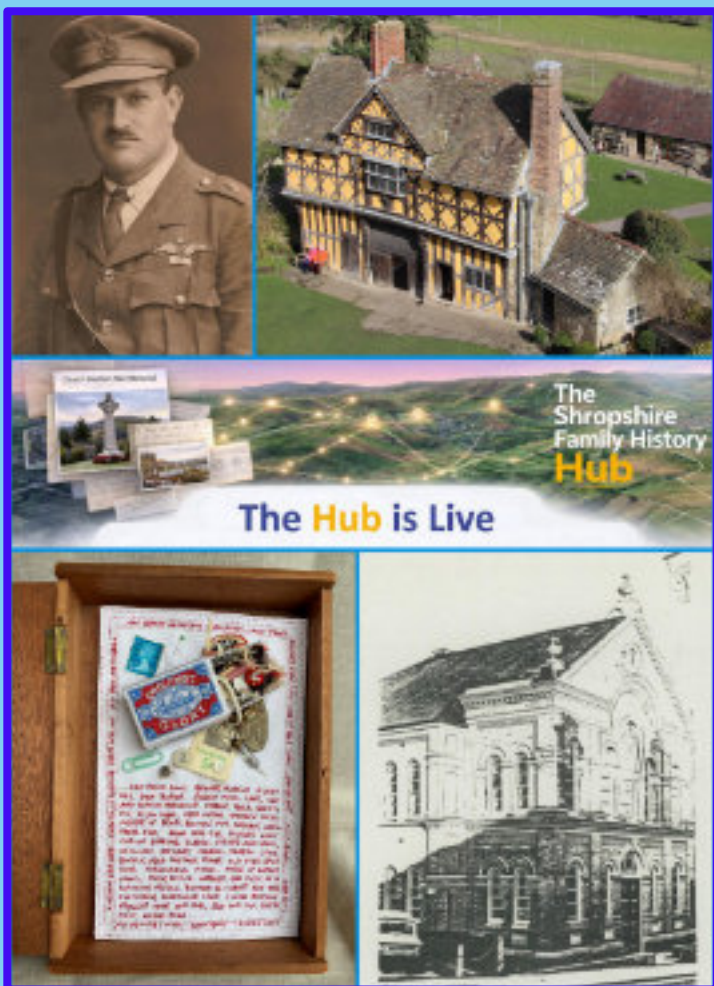




Shropshire Family History Society



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There are three vacancies on the Executive Committee

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

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Thoughts from the Chair

Talking Family History LIVE

It was fascinating to get a glimpse into Shropshire's industrial past through the talks at our event in May, from local brewing in towns across the county, to the vast coal fields in the Wellington area and the lives of those living in Hinkshay Rows and working in the Stirchley Ironworks. When visiting now it is quite hard to imagine that industrial past but in researching our ancestors we can get a feel for how different life would have been for many of them. We have audio recordings of each of the talks which have been added to the directory of talks on the website, along with the slides for each talk.

It was also great to officially launch the Shropshire Family History Hub. In its first week we have seen 117 members log-on to explore what the site has to offer which we are delighted by. Special thanks are due to Simon Davies for all the work he has put in to making the initial germ of an idea a reality and to Jane, Dawn and Isobel for their work on the site. You can read more about the project in the next article in this Journal.

It is always good to get together with others who share an interest in searching their family history and to see both familiar and new faces at Cross Houses the other week. Check out a few photographs of the event on page 93. Many thanks to Jane, Dawn and Pauline for organising the event and for being willing to do the same for our next in-person event which is booked for Saturday 3 October, so get it into your diaries now. If you have thoughts of what you would like to see included please let us know.

Records don't lie but people do!

We rely heavily on a variety of official records and documents when researching our family history but in reality how accurate are they!

Birth, baptism, marriage and death certificates/registers and census records are 'bread and butter' to our research but all are reliant on the information provided being correct and being entered accurately. I am sure we have all come across examples where the information might not be quite as it should be. I have a marriage certificate where the bride's father's name is included - great - but it is actually the name of the grandfather; or there are those census records where

someone is shown as married, when they never did, the place of birth changes every 10 years, or a number of other 'variations' in the facts. I came across a 1911 census return the other day which as you will know, includes details of the number of children born alive to the 'present marriage', except the number related to the head of household's first marriage, not his second marriage and wife who was recorded on the return.

In many instances the error is probably an innocent mistake, based on the facts as understood by the informant, as in the example of the bride giving the name of her grandfather on the marriage certificate, as she had been brought up to believe her grandparents were her parents! But sometimes there is a deliberate attempt to 'bend the truth' or deceive - perhaps where someone is trying to 'hide' from their past or pretending to be someone they are not.

It is good practice to triangulate your research, seeking out more than one piece of evidence to confirm the facts, but always remembering that, at best, the information is only as good as the knowledge of the informant or recorder of the information.

And, in a similar vein, if using Ancestry or other similar sites to explore your ancestors, please remember that some of the 'trees' are no more than a figment of someone's imagination, or have been collated from others who have an equally fertile imagination or a lack of understanding of how things work! I am sure you have come across examples where someone is included with a marriage date before they were born, or many other similar 'errors'.

Volunteers' Week

The first week in June is designated as Volunteers' Week and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members who undertake roles within the Society. Without the commitment from our volunteers the Society would struggle to function. Whatever your role, be it big or small, be assured that your contributions and the time you give is appreciated, even if we don't say it much. There are always tasks to be done so if anyone would like to join our band of volunteers please get in touch and let us know in what way you would like to be involved.

Karen Hunter, Chair chair@sfhs.org.uk



The Hub is live - now it needs you!

**A new chapter for Shropshire places, people,
records and memories**



The Shropshire Family History Hub is now live. Launched during the Society's Talking Family History LIVE event on Saturday 9 May, the Hub has moved from idea and preparation into a growing online home for Shropshire local history, family history and nostalgia. By the end of the launch weekend more than 100 members had already created their Hub accounts and joined the SFHS Members Area Group - a hugely encouraging start, and one that shows just how much appetite there is for a shared county-wide resource.

A living record

The Hub is not intended to be a finished monument. It is a living record - something we can keep adding to, improving and sharing together.

Members who read the previous Journal article will remember the core purpose: to build a useful, welcoming starting point for anyone exploring Shropshire connections. Each town, village and community can bring together a brief historical introduction, links to local sources, church information, war memorial material, house histories, notable people, photographs, memories, and - over time - member-only Society collections. The 3D maps give the project a particularly engaging flavour, allowing people to move visually across the county and discover places that shaped their families' lives.

Create your free Hub member account

The first and most practical request is simple: please create your free SFHS Hub member account and take a look around. Your account gives you access to the full Hub, including member-only material and the SFHS Members Area Group.

Please use the email address linked to your Society membership when registering, as this is what allows the system to recognise you as a member.

How to get started

- Go to [sfhs.org.uk](https://www.sfhs.org.uk) and click Learn More on the main Hub banner.
- On the Hub information page, use the For Society Members section and click Create your Hub member account.
- Register with your SFHS membership email address, confirm your password, and check your email to verify the account.
- Once verified, log in and begin exploring the Hub and the Members Area Group.

Keep the handout handy



The launch-day handout walks you through the four steps for creating a Hub member account. It is worth keeping nearby when you first register, especially if you are helping another member get started. A copy of the handout can be found at <https://www.sfhs.org.uk/hub-public>

Once inside, the Members Area Group is where new Hub content will be highlighted, where questions and feedback can be shared, and where members can respond with additional knowledge, memories, corrections and suggestions.

This is where the Hub becomes more than a reference site: it becomes a living conversation among people who care about Shropshire's past.

Visit the SFHS Members Area Group

Please do not stop at registering. The SFHS Members Area Group is an important part of the Hub. It gives the Hub Team a way to share newly added places, fresh highlights, collections as they come online, and examples of member research that deserve attention. It also gives members a place to appreciate, discuss and add context.

A small observation from one member can make a place page much more useful: the name of a local history group; a link to a village archive; a memory of a shop, school, chapel, farm or family business; or a correction to a date or place name. The Group is the place to make those contributions visible and to help the Hub improve in public view of the membership.

Help build the places you know

The Hub is already benefiting from wonderful offers of content from members, including personal research, photographs, local knowledge, records, memories and place-based material that might otherwise remain tucked away in hard drives, filing cabinets and notebooks. Thank you to everyone who has already come forward, and to those whose contributions are currently being prepared for inclusion.

We are especially keen to hear from members who have a Shropshire place, family, building, chapel, school, workplace, war memorial, churchyard, notable resident or local story that they know well. You do not need to produce a polished article before contacting us. A useful link, a short memory, a few photographs, a transcription, a research note, or a pointer to an excellent local website can all help us make a place page richer and more accurate.

What you could contribute

- Personal research connected to a Shropshire town, village or hamlet.
- Photographs, memories, anecdotes or old documents that add local colour.
- Useful links to local history groups, archive pages, church pages, war memorial projects or community sites.
- Suggestions for notable people, intriguing buildings, house histories, chapels, schools, shops, farms or events.
- Corrections, additions and local knowledge that will help improve existing Hub pages.

Join the hands-on editorial Hub Team

We would also love more members to join the hands-on editorial Hub Team. This does not need to be onerous. Some people may want to focus on one favourite place, one subject, or one collection. Others may enjoy checking links, polishing text, preparing images, gathering suggestions from members, or helping shape a particular section such as churches, war memorials, house histories, monumental inscriptions, or notable people.

The most valuable qualification is enthusiasm for Shropshire's history and a willingness to help make scattered knowledge easier for others to find. The work can be done gradually, as and when time allows, and there is real satisfaction in seeing a place page come alive because several members have pooled their knowledge.

Thank you

The launch was possible because of a great deal of work behind the scenes. Thank you to everyone who organised and supported Talking Family History LIVE, to those who welcomed members, prepared the programme and made the day run smoothly, and to the Hub Team for the many hours already spent gathering content, testing pages, shaping the member journey and preparing the launch materials.

Most of all, thank you to the members who have already responded with ideas, encouragement and material. The Hub will be strongest when it reflects the knowledge held across the Society. Please create your account, visit the Members Area Group, tell us what you think, and consider what you might be able to contribute. Together we can build a living legacy of Shropshire - one place, one story and one memory at a time.

Create your account via sfhs.org.uk or contact the Hub Team at hub@sfhs.org.uk

Simon Davies 7860, Jane Wilcox 7853, Dawn Blundell 4669, Isobel Hoy 10010



The Hibbins and Onians families of the parish of Stokesay



Image: Stokesay Castle, © Michael Hunter, 2023

Stokesay is a place of great interest and natural beauty; visitors come from far and near to see the ancient manor house, with the fortifications added by Lawrence de Ludlow at the end of the 13th century, the fine Elizabethan gate house and the small church in their delightful setting in the valley of the Onny. The

church must have existed in 1174, when Hugh de Say granted “the church of St John of Suthestokes” to Haughmond Abbey; the present dedication of the church, to St John the Baptist, is mentioned in the confirmation of that grant. There is no mention of a church at Stokesay in the Domesday Book; there was then a church at Aldon and this was probably transferred to Stokesay.

There are no memorials in Stokesay church to the de Says, de Verdon, Ludlows, Vernons or Cravens, the families who owned Stokesay prior to the purchase of the estate by Mr J D Allcroft in 1869. It is especially disappointing that there are no memorials to the Ludlows and their descendants, the Vernons, for these families held Stokesay for nearly 300 years. There seems to be no doubt that ancient monuments were destroyed when the castle was surrendered to the Parliamentarians in 1645 or soon afterwards. Fortunately the Vernon memorials at Tong, on the other side of the county, did not suffer a similar fate and, together with these, will be found the effigies of Benedicta Ludlow and Alice Ludlow, daughters of the Stokesay family who married Vernons.

Stokesay Church was largely rebuilt in 1654, *'by the pious oversight of George Powell and George Lambe, Churchwardens'*. It is to these gentlemen, to the parishioners of that time and, in recent years, to the Allcroft family, that posterity should be grateful for the preservation of the interesting group of buildings at critical times in the history of Stokesay.

In the chancel of Stokesay church there are several monuments to the Onians family of the Weo, Rowton and Aldon; a family which has many descendants in

Shropshire and elsewhere, although the name is no longer to be found in Stokesay parish. Weo, a tall white farmhouse, is on the Watling street, on the Clungerford side of View Edge and perhaps its name is a form of the Latin "Via". At Weo, John Onians (b 1802) ploughed the grey lands to the east, which had been the property of his ancestors for at least 400 years but, when William Hardwicke, the Shropshire antiquary, visited Stokesay about 1820, he had recently sold the farm. Hardwicke wrote that '*on the south-west about a mile and a half from Stokesay is Weo, where stood of late years the ancient interesting mansion of the Hibbins family late the property of John Onians who enjoyed it from ancestry - partly by descent and purchase from the heirs of the ancient and respectable family of Hibbins of this place*'. Hardwicke also mentioned that the ancient covered pew in Stokesay church belonged to the Onians family of Rowton; this pew, which still exists, was probably inherited by them from the Hibbins family, who held the patronage of Stokesay church for nearly 200 years.



1956 sketch of Weo and Rowton by Gerald Devey (descendant of John Onians and Susannah Hibbins)

The Hibbins family had lived at Weo and Rowton since the 15th century; in old documents their estate is described as '*the Manor of Aldon and lands situate in Weo alias Werve, Rowton alias Ruton Pyards, and Ruton alias Rowston Salters and Broome*'. It is said that Weo came to the Hibbins by marriage with Isabella Pardy, an heiress and the great grand-daughter of Robert Pardy who was living at Weo in 1412, and whose wife was Dionisia Mynde of Mynde. Weo bears a structural resemblance to the house at Mynde, now called Myndtown, by the western slopes of the Long Mynd and it seems possible that the basic plan of both houses may have survived alterations and additions since the day of Dionisia. The old farm at Rowton is also on an ancient site, and parts of the present farmhouse must have been constructed by the Hibbinses. Isabella Pardy's 2x great grandson, William Hibbins (b 1524)

married Ann, daughter of Laurence Ludlow and, from him, the estate passed to his



2023 photographs of Rowton and The Weo ©Adrian Payne (descendant of John Onians and Susannah Hibbins)



son Charles, who was buried at Stokesay in 1594, and then to Charles's son, Thomas, baptised at Stokesay in 1578 and buried there 1639/40.

It is curious that the name Hibbins is not now to be found in Shropshire. They were a long-lived stock and there were eleven children in each of the last three generations whose baptisms are recorded at Stokesay; but it seems that the sons were rarely content to remain on the home acres. Many of them went to London to study law; others went abroad as merchant adventurers.

William, a younger son of Charles Hibbins (d 1594) was baptised at Stokesay in 1589 and was one of the early settlers in Boston, Massachusetts. He was married at Boston, Lincolnshire, in 1632/3, to Hester Bellingham, sister of Richard Bellingham, who afterwards became governor of Massachusetts. She was buried at Stokesay in 1634, two days after the baptism of her son, Abel. About that time, William Hibbins emigrated to Boston, Massachusetts and became a leading citizen. His second wife was Ann, widow of an Englishman named Moore. William died in 1654 but, before his death, he lost much of his money and these misfortunes are said to have affected his widow. Although she had influential friends, she was accused of being a witch, tried and found guilty. Jonathan Moore, one of her three English sons, hurried to America but arrived too late to save her. She was hanged on 19 June 1656.

Charles' eldest son, Thomas, married Mary Barker of the well-known Haughmond family in 1596/7. Their eldest son, Charles, was baptised at Uffington in 1600. He went to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, but died when he was 24 and was buried at St Stephen's Walbrook in London. The second son, James, remained a bachelor and lived in London for the greater part of his long life. In 1640 he was disinherited by his father in favour of the third son, Jeremy, who was then a merchant in Alicante, Spain. This disinheritance was the cause of a life-long feud between the two brothers and the Stokesay acres became heavily mortgaged as a result of Chancery proceedings. James's will (1678) states *'to my brother Jeremiah Hibbins and his sons, 12 pence apiece to prevent and debar them making any claim on my estate....they being troublesome to me all my life'*. All of his estate was left to his executor Captain Symon Marriott.

Soon after 1640, Jeremy returned to Stokesay with a young wife, Sarah, daughter of Henry Androwes, Sheriff of the City of London. She was a sister of Hester ("Mrs Goodyear now Mrs Buckworth") whom Samuel Pepys mentions a number of times in his diaries *'I love the woman for her gravity above any in the parish'*. Sarah was buried at Stokesay in 1702. Jeremy and Sarah had 11 children. Their

eldest son, Barker Hibbins, died in 1700 in the service of the East India Company. The second son Thomas was a barrister of the Inner Temple and subsequently became steward to Sir Willoughby Aston and Sir Thomas Aston of Aston Hall, Aston-by-Sutton, Cheshire, where he was buried in 1706. The third son Henry (b 1650) was Rector of Waddesdon, Bucks. The youngest daughter Susannah (1666-1753) married John Onians of Clungerford and thus Weo and Rowton passed to the Onians family. It is their descendants whose names are now to be seen on the memorials in Stokesay church and many local families, including Botfield, Galliers, Bird, Smith, Dawes, Bach, Blakeway, Procter, Backhouse, Lewis, Jones and Bright, are descended from them.



Image: Stokesay Church, © Michael Hunter, 2023

The only Hibbins memorial to be seen in Stokesay churchyard (but not now visible) was a broken stone, close to the eastern wall of the chancel. On this stone it was just possible to read

the inscription to the memory of '*Sarah, wife of Thomas Hibbins of Rowton, Clerk, who departed this Life December the 27th Anno Dom 1716*'. This Thomas was the eldest son of the Rev Henry Hibbins of Waddesdon. The last Hibbins to reside in the parish was Henry's brother the Rev Lucius Henry Hibbins (b 1695/6), who was vicar of Stokesay between 1745 and 1750, after which he became rector of Fobbing in Essex, where he died in 1759. For over 18 years, he wrote over 30 letters to the Duke of Newcastle asking for clerical preferment, money or a pension, all of which were ignored. He married his first cousin Sarah Hibbins, daughter of James Hibbins of Holbeach. Their only daughter, Henrietta Lucretia, had married against his wishes and she was described in her father's will as '*my undutiful & unnatural daughter*' and any money left to her was '*for her sole and separate use and to be utterly & absolutely out of the power of her present base husband ... and after his decease ... they shall pay the principal moneys .. to her provided that such representatives be not of the blood of her said base husband whom I will have no share or interest in any part of my fortune or estate*'. The only surviving son, Frederick George Hibbins, who should have inherited the Stokesay estates, had apparently fled abroad and was described in Lucius's will as

“my poor fugitive son”. Probably this son never returned and so the Stokesay inheritance came to the families of Smallman and Onians, who were both descended from the Hibbins family.

It seems that the Hibbins family became extinct in the male line with the death of Dr James Hibbins (1711-77), the son of James Hibbins of Holbeach, Lincolnshire. He graduated from Magdalene College, Cambridge and Leiden University and was, for some time, physician to the London Hospital. He married twice, secondly in 1758 to a very wealthy widow whom he persuaded to make a will in his favour on the morning of the marriage. She died seven months later leaving him her considerable fortune and it seems he had no interest in Weo or Rowton. His only daughter from his first marriage, Anne, married John Lloyd FRS of Snitterfield, Warwickshire. Her descendants include the notorious Charles Thomas Warde of Clopton (1812-65) whose extramarital exploits were meticulously reported in the press of the time.

Original article by Gerald Devey, revised and updated by his daughter Madeleine Farbrother

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SFHS DNA Special Interest Group



Have you decided to dip your toe into the DNA pool, taken a DNA test, got the results back and felt overwhelmed, you've attended some talks, watched YouTube videos and then filed the results away as too difficult or you don't have the time or have you hit a brick wall in your research and aren't sure where to go.

Everyone in the DNA Special Interest Group started out with no knowledge and knows exactly how it feels, we've all been there. None of us are experts but by pooling our knowledge we can normally come up with ideas and avenues to consider to help fellow members. We have a great range of experience from those just starting out, to those who have been using DNA for a number of years but we are all still learning and trying new things. The best is to hear from members of the group.

The DNA group it is friendly and supportive with lots of encouragement. Members can chat and ask questions no matter how basic and everyone will try and help. After a meeting I feel enthusiastic to look again.

It is helpful to hear different methods, and see how others solve problems and brick walls which can prompt you to look at your research in another way.

We share our experience whether we've been doing DNA for sometime or are new to it and love helping with brick walls and we all celebrate when someone breaks a brick wall be it a chip or a demolition.

Members share their screens to support what they are saying or showing where their conundrum is.

We have a number of members who have been able to find their unknown fathers, grandfathers, grandparent's siblings and their families, as well as the unexpected finds of family that no one knew about, children given up for adoption and many families that emigrated and had disappeared from the paper records.

The other thing that's been mentioned frequently is the need for patience/persistence. Matches frequently don't respond right away (and sometimes never!). Sometimes they do come back but months or years later. Try, try again is a good motto!

So if you're thinking about a test; or have taken a test, but are unsure what to do with the results, or what to do next; perhaps the DNA SIG group could offer help and advice in some way. For those who are just starting out we have done small sessions to help members with their questions and ideas on where they might want to start.

If you're more experienced and have had successes however small that have taken your family history down new avenues or confirmed theories then you are also very welcome to join us and share the knowledge that you have.

You are very welcome to come along to a meeting and see what we're all about, you can join the DNA SIG from the link in the Shropshire FHS website or email dnasig@sfhs.org.uk

Jane Wilcox (host but no expert), 7853

From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On

The first two pages of the June 1986 Journal (Vol 7 part 2) were filled with the names and addresses of members numbered 869 to 923, except that the membership went from 889 straight to 900. This was followed by a confession from the secretary that *'I couldn't count!'*

There then followed 10 pages of members interests. It is a fascinating picture of members' struggles with 'What is Truth?' and 'What are Hopeful Imaginings?' and 'What are Lies?' passed on from previous generations.

Denise Cooper (917) from Australia asks about Samuel Cooper, aged 21, transported to Oz in 1840 for stealing a horse from Hatcham Bridge. Denise asks about the whereabouts of the Bridge which, of course, should have been 'Atcham' (6 miles from Shrewsbury). I hope she got an answer to her question!

Another Australian story which caught my eye came from the value of the, now, antique BT telephone directory, from which Mrs. Moore (543) was able to follow up links with the Farr family.

One article reported *'After abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986, the GLC Record Office and Library will be the responsibility of the City of London and will continue to operate from 40, Northampton Road, EC1'.*

The cover picture showed the church of St. Andrew and St. Mary in Condover. [See image to the right.] We were reminded that the *Parish Chest is said to be over 700 years old* and told that the *ink and pen drawing is by our member Mr.R.Wilding (800).*



The Society had been working on indexing the 1851 Census. Six more Parishes had been completed, and thanks were given to Mrs. White for her work on the project.

It was reported that the Association of Genealogists was founded in 1968 and was *open for membership to professional researchers who were expected to maintain a high level of professional conduct!*

A special plea for help came from the Bridgnorth Boat Builders who were knitting together the ancestors of those involved in boats, stretching back to the 18th century. Sadly, I couldn't find any current boat builders in Bridgnorth on the Internet.

Pictures were at a premium in our stencilled journal of 40 years ago, but Janice Cox chose this medium to illustrate the building of the St. Johns Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Shrewsbury, opened in 1805. *[See image to the right.]*



Trevor and Margaret Hill, meanwhile, had used their slide projector (remember those?) to illustrate their talk about Newport at the February 1986 meeting.

Miss J. Cook shared the thrill of finding a family tree in her attic which led her on an exciting trail of discovery about her past family...a reminder to us all...to leave our research where others just might pick it up!

Davis Yeadell advertised the Society's 1986 coach trip to the Central London Repositories and advised early booking to avoid disappointment.

The Federation of Family History Societies now had a permanent home at the Birmingham Midland Institute. (but now in Manchester, I believe?)

Mr.R.Jones, Project secretary, recorded that nine members of the Society turned up to record and capture the Inscriptions on the graves at Diddlebury. They used a 'shadow tube' to help them read the nearly worn-out lettering. It seems they were just in time!

The British Records Association had a two page spread concerned about the loss of Deeds concerned with historical house and land ownership. They were concerned that old deeds of historical interest were being sold off to private collectors, lost in a solicitor's office or rotting away in an attic. I am conscious that proof of the ownership of my house is summarised in one sheet of paper provided by the Land Registry but that I also have the original parchments going back to 1800. Needless to say, they were invaluable in researching the history of my house. I want to keep them for now, but what should I eventually do with them? Any suggestions?

Reg Wilford, 5564

Talking Family History Online - What's it all about?

At a recent session of TFH Online members were invited to write something for the Journal to tell others what it meant to them, so here goes...

An Australian's View: Rod Austin, 7864

My maternal great-grandfather was born in Ludlow, Shropshire. In 1883, he and one of his brothers left Plymouth aboard a ship bound for Rockhampton, Queensland — and that journey, made well over a century ago, is the reason I find myself logging on to a Zoom call every month from the other side of the world.

The Shropshire Family History Society's Talking Family History group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 19:30, and for me that means an early start on a Friday. When Australia is in summer and the UK in winter, the time difference is eleven hours — manageable enough. It's the reverse that tests the commitment: during the Australian winter, with the UK in summer, the gap narrows to nine hours with the clock shifting the wrong way, putting the call at around 4:30am my time. I go to bed early the night before. It is, without question, worth it.

The group usually has no set agenda, which suits it perfectly. It's the online equivalent of meeting friends at the pub — conversation ranges freely, rabbit holes are enthusiastically pursued, and you invariably surface with more knowledge than you arrived with. Over the couple of years I've been involved, I've come to know fellow members I would never have met had it not been for Zoom. A trip to the UK would have been the only alternative.

One exchange has stayed with me in particular. I asked the group how my great-grandfather might have travelled from Ludlow to Plymouth before boarding his ship. After some discussion, the consensus settled on the train — the most logical answer given what was happening in England in 1883, even if it can't be proved beyond doubt. The alternative, as someone pointed out, was to walk. That moment captured exactly what makes the group valuable: a simple question, collective thinking, and an answer that brought a long-dead ancestor a little closer.

Nearly every session I take something away — a new avenue to explore, a technique I hadn't considered, or simply a fresh perspective from someone

whose research has taken them somewhere unexpected. Everyone is there to help, and everyone has the chance to contribute without feeling overlooked. We usually open with the weather, which given that I'm sweltering through an Australian summer while they're enduring an English winter, never gets old.

I am genuinely grateful to the Society for making this possible. The Shropshire connection in my family is one branch among many, but through this group it has become one of the most alive. Somewhere in the records, my great-grandfather is still waiting to give up his secrets — and once a month, a little before dawn, I'm at my desk ready to look for them.

My thoughts on the group - Dawn Blundell, 4669

- Friendly group
- Offer support both on research and personal
- Encouragement
- Share experiences
- Help each other with breaking down brick walls and other ways of looking at the research
- Have you looked at this record? e.g. Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick [<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/>]
- Often something someone says or has done prompts you to look at your own research
- Able to share your screen to show what you have done or a way of how to record your research



An evening of diverse conversation - Pauline A. Maguire, 7517

It's just after nine o'clock on the evening of 5 March 2026: I have spent the last hour and a half in diverse conversation with sixteen other members of the SFHS. Not all from Shropshire I might add but from as far afield as Canada, Australia and many of the other counties of the British Isles. All in the comfort of my own home with coffee and biscuits to hand.

This evening's topics included the library in Bridgnorth where a group of family historians are researching several of the buildings in the town and their occupants; migration to Australia in the late 1800s the path of their boat journey and what records are available; how we can help to make our new members feel welcome and included as well as show them how to access the wealth of information available on the Web Site; we even discussed our Chairs outfit for her son's wedding, being designed and made by her from fabric purchased on a

recent holiday aboard; going into local schools to discuss aspects of family history including the deceased of World War One; the U3A and its family history group sessions.

Many times have I heard about a member's frustrating 'brick wall' and after lengthy discussion many alternative approaches have been offered by our experienced members.

Without our previous regular face to face meetings and using modern technology we can invite people from across the world into our own homes, listen to what they have experienced in their very varied research and gather knowledge as we go.

I have been privileged to talk to so many of the SFHS members, to put names to faces of people I would not have met without the monthly "Talking Family History" sessions held on Zoom.

Why not join us, we don't bite, we just want to listen to or talk about our favourite subject, Family History, make new friends and, as I said before, all without leaving the comfort of my own home.

Editor: If these pieces have sparked your interest in the Talking Family history Online group why not give it a try. To register all you need to do is email tfh@sfhs.org.uk and ask to be included in the circulation. The sessions are held on the first Thursday of the month, starting at 7.30pm and the link is sent out each month, about a week before each session. You don't need to come every month - just drop in when you can.

Parish Register Snippet

1651 August 25 - Edward CLUDDE of Orlton, Esq, dep'ted this lyfe the 23rd of August, was baptised the 23rd August, was married the 23rd August and was buried the 25th August.

Gillian Posner (5130) sent this in, and comments: '*I think this means all are in the same year. He must have known he was dying and couldn't marry until he had been baptised*'.

Capturing and Sharing Memories

From previous articles in the Journal it is evident that some of you have been lucky to inherit diaries and other memorabilia from some of your ancestors, which can help to paint a picture of their lives, their interests, and sometimes give a glimpse into wider world events happening at the time. Perhaps it is a war diary from one of your ancestors who served at the Front in WW1 or a general diary of life during their formative years – whatever they are, these items are absolutely priceless and are no doubt treasured. Among the items we have is a tankard made by Michael's grandfather while a Prisoner of War in the later years of WW1. If they are from a time before, they can almost tell their own story just by seeing and handling them.

However, a chance encounter the other week in my role as a volunteer for the National Trust got me thinking about how, as part of our family history research and recording, we can bring together our own memories, in the hope that future generations might be interested in our experiences as we are in those who have gone before.

Many of us might now capture our memories digitally, with digital photographs, electronic files, or perhaps even through social media becoming our 'diary' of what we get up to, but it is special having something tangible. After my mother's death I came across some old cassette tapes with recordings of conversations over family meals at my aunt's house around Christmas time way back in the early 70s! There was lots of clattering from the cutlery and crockery but poignantly, there were the voices of the family which was magical, and for those who are no longer with us it briefly brought them back to life. Now we are able to use our phones to take videos and capture such moments and share them with others.

In the March 2025 edition of the Journal I wrote about the '*Dear Nana/Grampy – from you to me*' Christmas gifts we got from our grandson, which I have still to be complete, but there are many other ways to gather our experiences together.

Inspired by my in-laws, who created scrap books of all the special events and holidays during their years together, resulting in five volumes which we keep on the bookshelf, Michael and I started along the same path. Sadly, ours only tell our story up to the early years of our children's lives, but it does cover our 'courtship',

wedding, honeymoon and those first few years of married life which might, in years to come, give future generations a glimpse of some of what we got up to! A friend has created a number of family history scrapbooks for her wider family which she gets printed and shares out.

For Michael's 65th birthday we held a '*This is Your Life*' party and I created a 'Red Book' for it, telling his life story to date, including some stories from his school days offered by a friend which I had never heard before. I have even made a start on my autobiography – not quite a '*tell all*' story – but that has taken rather a back seat in things to be done recently. We now create photobooks of our holidays which act as a wonderful reminder to us but they perhaps won't mean so much to our descendants, other than them being able to see the amazing places we have been privileged to visit.



Perhaps you have a sampler from days gone by, telling of events of the time, be it recording the birth or death of a family member, or commemorating a particular life event. I have completed a few of these; for my niece's births, my Dad's 60th birthday and an aunt and uncle's Golden Wedding Anniversary [see image to the right], with one of their wedding photographs providing the basis for the design.

All of this brings me back to my chance encounter. I got into conversation about textiles and stitching with one of the visitors and discovered she is a very talented embroiderer, Catherine Hill <https://www.catherinehill.art/>. Much of her work centres around red, hand embroidered text, with some of her pieces incorporating her own childhood memories of growing up in Lancashire in the 1970s. Catherine has very kindly allowed me to reproduce images of a couple of her pieces, *The Matchbox Challenge* and *Summer '76*, both of which I find absolutely wonderful. I wonder how many of you remember filling matchboxes with 'things' in an

Image: *The Matchbox Challenge* ©Christopher James Hall



IN-UNDER STORMS HURRICANES WERE BRIMBANT. DAYS WERE LONG. AND RAIN DROPT
 SUNDAY. WE WERE OUTSIDE ALL THE TIME DRESSED IN A-SHIRT, SHORTS AND
 PLASTIC JUNG SWEATERS. WE SAW CREAM OF HATS. MAMA SHE WAS A BUNNY EARS FOR OUR
 DINNER AND SOMEONE TO SIP - A WASHED OUT PINKA BOTTLE FILLED TO THE BRIM
 WITH CONCENTRATED JUICE. WE WERE WORKING TO GROUND BLOOD, SHE WALKED ON THE
 TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. SHE SAT ON THE EDGE OF THE MOUNTAIN WITH A BASKET
 WHEN A CHILDREN RODE THAT SUCH TO DISAPPEAR INTO IT. WE DIDN'T KNOW BUT WHEN
 IT WERE BUILT IN THE MOUNTAIN SHE'D WALKED UP A MOUNTAIN AND FLOODED IT. THAT
 SUMMER AS THE WATER BOILED UP MADE OF THE CHILDREN ROAD APPEARED. ALONG
 WITH PIGS AND PLOUGHED PAVEMENTS. WE SHARED EACH OTHER TO WALK AS FAR
 AS WE COULD ALONG IT AND HAD TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE PATROLS OF WARS
 FROM THE WATER BUILT. IF WE WERE SPOTTED WE CHASED TWO US ONE. ONE DAY THE
 WATER WERE SO LOW I WALKED FROM ONE END OF THE MOUNTAIN TO THE OTHER. THE
 ROAD SPLIT THE WATER WE SAW AND EITHER SIDE WERE CRACKED GARDEN AND THE
 FOOTINGS OF BUILDINGS DROPPED YEARS AGO. WE STAYED IN THE BEDROOM TO KEEP
 COOL AND NOT WANT SOME WHEN OUR BELLS GOED US TO. ALL SHE WERE BACK THE
 WERE A SHAMINGING HAND ABOVE THE ROAD - DRINKING WERE SWEET AND FEELING
 STICKY WATERHOOD. MAMA MADE US USE OUR SHOULDER THE DOWN THE FEEL OF
 PUSING BLACK SWEAT ALL OVER THE CLOSET. IN WINTER LINDS MAMA MADE THE
 SAME IN CHURCHES - PLUM LETTUCE, EGG, TOMATO, CUCUMBER AND COLD SPICES...
 SERVED WITH MEAT, HOMEMADE PIE OR QUICHE AND A BIG PLATE OF BREAD AND
 BUTTER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE KITCHEN TABLE. AFTER SIX MONTHS WE WERE PUTS AND
 BAKERS AND SEND US OUT FOR WATER. WE WERE LUCKY WE ONLY HAD TO GO OVER
 THE ROAD FOR A SHOWER. AFTER A FEW DAYS CHERRY AND APRICOT WERE FILLED
 AND LINED UP IN THE KITCHEN. ONCE A WEEK WE'D HAVE A BATH... FOUR INCHES OF
 WATER CONCERNING THE BOTTOM... CRIED IT 'WAVING IN SPLASH' ALL SIX OF US KIDS
 FROM ELEVEN TO SEVEN. WE SAVED EVERY BIT OF BATH AND DISHWASHER FOR THE GARDEN.
 THAT 'YEAR WE HAD A SUMMER CUP' OF TOMATOES... ARE THERE ALL SUMMER LONG...

Image: Summer '76 ©Chromatech
 attempt to gather together
 more than anyone else! I
 had certainly forgotten
 about such a challenge
 although I do now recall
 doing it when I was small,
 but we now have a 'project'
 for our grandson when he
 visits over the summer. Or
 perhaps you recall what you
 were doing during the long,
 hot summer of 1976? To
 find out what I was doing
 then you will need to wait
 for the publication of my
 autobiography!!

Many of us will not be quite

so talented with a needle and thread but I am sure there are examples of how
 you are looking to share your own memories or items from your ancestors which
 bring their lives to life for you. Perhaps you will share them with us?

Karen Hunter, 7646

Genealogy Brick Walls

*Where your ancestors play
 hide-and-seek and you're
 always 'it'!*

(source unknown)

What can my DNA do for me?

Review of talk by Dr Sophie Kay on 17 February 2026

The speaker started by explaining just what DNA is. The letters stand for DeoxyriboNucleic Acid, whose molecule forms the famous double helix, rather like a twisted ladder with rungs between the vertical edges. This molecule stores genetic information as a 'recipe' for life. The rungs are chemical groups known (for brevity) as A,T,C,G. As we all share about 96% of our DNA (as humans), genetic genealogy looks at the remaining 4%. As an analogy, she compared it to a standard fried egg. The yolk represents the cell nucleus which stores most DNA. Opening it would show 23 pairs of chromosomes (i.e. 46 strands) of DNA. 22 pairs are known as autosomes or autosomal DNA (atDNA). Parents give one chromosome each. The other pair are referred to as 'sex chromosomes' as they determine biological males or females. Two X chromosomes (one from each parent) is biologically female, while an X and a Y chromosome means biologically male; the X chromosome is from your mother and the Y from your father. Y from the father are passed down the male line, so determining the paternal line.

Outside the nucleus ('yolk') are other chromosomes known as mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). This is inherited from your mother, and everyone has it. Siblings or half-siblings with the same mother will have the same or very similar mtDNA. This indicates the maternal line of a family tree.

The speaker then turned to atDNA, and how it affects inheritance. Most cells have about 2m of DNA, though sperm cells have about half that and red blood cells have none. At conception we have 23 individual chromosomes, from father's sperm and mother's egg. The embryo (child) has 46 chromosomes, which are paired up (+ mtDNA from the mother), to form the 22 autosomes. one other pair are the sex chromosomes (XX - female or XY - male).

The speaker then went on to traditional genealogy vs. genetic genealogy, saying they are two sides of the same coin. Traditional uses archives and records and starts with ourselves working backwards to add others. Most genetic methods use a saliva test, sent off for analysis for sequences of A,G,C,T. Similar sequences show up as a genetic match, probably not due to chance, but showing a recent common ancestor or couple. You can click on uploaded trees which may show what research has been done. But never accept someone else's tree as gospel truth; be suspicious and check it. You can look for matches not just with you, but

with one another. Look for matches which can show where inherited DNA originates. We must always come back to genetic connections between people. Genetic genealogy relies on comparison and can't be done in isolation. It is important to understand genetics and the relationship of parents to child. Then using fictitious examples the speaker demonstrated the principles.

You are asking '*how is this person is related to me?*', and '*what does the shared DNA mean about our relationship*' and '*who is the most recent common ancestor (MRCA)*'. The Ancestry website searches show how much you match with others. Those sharing DNA are known as a 'mutual match cluster' which can be quite big. Shared DNA is measured in centiMorgans (cM), the greater the number the closer and more recent the match. A parent and child would share about 3,500cM, a parent and 1st cousin about 850cM.

Beware of genetic genealogy's '*Bermuda Triangle*'. Three people may match on each of the three sides of a triangle, but are on different lines of the family tree (see the shared centimorgan project tool at <https://dnapainter.com/tools/sharedcmv4>). To 'validate' your tree you need to look for similar matches for siblings. Check ALL lines of descent against historical records, does the shared DNA agree, are there enough matches? Beware that some tree branches may have few living descendants, or few descendants may have been tested, or there may be research error, and sometimes connections may be distant (beyond six generations).

'Growing child principle'. This is applicable to paper or genetic trees. Children grow in spurts and this is how your tree should grow rather than just a straight lineage. Look at collateral lines.

How can DNA extend a family tree? Fattening the tree by the growing child principle, overcoming migration and sifting namesakes to eliminate people with the same surname. Additional relationships, perhaps bigamous, can be a problem. Traditional research might help, but we might not even know to look, whereas DNA might present cases.

Don't forget connections. Are there records (e.g. a family bible, photos, certificates) in your family which went down another branch than yours? Or perhaps oral history. If you are trying to make verbal contact, be patient – some people don't respond for years even, but give an e-mail address anyway. Say which DNA kit you used. Remember not all families might be like yours. Build a

dialogue with people before asking for things. Show respect and reciprocate to help others.

After the talk there were a few questions:

Q. Any advice on orphans? This case involves a triangle or people, where two matches are both orphans. The g-father also has an unidentified brother. There are shared matches, but it's awkward to tie things up.

A. Go back to genetic matches but instead of looking for commonalities, look for non-common links. Some sites show matches and you might use 'DNA painter' (on-line) to look at segments. Be aware of pedigree collapse with an ancestor appearing more than once. Also remember identical twins. If identical twin brothers have a child each, they are strictly 1st cousins (by sharing a pair of grandparents), but testing will show as half siblings.

Q. A member has found several relations living in the USA back to the 1600s but without any UK entries. How is this?

A. A match that is weaker than 10cM has no evidence value for genetic evidence. Some may be genuine and some just chance; we can't tell. Chunks of DNA get broken up at each parent/child event. Some parts of our DNA are less prone to breaking; these pieces form 'pile-up regions'. Some pieces of DNA can survive for 20+ generations. A pile up region would look like a lot of people all appearing to match one another.

This is a complex subject and there is a handout from the talk available on the SFHS website. The talk was only available for a month after the session so no longer accessible.

Peter Tandy, 7709

Railway Ancestors

Review of the talk by Ian Waller, given on 17 March 2026

The speaker outlined the general history of railways, from 1821 with the first commercial railway from Stockton to Darlington. From then on, railways became the largest employer apart from the military. Employment was stable and long term. The 1844 Railway Act allowed public purchase of companies. In 1923, the many different private companies were grouped into the 'big four' (Southern, LMS, GWR, LNER). Eventually in 1947, the rail network was nationalised. Up to

1927 there were 988 companies in UK, both small and large. Company records exist for c.150 companies, sometimes within records for the big four.

There were hundreds of railway jobs, many being for life with many opportunities. Families migrated to larger railway towns, while agricultural workers became navvies, building railways. Some staff were not employed by the companies and moved around to get promotion. Wages were low, but other benefits included pensions, sick pay, houses, social clubs and others. Most companies split workers into departments: locomotive, operations, engineers, police, and others like dockers, chefs, chambermaids etc.

Most companies had their own dress codes, with different uniforms but similar insignia. These can be used for identifications from photos. Companies also had publicity departments for posters, hotels, ferries etc. To know what railway they worked for, you need to know the company, what kind of job and where it was located. A good source for information is the *Railway Gazette*.

Many stations were owned or used by several companies and when staff moved a new record was started, so there can be more than one record for an employee. Even though they had individual staff numbers, there was no logic to their allocation, and staff could be allocated to different departments, especially on promotion.

Railway company records are mostly at The National Archives (TNA), Kew (under class RAIL), or under Board of Trade (BoT) and Ministry of Transport (MT). Records can give details of salaries, staff, personal details, accidents, but may not cover an employee's full record. Other records may be in local record offices, or in archives of railway works like Doncaster, Crewe, Shildon etc. Railway accidents were common, with the BoT holding enquiries, for which records exist.

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants started in 1872, and became part of the NUR in 1913; incomplete records from then to 1927 are available. ASLEF records can be found from 1889-1959. The Railway Clearing House, established in 1842, looked after records for places where different company lines crossed. They employed more than 25,000 clerks etc. Trade Unions also filed accident reports many of which are available on-line (see Railwayarchives.co.uk). Again Trade Union records are important, with most records held at the University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre.

Railway workers usually refer to men, but many women were employed as clerks, seamstresses, engine or carriage cleaners. About 80,000 women took over men's

jobs during WW1, creating a problem in 1919 when they refused to give up the jobs and went on strike.

Another branch of railway employees were the railway police who started as signallers, whose main duty was to regulate train movement. The first railway accident was on the Liverpool to Manchester railway. Early police were special constables doing jobs alongside other jobs, and occupying station houses at one mile intervals (hence 'police stations'). Mechanical signalling changed the role. The first railway detective force was established in 1864, and each of the four main railway companies had a police department from 1923.

In 1948 the railways were nationalised. Workers' records are not all available and may be dispersed across several regions. The National Railway Museum at York holds many records, but not many personal records. Other records may be found in the Tracking Railway Archives Project (TRAP) <https://rchs.org.uk/special-interest-groups/tracking-railway-archive-project/>

Another source is railway staff magazines, covering all levels of staff, including promotions, retirements and new staff appointments.

Railway navvies lived in shanty houses along tracks being worked on, in huts housing 20 men who paid 1d/night for a bed, but earned 5/- a day. Work was hard and deaths common for which widows got £5. Navvies worked for independent companies and are not recorded unless they became railway permanent way (track) workers. (see *Gazetteer of Railway Companies 1846-1914*)

Many railwaymen such as drivers, firemen, and platelayers worked for private companies in iron and steel works, mines and quarries, or often driving static engines. In 1870 >100,000 were employed on static engines. They were also recruited to work abroad especially in India, Argentina, Peru, Australia and New Zealand.

Peter Tandy, 7709

Image: Insignia of the 'Big Four' rail companies (GWR, LMS, Southern and LNER)



Heroes and Ghosts – Wing Commander Harold Blackburn, MC AFC

How scandal and shame affect genealogy

Review of the talk by Michael Hallett given on 21 April 2026

Heroes...

The first powered flight was in 1903 by the Wright Brothers. Flight spread rapidly to Europe by aviation meetings, with the first meeting in Britain, in October 1909 in Doncaster. Harold Blackburn was born in Gloucestershire in 1879, but at age 18 months his father became a schoolmaster in Doncaster and the family moved. Harold didn't follow his father into teaching but became a bicycle engineer.

The story of his background came to light via a selection of early photographs passed down by the speaker's mother. The earliest photo shows a flimsy craft built in 1909 and supposedly taken at Dagenham. Two men, Harold Blackburn, and Harold Walker are aboard. The speaker's research, and that of noted early-aero expert Phillip Jarrett, shows the aircraft to be unknown, but too underpowered to fly. The speaker added a page to Wikipedia under the name Blackburn-Walker, partly to honour Harold Walker, and partly because there was Blackburn Aircraft Co already. Undaunted, Harold became a qualified pilot, licence no.79 flying a Bristol Boxkite aircraft; his licence gave no profession. Both Walker and Blackburn had decided on aviation as careers, and in the 1911 Census, Walker's occupation is 'aeronautical engineer' even though no profession then existed. Walker married Blackburn's sister and emigrated to America to work on aircraft there.



Image: Harold Blackburn, Royal Flying Corps, January 1916 Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2046517>

Robert Blackburn, (no relation) of the Blackburn Aircraft Company (BAC), met Harold; Robert was flying aircraft from the beach at Filey, Yorkshire, but had only one customer for them – the British War Office who were unwilling to travel to Yorkshire. So Robert took his aircraft to Hendon, London, which had become the centre for aviation there. In need of a pilot, he chose Harold Blackburn. The BAC had a deliberately underpowered practice monoplane for students. The speaker

read a short piece from 'Flying' magazine which detailed one accident, when a 'plane piloted by Dr Christie crashed through the hanger door (it was open!). Dr Christie failed to get a pilot's licence.

In 1912 Robert Blackburn designed the single seat Blackburn model D monoplane. When piloted by Montague Glew, it crashed in a field in Lincolnshire in 1914. The wreckage was put into a barn for 20 years before it was discovered by Richard Shuttleworth, who took it to Old Warden, Bedfordshire, to add to his collection. Restored, it still flies (on still evenings!) and is the oldest original British aircraft. Dr Christie then asked Blackburn to design a larger two-seat model.



Image: 1912 Blackburn Type D Monoplane (G-AANI) ©CC BY_SA 2.0

Most people had never seen an aircraft, so Blackburn promoted flying at various sites in Yorkshire, under the patronage of Harry Tudor a US agent who may have arrived with Wild Bill Hickock's circus. On one flight at Bridlington in 1913 he took his 10 year-old daughter Isla to 10,000 feet; she was dubbed 'the little air lady'. In 1913 they staged the 'Wars of the Roses' air race, where Blackburn's Yorkshire monoplane was pitted against the prototype Lancashire Avro 504, over a 100-mile circular course with checkpoints. A Yorkshire mist caused the Avro to miss a check point. The Blackburn team won the trophy (which still exists). Another exhibition was at the Yorkshire Agricultural Show in 1914. They created an airline and for the first time an aircraft was flown at regular times with a passenger, in this case Dorothy Una Ratcliffe, the Lady Mayoress of Leeds who was thus Britain's first airline passenger. Harold Blackburn then 'switched sides', buying an Avro 504, a biplane, as it was more stable than the monoplanes of the day. The Royal Flying Corps (RFC) took Harold Blackburn on and paid £720 for the Avro

aircraft. Two weeks later Blackburn was certified as a qualified pilot and sent to France. Some of his activities were recorded in Flight magazine.

By 1915 the RFC had to expand its squadrons and qualified pilots like Blackburn were promoted to squadron leaders and flight commanders. Harold was sent to command no.14 squadron of 'C' Flight, which is unique in having its badge motto in Arabic, after being sent to Kantara, near Alexandria (Egypt) to defend the Suez canal from the Turkish Ottomans. Blackburn was flying a BE2 (Bomber Experimental), which was slow, and cumbersome but also stable. Harold designed a bomb sight which was very effective. Blackburn was given the Military Cross (MC) and was mentioned in dispatches five times. Blackburn was also awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) in 1918. This was unusual as the MC is an army medal while the AFC is an air force medal (after the RFC became the RAF in 1918). At this point his war service ended. He left the air force but re-joined in 1920s. He was second in command at RAF Henlow (Beds), where the speaker's mother was born in 1924.

Harold became commander at Martlesham Heath air base where the Aircraft Armament and Experimental Establishment (AAEE) was formed. One of the aircraft tested was the Beardmore Inflexible, an all-metal aircraft larger than a B-29 Superfortress! Although ungainly, it flew well and was tested to destruction. All that was left was a wheel rim, now in an East Midlands air museum (at 50" it's the largest rim in aviation history). Harold's aviation career ended after 20 years.

...and Ghosts

At this point there is a void in the family history. The speaker's grandmother went to live with Robert Blackburn. Harold Blackburn won court custody of the speaker's mother. His grandmother was kicked out and went to Rock (Cornwall). His mother was living in Jersey in the late 1930s. When France fell to German invasion, a coal barge was sent Jersey to remove the children. Harold took his mother (then 17) to the dock only to find the barge full. So he waited until it was just leaving and threw his mother onto the ship. Harold became an Air Raid Warden in WW2 and married the speaker's mother's nanny. They returned to Jersey in 1947 and retrieved heirlooms buried in the potato plot! Harold died in 1959. In 1970s the family emigrated to New Zealand. In 2006 the speaker returned to Britain and started to research the family, by looking for air records at TNA (Kew). They were not found but, after a frustrating day, he did find divorce papers. He had a family tree drawn up by Harold which had totally removed his grandmother Violet due to the shame of separation. A later tree by his mother

showed a second child who only lived for 25 hours. With help from a local FHS he traced not one but two unmarked graves in a local cemetery. The one unresolved problem was what had happened to his grandmother who went to Rock. By a curious route he found the cottage there where she had lived.

Finally, he took Harold's medals to an Antiques Roadshow in Banbury, where they were filmed for transmission.

Michael has written a book '*The Generational Trauma Workshop Manual*,' to help others with similar family problems.

Peter Tandy 7709

Reviewer's note: The Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden, Bedfordshire, is a fascinating and unique air collection, covering the period from c.1909 to about 1945. All the aircraft are airworthy. The Edwardian aircraft (Blackburn, Deperdussin, Bleriot, Avro triplane and Bristol Boxkite (albeit replicas from the film *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*, etc) and flimsy Wallbro (1978 replica) are a delight to see fly on a still summer's evening. Apart from the aircraft there are vintage cars, motorcycles, and three of the best preserved (and working) vintage buses in the country. Full details are at: <https://www.shuttleworth.org>.

Editor: Thanks to Peter for writing these reviews of our talks. Don't forget that where permission is given we do record the talks and post them on our website on the Members Only page so if you miss one there is a chance you might be able to play catch-up.

Details of the next three talks can be found on page 97.

We are always on the look-out for recommendations for speakers or topics that



we can include in our programme so please let us know if you have any suggestions. We also welcome suggestions of topics to include, even if you don't have any speaker recommendations, and we will then do our best to try and find someone to cover that topic.

Was Your Ancestor a Foundling?

Editor: This article has been written by a non-member, Dr. Anthony Annakin-Smith, linked to a soon-to-be released book. I would not usually publish such items but I thought it provides some useful information for those who do have ancestors linked in some way to foundlings.

Have you ever wondered if one of your eighteenth-century Shropshire ancestors might have been a foundling? Or have you ever considered that an ancestor might have been involved in some other way with the country's first Foundling Hospital? Free online records give plenty of scope for research as well as an opportunity to uncover deeply moving stories of foundlings' backgrounds.

Strictly-speaking, foundlings were abandoned children, found and looked after by a stranger. However, London's Foundling Hospital, opened in 1741, generally took in children who were deliberately handed over, often very reluctantly by parents. Many were illegitimate. Branches of the hospital were set up around the country including one in Shrewsbury and one in Chester (hospitals, by the way, were places of care, not specifically medical facilities).

I have recently written a book about the Chester branch hospital and the 306 children who went there. While writing it, I was struck by how many links there were between the Shrewsbury and Chester branches and by how much scope there was for family research in Shropshire (and, indeed, Cheshire).



Image: 'North East View of the Foundling Hospital Salop' (PR/3/489) With kind permission of Shropshire Archives

While every child taken in by the hospital was first admitted in London, many were sent to 'nurses' (i.e. foster-carers) around the country, not least in

Shropshire, for wet nursing or, when a little older, dry nursing. Your ancestor may have been one of these nurses – or one of the children. When the children were a little older – typically four to six years old – many moved on to the Shrewsbury branch hospital which took in its first children in 1759. It was built and equipped

at a cost of over £15,000 (about £2.6m today!) and is now part of Shrewsbury School. In time, almost 1,200 children were admitted there. After a few years, typically when aged around ten, hundreds were apprenticed in Shropshire or in nearby counties, usually until age 21; others were transferred to different branch hospitals including Chester. Perhaps one of the apprentice masters/mistresses was your ancestor?

How, then, do you find out about individuals? Well, the best starting point is the online Foundling Hospital Archive which is free to access. This consists of digitised and mostly transcribed images of around 100,000 pages of records from the Foundling Hospital from 1741 to 1899 and covers over 22,000 children (<https://archives.coram.org.uk/>). This is fully searchable using, say, just a surname, or a Christian name and surname; you can also narrow results down by adding, for example, 'Shrewsbury'. Maybe, instead, just enter 'Shropshire' or 'Shrewsbury' or your home town/village name and see what turns up! You can trace children and apprentice masters/mistresses this way and, with a bit more work, their Shropshire nurses (not transcribed). You will also be amazed and quickly absorbed by the fascinating stories you can glean from the pages of the various documents.

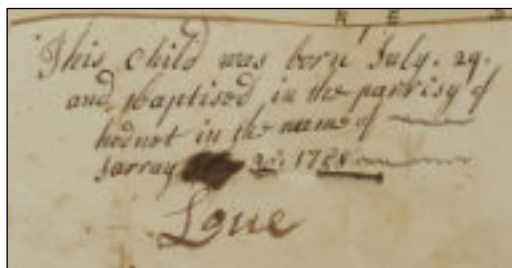


Image: A note probably written by parish officials in Hodnet, Shropshire sent to the Foundling Hospital with a girl who had been baptised 'Sarray' (Bennet/Arkinstall) in 1758. It is signed off with 'Love', probably written by the mother (London Archives: A/FH/A/09/001/106, no. 9,478). With kind permission of Coram.

Somewhat harder to track down are records of children who had been born in Shropshire and were taken

on the long journey to London for admission to the hospital. For these you will need to search the 'billets' (viewable online) – the forms completed when a child was admitted. Only a small proportion give details of place of origin for the foundling, often in very moving notes attached to the forms. Unfortunately these places of origin have not been transcribed. I have, though, been through 16,000-odd (!) and noted that there were many babies from Shropshire, often with one or more named parents or local officials. To give just one example, child number 8,601 was John, illegitimate son of Catherine Parry, baptised in Ludlow in 1758. She was a 'poor woman ... not being able to provide for the said child' but who

begged to be able to see it again one day (sadly, she didn't). In a remarkable twist, sometimes these children were eventually sent to the Shrewsbury hospital – many grieving parents would love to have known that their children were almost on the doorstep! At random, other places I made a note of include Ellesmere and Market Drayton as well as villages like Loppington and Quatford. Maybe you could set up a group to go through all the billets online?

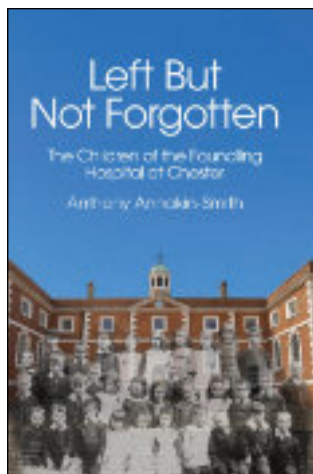
It is easier to find Shropshire names in transcribed petitions which were written from the 1760s into the 19th century. This was when people were required to submit a full written justification for their child to be considered for admission to the hospital. Again, these are often very heart-rending.

If you are really keen you could go the London Archives and view the original documents there. They hold much more than what has been digitised including, say, employee details, letters from job applicants, details of local suppliers of goods and services, and applications to be an apprentice master/mistress, with named referees. There are so many more Shropshire names to explore!

The size and importance of the Shrewsbury branch, as well as its various links to the Chester operation, mean that there are many references to it in the book – for example its successful treatment of smallpox, its large manufacturing operation and, more sadly, cases of abuse inflicted on young apprentices. There was also anger in Chester at the poor health of foundlings transferred there from the Shrewsbury branch. More generally, the book also looks at the origins of the Foundling Hospital – why it was needed and how it was established. Overall the Foundling Hospital and its Shrewsbury branch present a fascinating and moving topic to read about as well as a superb opportunity for many to learn about their ancestors.

Anthony Annakin-Smith

Editor: If you are interested in learning more, Anthony Annakin-Smith's book 'Left But Not Forgotten: the Children of the Foundling Hospital at Chester' is published by the University of Chester Press, price £19.99.



Queries from the Helpdesk

Editor: Barry Deakin has shared some more of the queries that have been brought into our Helpdesk at the Shropshire Archives.

I had a lady looking for a marriage certificate she could not find. Had used all the ones I knew but guessed not married. She had visited Poland and Denmark in her family quest. She had a leaflet to join our society.

We had a customer looking for the SLATERS in Caynham in 1900s, and also the name UNDERWOOD. The customer was the first I can remember who had travellers in the family, as I have. We did find a marriage with the occupation 'traveller' but in this case it was pointed out his father was a shop manager, so a traveller for the shop.

Another person pointed out that his finds in Ancestry in the 1600s were in different places, with the conclusion that one was entered wrongly. We were looking for a Rubin WEEKS but, in the end, found out that he was of Irish heritage so was spelt WEEKES and eventually found out spelling was Reuben.

We had a return visitor on SLATERS and UNDERWOOD, also researching the names WALL and HOLMES. We did find lots of information on censuses. He shared with me some magnificent pictures of SMITH traveller's gravestones from Hallow cemetery, in Worcestershire. However, none of them were mine, yet.

We had a lovely lady in from USA. Her relations were from Market Drayton, Wellington and Arleston. In Market Drayton the GRIFFITHS (Ernest b1902) were master bakers and apparently owned two shops there. We retraced from 1939 back to the 1871 census. There was a story that he married in Shropshire in 1927, but moved to Canada about 1928 then finally on to USA. By the 1935 census he was shown with another lady although we didn't get the chance to pursue this properly.

We had another family from the USA, this time four of them. They were looking for a Humphrey WHEELOCK (de WILLOCKE) b 1599! They were asking about gravestones, but nothing found. Always difficult to go back from their research when done so much. We did find one b 1513 and a Hugh, b 1480. Mostly from Donnington and Dorrington! They showed us a word they had which we could not pronounce in Welsh, luckily a lady heard my voice and translated "chwyl" (my apologies as only in my memory) to wheel.



We also had a person from Chester looking for Jane ROGERS d 1866 from Pontesbury, looking for a burial site, possibly St George's Church. [*Image of St George's, Pontesbury to the left.*] They were smelters and working in a lead mine according to census records.

There was a man looking for OSWALD in late 1770s: he had a Joseph married to Elizabeth STEPHAN 1822, and a brother George married to a Susan INKEN, her father John being a fruiterer in Gloucester. The gentleman reckoned there were two marriages of Joseph and Elizabeth, but we could only find one. He also had a family member living on the barges.

We then had an Allan DONE, born 1898, and I found his birth in Derby: he was married to a Gertrude PENNINGTON in 1933 and had four children in Pontefract. There was also a George WHITE married to Susannah in 1790 in Hodnet, but we could not find this. We did look in the Poor Law records for Market Drayton, but not found.

Lastly a man was telling me his connections to the CORBETT family: he needed a baptism but found it could only be at Munslow Church [*Image of St Michael's, Munslow to the right.*] He had contacted a representative of the church but did not get the answer. He also said his line was connected to the VERNON family which went back to King Alfred the Great in 848!!



Barry Deakin, 4412 barrydeakin2025@outlook.com

Editor: Thanks to Barry and all the Helpdesk volunteers who provide advice and support to those seeking to find out more about their Shropshire based ancestors



by visiting the Shropshire Archives. Now the Archives are open for two days a week, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the team could benefit from some more help to cover both days on a regular basis. If you are interested to find out more contact Gill Lewis at archives_volunteers@sfhs.org.uk

The National Register Before and After 1939

The National Register of 1939 is a topic of great interest to family historians. A talk on the subject by Ann Simcock in November 2021 was said to be one of the most popular and successful talks ever given to the Society. Recently I found more information about the National Register (NR) in a book that contains much of interest to family historians – *'The Sum of Us: A History of the UK in Data'* [by Georgina Sturge (2025) Bridge Street Press]. The author, a House of Commons statistician, reveals that the NR had a life both before and after 1939.

During the First World War the government decided that it needed more information on the population to facilitate the possible introduction of conscription and directed labour. The necessary legislation was passed in August 1915 and within two months 21.6 million people had been registered and the information card-indexed. From the start, it was clear that this register was different from the well-established national census: it was intended to be a live population database, with the potential to be constantly updated to include births, marriages, deaths and changes of address. It was a radically new concept (for Britain, anyway), emerging from the demands of total war.

Apparently the 1915 register did not have a good reputation with the public, who disliked its use to enforce conscription the following year and its lack of co-ordination with the food rationing scheme. The government were clearly keen to move on, because the records of the register were quickly destroyed at the end of the War.

In 1939 the authorities learned from those earlier missteps. A new Registration Act was passed two days after the declaration of war. Crucially, conscription had been introduced even earlier, so the government was able to frame the new register as a tool for organising rationing, directing labour and tracing people through the exigencies of war. Backed by a big propaganda campaign, the NR was completed 'with astonishing speed' on 29 September. Enumerators provided people with their ID cards (compulsory, of course) in return for

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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8330138>

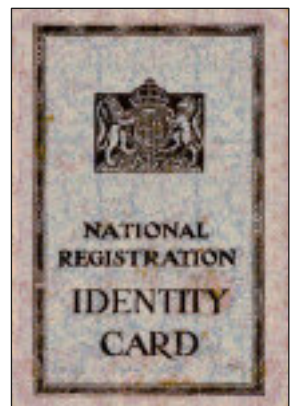




Image: National Registration Identity Card reverse - from The Genealogist website <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/1939-register/>

the completed forms. Local registration offices were set up, which kept copies of the forms and had to be told of changes of address, the latter being a massive and crucial issue in times of evacuation and intense bombing of many areas. Between 1939 and 1952, over 100 million changes of address were noted at local level, but these changes were not transferred to the NR.

The 1939 register had a better reputation than its predecessor, although it was in fact used to identify some conscription-dodgers. In the main, it was seen to

work successfully to facilitate the crucial rationing system and to keep track of a volatile population, so it was not surprising that it continued to be used and updated after 1945. In 1950, 39 government departments were still using it and so, more significantly, was the newly-formed NHS, which transferred people's registration numbers into its system. There was always a push-back, however, from those who wanted to see the end of all the paraphernalia of wartime restrictions and the Conservative government ended use of the NR in 1952. However, its use continued in many parts of the NHS, which is why the famous 'crossings-out' carried on (mainly in terms of women's married names) until 1991. Thankfully for family historians, though, the records of the 1939 NR were preserved and eventually digitised by subscription sites, which marked a step-change for family historians in Britain and beyond.

The idea of a national population database did not die there. The Blair government revived it in 2006 with the Identity Cards Act, intended to facilitate 'the most extensive population register in the world, containing not only written but biometric personal information.' Like so many ambitious projects, it ran into problems of opposition, technical issues and fears about costs and was quickly scrapped by the coalition government of 2010. As we have seen recently though, the debates about the advantages and dangers of ID cards and databases of personal information never seem to go away. The 1939 Register is one part, though clearly the most important, of an ongoing story.

One of the first records I printed off from FindMyPast is dated 06/03/2016. It is a return for a household in Albrighton in the 1939 NR; I doubt whether I had a clue about the nature of the NR at that time.

Here is a summary:

Elizabeth Emms (Robinson, Penson)	b 1912 Knitter Blind Trainer
Albert Penson	b 1875 Railway Clerk retired
Mary Brown (Penson)	b 1912

Albert Penson was my mother's widowed 'Uncle Olbert' (always pronounced like that!); the twins Elizabeth and Mary were his daughters and so the cousins of my mother Edith (1922-2017). On the original document the names in brackets were crossed out as the NR was updated to include married names. Much later, I discovered that Mary Penson married John Brown in Wellington in 1950. Elizabeth Penson married Eric Robinson in Halifax in 1951 and secondly, George Emms in West Bromwich in 1970. Elizabeth Penson was blind, but I have yet to discover the meaning of 'Knitter Blind Trainer'. My mother would have known: even shortly before her death in 2017, she remembered seeing 'Betty' Penson at Shropshire Lodge, their grandmother's home, almost a century before (see 'Shropshire Lodge: Life on the Border', March 2019 Journal). That's the 1939 Register for you, so many connections, but still so many questions – typical family history!

The National Archives has an excellent guide to the 1939 Register at nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/1939-register.

David Stokes 7734 David.Stokes7@tiscali.co.uk



Talking Family History LIVE Spring 2026



From Home Delivery to um...Home Delivery

My mother (born 1914) in Wood Green in London wrote in her life story....'My mother (My grandmother, of course!) *very rarely went shopping*'. She then went on to explain how things changed in her lifetime. She wrote:

In the 1920's Retailers were regularly seen selling their produce from their horse drawn or hand drawn carts. The greengrocer, baker and fishmonger were all eager to sell their produce directly to the house and they did well. The London Co-op came and collected the grocery order and delivered the next day. The butchers were very keen to sell their meat so Saturday night was a good time to buy meat as butchers had no refrigeration and reduced prices to clear their stock.

Sunday afternoon we listened out for the muffin man. He strode up the middle of the road carrying a large wooden tray on his head. It was his hand bell that we heard first. And then came his call "Come and buy my lovely muffins and crumpets for your tea". Then there was the 'Windmill and Balloon man'. He came around every summer with his horse and cart exchanging bottles and jars for windmills and balloons. This caused a lot of excitement amongst children.

At other times we took our jam jars and bottles out to the 'Rag and Bone Man'. He paid us one penny for a 2lb jar and half penny for a 1lb jar. He also bought clean newspapers and hey presto...we were rich enough to buy two ounces of sweets.

I reflect that when I was growing up, in the late 1940s, home deliveries were restricted to the daily milk and bread deliveries, again by horse or hand drawn cart. Of course, we also had the coalman who lugged coal to our shed on his back. However, most of the shopping was undertaken by my mother with a daily walk from our home to the local shops with her wartime ration book in hand. She queued at different shops or counters for vegetables, meat and toiletries etc.

Then came the first Self-Service shop with which, today, we are all very well accustomed. It changed shopping dramatically and almost ended delivery services.

But now I want to jump to the Covid epidemic in early 2020 when we were expected to stay at home. Shops were shut and suddenly we were plunged into ordering our food online through our computers or phones.

So, hey presto...home deliveries were back in a big way. My grandmother wouldn't have understood computers, but she would certainly have recognised the knock on the door with a delivery of food from the local shop that we still now receive every week from the Supermarket!

Reg Wilford, 5564

News from Shropshire Archives

Shropshire Archives has begun a phased return to normal opening hours. The move from Shirehall is still not quite complete and we are also moving out of the current Archives out-store. Thank you for your patience while this is completed.

Shropshire electoral registers and poll books are now searchable on the Ancestry website. The poll books date back to 1676. The electoral registers are mostly from 1918-1954 and generally annual (except for the war years). You can search for individuals but also browse through registers if you are looking at a whole community.

While Shropshire Archives rarely purchases material at auction, a recent opportunity proved too good to miss. Thanks to a generous grant from the Friends of the National Libraries, along with support from Professor Hoyle of the Victoria County History Shropshire and the Friends of Shropshire Archives, we have acquired an antiquarian collection rich in material for family historians. Among its highlights is a fascinating 1801 and 1805 list of inhabitants from the parish of Holy Cross, Shrewsbury (reference 10185). This document records householders and their occupations, along with tallies of males and females both above and below the age of 21. The first national census to list individuals by name was not conducted until 1841, but population counts, compiled by churchwardens or overseers of the poor, were made in 1801. Only a handful of working documents for the statistical count survive in Shropshire. The inclusion of the follow-up count from 1805 makes it even more intriguing and uniquely valuable for anyone tracing Shrewsbury ancestors.

Sarah Davis, Archives Team Leader

Editor: The link on Ancestry for the electoral registers and poll books is <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/63065/>. You will need a subscription to the site, or check out your local library as they may offer free access..

Bridgnorth Library Family History Vounteers

With so many meetings going online, it's nice to be able to have a face to face meeting to discuss your family history queries.

Bridgnorth Library offers such a facility every Tuesday afternoon between 2pm and 4:30pm where you can chat informally and if required, gain experience with an experienced family history volunteer on how to do your own research on the library computers.

Shropshire Libraries and Shropshire Archives provide access to two of the major family history websites namely Ancestry and FindMyPast (FMP) as well as access to the British Newspaper Archive, enabling research of extensive newspaper archives, all of which can be searched without cost, providing you have library membership, via the library branches.

Each person's family is unique and a surprising amount of publicly available information can be found by researching the records of hatches, matches and dispatches (births, marriages and deaths)!

Another approach is the One Property History which has been broadcast recently on TV. With so many properties in Bridgnorth being several hundred years old there can be a fascinating insight to be gained into how our ancestors lived.

In addition the volunteers are researching their own projects and currently these include:

- Identifying the occupiers of the High Street properties from the late 1600s to the present day.
- Transcribing the diaries of George Gitton, a local journalist and publisher during the 19th Century.
- Introducing computer-based technology to improve access to the reference section of the library.

Be warned, family history research is addictive, but pluck up your courage and come and see what you can find about your past.

Dave Tonks, 7302

Editor: Information about these 'Local and Family History drop-in' sessions can be found at <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries/find-a-library/bridgnorth-library/local-and-family-history-drop-in/>

Talks Programme: June/July 2026

Walking with Your Ancestors: Mapping Strategies for Genealogists

Dr Sophie Kay

Saturday 13 June, 10.30am

This talk is a shared session with the Family History of Cheshire. The extended talk (lasting approximately 90/100 minutes, with time allowed for a comfort break) will provide an in-depth look at three main practical mapping methods for family history: Ancestral Walks, Concentric Survey, Outlier Method, plus practical tips for working with historical maps and where to find them.

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.

Surnames, Language, and Identity in Shropshire

Harry Parkin

21 July

Our surnames can provide a great deal of information on the history of England. Some of the surnames that are particularly common to Shropshire give us an insight into the languages and features that have contributed to the county's linguistic identity. This talk will present a brief history of surnames in England, before looking in detail at the etymology and development of some of the names that are strongly associated with Shropshire. It will look at how our understanding of English regional history can be enhanced through an awareness of the country's surnames, while also showing how a linguistic understanding of our own surnames has the potential to improve our knowledge of family history.

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

10126	Dave	Whiting	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10127	Erica	Stephenson	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10128	Philip	Woosnam	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10129	Gill	King	Dawlish, Shropshire
10130	Simon	Lewis	Penyffordd, Flintshire
10131	Alison	Williams	Hull, UK
10132	Margaret	Thurston	Stockport, Cheshire
10133	Kevin	Hunt	Manchester, UK
10134	John	Webb	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10135	Lynn	Perry	Minehead, Somerset
10136	David	Davies	Rhyl, Denbighshire
10137	Sally	Nissen	Lichfield, Staffordshire
10138	Susan	Higgins	Maidstone, Kent
10139	Nigel	Sustins	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10140	James	Way	Newbridge, Gwent
10141	Janet	Trow	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10142	Roger	Price	Shrewsbury, Shropshire
10143	Jane	Johnson	York, Yorkshire
10144	Ceri	Fairclough	Gundelfingen, Germany
10145	Christine	Wheeler	Chippenham, Wiltshire
10146	Linda	Stevens	Telford, Shropshire
10147	Robert	Henworth	Solihull, West Midlands
10148	Graham	Williams	Stafford, Staffordshire
10149	John	Langley	Surrey, Canada
10150	Kenneth	Roberts	Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
10151	Brigitte	Longmore	Castlemaine, Australia
10152	Patricia	Matthews	Knighton, Shropshire
10153	Garry	Cope	Bolton, Greater Manchester
10154	Margaret	Cope	Bolton, Greater Manchester
10155	Rebecca	Ward	Bakewell, Derbyshire

Obituary - Susan Bentley

Susan Bentley, a member of SFHS and an indefatigable genealogist, died in March this year. Unfortunately, my knowledge of her early life is sketchy, but she was born and brought up in Shropshire, perhaps in the Wellington area. She became a member of my family in 1993, when she married my maternal cousin Roy Bentley, whose father Albert (my Uncle Bert) ran the Worfruna Garage, a familiar landmark on the A454 Bridgnorth to Wolverhampton road near Worfield. Roy and Sue went on to run their own garage in Swanage, Dorset, before retiring to the village of Crossways near Dorchester.

When my mother's final illness brought relatives together in 2015, I got to know Sue and quickly appreciated her passion for family history. Her handwritten family trees and research documents used to reach me in bulky envelopes before we started to use email. Her main interest was in the Bentley and Lewis families, the ancestors of Roy and my mother Edith, but she was always willing to tackle brick walls on my father's side. She was extremely generous in sharing her research and I must acknowledge that her work has made a big contribution to the eight articles that I have written for the journal since 2019. Most recently it was Sue's research that broke through the brick wall that had concealed the turbulent life of my 2x great-aunt Jemima Jones ('Temmer': a Sad Tale from Shrewsbury, March 2025).

Apart from family history, Sue and Roy loved their annual cruises: even in her final months, she managed a final trip around the Caribbean and the Azores. The work that she inspired goes on, as she would have wished. I still hope to trace the lives of the Bentleys who moved from rural Shropshire to Wolverhampton from the 1830s, as well as the descendants of a Bentley who emigrated to Australia in 1840. Then there are the branches of the Lewis family who moved to the Yorkshire textile towns. As the work continues, I am fortunate to have the research of such a generous family historian to guide me.

David Stokes 7734 david.stokes7@tiscali.co.uk

From the Editor

Thanks to our contributors I have found myself having to juggle the articles to get them all to fit! This is a good position for an editor to find themselves in, rather than having to scramble round for items to fill the pages. I also have a few in reserve a future edition but nowhere near enough to fill another Journal. so please continue to send in your articles, and don't forget that, if you have them, supporting images really do add something to your contributions.

It is great to read about the research that our members undertake, and when it extends way back into the 1500s it gives me some hope that, with more digging, I might be able to trace my ancestral heritage back that bit further. Perhaps you have examples of extending your research way back that you could share.

Helping others with their research can be very rewarding, with items in this edition highlighting the work of our Helpdesk volunteers and others who offer a family history drop-in session at Bridgnorth Library.

This edition also spotlights a number of activities our Society offers to its members - Talking Family History and DNA SIG online sessions, our monthly talks, live events, and the Hub, our latest venture which we hope will encourage more of you to get involved in sharing your knowledge and research with others.

We have recently adopted a new software package to 'create' the Journal. It is similar to, but different from the previous package, and as ever with such changes it is taking a bit of time to remember how things work. Thank goodness for the various tutorials on the Internet which have been able to point me in the right direction when I haven't been able to get it to do what I want it to do. Please accept that with this new software the Journal might look slightly different, and excuse the odd error or two as I adjust to the new way of doing things.

A member recently said to me '*so that is what you look like!*' so, in case anyone else is wondering, I've added a photo!

Karen Hunter, Editor, editor@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 from digital cameras and 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.

Our ancestors' feet no longer
leave prints in the earth,
but their stories are still
here for us to find.

—
UNKNOWN

Copy Dates

Publication Date	Items to be submitted by
September 2026	1 July 2026
December 2026	1 October 2026
March 2027	1 January 2027
June 2027	1 April 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		speakers@sfhs.org.uk

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	xchangepcerts@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	hublead@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: *Summer '76* - embroidery by Catherine Hill Image: ©Chromatech
See article on pages 73-75 for more information

IN MY OWN SCHOOL HOLIDAY WERE BRUANT. DAYS WERE LONG. NO RAIN JUST
 SUNSHINE. WE WERE OUTSIDE ALL THE TIME DRESSED IN A T-SHIRT, SHORTS AND
 PLASTIC BEACH SANDALS. NO SUN CREAM OR HAT. MUM GAVE US A BUNNY EACH FOR OUR
 DINNER AND SOMETHING TO SUP - A WASHED OUT PLASTIC BOTTLE FILLED TO THE BRIM
 WITH COMPANION POP. OFT WE MOVED TO TROUT BROOK, THE WRECK OR THE
 TOP OF THE VILLAGE. UP THERE SAT ON THE EDGE OF THE MOORS WERE A RESUMEER
 WITH A COBBLED ROAD THAT SEEM TO DISAPPEAR INTO IT. WE DIDNT OWN BUT WHEN
 IT WORE BUILT IN THE 1930S SHE'D WALKED UP A VILLAGE AND FLOODED IT. THAT
 SUMMER AS THE WATER DIED UP MORE OF THE COBBLED ROAD APPEARED ALONG
 WITH MARGARITS AND FLAGGED PAVEMENTS. WE DARED EACH OTHER TO WALK AS FAR
 AS WE COULD ALONG IT AND HAD TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE PHYSIOLS OF WARS
 FROM THE WATER BOARD. IF WE WERE SPOTTED THE CHAMP TELL US OUT. ONE DAY THE
 WATER WERE SO LOW I WALKED FROM ONE END OF THE SHORE TO THE OTHER. THE
 ROAD'D SPLIT THE WATER IN TWO AND EITHER SIDE WERE CRACKED EARTH AND THE
 FOOTINGS OF BUILDINGS DROPPED YEARS AGO. WE PRODDED IN THE BEDDON TO KEEP
 COOL AND ONLY WENT HOME WHEN OUR BELLYS TOLD US TO. ALL THE WAY BACK THE
 WERE A SHINING RING HAD ABOVE THE ROAD. THYMAC WERE SHINY AND FEELING
 STICKY UNDERFOOT. MUM MADE US LEAVE OUR SANDALS AT THE DOOR FOR FEAR OF
 PUTTING BLACK STUFF ALL OVER THE CARPET. IN WEATHER LIKE THIS MUM MADE THE
 SAME FOR EVERY DAY - FLAT LETTUCE, EGG, TOMATO, CUCUMBER AND COLD SPADS...
 SERVED WITH MEAT, HOMEMADE PIE OR QUICHE AND A BIG PLATE OF BREAD AND
 BUTTER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE KITCHEN TABLE. AFTER SHE MUM'D GIVE US POTS AND
 BUCKETS AND SEND US OUT FOR WATER. WE WERE LUCKY WE ONLY HAD TO GO OVER
 THE ROAD FOR A SANDWICH. AFTER A FEW DAYS EVERY TIN AND BUCKET WERE FILLED
 AND LINED UP IN THE KITCHEN. ONCE A WEEK WE'D HAVE A BATH... FOUR INCHES OF
 WATER COVERING THE BOTTOM... CALLED IT HAVING A SPLASH. ALL SIX OF US KIDS
 TOOK TURNS IN IT. WE SAVED EVERY BIT OF BATH AND DISHWATER FOR THE GARDEN.
 THAT YEAR WE HAD A BUMPER CROP OF TOMATOES... ATE THEM ALL SUMMER LONG...



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