveline
on her 6th birthday
as a token of love
from her Aunt
Helena also with
best wishes for a
bright and happy
birthday

Helena Watson inscription.



James Watson and his family.

Queries and comments are most welcome.

Rex Watson : e-mail rexwatson@ntlworld.com

WAS JOHN FOWLER REALLY A FOOLE?

By Tony Haley (member 8224)

John Fowler was born around 1804 in Over Darwen. But was he the son of George and Alice Foole? Did his surname morph from Foole to Fowler when he moved to Liverpool?

No baptism records have been located.

I first got interested in John when Ancestry suggested I had five DNA matches with his descendants. If these were real then it is quite likely that John was the sister of my three times great grandmother Jane Foole, the daughter of George and Alice.

Ancestry's Thrulines provide an excellent guide on where and who to research, but the information they provide is obtained via submitted trees. As I think we all know some of these can be a little flaky. Perhaps the compilers relied too much on indices and registers without certificates; or researching in insufficient depth or checking alternatives; or ignoring Lancashire naming customs where siblings can recreate their grandparent's names ad infinitum.

Suffice to say the need for proof and documented sources is as great as ever.

So there were two distinct phases to this project.

- (1) Check out and prove the lines to the five descendants of John Fowler.
- (2) Prove that John Fowler's parents were George and Alice Foole and hence Jane is his sibling.

The first phase proved fairly simple if somewhat time-consuming. Of the five 'cousins' one was born in Preston, one was born in Manchester the three in Australia.

The second phase proved much more interesting.

John had married Hannah (probably Harwood). No record of the marriage has been located but as Hannah was born in Over Darwen then it is probable that the marriage took place there in the early 1820s.

They had five known children, George 1823, William 1825, Roger 1831, Hannah 1833, and Alice 1834. The first three were born in Over Darwen and the latter two in Liverpool. In 1841 they were together living in Liverpool¹. By 1851 the family less three of the children, George, Roger and Alice had moved to Oldham².

Prior to the 1861 census both John and Hannah had died. But that census proved pivotal to the project. William is listed at two locations. Firstly with his wife and five children living in Runcorn³ and secondly lodging in Over Darwen⁴ with Ralph and Jane Isherwood. Both records give near enough identical information; status (married); age (36); birthplace (Over Darwen); occupation (iron moulder/founder).

Jane Isherwood is the married name of Jane Foole. Now we have a connection between John's son William and the Foole family via John's potential sibling Jane.

There was a tree on Ancestry that claimed to have discovered John Fowler's death in 1859. They did not have the certificate and relied on the index. I tried to engage the owner in order to have a discussion but they refused any dialogue. They purported to have a lot of knowledge on Fowlers. This was disappointing but I felt that the name was too common to rely on the index alone.

The certificate confirmed my suspicions. The place of death was suspicious but more importantly the occupation of the deceased was a merchant. It would be very rare to go from being a labourer to a merchant as a fifty something year old.

There was another likely death this one in December 1860.

The age was good and it was back in Liverpool. The certificate proved crucial. The place was right but more importantly the informant was his son-in-law Joseph Emmett, the husband of his daughter Hannah.

That was interesting but did it move the investigation along?

And here there was a large slice of luck. Ancestry has a collection *England & Scotland, Select Cemetery Registers*. This includes St Mary's, Kirkdale, Liverpool where John was buried in December 1860.

The records for this cemetery between 1837 and 1861 include parents' names.

John's parents are listed as George and Alice.

Mystery solved, John Fowler really was John Foole but, as we all know, solving one mystery frequently brings forth even more!

Back to that 1861 census⁴ where William Fowler was lodging with Ralph and Jane Isherwood. There was also another Fowler lodging there – Thomas Fowler age 17 born in Everton. Where did he fit in? There were only five people at the address Ralph, Jane, one of their grandchildren plus the two Fowlers. Surely he must also be related somehow.

A sibling of William was ruled out. His family is well known. How about some form of cousin?

Thomas was located in the 1851 census⁵ in Liverpool. He was living with his father, Thomas, (inferred) mother Margaret and two siblings Jane age 12 and George age six.

Thomas was born in Blackburn although the later 1861 census⁶ changes it to Darwen. That was very encouraging. Perhaps Thomas was a sibling of John and Jane, son of George and Alice.

Thomas's baptism has not been located but from the censuses he was born around 1798/9. George and Alice were married in 1794 and the first recorded child was born in 1801. To wait seven years for a firstborn seems unlikely. That means that there is a space in their schedule for Thomas.

There then followed a serious quest for more information. But little was forthcoming.

No birth registration could be found for any of Thomas and Margaret's children. However another son, Roger, was found. He was in that cemetery index for St Mary's. A February 1844 death, parents Thomas and Margaret. The death certificate put his age at two years and seven months but even armed with this accurate information no birth registration could be found.

That cemetery register also recorded the burial of Margaret in 1851. Her parents were shown as Patrick and ? Heaton. Young Thomas adopted a middle name of Eaton. This cannot be a coincidence but was the 'H' an act of commission or omission? I imagine the difference in accent between East Lancashire and Liverpool may account for this.

No marriage registration for Thomas and Margaret has been found. Perhaps because there never was any ceremony. When their eldest child, Jane, was born in 1839 Thomas was about 40 but Margaret was only 22. Perhaps he had had a former life which meant they felt they had to move away to live together. Liverpool, where his sibling John was living, must have been attractive.

One certificate that has been found is Thomas's death certificate. He died in 1863 in Hacking St., Darwen and was buried there in Holy Trinity. We do not know whether he had moved back permanently or was just visiting. In any event it is a further indication of his roots.

So was Thomas Fowler also really a Foole?

The evidence is circumstantial, scant, flimsy yet somehow strangely compelling.

Any thoughts from members?

Census References:

¹ 1841: HO107/558/13; Folio: 40; Page: 23

² 1851: HO107/224; Folio: 496; Page: 26

³ 1861: RG9/2564; Folio: 96; Page: 16 (home)

⁵ 1861: RG9/3109; Folio 130; Page 47 (lodgings)

⁴ 1851: HO109/2190; Folio: 509; Page: 11

⁶ 1861: RG9/2715; Folio: 9; Page: 12

POSTSCRIPT AND UPDATE – JOHN FOOLE/FOWLER

The original project was to investigate the five DNA matches that proposed George and Alice Foole as mutual ancestors through their son John Fower, i.e. was John Fowler a sibling of my 3 x grandmother Jane Foole?

Since then two further matches have appeared, both purporting to come through John. These need investigating.

The sixth match, born in York, turned out to be in my tree already. ThruLines had previously identified him as a distant cousin on my father's Bolshaw line. I verified this and fed the details into my tree. Returning to ThruLines, expecting to see the dashed line around the boxes, removed, they were back but not through the Bolshaw's but through George and Alice with this cousin also via John.

For those unfamiliar with Ancestry's ThruLines a dashed box around the name indicates the source is a tree other than your own.

This new match was a double cousin.

The seventh match, born in Bolton, was altogether different. ThruLines suggested that he was descended from John's son Roger.

Everything checked out but I was very suspicious of the connection between Roger and John. The only link was the 1841 census where Roger was staying with John and family. But was he really John's son? Perhaps he was just visiting or maybe he had been adopted.

The other four 'siblings' retained the name Fowler and John was clearly their father on their marriage certificates.

Roger, on the other hand, reverted to the Foole surname. His marriage certificate was needed to verify his father's name.

He married Mary Greenhalgh in 1855. (His name was miss-transcribed in the indices as Foote, explanation later)

I looked forward to receiving the certificate fully expecting the father to be John but curious as to how it would be spelt. How wrong could I be?

Roger's father was William Foole. One of the witnesses was William Fowlere. The witness was probably one of his 1841 apparent siblings.

After much searching for both Roger and William the only conclusion was that Roger Foole was indeed the 10 year old Roger Fowler from the 1841 census. This in turn would suggest he was some sort of relative, perhaps a nephew.

For the first seven years of their marriage there are no documented children for George and Alice Foole. The first known birth is in 1801 of their son, named after his father, George.

If George and Alice were naming their children in line with the Lancashire naming customs there should be two boys born in

this seven-year blank period named after their grandfathers.

But both grandfathers were called William – result!

George Foole senior's two brothers were called Thomas and roger. Again another indicator that Thomas fowler was connected to the family.

Roger Foole retained his original surname and lived out his life in Astley Bridge where he died in 1896 aged 65. However he did add an acute accent to the e. It was this that the marriage transcriber would have thought as a cross on the l to create a t.

Were William Foole, Thomas Fowler and John Fowler all siblings of my 3 x grandmother Jane Isherwood neé Foole?

On the balance of probabilities.....

THE ORIGINS OF WILLIAM G. STEWART

A genealogical mystery by Peter Loach
Leicestershire & Birmingham Family History Societies

William Gladstone Stewart was a well known television producer, director and presenter, probably best remembered as the host of the Channel 4 quiz show Fifteen to One between 1988 and 2003.

When William died in September 2017, several newspaper obituaries appeared, which all agreed that he was born on 15 July 1933 – but although most gave his birthplace as Lancaster, a couple suggested the Lincolnshire parish of Habrough, some 150 miles away.

This contradiction puzzled me, so I decided to search for William's birth registration. His Wikipedia page states that

both his parents died when he was 2 years old, and that he grew up in a children's home. A search of the GRO birth index for William G. Stewart in 1933 produced no results. However, the early loss of his parents made me wonder if his name had been changed at some point, so I went back to the birth index (on the wonderful free BMD site) and searched for any child named William G born in 1933 in Lancaster registration district. Three results came up, but one stood out – William G. S. Ruxton born September Quarter, mother Stewart-Kerr.

So was William born a Ruxton? If so, there should be death registrations for his parents in 1935 or 1936, so I searched Lancaster district for that period, and just one entry appeared – Isabella Ruxton, aged 34, in September Quarter 1936. The Free BMD transcription of this entry has a "Postema" – a message added with extra information – and my jaw dropped as I read "Common-law wife of Dr. Buck Ruxton who murdered her and their maid Mary Rogerson". The death of Buck Ruxton aged 36 is registered in Manchester North in June Quarter 1936, with a "Postema" that he was hanged at Strangeways Prison on 12 May.

The Ruxton case became known as the "Jigsaw Murders", and has been extensively written about. Buck Ruxton was born in Bombay in 1899 and came to the UK in 1926 to train in medicine. He anglicised his name in 1927, and while studying in Edinburgh met a café manageress named Isabella Kerr. Buck had undertaken a short-lived arranged marriage in India in 1925, and Isabella had married a Dutch seaman named Antonio Van Ess in Edinburgh in 1920, but they had separated soon afterwards.

Buck and Isabella lived together, firstly in London and later at 2 Dalton Square, Lancaster, posing as a married couple. They had 3 children – Elizabeth Ava Stewart Ruxton born 21 August 1929 in Lewisham, Diana Rose Stewart Ruxton born 17 January 1931 in Lancaster and William Gladstone Stewart Ruxton born 15 July 1933. The couple had a tempestuous

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society

Registered Charity No. 513437

President: John Dalton

LFHHS ONE DAY CONFERENCE

AND

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 16th May 2026

9.45 am to 4.30pm

At

Rhyddings Methodist Church Hall
Watson Street off Rhyddings Street
Off Union Road (main road by War Memorial)
Oswaldtwistle BB5 3EP

and by ZOOM

All members & their guests are invited to this Annual Event

Do come, meet old friends and make new ones

You will be most welcome

Founded 1973
as the Rossendale Society for Genealogy and Heraldry
A Member of the Federation of Family History Societies.

Programme

09:15 – 09:50 Registration and Tea / Coffee

09:50 – 10:00 Welcome and Introduction

10:00 – 11:00 **Speaker: Keith Stephenson - Hoghton Tower.** Built in 1565 on the site of buildings dating back to 1109, commands a hilltop with impressive views of the Lakes, Irish Sea, and Wales. Its strategic location brought centuries of royal and artistic guests, giving it national prominence.

11:00 – 11:20 Intermission, Tea / Coffee

11:20 – 12:20 **Speaker: Steven Irwin - The Women's March (and Men's too...) – how we all got the vote** - From the Great Reform Act of 1832 to the Equal Franchise Act of 1928, how did we all end up able to vote? What were the routes and reasons by which men and women gained the vote? Suffragists vs. Suffragettes – the personalities and methods they used to advance their cause.

12.20 – 1:45 Buffet Lunch

1:45 – 2:45 **Speaker: Kate Hirst - This illustrated talk traces Catholic history in Blackburn** from sixteenth-century recusancy fines to eighteenth-century acceptance and community establishment, using newspaper extracts, maps, parish registers, and notable figures' stories

2.45 – 3.10 Intermission, Tea / Coffee and Raffle

3:10 – 4:25 **LFHHS Annual General Meeting and Open Forum**

4:30 Farewell and departures

We extend a warm welcome to LFHHS members and non-members. Please signify on the Application Form

There will be opportunities to chat and exchange information throughout the day. A selection of books, CDs and scans of fiche will be available for purchase or order. Do not forget – you may need your Debit or Credit Card

Motions and Nominations for Officers for the AGM must be forwarded, in writing, to the Secretary, to arrive at least 28 days before the 16 May 2025 (that is by Saturday 18 April 2026)

Any member making or requiring a copy of Nominations and Motions should email stephen.t.benson@btinternet.com or send a stamped s.a.e. (9" x 4") to Sue Foster at 18 Glencross Place, Blackpool FY4 5AD

LANCASHIRE FAMILY HISTORY & HERALDRY SOCIETY

APPLICATION FORM Annual Conference and AGM

To be received by Saturday 18 April 2026 please

Name:

Address:

..... Post Code:

e-mail address of Main Applicant

1. Please reserve..... place/s at the Conference & AGM with buffet lunch

at £20.00 per person £

2. Please reserve place/s at the Conference & AGM without lunch

at £12.00 per person £

3. I / we would like to be present at the AGM ONLY, please email /post the papers.

I enclose a cheque for £ **Payable to LFHHS or book and pay
online through the Society's website shop at www.lfhhs.org or via
Bank Transfer to LANCs FAM HIST & HERALDRY SOC**

Account No. 12578737

Sort Code 16-28-33

Name/s, IN FULL, and MEMBERSHIP NUMBER or 'Guest' of those attending so
that badges can be prepared.

Please UNDERLINE PREFERRED NAME for the badge.

1

2

3

4

5

Please send completed Application Form, to be received **by Saturday 18
April 2026** to: Stephen Benson, 32 Slater Lane, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 1TN,
with a note of any dietary requirements.

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society

LFHHS ONE DAY CONFERENCE

&

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 16^h May 2026

Please complete and send

TODAY

We wish to attract as many members as possible to the Conference & AGM. The cost is **£20.00 per person, including a Buffet Lunch.** Please come and join us in what is usually a very happy and rewarding event.

Booking can be made through the web-site shop:
www.lfhhs.org

.....

The venue and facilities are wheelchair accessible

Conference Organiser: Stephen Benson
Tel: 01772 422808

relationship, with Buck suspecting Isabella of adultery, and on 15 September 1935 he strangled her at their home, along with their unfortunate maid Mary Jane Rogerson. He dismembered both bodies and drove to Scotland, disposing of grisly parcels of human remains in a remote ravine near the town of Moffat. Newspapers used as wrapping helped the police link the remains to Buck, and on 13 October he was charged with murder. In March 1936 he was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Following the notorious trial, the three young Ruxton children were taken into the care of Lancashire Council, and placed in a home. Elizabeth can be found in the 1939 Register at a LCC Children's Home in Broadstairs, but the two entries immediately below her are still redacted. In 1942 the births of all 3 children were re-registered under the surname Van Ess, and both daughters later married using that name. Elizabeth died in 2016 and Diana in 2021.

The birth certificate of William Gladstone Stewart Ruxton is fascinating. He was originally registered on 20 July 1933 as the son of Buck Ruxton, medical practitioner and Isabella Ruxton formerly Stewart-Kerr. A lengthy marginal note records corrections made on 26 October 1942 following a Statutory Declaration by two Police Officers dated 17 September – Buck Ruxton is removed as the father (leaving the column blank) and altered to "Occupier" in the informant column. Isabella's surname is changed to Vann Ess formerly Kerr.

There seems little doubt that William G. Stewart and G. S. Ruxton were one and the same person. One wonders if he knew the truth about his parents, or had any contact with his sisters in later life. Elizabeth's marriage lists her as Ruxton or Van Ess, so she appears to have been aware of her upbringing. Perhaps it is best to let sleeping dogs lie now that all three children are deceased.

CHURCHTOWN CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL 2024

By Ron Chapman

Despite the damp weather that prevailed beforehand, on the Saturday the sun came to Churchtown Children's Festival.



This event, believed to have been running continuously for nearly 200 years, is a testament to the enduring spirit of a small village of approximately 200 houses.

The Spring Festival was initially organised by the local branch of The Oddfellows, a friendly society with a mission to provide assistance within their communities.

The earliest documentation of the Children's Festival is an article in the Preston Guardian, now known as the Farmers Guardian. Dated 6 June 1868, the article notes that the Festival had been active for "more than 30 years".

By 30 May 1896, the Preston Guardian referred to the Festival as Churchtown Club Day. Although the Oddfellows eventually

faded away, the children continued to celebrate the day, shifting the focus towards a children's festival, which remains the tradition today.

Nowadays the beautiful village boasts a single pub, an old church, and no shops.

Historically, it was the Parish Church of Garstang, but the parish has since been divided. The fascinating St. Helens, a Grade 1 listed building, dates back to the 13th century.

In the 1920s, the Butler-Cole family, prominent figures in the community, built the Memorial Hall. This tribute was to honour the brave men from Kirkland and Catterall who sacrificed their lives in World War 1.

The Memorial Hall and its surrounding field were generously donated to the people of Kirkland and Catterall, serving as a constant reminder of the heroes who fought for their country.

During this period, a charming local custom was observed. On the day of the procession, it was customary for the local girls to dress in new white dresses and matching hats, symbolising purity and unity.

These young girls would then visit the elderly in the village, proudly showing off their new dresses. This tradition served as a bridge between generations, fostering a sense of community and respect for their elders. In return for their visit, each girl would receive a penny.

This tradition, along with the Memorial Hall, paints a vivid picture of the community spirit and rich cultural heritage of Churchtown, Kirkland and Catterall in the 1920s.

The parade starts at the Memorial Hall, goes along the main road and turns off for St. Helen's Church in Churchtown where a service is held.

The parade then returns to the Memorial Hall where crowning, feasting and fun take place.

Once common in Lancashire, the May / Whitsuntide / Rose Queen Festivals were celebrated by most towns and villages.

Although they are not as prevalent these days, the communities in this area each have their own Festival and they each join in with each other to create a season of spring and summer fun.

See photographs on rear outer cover.

OUR SOCIETY NEEDS HELP

By Mike Coyle

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH OUR MEMBERS

We have a Communications Team, looking after our direct dealings with our members, and always happy for new folk to join us. We depend on all our communication platforms for access to our members.

Our Facebook

We are looking for help with our Social Media. In particular, someone to advise us on future strategy and/or manage our existing Facebook page.

Some of our branches have a Facebook page too. They often provide great help if anyone is struggling with a family history problem. Simply post a problem and see if anyone has an answer for you.

Our E-mails (Operated via Sender.net)

Most will know that our main ways of getting in touch is by e-

mail and via our 'Forum', however, we know that less than half our members open our e-mails or that our e-mails go into SPAM folders. We would ask that you make every effort to open our e-mails, they always have a clear subject header, so that it is clear that it is from LFHHS. There may be something of particular interest to you in there.

We send the quarterly Journal out by e-mail to those who have chosen a digital copy, and when we do this, we include a link, that you click on, which takes you to the Journal in the Society's "cloud". Understandably, some of you may be nervous about clicking on links in e-mails. Please be assured that our link is safe.

For those not receiving e-mails, PLEASE CHECK YOUR SPAM FOLDER. We have no control over what goes into your SPAM. If you find one of our e-mails, you can mark it as 'Not Spam', so that your e-mail host will put it into your 'Inbox'.

Something you may wish to do each time you log into your e-mails is to check your SPAM box first, highlight any message which should not be there – click on 'MOVE TO' – click on 'INBOX' Once you get into the habit it will become automatic.

Please also make sure we have your up-to-date e-mail address.

Our Forum (Operated via groups.io)

All our members have free access to our 'Forum'. It allows members to contact other members with topics you are interested about. You may have a brick wall or could offer help or advice. We know that less than half of the membership make use of the Forum.

Running the Forum is not a big task, but it would be useful to know how to manage it better, especially keeping the mailing list of members up-to-date.

Our Journal

We circulate our journal by post or by e-mail. If by chance you are not receiving our journal 'Lancashire' regularly, please let us know. Do we have your up-to-date e-mail address? Has your copy of the journal gone into your SPAM folder?

The journals are mainly to publish articles written usually by our own members, but offers from non-members are also considered if thought of interest to members.

If you have an article or something you think would be of interest to our members, you are cordially invited to forward it to our Editor (preferably in Word). Don't forget to add any references where you found information, thereby giving some of our newer members ideas of where they should look for their own information, or to help with any 'brick walls'.

Photographs may also accompany articles. These can sometimes be used on the covers of our journals.

Our Zoom Talks and Meetings

Our talks programme is now well established. We have an excellent Speaker Secretary and Planner in Marian; however, we would welcome more members involved in hosting the talks and help looking after administrations, e.g. recordings, scheduling and the like.

Some of our branches are now partly or exclusively run via Zoom.

MANAGING OUR LFHHS

Most members will be aware that the current Executive Committee have been involved since the early years of the society. We have lost several, or they have reluctantly stepped down from the posts they held.

With that in mind we would appreciate assistance from some new blood with new ideas and the energy to entice members to carry on providing the sort of society we all enjoy belonging to.

The future holds enormous promise for us, but we need to prepare for it! If you think you can help, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH. Our Society AGM is coming up on Saturday 16 May 2026, with a chance to offer your services.

Meanwhile, if you, or someone you know, are not receiving information from us, or want more information, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH.

DEATHS NOTIFIED

Mrs. Linda Mary Tyler - USA

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of the above.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Abbreviations:

c.Bury = Bury area

e.20C = early 20th century

m.18C = mid 18th century

c.1650 = about 1650

e.1763 = earliest ancestral link

l.19C = late 19th century

N.B. The 19th Century ran from 1801 to 1900. Unless otherwise specified, all locality names are in the pre- 1974 County of Lancashire. All other references are to pre- 1974 Counties.

Ms. P. Archer (11555)

ARCHER IRL Antrim 1900-1940

Mrs. E. Walker (8235)

Please resend the surnames you are researching.

Mr. G. Cannon (11187)

39 Lawton Road, Roby, Liverpool. Lancashire L36 4HL

e-mail: sparetyre2@hotmail.co.uk

CANNON LAN Capernwray 1700

Ms. J. B. Aitchison (11511)

HOYLE LAN Higher Booths (Tailor) 1804-1879

Mr. D. Yates (11545)

TOWNS

Ms. L. Merritt (11550)

ASPIN LAN Burnley (Coal heaver)

ASPDEN LAN Burnley (Printer)

ASPEN LAN Burnley

Ms. C. Kell (11553)

FARNWORTH

BILLINGTON

Mr. H. Russell (11573)

9 Craven Mews, Skipton. Yorks BD23 2AQ

e-mail: russelltouringuiding1122@yahoo.co.uk

BRITTON	LAN	Blackburn	1814+
HOWARD	CHS	Stalybridge (Butcher)	1719+
HOWARD	CHS	Mottram-in-Longendale	1719+
HOWARD	YKS	Saddleworth	1719+
HOWARD	DBY	Glossop	1719+
MORRIS	CHS	Stalbridge	1850+
RUSSELL	LAN	Mottram-in-Longendale (Calico printer)	1775+
RUSSELL	CHS	Stalybridge (Charles)	1775+
RUSSELL	LAN	Blackburn	1775+
RUSSELL	LAN	Bolton (Calico printer)	1775+
RUSSELL	LAN	Ashton-under-Lyne (Block printer)	1775+
RUSSELL	LAN	Rochdale (Stone mason)	1775+
SCHOLES	LAN	Prestwich	1732+
SCHOLES	LAN	Crumpsall	1732+

Mr. R. Turner (11576)

TURNER	LAN	Rawtenstall	1700-1970
--------	-----	-------------	-----------

Ms. S. Creer (11582)

BROWN	LAN	Cockerham (Farmer)	1700+
-------	-----	--------------------	-------

Ms. B. Clohesy (11591)

CROOK	LAN	Chorley	
-------	-----	---------	--

NOTES AND NEWS AND BOOK REVIEWS

Steve and Jennifer Benson run regular help sessions at **Tarleton Library**. Everyone welcome.

FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, 10.00 am to 12.00

PRESTON BRANCH HELP DESK AT LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES

Jennifer Benson, Joan Clayton, Peter Bamford and Stewart McLaughlin run regular help sessions at Lancashire Archives, Bow Lane, Preston. Everyone welcome.

THIRD FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH,
09.30 am to 12.00pm

Barry Dickinson holds regular bookable Family History one to one surgery sessions at **Barrowford Library**.

MOST MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS from 2pm

Please book on the LCC website or phone/call in to see the local librarian.

HELPING HANDS

E-mail: help@lfhhs.org.uk

Do you have a family history question or need a library/archive lookup then Helping Hands might be able to help.

OUT OF COUNTY STRAYS AND NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS

Did you know that the Society still collect any Out of County Strays or Newspaper Cuttings or Stories?

If you have or find any, please forward to

LFHHS, 2 Straits, Oswaldtwistle BB5 3LU

Many members have ancestors who have strayed away from Lancashire and been lost to their families forever.

SCANNED PDF COPIES OF ALL OUR OLD FICHE NOW AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE BY E-MAIL

Our microfiche have been scanned and are available through our website shop.

Orders are currently being sent out as an attachment to one or more emails, depending on the size of the order.

The prices are the same as the original microfiche, but obviously excluding postal charges.

In the near future it will also be available to purchase as an immediate download.

Look on the website for the shop section showing "Scanned images of microfiche" – this leads to 5 sections divided by alphabetic first letter of location - A-D, E-H, I-L, M-Q, R-Z. Click on <https://www.lfhhs.org/index.php?cPath=63>

EXHIBITIONS AND FAIRS

Society Coordinators – Steve and Jennifer Benson

If you would like to help and take part in any of the fairs please contact **Stephen Benson** (telephone 01772-422808 or e-mail Stephen.t.benson@btinternet.com)

POET LAUREATE APPOINTED FOR THE HISTORIC COUNTY OF LANCASHIRE 2020

Friends of Real Lancashire are pleased to announce the appointment of a Poet Laureate for the Historic County of Lancashire.

Mr. Steve Williams who has written many light-hearted poems especially for the northern audience has recently been appointed to this new honorary post. Steve has been described as: 'a poet for people who don't think they like poetry'; 'the L. S. Lowry of poetry'; 'Stan Ayres' (?); and 'somebody who should be doing something more useful with his time.' Steve writes for a broad audience but he admits that his poems are "enjoyed best with an Eccles cake or two and cup of strong tea".

Steve Williams was born in Liverpool in 1970 but was brought up in Wigan. He attended Holy Family Primary School in Wigan and St. Joseph's High School in Horwich. Growing up Steve had his heart set on becoming an English teacher but initially opted for a career in graphic design instead. In this field, he worked in Manchester for over 3 years. However, in 1991 the opportunity arose for him to go to University in Birmingham followed by teacher training in Hull. Steve has taught English in several high schools and has led numerous reading and writing initiatives for hundreds of young people across the north.

He knows his way around a rhyming couplet that's for sure. He is the writer behind www.jiggerypoetry.com a personalised poetry service launched in 2016. He writes poems for weddings, birthdays, retirements, funerals, corporate events and even football teams! He is a former "Poet in Residence" for BBC Radio York and has written two books of poems: 'A Midsummer's Ice Cream' and 'A Shepherd's Tale ... and other Christmas poems' – both of which can be found on Amazon.

Stephen is married to Victoria, and they have a daughter, Beth, who is studying Geography at Durham.

Philip Walsh, Chairman of Friends of Real Lancashire said, "As honorary Poet Laureate for the Historic County of Lancashire and believed to be the first county poet laureate in the UK.

Stephen will write three or four poems for us each year which we will gladly share in the media. We are delighted with Steve's first poem "To Lancashire" and we look forward to working with him for the foreseeable future. The Committee felt that Lancastrians young or old would easily relate to his poems."

Steve Williams said, "I am immensely proud to have been chosen to be the Poet Laureate for Historic Lancashire, and I am excited to play my part in the excellent work done by its members on behalf of the people of this great part of the country."

BRANCH NEWS

BLACKBURN & DARWEN Virtual Branch Meetings by ZOOM

All members are welcome.

Check the Members Forum and Website for further information

BURY Virtual Branch Meetings by ZOOM

Usually Second Tuesday of the month at 7pm

Check Members Forum and Website for more information.

All members are welcome.

CHORLEY

Secretary: Jayne Dixon

Branch e-mail: chorley@lfhhs.org.uk

We have continued to have very good attendances at our branch meetings, with the talks being well received, and we are looking forward to maintaining the same in the coming months.

Although we suffered about a 10% reduction in income last year, we are delighted that through prudent management we managed to increase our surplus over last year.

We are beginning work on the programme for next year, and welcome any suggestions from members regarding the talks or the speakers they would like. We have been encouraging members to give talks, which of course is financially beneficial for the branch. We would warmly welcome members from other branches who would like to give us talks; just let me know!

The January talk we had from Steve Williams celebrating the women of Lancashire was very well received, and we are looking forward to February's meeting when we will have a talk about Sir Edward Watkin.

CHORLEY RESEARCH CENTRE

The Research Centre has reopened after the Christmas break and already we are seeing an increase in visitors.

Sadly we don't believe that people are aware of and/or make use of our extensive library, and so as an appeal to members, know that we are in Astley Park and open 3 or 4 days a week (our opening times can be found on our Facebook page or the Society's web site), and you will always be welcome to come and look around.

Income for 2025 was significantly higher than in the previous year, but because of unforeseen repairs and renewals and other expenditure, the surplus was reduced, but nevertheless, a surplus was maintained.

In accordance with the agreement reached with the Society's Executive, the Research Centre is closing its bank account having transferred the balance in the account to the Society's current account.

Megan Roberts - Chair – Chorley Branch

FYLDE

Secretary: Mrs. Olive Thexton, 7 Bispham Lodge, 251
Norbreck Road, Thornton Cleveleys FY5 1PE
Branch e-mail: fylde@lfhhs.org.uk

Our next meeting will be the branch AGM on 4 March.

Any amendments will be advised via Members' Forum and the website.

HERALDRY GROUP

Contact Stephen Benson or Chris Ward

We are looking into the possibility of conducting our meetings by Zoom for the benefit of interested members who live too far away to be able to travel for face-to-face meetings. No programme has been arranged, but notices will appear on the Members Forum and the Society website.

If you are interested in joining us, please let us know

HYNDBURN

(covering Accrington, Altham, Church, Clayton le Moors, Gt Harwood, Oswaldtwistle & Rishton)

Secretary: Eileen Bullock, 51 Hawthorn Avenue,
Oswaldtwistle, Accrington. Lancs BB5 3AE
Branch e-mail: Hyndburn@lfhhs.org.uk

**New Venue : Accrington Sea Cadets, Harvey Street,
Oswaldtwistle, Accrington BB5 3LT
Now first Wednesday of each month.
Doors open 6.45pm for a 7.00 start.**

We held our Christmas lunch at the end of the year and in view of the poor weather over the past few years decided not

to hold meetings in January or February. We will be having our branch AGM on 4 March which will be followed by a talk.

IRISH ANCESTRY GROUP

Branch e-mail: irish@lfhhs.org.uk

On Saturday 14 February 2026 at **1pm Carol Lee** will give us another **Zoom talk Finding Irish Ancestors – the difficulty of researching.**

An explosion and fire in the Public Record Office in Dublin in 1922 destroyed many records and left an ever-present gaping hole for Irish Researchers.

Join me to explore what records are available and how to access them.

LANCASTER & MORECAMBE

Morecambe Heritage Centre, Unit 29 Arndale Centre,
Morecambe LA4 5DH

First and third Friday 11 am–1 pm

and

Virtual Branch Meetings by ZOOM

Third Thursday of the month at 6.45 for 7pm start

For those with an interest in that area. Members worldwide can ask questions and share knowledge and information about Lancaster and Morecambe families.

E-mail: maryjanebevins@yahoo.com for joining instructions.

LONDON & SOUTH
Virtual Branch Meeting by ZOOM
Five Saturdays in the year at 2pm
Joint Cumbria/Lancashire/Cheshire/London & South

These talks are open to **all members of the society**. They will continue Saturday afternoons on Zoom at 2pm, with the room opening at 1.30pm. If there is a topic or speaker which you think would be of interest to the group, please email me at the address below.

Saturday 5 September 2026 Phil Isherwood – Using A Research Methodology For Family History.

The sources we rely on for our family histories provide information, but the analysis of that information and formulation into proof requires a structured method. Currently there is little guidance on this for beginning and intermediate family historians, especially in the UK.

This talk will discuss methodologies, what they are and why they are useful. It will introduce an effective, easy-to-follow research methodology and show how it can be used to successfully solve complex cases.

You will learn what a research methodology is, why it's important, Six Steps to solving difficult genealogy problems and how to use the Six Steps to be more successful in your research.

Phil Isherwood is a family history speaker and writer alongside his full-time career in the software industry. He brings a passion for best-practice methods and innovative technology to his genealogical research.

Phil is a contributor to Family Tree magazine, a Family History Advisor for Oxfordshire Family History Society and co-founder of Pro-Am Genies, a networking group for professional and aspiring pro genealogists.

Submitted by Helen Conchar – Member 7279
E-mail: london2@lfhhs.org.uk or helsbels1997@gmail.com

PENDLE & BURNLEY
Virtual Branch Meetings by ZOOM

First Thursday of the month at 06:45 PM
E-mail garryjwalton@gmail.com for joining instructions

The virtual branch continues to thrive. We have global membership, 30 members from UK, USA, NZ and Australia.

We tend to discuss the family trees and stories of members taking it in turn to present a story or ask for help to solve a problem.

Membership subscriptions are collected centrally by LFHHS. No cash is collected by the branch.

Any paid up LFHHS member wishing to join the branch is welcome to email me and be added to our mailing list.

Check the Members Forum and Website for further information

PRESTON

Secretary: Stephen Benson, 32 Slater Lane, Leyland. Lancs
PR25 1TN Tel: 01772 422808
Branch e-mail: preston@lfhhs.org.uk

Our 2025 programme started in January with Steve Williams talk on "Unsung Lancashire Heroes" and was followed in February by Alison Brown giving us "The History of The Victoria Bowling Club".

March brought Philip Walsh telling us about "Horses for Courses" with the history of Lancashire Constabulary's Mounted Division. In April Miranda Rutherford gave us a talk "From Pocahontas to Preston – A Patawomack Experience" highlighting her history with America's first inhabitants. In May Bill Grime told us about his ancestor "Jack Grime – DNA Reveals his secret". In June Janet Edwards told us about "The Historic Importance of Bank Hall" while in July Megan Roberts told us about "When Emigration Goes Wrong" the tragic story of the Coal Miners and their families from Chorley who went to Hanna, Wyoming, only to be caught up in two devastating pit disasters.

No meeting took place in August but in September we had Anna Watson telling us about how to find out about illegitimate ancestors and then find the documents with details about them.

In October Alan Crosby told us about Sex, Wigs and a Drink : a Manchester diary from the reign of Queen Anne. November was the final meeting of 2025 with our usual Quiz and Jacob's Join.

'Family History Friday' sessions at Lancashire Archives were run throughout 2025 by four Preston branch members, Joan Clayton, Jennifer Benson, Peter Bamford and Stewart McLoughlin. These events are usually well attended and appreciated.

Branch library

Our library of books and documents are hardly ever being used. We started a process of disposing of some of the books containing information which is available elsewhere. This process continues. If you would like a list of the titles please let me know.

Projects

No new projects have been undertaken by the branch.

Branch AGM

We had our Branch AGM in January. As usual it did not take long, and all Committee members are still in situ.

Stephen Benson
Preston Branch Chairman

RIBBLE VALLEY Virtual Branch Meetings by ZOOM

With Ron Chapman

4th Thursday of the month at 6.45pm for 7pm start

Open for any members with Ribble Valley interests.
Check the Members Forum and Website for further
information

ROCHDALE

Secretary: Mrs. Rosemary Fitton, 13 Bowlers Walk, Rochdale.
Lancs OL12 6EN

Tel: 01706 – 356135

Branch e-mail: rochdale@lfhhs.org.uk

At our September meeting we were given another excellent talk by Iain Bowden on the history of Hare Hill House in Littleborough. Iain has extensively researched the history of the house and its original owners, the Newall family.

It was fascinating to hear how the building has changed over time whilst in the ownership of different generations of the Newall's. Today, Iain along with a team of local volunteers

are working hard to conserve the house whilst a number of small businesses and community groups use the building helping it to thrive as a community hub.

In October, Brennan, Lynne's husband gave us a lovely talk all about Andy Scott's sculptures. Brennan had put together several power point presentations accompanied by music showing his photographs of many of Andy Scott's sculptures he and Lynne had seen whilst touring Scotland. The most well known of these 'The Kelpies' is famous as the world's largest equine sculpture; it can be seen at Helix Park. It was fascinating to see all these impressive works of art.

Thank you to all the members who were able to attend our Christmas party in November.

A big thank you for all the lovely donations for the prize hamper and evening's food. Lynne provided our evening's entertainment with a number of Christmas quizzes which everyone seemed to enjoy.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all our members for your continued support throughout the year.

ROSSENDALE

Branch e-mail: rossendale@lfhhs.org.uk

In November, our branch deputy chairman, Leo Turner, gave a fascinating talk on the 1860 railway accident at Helmshore. Half the carriages of an excursion train ran away after a coupling broke as it set off uphill from Helmshore towards Haslingden. Unfortunately there was another excursion train about a third of a mile behind the first one, and eleven people were killed as the runaway carriages hit that second train. This was in the days before continuous braking, which we have now, so that if a carriage or wagon breaks away, a brake pipes comes apart and automatically applies the brakes.

Our Christmas social went off well, with a potato pie supper supplied by Leo, followed by a quiz.

Our branch chairman, John Dalton, presented a talk in January "Writing a family history", in which he used a family story he had researched as an example of why we should write down proper notes (i.e. understandable by non-genealogists) so that such family stories don't get lost.

He suggested that while writing a complete family history may be too daunting for a lot of people, writing down smaller, separate stories was much easier. These would then bring to life those names on that lovely, enormous family tree you have drawn up!

As you reach the end of our February 2026 journal, it may be the best time to arrange to attend our one day Conference and AGM on

Saturday 16 May 2026

9.45 am to 4.30 pm

At

Rhyddings Methodist Church Hall

Watson Street off Rhyddings Street

Off Union Road (main road by War Memorial)

Oswaldtwistle BB5 3EP

Also by ZOOM

This Annual Event is open to all members and their guests.

You will be most welcome.

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society

Branch Locations



Face to face **BRANCH** meetings currently held at Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Irish Ancestry, Lancaster and Morecambe, Preston, Rochdale, and Rossendale.

Virtual Branch Meetings by Zoom are conducted by Blackburn & Darwen, Bury, Heraldry, Irish Ancestry (sometimes), Lancaster & Morecambe (sometimes) London & South, Pendle & Burnley, Ribble Valley, and Society Virtual Group.

YOUR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP ENTITLES YOU TO JOIN IN ANY OF THE ABOVE BRANCH OR GROUP MEETINGS

THE LANCASHIRE FAMILY HISTORY AND HERALDRY SOCIETY
CONTACTS

Chairman: Tony FOSTER

Treasurer: **Stephen BENSON**, 32 Slater Lane, LEYLAND PR25 1TN
Tel: 01772 422808 treasurer@lfhhs.org.uk

Membership Secretary – for Subscriptions and Renewals:
Sue FOSTER, 18 Glencross Place, BLACKPOOL FY4 5AD
 Tel: 01253 694783 membership@lfhhs.org.uk

Society Secretary – Vacant secretary@lfhhs.org.uk

Minute Secretary - Sheila J. COURT
Editor – for Articles, Notes & News and items for the Journal:
Hazel JOHNSON, 65 Lever House Lane, LEYLAND PR25 4XN
 hazel.johnson2@btopenworld.com
 Or editor@lfhhs.org.uk

Pedigree Database **David BRETHERTON**, 33 Towersey Drive, THAME OX9 3NR
Tel: 01844 215178 pedigrees@lfhhs.org.uk

Surname Jennifer BENSON, 32 Slater Lane, LEYLAND PR25 1TN
Interests Tel: 01772 422808 surnames@lfhhs.org.uk

**Helping Hands
& Mentoring** **Fiona HALL**, 6 Willowherb Close, Prestbury, CHELTENHAM GL52 5LP
help@lfhhs.org.uk

Projects: Tony FOSTER, 142 Cotswold Crescent, BURY BL8 1QP
projects@lfhhs.org.uk

Sales: Sales Officer, 2 Straits, Oswaldtwistle, ACCRINGTON BB5 3LU
sales@lfhhs.co.uk

Heraldry: heraldry@lfhhs.org.uk

Education Liaison: Mike COYLE, 248 Hawes Side Lane, BLACKPOOL FY4 5AH
Tel: 01253 761778 education@lfhhs.org.uk

Webmaster: **Stephen BENSON,** 32 Slater Lane, LEYLAND PR25 1TN
Tel: 01772 422808 webmaster@lfhhs.org.uk

Research Centres: 2 Straits, Oswaldtwistle, ACCRINGTON BB5 3LU
Tel: 01254 239919 (Answerphone)
For opening times see www.lfhhs.org.uk

Chorley Family History Centre, Astley Hall Farmhouse, Hallgate,
Astley Village, CHORLEY PR7 1XA Tel: 01257 231600
For opening times see www.cfhrc.com/bookings.html

PLEASE NOTE:

Changes of address and non-receipt of journals should be reported to **Membership Secretary**, 18 Glencross Place, Blackpool FY4 5AD. If you are aware of the death of any member kindly advise **Sue Foster** who will ensure that future magazines are not sent out. Thank you.

Photographs from Churchtown Children's Festival 2024

