



Shropshire Family History Society



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Karen Hunter	Chair	chair@sfhs.org.uk
	Editor	editor@sfhs.org.uk
Dave Morris	Secretary	secretary@sfhs.org.uk
Lorna Emms	Treasurer	treasurer@sfhs.org.uk

Committee members

Dawn Blundell	Trustee	
Simon Davies	Trustee/lead for SFHHub project	hub@sfhs.org.uk
Lorraine Hunt	Trustee	
Steve Jones	Trustee/Webmaster	webmaster@sfhs.org.uk
Graham Shenton	Trustee	
Jane Wilcox	Trustee	dnasig@sfhs.org.uk

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General Postal Enquiries: For any general enquiries by post please send them to:

Shropshire FHS, c/o 48 Oakley Street, SHREWSBURY, SY3 7JY, UK

Post will be passed to the appropriate member of the Society team and a reply issued as soon as possible.

Telephone contact: Dave Morris, 07980 870007

Front cover: Images from the Journal articles as included in this edition.

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Contents

Thoughts from the Chair	4
Talking Family History LIVE	6
Brick Walls Without Borders!	9
The Shropshire Family History Hub	10
George Jones - A truly gentle man	14
Friends or Family? Part 2	18
A useful website	23
Who was David Manley?	24
From a Bathtub to a Hot Shower	27
From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On	28
Tracing your non-Conformist ancestors	30
Unlocking the hidden history in your photographs	33
Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Family History	36
An A-Z of Genealogy	38
Meet Our Committee Members	43
New Members/Deaths	44
From the Editor	46
Talks Programme: March-June 2026	47
Notes for Contributors	49
Social Media Manager	50

Thoughts from the Chair

Shropshire Family History Hub

We will be officially launching this project at our Talking Family History LIVE event on 9 May so if you want an early view of it all, make sure you join us at Cross Houses that day. If you can't make it to this event we will send out details of how you will be able to access it and are also planning some online sessions to show you how it works and how to get the most from it. Details of these will be sent out by email after the event, so keep your eyes open after 9 May.

Trying something different

We have arranged a couple of Zoom sessions in partnership with The Family History Society of Cheshire to see if we can help each other out with brick walls from across the border. Details are on page 9 and I hope some of you will join me, either with your own brick walls or to help others.

We are also planning a joint Zoom talk with Cheshire, when Dr Sophie Kay will join us to talk on **Walking With Your Ancestors: Mapping Strategies for Genealogists**. In this session Sophie will look at three practical mapping methods for family history: Ancestral Walks, Concentric Survey, Outlier Method, plus practical tips for sourcing and using historical maps. This talk, at about 100 minutes, is longer than our usual monthly meetings realistically allow for. Therefore we are going to try out a Saturday morning and will let you know the date as soon as we get confirmation. I am always intrigued by how maps can add a further dimension to my family history research so am very much looking forward to listening to what I am sure will be a fascinating talk by Sophie and I hope some of you will join me.

Rookie Errors

I like to think that my family history research skills are reasonably well honed these days but a couple of weeks ago I realised that it is still possible to make some simple errors which can lead to problems!

I had been presented with a challenge! What could I find out about the possible previous owners of a 19th century child's petticoat - one of the many items in the costume collection of Charles Paget Wade of Snowhill Manor in Gloucestershire. Admittedly not quite the usual genealogy challenge but I was up for seeing what I

could find. The only information I had been given was *'Belonged to Mrs Milvane. Probably her mother's (Mrs Adlard)'*.

I thought that, with relatively uncommon names, the task would be quite straightforward, but it didn't turn out that way, or at least not initially as I couldn't find anyone of those names in connection with each other. For some unknown reason I left it at that, and reported back that it appeared to be *'one that got away'*!! However a couple of suggestions from colleagues that the name Adlard was linked with the local area focused my search close to home and hey presto - that family was in the census so I had a hook to hang my research on.

I expect you might be two steps ahead of me as to what I didn't do on my first foray into investigating.

My first rookie error was that I took the names at face value - how foolish! Mrs Milvane was actually Mrs Milvain. By searching on the variation, it immediately threw up some good options to explore further, finding Mrs Milvain in later censuses, again local to the Gloucestershire area.

The other rookie error was not making use of the Newspaper archives, which I have ready access to via my FindMyPast subscription. With the revised spelling of Mrs Milvain's name I uncovered her marriage details and her overseas travels with her husband, (which explained why I couldn't find her in the 1911 census). I was then able to pin her down to living in Snowhill, just up the road from Snowhill Manor, in both 1921 and 1939, which is the same time period as Charles Paget Wade. This helped explain the likelihood of her donating the petticoat to his collection. An article in Country Life also provided a potted history of the family and details of the beautiful house they lived in.

Lessons learned

- Make use of insight that others might have - certainly in this case it pointed me in the right direction.
- Search all variations of spelling, especially of names.
- Explore the richness of information in Newspapers - they can provide a window on people, places and events which all help to shape the lives of those who have gone before and I'm sure Dave Annal's talk in June will provide lots of ideas on this.

Karen Hunter, Chair chair@sfhs.org.uk

Talking Family History LIVE

Spring 2026

Face to face talks are an important part of our Society's offering and so we would like to invite you to our next Family History Talking LIVE event on Saturday 9 May. We will be hearing some enlightening talks on the brewing, iron and coal mining industries in Shropshire. Much of what we will learn about these industries will apply, wherever you may live around the country.

Our Brewery and Hinksay Rows talks will look at the social importance, and of how pubs and communities were a vital part of our ancestors lives.

There will be an update on what is happening within our Society, as well as a chance to be among the first to try out our new member's 'Shropshire Hub'. More about this will be revealed on the day.

This is a free event, open to members and non-members alike. Please encourage those you may know, who have an interest in family or social history to join us. They will be very welcome.

Talking Family History LIVE

Saturday 9 May

Chapel Community Centre, Cross Houses, Shrewsbury SY5 6JG

11am-3.30pm

10.30	Arrival and refreshments	
11.00	Welcome	Karen Hunter, Chair, SFHS
11.05	The Brewing Industry of Shropshire	Mike Brown, Volunteer Achivist, Brewery History Society
11.45	Hinkshay Rows, a Shropshire Industrial Community	Heather Duckett
12.45	Lunch, bring your own picnic with you	
13.45	'The Granville Boys': Coal mining in the Wellington area	Wellington History Group
14.55	An update on SFHS	Karen Hunter and Simon Davies
3.25	Close	Karen Hunter, Chair SFHS

Here is a ‘taster’ of what the talks will be about.

Mike Brown, Volunteer Archivist - Brewery History Society

Mike will cover the nature of the brewing industry and how it touched so many aspects of family life, from employment in production and distribution, through to the pub as a social centre. Shropshire has a long history of Brewing pubs with family involvement, especially the role of women as the “brewster” whilst the husband often had another job.



The C19th saw the development of steam-powered large-scale brewers in the county and Mike will include some examples from Shrewsbury, Wem and Wrekin and also the impact the railways had on the industry.

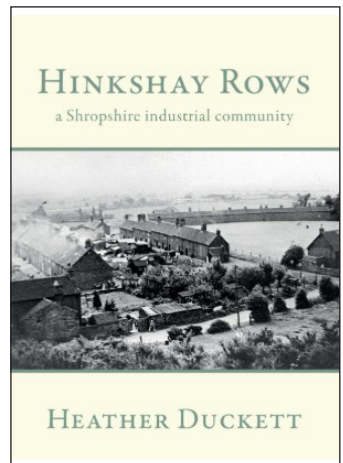
The C20th saw the rise of the national breweries and the decline of the local county concerns such as in Wem.

Hinkshay Rows: a Shropshire industrial community - Heather Duckett

On a remote piece of agricultural land at Hinkshay Farm in Dawley parish, Shropshire, three rows of houses were built in the 1820s. The first 48 back-to-back dwellings called ‘Double Row’, then ‘Single Row’ and ‘New Row’, bringing the total to 78 houses.

They were built by the Botfield family to house workers for a new ironworks, Stirchley Forge and Mill. A close-knit community developed with many marriages between neighbours. Large families were the norm and work was plentiful, including for women. The nearby White Hart Inn together with Hinkshay Mission Church provided a focus for community activities.

Heather will take us through the employment and social history of the community through to its eventual demolition. If your ancestors worked in the iron industry, maybe as forgemen, puddlers, rollers, furnace men, or pit girls this talk will give you an fascinating insight into their lives.



“The Granville Boys” - Wellington History Group

“The Granville Boys” of Wellington History Group are three local retired miners who have between them 87 years of experience working at the coalface. Their talk will include:

- *how and where coal was first used;*
- *how children worked in the mines from as young as 4 or 5 years old;*
- *how the good King Henry VIII banned the felling of oak tree’s to preserve them, as coal was replacing them as fuel.*

They will talk about how coal was reached, for example by bell pits, drift mining, deep seam working, sometimes up to 1300 feet deep. Dangers in the mine, the camaraderie among the men and modern machine mining will also be covered.



Image: Highley Colliery

© <https://nmrs.org.uk/mines-map/coal-mining-in-the-british-isles/shropshire/>

We look forward to seeing you at this event which is open to members and non-members and entry is free, so do invite your friends/relations who are interested in family history or our talks of the day.

Please bring your own picnic and if possible a mug to reduce the washing up!

If you can give us a hand with setting up the rooms or sorting out refreshments please let us know at events@sfhs.org.uk



Genealogy is like doing a jigsaw without the picture on the box – and sometimes with the added excitement of missing pieces and no edge pieces!

Brick Walls Without Borders!

Ever feel that your family history research has hit a dead end? Those stubborn ancestors who refuse to be found? Then this pair of special Brick Wall Busting sessions could be just what you need.

We are delighted to be working with The Family History Society of Cheshire to offer two joint Zoom evenings, each focusing on brick walls from a different county.

Cheshire Brick Walls – Wednesday 22 April, 7.30pm (via Zoom)

Shropshire Brick Walls – Thursday 23 April, 7.30pm (via Zoom)

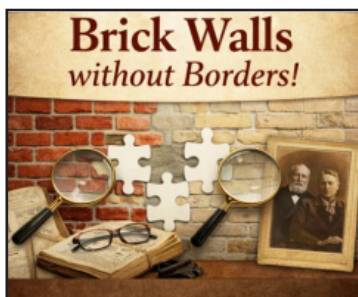
You are very welcome to send in details of your own brick walls in advance, so we can take a closer look during the session, [send to chair@sfhs.org.uk] but there's no obligation to do so. If you'd rather simply drop in, listen, and pick up ideas, techniques, and inspiration, you'll be just as welcome.

These sessions are all about shared experience, fresh perspectives, and learning from one another's research challenges and successes.

Come along, bring your puzzles (or just your curiosity), and help us knock down a few walls together.

The links for both sessions will be sent out by email to SFHS members a few days before the events.

We are looking for a few of our members who have a good knowledge of the county and the family history/genealogy resources that might be of help to those who come with their queries to join us for the Shropshire based session. If you can help in this way please get in touch with Karen Hunter at chair@sfhs.org.uk



The Shropshire Family History Hub



Overview

The Shropshire Family History Hub is a new and exciting initiative by the Society. Essentially, it is an online historical and nostalgic information resource which aims to cover all the towns and villages of the County. Our objective is to provide a starting point for those investigating their Shropshire connections in order to familiarise themselves with a particular locale and any information sources and local groups.

Volunteers

The project is being compiled by a group of Society volunteers, and we welcome anyone to join us, especially members wishing to focus on their own local community's entry in The Hub.

Society Collections

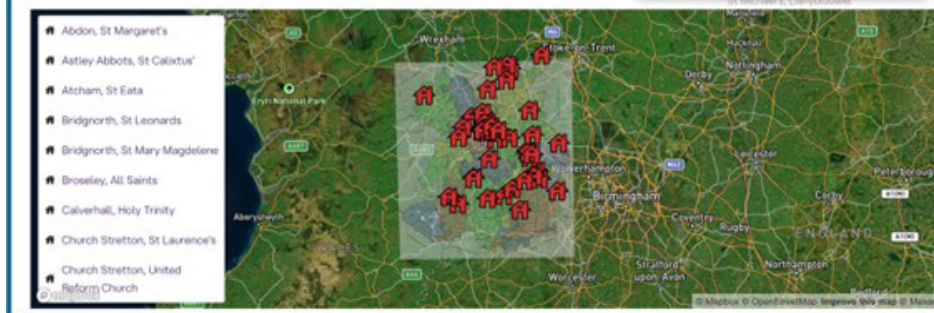
The Hub is ideal for sharing member-only collections held by the Society, starting with the wonderful John Ravenscroft photo collection of almost all the County's churches, some 331 in total, which John has amassed over the last 25 years.

The next collection we aim to include are our Monumental Inscriptions; a priceless way of tracking down ancestors and often discovering more than you'd bargained for. For example, an unexpected inscription on Simon Davies' 2xG Grandparents' Lydbury North grave led him to a gold prospecting town in Queensland and the mysterious fate of their son who disappeared in shark infested waters.

Fabulous Churches

The County is blessed with a vast cornucopia of churches. The vast majority captured in John Ravenscroft's photo collection.

The Churches include in the Hub so far can be accessed directly by clicking on the map below:



Village/Town Section Structure

Background and Information Sources

Each location has its own section which starts with a brief historical overview. It also has a collection of useful links to more in depth resources, such as any local history group, Wikipedia, local Societies and the like. Link recommendations are very welcome.

Interesting Snippets

Where we have them, we add Interesting Snippets that could capture the imagination and increase the reader's curiosity. Especially powerful are nostalgic recollections, and again please do come forward if you have any. Here is a personal example: in setting up the main page for Newport Simon came across reports of a V1 flying bomb landing on Christmas Eve 1944 and blowing out all the windows on the High St. He immediately messaged his 91yr old father who was raised in Newport during the War, and asked him if he remembered it. He did - and if you are interested you can read more on the Newport page of The Hub.

Churches

As mentioned previously, we devote a complete sub-section to local churches, all brought to life by John Ravenscroft's photo collection. Anyone with a particular

interest and knowledge of a place of worship, we'd love to hear from you. We found a fascinating YouTube video on St Margaret's, Abdon in the shadow of the Brown Clee. The presenter explains that Abdon is a 'deserted village' which was abandoned on account of the Black Death.

War Memorials – The Fallen

There are so many beautiful and poignant memorials for which local communities have investigated the lives of their fallen. The Church Stretton History Group for example has done an amazing job of creating biographies for both World Wars.

War Memorials - The Fallen

The Church Stretton History Group has researched and compiled on their website a fabulous record detailing the lives of their fallen in both World Wars.

To visit the Group's site for WWI Fallen click on the following:

- [Introduction and analysis](#)
- [WWI Soldier biographies](#)



Interesting Buildings – House Histories

This sub-section we hope will prove popular. There is increasing interest in house histories; helped by David Olusoga's 'A House Through Time' series on the BBC. We'd like to highlight Church Stretton History Group for some fascinating examples, including the house 'Greengates' which dates back to the The Great Fire of Church Stretton in 1593. Simon has been inspired to create childhood accounts of his Grandparent's house in the same place.

Well Known Inhabitants

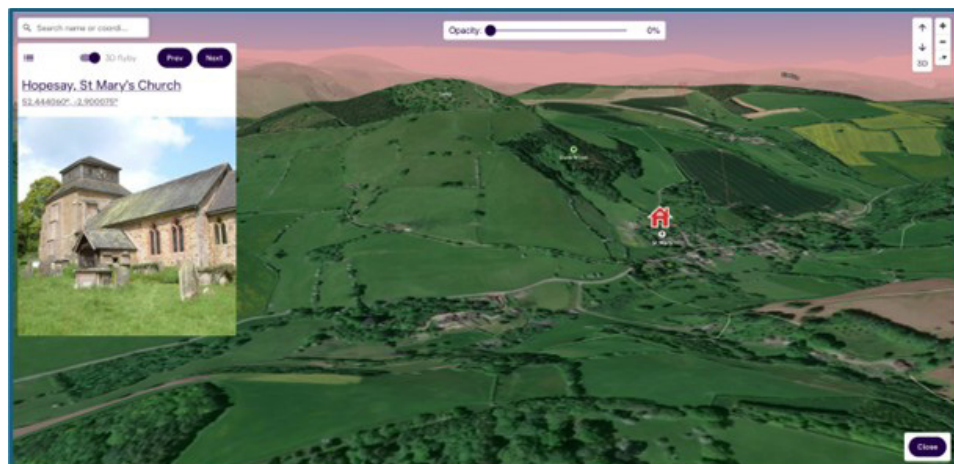
The final sub-section (for now – and feel free to propose others) provides a fun way to spark interest. You've probably heard mention of Charles Darwin, Wilfred Owen or Mary Webb, but they are the tip of an eclectic iceberg. From pioneer nurses to 'hanging judges' please tip us off on any we might miss.

Other Ideas

Whilst we are concentrating initially on the Society's collections where we find information on War Memorials, Interesting People and Well Known Inhabitants we are including sections for these and welcome contributions from Society members with information or links to affiliated groups.

Illuminating Use of 3D Maps

We are particularly pleased with the engaging use of immersive online maps, and are steadily plotting places on a 3D world which allows you to scan across the County and open up whatever grabs your fancy. It's a great way to see our beautiful County and to imagine the to'ing and fro'ing of ancestors as they went about their daily business.



Launch and Access

We are building The Hub on [WeAre.xyz](https://www.weare.xyz), which is designed for Family and One Place Studies, and it is a continual work in progress. A certain proportion of the site over time will be publicly accessible to anyone, and we hope will lead to individuals from far and wide discovering the Society and joining.

But for all of us, the current members, we will set up a simple free login to access the Hub in its entirety. Details, guidance and useful reference material will of course be provided (both written and video).

We intend to be live in time for the next Talking Family History LIVE in person event on Saturday 9 May, and hope as many of you as possible will attend to try the system for yourself and for the unveiling, plus Q&A session.

Summary

We hope this initiative will bring people around the world closer to their Shropshire roots, and facilitate connections among our community. Its potential

is limitless, and we can't wait to see what fascinating nuggets of the past are uncovered, and what memories lurk within our collective subconscious.

We look forward to hearing from you, with whatever thoughts, ideas and information spring to mind. Please get in touch: hub@sfhs.org.uk

Simon Davies, Jane Wilcox, Isobel Hoy, Dawn Blundell

George Jones - A truly gentle man

George, my paternal grandfather, the second child/first son of Robert Jones and Eliza Elkes, was born on 26 January 1881 in the village of Wrockwardine in Salop, and baptised in the Parish Church a few weeks later on 6 March. His parents went on to have four more children, three girls and a boy and all six children survived childhood and went on to live long lives, although none quite as long as George.

Robert, his father, was recorded in the census returns between 1841 and 1911 as an agricultural labourer so I have assumed that the family didn't necessarily have a great deal of money but if George was anything to go by, they brought their children up to be hard workers with a sense of responsibility and respect for others.

[The image to the right is of Robert Jones, date unknown, which I have only very recently found.]



By the age of twenty George had moved away from home and was found in the 1901 census living in Capenhurst, Cheshire. At that point he was a border, working as a Railway Porter. The railway was to provide employment for him for the rest of his working life. I have still to look into his employment records to find out

the detail but I do know that by 1911 he was living in Upton Magna in Shropshire and working as a signalman. This is the job he held until his retirement in 1943, although he moved from the signal box in Upton Magna to the one in Shrewsbury [see image to the left] around about 1915 at the same time moving into Shrewsbury from Craven Arms.



But let's take a few steps back as a lot happened in his life between these two census returns.

Firstly, he returned home to marry a local Shropshire lass, Jane Elizabeth Tipton, on 27 October 1904 with the ceremony being held in the same church in which they had both been baptised.

The image to the right is of George as a young man, possibly around the time of the 1901 census, or perhaps his wedding in 1904.



A whispered family story said they had two children before their son William Robert was born in 1910 but no-one seemed to know any details other than they might have been girls. The 1911 census confirmed two children had been born and died. I felt I needed to find them, but you try searching for girls born with the surname Jones! My first assumption was that they were back living in Shropshire but I could find no records of any children born in the county with the mother's maiden name Tipton so I had to widen the search. Eventually, using Free BMD and the GRO indexes I found some likely matches so ordered the birth certificates, with success on both first time. And so, using the information on these, the baptism registers on Findmypast and the death certificates I acquired, I was able to give these little ones their rightful places in the family.

They were both girls. The first, Mary Alice, born on 24 August 1905 (co-incidentally the birthday date of my younger son 80 years later). She was baptised on 14 September 1905 in Hoole, Cheshire and sadly died from influenza and bronchopneumonia aged 14 months on 24 October 1906.

And then, two years later, more sadness for the young couple. Their second daughter Jane was born on 18 July 1908 at home in Tranmere, near Manchester. She was baptised at home the same day, and died just two days later. The cause of death was given as premature birth (about 6 months), leaving her father to register a birth and death at the same time. It all made for sad reading and I have still to find out where they were buried.

Although it was a long ago I am sure they were not forgotten by George during his lifetime. If these children had been born today they may well both have survived but without antibiotics and the high-tech neonatal care now available under the NHS this would have been a common tragedy for many families in the early 20th Century.

After the birth of their first son in 1910 they went on to have three more boys, in 1913, 1916 and 1921, all of whom survived to adulthood. But very sadly tragedy was to strike again in September 1921 when Jane died at the early age of 39, leaving George with the four boys, one of whom was only three months old. To help him manage this the youngest son was 'taken in' by one of George's sisters (Mary Ellen) who lived in Lancashire and George sought a housekeeper to take care of the others and the house.

I don't know quite how he found her, but a woman was employed. This was Joyce Eleanor Robinson, known as Nellie, who had been born and brought up in Eyton upon the Weald Moors [see the article in Journal 42, Part 2, pages 58-61 for more information about her family]. Joyce arrived with an illegitimate young daughter of her own. The family story goes that he and Nellie fell in love, and they were married in June 1923 at Shrewsbury Abbey, with George 'adopting' her daughter, bringing her up as if she was his own. And so their family might have been complete but in 1930 they had a son, my Dad.



[Image: Shrewsbury Abbey]

I remember my Grandad as a 'gentle' man, always smartly dressed, usually wearing a tie, with a big smile and a tickly moustache. He kept various things in his shed at the end of the garden, among them a set of tools for repairing shoes and his shoes were always well polished. I recall him cutting loaves of bread horizontally, and drinking/slurping his tea off the saucer. He also enjoyed a glass of whisky before going to bed, something he maintained almost right through to his death.



They lived in Shrewsbury from about 1915, the house being part of a terrace, with a 'front' room which was kept for best and rarely used, although when we visited I was allowed in to play the piano (something I enjoyed but didn't do very well). Because it was rarely used that room was always cold. The other rooms downstairs were the 'living room' with an open

fire (by which we would toast bread on toasting forks), a dining table, sideboard, settee and Grandad's rocking chair by the fire which he always sat in, with his feet up on the mantelpiece. Off that room was a walk-in pantry down and under

the stairs, where various food items would be kept cool - there was no fridge; and a galley-like kitchen with a large, very shallow stone sink at the far end where we would be stood for a wash. Upstairs there were three bedrooms, but no bathroom (the toilet was out the back downstairs) so we had earthenware 'potties' or 'guzunders' under the bed to use at night - I remember them being very cold on my bottom!

There were open fireplaces in the bedrooms, but these were not used when I stayed there. I used to sleep in the smaller of the back bedrooms which had been my father's bedroom when he was a boy, and I would look out of the window in the dark to see the cross lit up on the top of the tower of the Abbey Church – the place my grandparents had been married and subsequently where both their funerals were held. The railway ran along the end of the back garden so there were frequent train noises to contend with although we were used to that as the house I grew up in was also built alongside a railway.

George and Nellie celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary in 1973 and made it to 51 years together before Nellie died in 1974 at the age of 83. George was then 93 and he struggled to care for himself for long after that and so he moved down to Gloucestershire to live with his third son and his wife. He was still engaged with everyone, and even made it to my 18th birthday party, helping me to cut my cake and looking as dapper as ever!



He died from bronchopneumonia just eight days before his 98th birthday on 18 January 1979 so he didn't quite make it to his 100th birthday and a telegram from the Queen, but he still had an amazingly long life.

His youngest son, my Dad, is catching him up – he is now 96 and still trundling on, with the aim of living until he is 102!! So, if I've inherited the right genes perhaps I will be celebrating my 100th birthday in due course.

Karen Hunter, 7646



Friends or Family? Part 2

Editor: This article follows on from that in the December Journal, revealing the Alexander and McGhie connections.

Alexander

Ten of the letters are from Francis Alexander to his intended wife Margaret Frazer. Francis was in partnership with a Mr McClURE and they were searching for coal in the Wigan coalfields. He and Margaret Frazer were to be married once he had discovered a seam of '*black gold*' but he and Margaret never married, the family '*myth*' being that there was a problem in the mine and he went to investigate, the wires holding the cage broke and the cage fell with him in it, which the more cynical members of my family interpreted as, '*he jilted her*'. Even reading his letters in my early teens I felt that could not be true and determined that one day I would endeavour to ascertain what had really happened. However, I had to keep reminding myself that Francis was not my ancestor and I should be concentrating on researching my own family, although I did write to the Coal Board to see if there had been an accident at that time, with no result and searched for his death certificate, likewise in vain. As said, when I found Mary's maiden name was Alexander, meaning she was related to Francis, I was incredulous but at least it explained why Francis came to Bury most weekends to discuss '*business*' with William (as well as giving him an excuse to visit Margaret Frazer) and it would seem that William was probably funding Francis in his search for coal. Francis never refers to Mary McLean as '*my sister*', even though she was! Or even William as his brother-in-law.

One day when idly (wasting time) trawling the internet, looking at Buittle (pronounced Bittle) on Google maps, because this was where the McGhies were born, the names McGhie and Alexander appeared together in the '*links*'. The '*guiding hand*' again? At any rate, I have never come across this '*link*' since. I found myself looking at a list of the epitaphs on gravestones in the Buittle Kirkyard. Finally, Grave No 168 gave me one of those rare '*Eureka*' moments in family history research. It reads:

'Sacred to the memory of William McGhie, who died at Toull, on the 4th day of May 1845, aged 55 years. And to that of Francis Alexander, who was born at Toull, Novr. 20th 1806 and died near Tuscaloosa, in the state of Alabama, U.S.,

on the 20th Augt. 1850. Also of George Alexander McGhie, son of the above, who died at Toull, 13th of December 1851, aged 22 years. Also Eliza McGhie, his daughter, who died at Dalbeattie, 8th May 1856, aged 47 years. Also Mary McGhie, spouse of the said William McGhie, who died at Bury, Lancashire, 20th January 1861, aged 71 years.'

We had known for a long time that a Mary CARRICK had married William McGhie 11 Dec 1810 in Buittle, and also that a Mary Carrick had married a John Alexander 3 Aug 1806 and had a daughter Mary. But it never even crossed our minds that the two Mary Carricks were one and the same, quite forgetting that Scots women have a tradition of reverting to their maiden names when they are widowed. Also, my sister-in-law was unable to find a Francis born to John Alexander and Mary Carrick at the time, the gravestone (and the internet) making it a simpler matter for me. In fact, John Alexander had died in 1809 and as he worked on the farm for William McGhie, I suspect William's proposal of marriage to his widow would be acceptable, if only to keep a roof over her, (and her children's) heads and because she could not have gone on living at Toull unless they were married. I now knew that the Alexanders were related to the McGhies and the rest of the McGhie children were hers and all were related to William McLean through his marriage to Mary Alexander.

The Francis Alexander courtship of Margaret Frazer had lasted some five years, which seems a little excessive even for those days, and I had only recently been able to access his last few letters (scrappy notes) where he seems very depressed about not finding coal. Sometime after the census was taken in 1851, the Henderson family moved to Greengates, Salford, where James Henderson was running an inn called *'The Moulder's Arms'*. Did they move because Francis had died, and there were too many reminders of him in Bury? Or because his wife Margaret Henderson (formerly Frazer, née LONGSHAW) was dying from breast cancer and daughter Helen (she who made the sampler) dying from phthisis, or had James' drapery business failed completely and the only work left to him would be as an *'Innkeeper'*? Was it because his wife Margaret was about to have an *'oppration'*? (Letter from Sarah LORD to Mary Henderson.) An operation which I take to be as much the cause of her death as the cancer. Or because Francis had left for America having *'jilted'* Margaret? Or had he gone to America still hoping to come back and marry her if he had been successful in his search for coal. It is also possible that he asked her to go with him and she refused, possibly because she knew her mother and sister were dying. Sadly, I shall never know. It could

even be that she was to follow him when he had established himself, though I think, had that been the case, he would have married her before he left for America.

Francis sailed from Glasgow to New York on the 'packet' ship *SS Corra Linn*, arriving in New York on 22 Apr 1850 and was dead four months later aged 43.

[Image: New York & Glasgow Packet Ship Corra Linn; Capt. Z.M. Lambert"; LR: "Dunham & Dimon, Owners, 1850: Creative Commons, Public Domain]



What a shock that must have been for both families and I guess Margaret Frazer, if she still loved him, would not have recovered. She never married despite having had other proposals, two of which are in the letters. The Hendersons returned to Bury after the deaths of Margaret and Helen Henderson and as they were in Bury in 1851 and 1861, I would not have known they had ever left Bury in between were it not for the letters. James Henderson may have already been ill when they came back to Bury as he died from phthisis in October 1853, although his occupation was given as '*Agent for Spirit Merchant*' in 1851. Margaret Frazer and Mary Henderson were both '*Dressmakers*' and set themselves up in a draper's shop in Rock Street, Bury, probably aided by Grace who was a '*Bonnet Maker*', until Margaret died in 1858 from a heart attack, and Grace married John Campbell in 1860, dying in childbirth in 1871. Grace had left Brookfield House School early when the Hendersons moved to Greengates, much to the annoyance of the headmistress ('*Governess*') Mrs Douglas. There are two rather unpleasant letters from her, one to Margaret Henderson and the other to Mary Henderson, which give the impression that she doesn't really believe that Margaret is seriously ill, almost demanding that Grace returns to the school. There does seem to have been some sort of earlier dispute with her because also in the Mary Carruther's letter, she starts by saying, '*I should have written before we left Brookshaw, if we had not gone away so suddenly*'. However, whatever one thinks of Mrs Douglas, (and her atrocious handwriting), it has to be admitted that Margaret Frazer, Mary Carruthers, and Grace Henderson all have exquisite handwriting, but perhaps the 'Birds' were responsible for that!

McGhies

On the reverse side of the gravestone it reads:

'Also of Jane Lindsay McGhie, daughter of Robert McGhie, who died at Dalbeattie 18th June 1860, in the third year of her age. Also the said Robert

McGhie who died at Dalbeattie 11th June 1861, aged 37 years. Also Wellwood Maxwell McGhie, who died at Bury, Lancashire, 10th March 1872, aged 44 years.

The problem with this is that it is wrong! Wellwood died in Bury but was buried 14 May 1864 aged 39, which can be so easily checked, that I am left wondering who authorised the engraving on the reverse side of the stone and what else on it might be incorrect. In the 1861 census Robert McGhie is a '*Grocery and Provision Dealer*' in Bury, so he was there on 7 April 1861 when the census was taken. As Wellwood, a '*Tailor and Draper*', was living with him at that time, having recently been widowed, and could no doubt lend a hand in the shop when required, there is no reason why Robert could not have been in Scotland in June, possibly because his daughter had died there in June the previous year.

Robert married Jane LINDSAY in Urr in 1853, which was presumably why they named their daughter Jane Lindsay McGhie. However, even though she isn't mentioned on the stone, Jane must have died and Robert married again, because on the 1861 census in Bury his wife's name is Mary. The inscription narrows the family move from the farm in Toull to Dalbeattie to between December 1851 and May 1856. I would hazard a guess that after his father and brother George died, Alexander McGhie was unable to run the farm on his own and had to sell up, perhaps moving to a smaller farm at Dalbeattie. Alas, the 11 letters from Margaret McGhie to her great friend Margaret Frazer in Bury, make no mention of this as even a vague possibility: hardly surprising as the last one was postmarked November 1844, when her father was still alive, although he was to die in May of the following year. As Margaret was returning to Bury at the insistence of the McLeans, when she wrote the letter, and we know that she did (letter from Francis to Margaret Frazer), her father's death may have meant she had had to return home once more, although her sister Eliza, (of whom there are many references in the letters, in which the pair of them come across as a couple of what my sister-in-law referred to as being '*like Kitty and Lydia in P&P*'), would be there to keep house, and to help make the move to Dalbeattie. Her brother John is married with children (one of whom he has named Francis Alexander McGhie) and living in Wigan. William McGhie junr. was still alive in 1851, but is not mentioned after that in Margaret's letters, unless he is the '*Will*' referred to in her last letter. Wellwood and Robert are in Bury and both married with a child each, so now that George has died there would only have been Alexander left to run the farm.

In 1841 John McGhie was a 'Draper' in Bury with his brothers William and Alexander, he being a 'Draper's Apprentice', and his sister Margaret acting as housekeeper for them all. Also staying with them is their mother Mary McGhie, though she returned to Scotland, because in 1851 she was at Toull with her son Robert then aged 26. He must have brought her back to Bury, after his father's death, as that is where she died in 1861. By 1851, John has married and has moved to Wallgate Street, Wigan, and his brother George is living with them, both John and George being 'Travelling Drapers' though George must have returned to Scotland between March and December when he died, according to the stone.

I had thought that maybe John had decided there were too many drapers in Bury and he would have less competition in Wigan. However, the letters tell a different story! The first is written by Margaret McGhie to Helen Henderson in Bury on 24 July 1843. It transpires that she and her brother John are staying with a John Aspinall and family at Quarry Mount, Brighouse, Yorkshire. The daughter of the house is Sarah Aspinall about whom Margaret makes a couple of patronising remarks, which give the distinct impression that she does not like her. So it must have come as a rude awakening when seven months later John McGhie married Sarah Aspinall on 18 Feb 1844 in Bury (William McLean being a witness). The dislike must have been mutual because John, perhaps egged on by Sarah, threw his sister out! She writes to Margaret Frazer from Toull,

'no one but myself know how kind Mr & Mrs McLean was to me both before I left and since: but for their kindness I could not have come home. After having lived twelve long years with John, and I ever did my best for them all, he never even asked me how I was going home, or if I had money to take me; oh: Margaret, I did feel his conduct keenly - yea more so than anyone can know.'

I suspect the fall-out from William and Mary McLean would have spurred John and Sarah to head for Wigan, plus the fact that thanks to the McLeans, Margaret was about to return to Bury, where I have the distinct impression she would have been very happy to give her version of events to all and sundry. (Margaret never refers to Mary McLean as her sister, step-sister or half-sister, always using the formal Mrs McLean!)

Francis must have returned home from Wigan or Bury to take leave of his mother before he left, because he sailed from Glasgow on the *SS Cora Linn* arriving in New York on 22 April 1850, and was dead just four months later on 20 August 1850, aged 43. I am left to wonder if there was more than a grain of truth in the

story of the accident in the mine, was he looking for coal still? And could his death have taken place, not in a Wigan coal mine, but in the Alabama coalfields? I was able to be certain this was the right Francis Alexander because he gave his occupation on the ship's manifest as 'Mr. Miner' which I thought was a neat way of saying he was the boss, not a hands-on coalminer.

Had Francis actually married Margaret Frazer, we would have been related, however distantly, to the McGhies, Alexanders and McLeans though none, as far as I have been able to establish, were related to the Carruthers, despite the sampler and Mary Carruthers' letter to Mr and Mrs Henderson misleading me for such a long time. All are 'FRIENDS NOT FAMILY,' but in no way do I regret the time I have spent researching them, as they are still a part of my family story.

For anyone wondering about the name Wellwood Maxwell, it appeared several times on other gravestones in Buittle Kirkyard, even the grave next to the McGhies, and would seem to have been a name given by the local landowner to the eldest son. A quick check on Google tells you that,

'Wellwood Johnstone, a surgeon, was born c1740. He married Catherine Maxwell, daughter of John Maxwell of Terraughty in 1769. Under a family settlement he took the surname Maxwell and became Wellwood Maxwell of Barncleuch'

and just now I am reading that there was a Wellwood H Maxwell who was MP for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright from 1868 to 1874.

Gillian Posner, 5130

A useful website

At our last TFH online session Dawn mentioned a website that most of us hadn't come across - The Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick. They describe themselves as '*the main British repository for national archives of trade unions and employers' organisations, and also has strong collections relating to pressure groups, fringe political parties and transport*' but from a quick look through it is much more than that and certainly a site that you could lose yourself down a rabbit hole or two! To find out more take a look at <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/>

Who was David Manley?

This question has perplexed and frustrated me for over 40 years.

Tracing my paternal family line back to David MANLEY, who raised a large family in the Shropshire parishes of Westbury and Pontesbury, proved to be straightforward. The date of his marriage gave me the piece of good luck which family historians hope for. David married Mary PRITCHARD at Westbury on 22 October 1837, just weeks after the father's name was required to be included on marriage certificates. His father's name was given as Evan Manley. The 1851 census gave David's place of birth as Llanbadarn, Radnorshire. From the 1851 and 1861 census entries David would have been born in 1810.



Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Marys,_Westbury,_Shropshire_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1163180.jpg

There are three Llanbadarn parishes in Radnorshire, Llanbadarn Fawr, Llanbadarn Fynydd and Llanbadarn-y-Garreg. No Manley entries have been found in these and, as far as I can see, there have never been any Manleys in Radnorshire except for a Monmouthshire-born mason, Charles Manley and a couple of much later birth registrations. As Llanbadarn Fynydd is the largest of the three, in the mid-1980s we decided to visit the Powys Archives centre at Llandrindod Wells to search the parish registers. We drew a blank, but I noticed something which I couldn't get out of my head. There was a family named MANTLE around the time I was interested in with an Evan Mantle shown as husband and father.

The question is 'could a David Mantle from Llanbadarn turn up in Westbury and be recorded as David Manley on his marriage certificate'? When a labourer from a rural Welsh parish with an unfamiliar accent stood before him, the vicar would surely enter the name according to the pronunciation of the word as he heard it. This might be how the name Manley came into existence in 1837 in the parish of Westbury.

Over the years, with the increasing availability of online resources, used together with the transcript of Llanbadarn Fynydd registers purchased from the Powys Family History Society, I have revisited the Mantle family of Llanbadarn many times.

The Mantle family of Llanbadarn Fynydd

Evan Mantle married Mary BISTON on 29 May 1801.

Three children have been found in the baptism register:

- Evan bap 10 October 1802 (Evan the son of Evan Mantle by Mary his wife)
- Mary bap 22 July 1804 (Mary, daughter of Evan Mantle)
- Elizabeth bap 18 Aug 1806 (Elizabeth, daughter of Evan Mantle by Mary his wife)

Unfortunately, there was no baptism of a son David to Evan Mantle.

Given the general under-recording of events noticed in the registers, a David can't be absolutely ruled out. No burial of Evan's wife Mary is recorded either. Evan remarried on 1 July 1833; his new wife was Jane Evans and they had a daughter Sarah in 1835 and a son Thomas in 1844 when Evan was shown as a farmer of Pwllperan. Jane Evans had also had an illegitimate daughter Ann in 1829 when she was living at Pwllperan. Pwllperan consisted of four isolated farmsteads/cottages of a few acres each and situated about 3½ miles from the centre of Llanbadarn.

The 1841 census lists Evan Mantle aged 70, a farmer of Pwllperan. Living with him was his unmarried daughter Elizabeth and her illegitimate children David (born 1829), Richard (born 1833) and Edward (born 1836). Also in the household was Sarah, the daughter of Evan and his second wife Jane (born 1835). Evan Mantle aged five (clearly not Evan's son of that name, who had been born in 1802), and Ann Mantle aged one were also in the household. Who their parents were is not known as no baptisms have been found for either. Evan Mantle died at Pwllperan in 1842 aged 72.

Although no David was recorded in the baptism register, it is known that David was a Mantle family name. Evan's son Evan and his wife Mary had a son David born in 1831 when the family lived for a while at Lower Spoad, Clun. By 1851, his father having died in 1842, Evan and Mary moved back to the family home at Pwllperan. Evan died in 1864 leaving a Will which was proved by his son David who lived in the Newtown area of Montgomeryshire until, on the death of his father, he moved to Pwllperan.

Evan senior's daughter Elizabeth did not marry and had several illegitimate children including a David Mantle baptised on 25 October 1829 '*son of Elizabeth Mantle single woman of Poolperran [sic]*'

Were these two Davids born to Evan and his sister Elizabeth given the name because of a sibling relationship?

Looking at the generation before Evan senior and his family, we know that Evan was the son of Richard and Catherine née STEPHENS. He was left £15 in his father's Will of 1807 which also showed Richard and Catherine had a son Richard and daughters Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Morgan, Mary and Ann Mantle.

Thomas Morgan and his wife, Elizabeth (the sister of Evan senior), lived in one of the homesteads at Pwllperan. They christened one of their children with the family name David. Another son of Richard and Catherine was, according to an online family tree, Thomas born in 1776. He married Mary Lewis and had a son David in 1807.

There is thus evidence to show that David was a Mantle family name and that Evan senior could have had an unrecorded/unbaptised son David, and from the information given by David Manley in Westbury that his father was Evan from Llanbadarn, it is possible that David Manley was David Mantle.

David in Westbury, (in among the usual names given to children at that time, including my ancestor Thomas Manley born in 1849), had a son with the uncommon name of Stephen. In the parish of Llanbister in 1841 there was a Stephen Mantle aged 45 and wife Jane aged 50 and they also had a son named David aged 10. Llanbister is the adjacent parish to Llanbadarn. Stephen's line goes back to John Mantle born about 1773 who may be connected to Evan, but it cannot be proved at this stage. Stephen and his family emigrated to Canada between 1841 and 1851. Could Westbury David have known Stephen?

A case can be made from the above information that the David who arrived in Westbury was a David Mantle from Llanbadarn. Evidence for this possibility is that there are no Manleys in Radnorshire and it is a likely scenario that Evan Mantle would have had an unbaptised son David. In addition to this a Welsh rural way of speaking might produce the spelling of the name in Shropshire.

This study, setting out the possible (even likely) roots of my ancestor David Manley is compelling in many ways, but firm evidence is lacking, and therefore the Manley family line must end in Westbury with David Manley whose father was shown as Evan.

Heather Duckett, 334

From a Bathtub to a Hot Shower

When I persuaded my mother (born in 1914) to write about her childhood memories I little thought that I, let alone my grandchildren, would be so astounded by her early life. She had no dad as he had been killed in the first world war, so she lived with her mother and elder sister on the first floor of her grandparents' home in London.

She wrote

'We had one toilet outside the backdoor downstairs. It was chilly in the winter but at least we didn't have to go to the bottom of the garden like some families. We had just one tap for the whole house. Any water that we needed had to be carried upstairs. Saturday evenings meant bath time for both my sister and me. The water was heated in the large copper tub out in the scullery and had to be carried upstairs by my mother. It was poured into a large tin bath by the fire. My sister and I took it in turns for our bath and hair wash. Our hair was then put into rags which acted like curlers, and we were then given a dose of medicine to ensure we were not only cleaned on the outside but on the inside too.'

As I grew older, I occasionally went with my sister to the local Wood Green Baths on a Saturday morning. It was an enormous bath, big enough for my sister and I to share. We had a lovely lot of hot water, enormous towels which had been warmed for which we paid two pence.'

My mother was married in 1937 and was blessed with a bath in her own home, though hot water was dependant on the back boiler stationed behind the fire. Lighting the fire was a required task if hot water was needed for a bath, as I remember well! After my father died she moved into a flat where there was a shower, with constant hot water and a radiator for warmth when she emerged to dry herself. A lot can change in a lifetime!!

Reg Wilford, 5564

Editor: When I was small I recall visiting my grandparents who lived in Crowmere Road, Shrewsbury. My grandad still had his regular bath in a tin bath in front of the fire with water that had been heated on the gas stove! This was in the 1960s through to the mid 1970s.

From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On

The first page of the March 1986 Journal (Vol 7 part1) was filled with the names of another 45 new members (823-868) from all around the UK. Just one from Australia this time.

Secretary, Gina Lewis, was pleased to tell members that the Society...*had placed an order for the IGI (International Genealogical Index), containing 82 million names worldwide, comprising 2618 fiche for England and 567 for Scotland, 1 for Bolivia, 12 for Iceland, 1 for Pakistan etc etc....which could take up to 3months for them to arrive from Salt Lake City'.*

The meeting in January 1986 in Shirehall was, '*a Beginners evening and was attended by 140 plus'.*

Mr. Tipper, who was in charge of the bookstall reported that the Committee... '*is pleased to announce the publication of the first edition of our 'DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS INTERESTS'. which lists all surnames that have been notified by members up to Dec 1985.* The directory was available for £1.50.

Dennis George (27) was recording Prees M.I.s when he discovered a series of unusual deaths!

- Margaret Drury killed by the fall of a sandhill,
- Thomas Edwards killed by Indians in South America,
- Ronald Wilson and Gwendoline Powell killed in a motor bike accident
- Emily Morrey, lost at sea in 1915 through the torpedoing of HS Hesperian
- Col. William Hill died from a fall on Mount Pilatus, in Switzerland

The November meeting included reports of three talks;

- Ann Kirby talked about 'Leggers' and the Canal Tunnel at Blisworth. She recommended a visit to the Stoke Bruerne Waterways Museum.
- Gill Tunna, talked about her ancestor's involvement in the Shropshire Ironworks and how Ironbridge claims to be the birthplace of the industrial revolution.
- Brian Evison talked about the role of the Militia in defence of England, how men were chosen, their movement around the country and the inevitable marriages outside of their place of birth! As many of us have discovered there was more population movement than we might once have realised.

Mrs. Simpson (130) wondered how churches in the C17th discovered where charity and disaster funding is most needed. She discovered that Frodsham Church (in Cheshire) had made 21 donations to churches throughout Shropshire for fire, damage and other needs between 1663 and 1726.

For those wanting to explore Family Life between 1470-1700, Janice Cox recommended '*The English Family*' by Ralph Houlbrooke published by Longman in paperback in 1984. If it was a good read then, presumably it still is!

If you had a Shrewsbury Policeman in the family, between 1836 and 1947, then a card index file at Shrewsbury Library, giving as much information as it was possible to find had been produced by Douglas Elliott. The names of the policemen in the file were printed in full in our journal.

For members with Quaker connections, Mr. Wild from Kent had extracted all of the marriages with a Shropshire connection in the period 1657 to 1836 from the Society of Friends (Quakers) register.

Under the heading of 'Computers and the Data Protection Act', members were reassured *that information such as their name and address, telephone number, membership number, and date of any journal referring to that member was strictly confidential to the Society and would not be passed onto a third party.* Was fear regarding the confidentiality and accessibility to computer records beginning to emerge at this time?

It was reported that the Public Record Office was to stage a Doomsday exhibition recording its 900 years anniversary (ie 1086-1986)

Mr. M. Tipper monopolised the two central pages with a vast quantity of books, charts, greeting cards and leaflets all available from the bookstall. I remember that the bookstall was a popular ingredient of monthly meetings at the Shirehall and in more recent times at Cross Houses.

Reg Wilford, 5564

Editor: We have exceeded the number of new members of this time 40 years ago, with 50 people joining us between November 2025 and January 2026! As you will see from the list later in the Journal, members are joining from across the world which is wonderful, and perhaps indicates the journeys some of our ancestors must have made in years gone by.

Tracing your non-Conformist ancestors

Review of talk by Elizabeth Yule on 16 September 2025

This talk focused on England and Wales.

The talk started by outlining dates and Parliamentary Acts which had affected dissenters and non-Conformists, from the time of Henry VIII. He is said to have introduced non-conformism when he broke from Rome, but 14th Century dissenters, known as Lollards, challenged the primacy of the church and objected to its wealth. People should be able to interpret the Bible for themselves. Henry's son (Edward VI) pushed Protestantism, but Puritans felt change did not go far enough and objected to church hierarchy. Puritans were not a single religious sect, but were Church of England dissenters who wanted different ways to worship, and to 'purify' the church. Later (17th century) dissenters formed groups called Separatists and Independents (later Congregationalists).

It's no wonder some people chose not to conform to religious beliefs. Under successive monarchs from Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy in 1534, the established religion varied from Roman Catholics and Anglican Protestants (Henry VIII), then Protestant (Edward VI), Roman Catholic (Queen Mary), Protestant (Elizabeth I), Presbyterian (Scotland) and Anglican (England) (James I), Anglo Catholic (Charles I), Presbyterian (Cromwell), Indifferent Anglican (Charles II), Roman Catholic (James II). Non-conformists were those who did not conform, while Protestants were those who 'protest' (against Catholicism); dissenters were non-conformist protestants, recusants were non-conformist Catholics.

Following Henry's break with Rome, the following Acts and events affected dissenters:

1553-1558	Return to Roman Catholicism under Queen Mary
1559	Act of Uniformity (every church had to use Book of Common Prayer)
1605	Gunpowder Plot
1642-1651	English Civil War Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector and was an 'Independent' and ruled during his 'Commonwealth' or 'Interregnum'
1649-1660	Commonwealth period (under Puritan government)

1660	Restoration of the Church of England and Monarchy
The Clarendon Code was four Parliamentary Acts which made all officials take the Holy Communion.	
1661	Corporation Act (anti-nonconformist legislation)
1662	Act of Uniformity
1664	Conventicle Act – no more than five people could meet for worship
1665	5 Mile Act – exiled ministers could not practice more than five miles from their old parish.
1672	Declaration of Indulgence - nonconformist meeting houses were first licenced.
1673	Test Act – ministers had to take Holy Communion to hold public office
1688	Catholic King Charles II was ejected in the ‘Glorious Revolution’, and replaced by William III (of Orange)
1689	Toleration Act – allowed nonconformists freedom of worship; it was the most important of the Acts but Catholics were still barred
1753	Hardwicke’s Marriage Act - all except Quakers and Jews, who kept good records, had to marry in the Anglican Church. Catholics and Baptists could only legally marry in an Anglican church
1778	Catholic Relief Act - Catholics could now own property and inherit land
1791	Catholic Relief Act - chapels now permitted
In the 18th century, there were an estimated 400,000 non-Conformists in England and Wales.	
1828	Repeal of Test Act - barriers to nonconformists holding public office removed
1829	Catholic Emancipation Act - Catholics could now hold public office
1837	Statutory Registration - nonconformists could marry in their own chapels, if a Registrar is present
1840	Nonconformist churches instructed to deposit registers with the Registrar General
1858	Another instruction to deposit registers with the Registrar General
1898	Do not need Registrar present to marry in nonconformist chapel

The Records

Registers

There are no records of non-Conformist marriages 1754-1837, though they did keep registers of baptisms and burials, and there are few burial grounds. Records are often in Church of England registers. More registers can be found from 1689 after the Toleration Act.

Non-Conformist registers often have much more information than the Anglican, but it is inconsistent. Quaker records are also more detailed.

Protestant Dissenters Registry (Dr Williams' Library)

Non-Conformists could choose to register births with this library. Non-Conformists had no access to baptism certificates. Began in 1742 but was retrospective (the earliest birth is from 1716) – nearly 50,000 births registered.

Where to find the registers

Under Registry numbers in TNA

RG4	Non-Conformists BMDs - surrendered to non-parochial Commission in 1840
RG5	birth certificates of Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist registry plus Wesleyan Metropolitan Registry (from 1818)
RG6	Quakers
RG8	BMDs surrendered to non-parochial Registers Commission 1851 (most are digitised on Ancestry, FMP, BMD Registers.co.uk)

Other non-Conformist records

Minutes, members lists, magazines, periodicals etc may be found in local record offices. Some groups have specific records – Quaker sufferings (Non-Conformists' fines for not conforming with church ties, give much information), Methodists circuit records, Baptists Union Handbook.

Spotting a non-Conformist ancestor

- Possibly mentioned in Church of England registers
- Burial in a non-Conformist cemetery which may be close to a non-Conformist church
- Gravestone inscriptions – these may mention non conformity

- A lack of baptisms in parish registers though there births and burials
- Presence of biblical forenames (like Abraham etc)

The Speaker then gave a case study of the Leman Scott family of Norfolk.

A useful website for non-Conformist records is The Official Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial BMDs Service (for which there is a cost) www.BMDRegisters.co.uk.

Reviewer's note: I missed the actual talk so this review is compiled from the SFHS recording and associated handout (on the SFHS website). The recording ends without showing if there were any relevant questions of comments.

Peter Tandy, 7709

Unlocking the hidden history in your photographs

**Review of the talk by Stephen Gill, FRPS, ASICI, PGCE, given on
18 November 2025**

Photography dates back to c.1840; and in a lecture dealing with old photographs, much of it was visual examples.

The speaker started by outlining facts about Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI uses vast amounts of energy, but why? A 'floppy disc' (remember them??), used to hold 1.4Mb of data. Restoration of a high-resolution photo uses about 350 discs!, and creating one restored image may use the equivalent of thousands of 'floppies'. AI is enormously energy hungry. In 2022 data centres consumed about 1000 terawatts of electricity – about equivalent to the whole of Japan!! Google's data centres in 2022 used 20% more water (for cooling) than in 2021, and Microsoft's rose by 34%.

Data today is stored 'in the cloud', but what does it mean? It isn't the white fluffy masses in the sky, but is in vast warehouse-like computer hubs. And where is the best place for those? Well, it is Greenland where there is plenty of water, lots of space, and room for cooling. And who owns 'the cloud'? It's unknown but is probably the richest in the world. Most of 'the cloud' is in the US, also UK, Germany etc.

If you don't store your data in the cloud, where can you? The speaker showed solid state drives (SSDs), a bit larger than a matchbox, holding 480 Mbps. And what of passwords, if the system fails? He keeps all his in a notebook at home and believes that theft of them is not very likely.

How useful is AI to genealogists? Generally, it is good for research, but he warned there are quite a few versions on-line, some better than others. He uses (mostly) ChatGPT, but warned against using GROK (which is run by Elon Musk).

In the past, new technology was seen as taking people's livelihoods away. Workers (known as Luddites) smashed machinery to halt progress. Today we all use Ancestry (or other genealogy sites) on computers to speed progress and don't think about it. AI has the potential to really help, but...it isn't always correct as it can pick up the wrong information or may guess at answers if it doesn't know. He compared it with the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which has 29,000 pages, 22,000 illustrations and 450 references. Every time we make a Google search, it looks at 600 BILLION pages. One very useful genealogical use of AI is in reading cursive script, and translating it into English (or almost any other language). And the best aspect is it's free, unless you use it regularly.

Is AI good at image restoration? Yes, but what is 'restoration'? Pictures can look false with too much restoration. Part of history is passing information onwards, so falsifying data with over-restoration, messes things up for future generations. He showed examples of ChatGPT restorations starting with a real-time example of how ChatGPT can offer valuable solutions. He started asking ChatGPT what it knew about the photo, and then had a 'conversation' with it. ChatGPT not only gives direct answers (correct or not), but also gives a lot of extra background information.

He showed a photo of a Victorian chap in a buttoned uniform which had numerous small white streaks across it. These, he said, are egg-white which was used in the early photographic process. ChatGPT removed them. But it also removed the light-grey braiding along the edge of his uniform, thinking it was a scratch.

Using a recent news photo of Donald Trump with unfocussed advisors, at a meeting, he showed that AI can't sharpen out-of-focus images. Another was a glass negative of a group of ladies sitting at a marina, which was broken into 16 pieces. After piecing it together, ChatGPT made it look like new, but had also reversed it. And it had added an extra ankle!

In conclusion, he said don't be afraid of AI but use it carefully. In particular, DON'T add personal information (yours or someone else's), as it can be accessed by others. He added that AI is not going away.

After a fascinating talk there were lots of congratulations and some questions:

Q. Can AI identify words with old spellings in old wills (of c.1597), where reading and transcribing letters is difficult?

A Yes, absolutely.

Q. Can AI turn negatives into positive plates if scanned?

A. Probably not, but he hasn't tried it and it probably won't be a good result. They need scanning and scanners were designed for documents not old photos which are usually much smaller.

Q. Does AI have potential to scan photos and search for people appearing more than once?

A. He had tried it recently with two group photos knowing at least one person was duplicated. ChatGPT found three people straight away. Even modern phones can search for a person from their 'archives'.

Q. In the future will we be able to believe what we see?

A. He said it will be a problem in the future but don't be scared of it.

Q. There is talk now of the Government building many more data hubs. What happens to data if the hub is destroyed?

A. That could be a problem. But he again showed his small data SSD.*

Reviewer's addendum:

* By a coincidence, the local East Anglia news had a report two nights previously, about a new data hub opening in Harlow (Essex). The building was openly shown as an elegant (modern) structure, and the reporter was given full access. The CEO, when interviewed, seemed to say that data was highly protected, but was also dissipated among other centres. So, data would still be preserved in the event of destruction of a hub.

Peter Tandy, 7709

An early European attempt at daguerreotype portraiture. Count Karel Chotek with his family, 3 or 4 November 1839. Possibly by Carl August von Steinheil. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Family History

Review of the talk by Andrew Redfern on 16 December 2025

The speaker in a lecture (from Australia), said using AI is like boarding a train for a journey. You don't have to drive the train, and can board and leave when you want. Family history can't be done without using AI in some form. It is immensely powerful, enough to transform family photos into avatars and animate them. By example he had a still photo of his great-grandmother mother animated to smile.

AI, known as 'machine learning' and 'deep learning', developed in the 1950s in the US. In genealogy, it has grown hugely. From 1997-2013, Ancestry indexed c.2m records/month. In 2018-2023 it indexed 2-3 m records a day, and in 2022, the entire 2022 US census was indexed in just 9 days!! In 2025, Ancestry anticipates 65+ billion records over 88 countries, using 2000 terabytes of data. AI can look and make connections we can't even think of!

He then demonstrated the abilities of AI for genealogists, using the ChatGPT platform. Remember ChatGPT provides options or possibilities not answers.

Many AI platforms are available; he showed logos of 14, each of which has merits, but suggested getting used to one initially. He uses ChatGPT which was launched on 30/11/2022. The name is derived from Generative, Pre-trained, Transformer. If it is pre-trained on rubbish it will produce rubbish.

AI is an assistant, or tool, not a replacement. It isn't a good assistant if you are not specific in what you ask it, but if it gets it wrong (and you know it) you can chat back to it. How can we use tools if we don't believe in them? The answer is to ask about material known to be true, and explicitly tell it what we want. To use ChatGPT, you need an account, but its basic form is free to use for 24 hours (unless you use it a lot), while a paid account gives more. Within ChatGPT there are many GPTs which are self-customised versions and which can be as complex or simple as you need. They can be found in the side bar of the ChatGPT program.

Other sites mentioned: TRANSKRIBUS (for transcribing documents and photos), CANVA/MIDJOURNEY (will create images), DESCRIPT (for transcribing audio files), RUNWAY (for creating video files), and 11 LABS (for cloning voices or getting accented voices to read scripts).

Digitised newspapers are essential; he showed an example from the Australian TROVE system (part equivalent to British Newspaper Archive). Having found a funeral notification, he copied it into ChatGPT, analysed it for names etc, and added it to his existing data record.

Bias – is a term used for results systematically biased due to assumptions in the machine learning process. There are two types: algorithmic /data bias, and societal bias. These reduce the potential of AI, encourage mistrust and distort results. We can reduce it by being aware, education, questioning answers, and being critical.

Privacy and security are big concerns. Using the ‘temporary chat’ feature in ChatGPT, what you write isn’t saved when exiting the programme, and isn’t used to train ChatGPT in further models. Under ‘settings’ it can be turned off.

What you put into AI is known as a ‘prompt’, and the better it is, the better is the output. As AI is used, better prompts are developed; the AI tool can even help here. Other users’ prompts can be seen and used (see the handout on the SFHS Members’ page for examples).

Regarding photo restoration; AI can remove scratches, ½ tone dots, discolouration, enhance features and improve clarity and contrast. The result should look like a touched up vintage photo, not a fresh digital image (see also the talk ‘*Unlocking the hidden history in your photographs*’, accessible on the website, and its review in this Journal, page 33) Finally he said ALWAYS tag enhanced photos to maintain ethics and let others know what they are dealing with.

Summing up he suggested signing up for a ChatGPT account, writing a biography from your research of an ancestor, tabulating things like birth dates or locations for a group, creating timelines of ancestors from your written passages and extracting data from newspaper articles.

There is a Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogyandai>.

After the talk there were some questions:

Q. Family Search can look at wills and pick up other names. Are there any other sites to do this?

A. It will be coming to other sites.

Q. Ancestry DNA, makes suggestions about relationships, but does it ‘learn’ from them?

A. It's up to independent providers. It's based on the number of centimorgans and over time priorities should be re-ordered. But it isn't a rolling process and needs the algorithm to be updated.

Q. ChatGPT is very powerful. Is there a danger people stop asking questions when they get an answer which suits them?

A Very much so, but it happens when people look at certificates. Keep your FHS hat on and ask questions – could it be wrong? Always verify with documents or DNA.

Q. Does AI help with DNA for those without trees?

A. Can do. Develop a small cluster and work from there.

Peter Tandy, 7709

An A-Z of Genealogy

an alphabetical look at some less-well known sources of British genealogy

Review of the talk given by Dr Janet Few on 20 January 2026

As an 'alphabetical look' the speaker went through sources beginning with each letter in turn, with examples from her own research. Some websites are included here and a full list is given on the handout which can be found in the Talks section on the Members Only page of the SFHS Website.

A: Absent Voters List These are specialised voters lists for those unable to be present at election time and include servicemen not yet home from war, or diplomats. Most can be found in county archives, but FMP has some from 1918-1921.

A: Anglican Visitations These were fact-finding visitations on the clergy, following a questionnaire, by bishops, especially in the 18th century. Those for Devon are on-line, but others are in county archives.

B: Bomb Site Lists, with maps, of Greater London, showing where bombs and incendiary devices fell during WW2. It is an open site (crowd funded) to which people add information. The website works better on phones than it does on PCs. There is a guide in The National Archives (TNA), Kew.

B: Booth's Survey of London Dating from 1886-1903, it colour codes streets on a map according to the social class of people living there. There are also accompanying notebooks.

C: Case Books Dating from c.1600, these are records of medical consultations by two astrologers. Sometimes difficult to read, they do contain some wonderful diagnoses.

C: Civil War Petitions These are petitions by soldiers, widows and orphans to Parliament to claim a pension. The project is a work in progress. See: www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk.

C: Clergymen A Church of England database from 1540-1835 as a continuation of Crockford's Clerical Directory. It can be searched by name or place.

C: Connected Histories A database from 1550-1900 of different but connected on-line records.

D: Domesday An on-line database with illustrations of the Domesday Book of 1086. It is arranged by geographical unit, covering Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and 'The Rest' but not London.



Image, by Andrews, William - Andrews, William: "Historic Byways and Highways of Old England" (1900)[2], Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=855126>

D: Drivers FMP has some records from the DVLA showing initial registrations of vehicles between 1921-1944, but only for Coventry, This also includes motorcycles with or without sidecars.

E: Ecclesiastical Census This was produced at the same time as the 1851 National Census, and lists all churches, chapels. meeting houses etc. The originals are at TNA, but images can be downloaded from the website. It is a good source for worship in the mid-19th century.

F: Farm Survey A survey of all farms, 1941-1944, with a full description of each one. There are four pages for each farm. It is available at TNA (with a research guide) and is being digitised (possibly available in 2027?). [Note: the survey for Shropshire is available at Shropshire Archives, and Hampshire has one at Winchester – it might be worth asking at local archives.]

G: Gazettes This is mainly 'The London Gazette', (since 1665) which is the official organ for Government notices and lists all honours, medals and military changes and more. A full set (including those for Edinburgh and Belfast) is available at the British Library and it is also available at www.thegazette.co.uk.

G: General View of Agriculture This covers the British Isles, three Irish counties (Ireland not divided then), Channel Islands and Isle of Man. Where there are two volumes you need to look at both. A full list is shown on Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_View_of_Agriculture_county_surveys

G: Griffiths Valuation The first full valuation of property in Ireland 1848-1864 and is available on-line (and searchable).

H: Hearth Tax 1662-1689. Two shillings was payable as tax for each hearth. Documents show who was living at a place at the time and their wealth.

K: Kelly's Directories Dating from the 18th to mid- 20th centuries, these are divided into street and trade directories, for each location. You also need to look at the place description as it contains much information about the place. There are also tourist guides up to the mid-20th century.

L: Layers of London website A map-based history website covering London.

M: Manorial Documents Record Manors are not the same as parishes. Records before 1732 are in Latin. Manorial Courts dealt with a number of offences. Records are held at TNA.

M: Medical Officers of Health Reports Medical Officers were appointed for different areas and submitted a report each year from 1838. The reports are on the website of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine library.

M: Methodists There are a number of websites dealing with Methodists under the Methodist Heritage website.

N: Name Books These records were drawn up in the late 1850s -1860s when planning for a 6": mile OS map. They cover mainly Northumberland, Cumberland

(as was) and oddly Isle of Wight. Records for Ireland are from 1826, and Scotland from 1845 onwards.

N: Newspapers A major source for genealogists, the British Newspaper Archive (BNA) is a subscription site, although many pages are free to view. Apart from BMDs, they also record daily events, and have adverts. There are also Colonial newspapers available. They can also be accessed through the Findmypast website.

O: Old Bailey About 200,000 Central Criminal Court records from 1674-1913 are on-line and searchable.

P: Pathe News Over 85,000 newsreels for the period 1896-1976: they were the main source of news for many people. The site also includes the Reuters Historical Collection (130,000 clips) and are searchable by topic or personal names.

P: Population A website looking at population changes.

P: Protestation Returns A Census-like list of mainly men, drawn up in 1642 showing oaths of loyalty to the Crown. It also includes other documents relating to the Civil War. Mostly in the Palace of Westminster Parliamentary Archives.

Q: Quaker Ambulance Service Records of service in WW1. Not all are Quakers, it also includes conscientious objectors. Records are in the Friends (Quaker) Library.



Image: By Vernon39 - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3968737>

R: Red Cross Records of people (like Agatha Christie) who volunteered for service in VAD units. There are c.90,000 records, mostly women.

S: Shire Publications A long-established series of booklets covering many occupations.

S: Slavery Records of the legacy of British slave owners from 1833 are available at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>

S: Statistical Accounts These records mainly cover Scotland. The old series is from 1791-1799, and the new from 1834-1845. They are downloadable from their website.

T: Tithes The Genealogist holds the National Tithe Record Collection for 1837-early 1850s. Welsh records are freely available on-line.

V: Valuation Office Reports An attempt to value every property in Britain for Capital Gains Tax purposes. Due to WW1, it was never entirely invoked. Records consist of large-scale maps and official notebooks. Reports can be found at TNA under IR121/124-135. Maps are under IR58. They are being made available on The Genealogist website.

V: Vision of Britain (through time). A collection of maps, photos, census reports (but not returns) etc.

W: Women A website to remember forgotten women.
<https://www.fewforgottenwomen.com/>

W: Workhouses Details of main workhouses (post 1834), with parish poorhouses before 1834.

Y: Young People There are a number of resources which can help to encourage young people to get interested in genealogy.

Z is for sleep (Z Z Z zzzzzzz) !

More information can be found in the speaker's book '*The Family Historian's Enquire Within*' - no longer published but can be found on second-hand bookshop sites.

Peter Tandy, 7709

Meet Our Committee Members

Jane Wilcox, 7853

Hello my name is Jane Wilcox, I joined the committee in January 2026. I was born in the West Midlands but grew up in Bristol and worked for various insurance companies before taking early retirement.

I've always loved history, particularly social history and being interested in my own family history I attended a night school course to learn the basics. The course taught how important it is to speak with as many family members as possible to collect memories and I was lucky that mine were happy to share their stories, some of which have proved invaluable.

I've enjoyed visiting archives and time spent at the local Mormon library looking at fiche and microfilm finding births, marriages, deaths and census records. Ordering certificates from the local register office and the anticipation of opening the envelope and hoping you had identified the right person.

My research had spent a number of years on the back burner but then the pandemic gave me time to restart and what a revelation, so much now online, much quicker but also potentially easier to get carried away. I've added DNA to my research and that has helped to solve a few mysteries.

I thought my family were from Birmingham and Liverpool but over time I've found ancestors in Shropshire, Worcestershire and Suffolk. Family history is like a jigsaw you just don't know how many pieces there are. I enjoy working with others and helping people find their missing links.

I host the DNA Special Interest Group, though I'm not an expert, am a member of the Talking Family History Group and help with organising the TFH 'Live' events. When I'm not doing family history I enjoy walking, holidaying, volunteering at my local National Trust Property (Newark Park) and village lunch club.

Editor: Welcome to Jane, our newest Committee member, and thanks for the support to the work of the Society.

If you think you could help us in some way please get in touch. There are always tasks to be done! Contact secretary@sfhs.org.uk to learn more.



New Members

Welcome to all our new members who have joined us in the past few months. It is wonderful to see the number of people have joined us through the website. We hope you all enjoy your membership and are able to join us at some of our talks, discussion groups and events.

If you have any queries please get in touch with our Secretary, Dave Morris, in the first instance at secretary@sfhs.org.uk

10076	Viv	Radcliffe	Reddish, Cheshire
10077	Joanne	Ball	Olney, Buckinghamshire
10078	Martin	Richards	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10079	Sarah	Richards	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10080	Gill	Denyer	Guildford, Surrey
10081	Kim	Lewis	Oswestry, Shropshire
10082	Sue	Poyntz	Chepstow, Monmouthshire
10083	Jane	Davies	Southampton, Hampshire
10084	John	Pugh	Barnsley, South Yorkshire
10085	Christopher	Lowe	Nantwich, Cheshire
10086	Susan	Taylor	Telford, Shropshire
10087	Stephen	Thomas	London
10088	Holly	Evans	Waverly, WA, USA
10089	David	Teasdale	Birmingham, West Midlands
10090	Paul	Snook	Telford, Shropshire
10091	Julia	Heaton	Peterborough, Lincolnshire
10092	Ina	Aarta	Alberta, Canada
10093	Leigh	Walker	Birmingham, West Midlands
10094	Susan	David	Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
10095	Iain	Arnold	Bristol, North Somerset
10096	Brenda	Fairley	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10097	Brian	Atkinson	Telford, Shropshire
10098	Sarah	Fidal	Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
10099	Rosemary	Gotts	Wooton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

10100	Stephen	Speake	Telford, Shropshire
10101	Isabella	Rosner	London
10102	Elinor	Wilding	Tasmania, Australia
10103	Susan	Houson	Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
10104	Robert	Holmes	Axbridge, Somerset
10105	Michael	Dicker	Torquay, South Devon
10106	Julie	Varo	Ashbourne, Derbyshire
10107	D	Corbitt	Jacksonville, Florida, USA
10108	Ian	Sanders	Ely, Cambridgeshire
10109	Jane	Standring	Bolton, Lancashire
10110	Debra	Berry	Iredell, North Carolina, USA
10111	Kevin	Reynolds	KwaZulu-Natal South Africa
10112	Peter	Humphries	Stroud, Gloucestershire
10113	Leslie	Selph	Frostproof, Florida, USA
10114	Donna	Beauchesne	Sommerville, South Carolina, USA
10115	Anthony	Downing	Saffron Walden, Essex
10116	Mary	Downing	Saffron Walden, Essex
10117	Roger	Grosvenor	Cardiff, Wales
10118	Richard	Roberts	Liverpool, Merseyside
10119	Russell	Teece	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10120	Robert	Brown	Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire
10121	Phil	Hayes	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10122	Michael	Hopwood	Dereham, Norfolk
10123	Brian	Morris	Ontario, Canada
10124	Michael	Watkiss	Wolverhampton, South Staffordshire
10125	Steven	Weinert	Smithfield, Utah, USA

Deaths

We have been advised of the deaths of two members in the last few months and we send our condolences to their families and friends.

941 Mary Whelan, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

5666 Christine Marklew, Shifnal, Shropshire

From the Editor

It is hard to believe, but this is my 20th edition as Editor, having taken up the reigns for Journal Volume 42 - Part 2 way back in June 2021.

Over that time we have read with interest:

- stories of the lives of those who have gone before;
- articles on the social history of towns and villages in Shropshire;
- items on ways to tackle some of the research challenges we all face in exploring our family histories;
- reflections on the work of our Society 40 years ago;
- book recommendations;
- reports from our monthly talks;
- details of our varied events;
- updates from Shropshire Archives
- and many others.

Each of the Journals have relied on members sending in their contributions - without them I would struggle to pull each edition together. So, as ever, many thanks to all our contributors, past, current and future.

The need for articles continues - the folders for future editions are almost empty so without more contributions we will have a very reduced Journal for the June 2026 edition! So please put your thinking caps on, your fingers to the keyboard, or your pens to paper and let me have some articles for the next few editions. It would be wonderful to have more than enough copy to fill each one!

Can I remind you that we are still looking for someone to replace me as Editor. If you are interested to find out more about what the role entails please get in touch. Help and support will be available, especially as you learn the ropes and if more than one person is interested it may be possible to share the task out.

Karen Hunter, Editor, editor@sfhs.org.uk

Talks Programme: March-June 2026

Railway Ancestors

Ian Waller

17 March

Railways were one of the largest employers and many companies left a legacy of staff records. This talk examines how those records help piece together the career of a railway worker using a variety of records up to nationalisation in 1948.

Heroes and Ghosts

Michael Hallett

21 April

Heroes and Ghosts is the story of Michael's grandfather Harold Blackburn, a pioneer aviator before World War I and war hero. After the war, scandal struck the family and plunged it into shame for three generations. Along the way, his story was lost, his memorabilia buried for decades.

This presentation brings the story of his amazing career to light through the recognition of unconscious shame affecting multiple generations. Shame affects the way memories are carried in a family, both in terms of what is remembered—or allowed to be remembered—and in terms of what mementos survive.

Researching such events requires a softer approach than conventional, data-driven genealogy. While telling this story Michael will share tips and techniques that are useful for all genealogists.

Ethel Elizabeth Chapple's Life in Shropshire 1879 to 1936

Ainslie Hepburn (Member)

19 May

This story is part of a larger project of Ainslie's that compares Ethel's life with that of her other grandmother and also with the lives of her husband's grandmothers. So, this is both an account of the life lived by each of the four women, and also a comparison of their experiences.

It is a story that is difficult to research because the lives of 'ordinary' women are not much documented – these women barely exist in records. But Ainslie wants to know not only the details of their lives – their families, their education, their work – but also how each of them were impacted in their four very different environments by the social, religious, and cultural realities of their time.

The talk will tell the story of Ethel Chapple and also look at particular aspects of life stories:

How do we find out about the lives of 'ordinary' women?

How do similar experiences (family life, education, religion, public health, travel, etc) impact people – particularly women - in different places at different times?

How do we share this knowledge?

Read all about it

Dave Annal

16 June

This talk is about newspapers. But it's also about stories; about bringing our ancestors to life; about moving away from the idea that once we've discovered their names and dates, our task is complete; it's about seeing our ancestors as real, living, breathing, thinking people.

The talk will demonstrate how newspapers – specifically local newspapers – can lead us some way along this path. How, by uncovering references to the smallest, apparently insignificant events in our ancestors' lives, we can start to get glimpses of the people behind the names and dates.

All these talks are online via Zoom, and the link for each will be sent out by email to our members about two weeks before each talk.

Previous talks

Where we are given permission we record the talks and share them on our Members Only page on the website, alongside any handouts that may have been provided by the speaker. Please note some talks will only be available for a short period of time.

Ideas for future talks

We are always on the lookout for ideas for future talks - either topics you would like to learn more about or recommendations of sessions you have already seen that you think other members would find interesting. We will be aiming to sort out the 2026/27 programme in the next few months so please pass on any ideas to secretary@sfhs.org.uk

Notes for Contributors

- All contributions should be sent to the Editor at editor@sfhs.org.uk, or by post using the address inside the front cover if you don't have email.
- Include your name, membership number, e-mail and other relevant contact details in the same file as the text of your article and indicate which of them can be included. Otherwise, only your name and SFHS number (if appropriate) will be printed.
- Please note that articles will not be published under a pseudonym or anonymously unless there are legitimate reasons for doing so, which need to be discussed with the Editor in the first instance.
- Send pictures as separate image files (eg e-mail attachments), and only include them within the item or article as well, to give the editor an idea for suitable positioning. The relevant place could just be clearly referred to in the main body of the text.
- List the filenames of any pictures you are sending in the e-mail with relevant acknowledgements.
- It is assumed that place names, surnames etc will be spelt correctly and they will be printed as submitted unless otherwise informed.
- If possible, please CAPITALISE all family surnames within your submitted articles when they first occur.
- Any pictures or other images should have a file size as large as possible. Most digital cameras and those in mobile phones are more than adequate but the higher the resolution, and therefore quality, the better.
- Scanned photographs etc should be at a minimum of 300dpi if at all possible. JPG (or JPEG) is the preferred file format but in certain circumstances, others could be considered. Please contact the Editor for clarification if necessary.
- Original pictures, documents etc, can be submitted and scanned by the Editor but this should preferably be a 'last resort'.
- All items (articles, images, photographs) submitted must have permission to print granted with the correct acknowledgement included when submitting them.
- Please note that items which essentially consist of full or significant transcriptions from Wikipedia or other websites will not be published.
- Any submitted articles may be edited by the Editor.

Social Media Manager

Do you use Social Media? Do you know how it all works? If so perhaps you can help us. At the moment this task is picked up by myself, and I admit to doing it very sporadically and not very well. It is a role I need to hand on to someone with a better knoweldge of how it all works and some time to focus on it.

We are therefore looking for someone to take on the management and oversight of our Social Media accounts. This will enable us to promote ourselves and our activites to a wider audience and engage with those who have an interest in family history and genealogy.

If you think you could help us with this please get in touch with me at chair@sfhs.org.uk

Thank You.

Karen Hunter, Chair



Copy Dates

Publication Date	Items to be submitted by
June 2026	1 April 2026
September 2026	1 July 2026
December 2026	1 October 2026
March 2027	1 January 2027

Advertisements

The Society welcomes adverts relevant to the interests of family historians. Prices are per issue.

Members	£20 full page	£10 half page
Non Members	£24 full page	£13 half page

Copy should be submitted to the Editor. The Society reserves the right to refuse any advert it considers inappropriate.

Other appointments

Membership

Gift Aid	Lorna Emms	treasurer@sfhs.org.uk
Subscription Renewals	Dave Morris	secretary@sfhs.org.uk

Programme

Programme Secretary	Vacant	speakers@sfhs.org.uk
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Enquiries/Help

(Please note we do not undertake personal research but will assist if we can)

General Enquiries	to the Secretary	secretary@sfhs.org.uk
Research Queries (Members only)	Christine Abram	research.queries@sfhs.org.uk

Reference Material

Certificate Exchange	Christine Head	xchangecerts@sfhs.org.uk
Members' Interests	Dave Morris	members_interests@sfhs.org.uk
Library/Exchange Journals	Graham Moore	library@sfhs.org.uk
Parish Registers Books	Graham Moore	library@sfhs.org.uk

Sales

Monumental inscriptions and Microfiche	Ruth Wilford	copies@sfhs.org.uk
House History Books		sales@sfhs.org.uk

Projects

Original P.R. and 1851 Census Microfiche (Shropshire)	Christine Abram	research.queries@sfhs.org.uk
Help Desk Volunteers at Shropshire Archives	Gill Lewis	archives_volunteers@sfhs.org.uk
Shropshire Family History Hub	Simon Davies	hub@sfhs.org.uk

Online Groups

DNA Special Interest Group	Jane Wilcox	dnasig@sfhs.org.uk
Talking Family History	Karen Hunter	tfh@sfhs.org.uk

Back cover: An early European attempt at daguerreotype portraiture. Count Karel Chotek with his family, 3 or 4 November 1839. Possibly by Carl August von Steinheil. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



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