



Shropshire Family History Society



Journal 47 - Part 3

September 2026

PATRON

Mrs Anna Turner JP
His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Mrs Ann Kirby Mr Michael J Hulme Dr David R Burton

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TRUSTEES

Officers

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

Committee members

Dawn Blundell	Trustee	hubalub1@sfhs.org.uk
Simon Davies	Trustee/Lead for Hub	hublead@sfhs.org.uk
Loraine Hunt	Trustee	
Steve Jones	Trustee/Webmaster	webmaster@sfhs.org.uk
Graham Shenton	Trustee	
Jane Wilcox	Trustee	dnasig@sfhs.org.uk
Paul Quartermaine	Co-opted member	speakers@sfhs.org.uk

There are two vacancies on the Executive Committee

General Postal Enquiries:

For any general enquiries by post please send them to:

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

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

Telephone contact: Dave Morris, 07980 870007

Front cover: Albrighton War Memorial [Erected in 1920 as a WW1 memorial, with the names of nearly 30 local men listed, and then a further 8 names added after WW2. The memorial was Grade II listed in 2008.] ©Michael Hunter, 2026

The Journal of the Shropshire Family History Society

Registered Charity No. 514014 Founded 1979
Member of the Family History Federation



ISSN 2050 053X

Volume 47 - Part 3

September 2026

Contents

Thoughts from the Chair	108
Talking Family History LIVE - Autumn 2026	110
The Duncalfes, the Pickens and Chappel House Farm	112
A trip down memory lane!	115
From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On	116
Thomas Jackson's Snuff Box	118
Ancestors in numbers!	119
Read all about it! - using newspapers to bring ancestors to life	120
The great Rowton event of 1876...and 2026!	123
Research into the Memories of War	128
From a Postage Stamp to a Mobile Phone	131
Queries from the Helpdesk	132
Brewers and Bakers	134
'Read all about it'	136
Surnames, Language and Identity in Shropshire	146
Talks Programme September 2026 - January 2027	149
New Members	150
Shropshire Family History Society Annual General Meeting	151
From the Editor	152
Notes for Contributors	153
Ordnance Survey Maps on offer	154

Thoughts from the Chair

Remembering the Fallen

For Remembrance this year I am working with our local First School on a project to research some of the former pupils of the school who died in the First World War. I made the offer having seen the memorial board in main corridor and thinking it would make a good project for some of the pupils. The staff have welcomed the idea and the aim is for the Year 5 pupils to lead an assembly for the school, using the information they can gather together. There are a few Commonwealth War graves in our local churchyard; some are remembered on other family gravestones; some have local roads named after them; and they are all named on the village War Memorial so there are plenty of tangible points of reference, as well as baptism registers, census returns and the details of each serviceman included on the CWGC website so there will be plenty to help the children tell their stories. Unfortunately the school records of the time are not available at the local archives but I think there will be enough to keep them busy in their research and hopefully the project will give their act of remembrance a more 'personal' element.



Our Shropshire Family History Hub has a section on War Memorials across the county, and this is a project we are looking to expand and enhance in the coming months. Some villages have undertaken some significant research into those from the local area who made the ultimate sacrifice. Examples include: All Stretton (<https://allstrettonhistory.org.uk/historical-research/world-war-one/>); Church Stretton (<https://cswwone2.wixsite.com/soldiers>) and Loppington (<http://loppingtonhistory.co.uk/>) but I am sure there are more. We are also exploring how we might be able to link into the Roll of Honour which was created at the time of the centenary of the start of the First World War but which is not currently accessible through their website and we will keep you updated as and when we have more news on this.

Our Talks Programme

I am pleased to say that Paul Quartermaine has stepped forward to take on the role of Programme Secretary. He has been working hard over the last couple of months to bring together the programme for the whole of the 2026-27 season of talks. There are an interesting range of topics included and the first five are detailed later in the Journal and are also listed on the website. We will add the others in the coming months. As ever, if you have a suggestion for a future topic or can recommend a good speaker please let Paul know as he is already looking at the 2027-28 season and would welcome your ideas!! Thanks Paul.

Also, don't forget that we have an archive of talks available on the website (subject to permission given by the speaker), dating back to the autumn of 2020 when we started using Zoom.

A House Through Time

Have you been watching the latest series of *A House Through Time* on the BBC, presented by David Olusoga? Focusing on an eighteenth century house in Edinburgh it explores a world of history and secret lives within the walls of one house. It is definitely on my 'to watch' list.

At Snowhill Manor in Gloucestershire, where I volunteer, the last owner of the house, before the National Trust, undertook research of the history of the property and created heraldic shields for each owner which are now displayed as a timeline around one of the rooms. Your research might not lead to something quite so elaborate and may not include King Henry VIII as one of the 'owners' but I have no doubt will reveal some interesting details.

A chance encounter last week when we visited Shrewsbury Abbey has resulted in one of the volunteers sharing their house history research of a property in Whitehall Terrace, Shrewsbury which we will look to include on the Hub.

Perhaps you have researched the history of your own property or that of one of your ancestors. Reg and Ruth Wilford have, and you can find a recording of the talk they gave about it, *A History of Wrekin Villa*, on the website. If you are thinking about a similar research project or are already working on a 'one-place study' don't forget '*All About That Place 2026*', the free virtual event organised by the Society of Genealogists, taking place between 7–16 October.

Karen Hunter, Chair chair@sfhs.org.uk

Talking Family History LIVE - Autumn 2026



Shropshire
Family History
Society

Talking Family History *LIVE*



*Inspiring talks
for anyone interested
in family history*



**SATURDAY
3 OCTOBER 2026**



11.00am – 3.30pm
(Arrival & refreshments from 10.30am)



Chapel Community Centre
Cross Houses
Shrewsbury SY5 6JG

FREE
entry for
members &
non-members



ENJOY
engaging
talks



BRING
your own
picnic



MEET
like-minded
people

TALKS INCLUDE:



'The History of Medicine'

Including the challenges
faced by our ancestors
Dr Mike Jenkins



"Don't you know there's a war on?"

Shropshire in the
Second World War
Dorothy Nicolle



'Could be worse'

Who was in the Church
Stretton Union Workhouse
on the evening of the
census of 3 April 1881?
Church Stretton
Local History Group

Plus an update on SFHS
Karen Hunter, Chair SFHS



Everyone welcome!

Whether you're a seasoned researcher
or just getting started, come along,
learn something new and be inspired.



Please bring a mug to help
us reduce
the washing up



Research.
Learn.
Share.
Connect.

Join us!
sfhs.org.uk



Scan to visit
our website

The programme for the day includes three really interesting talks and below is some more information on each of these and the speakers.

Dr Mike Jenkins - The History of Medicine

Exploring the origins and evolution of medicine and the health challenges experienced by our ancestors as well as the innovations that have supported and led to modern medicine.

Dr Mike Jenkins- a hospital doctor and G.P. of 40 years who is now a keen amateur historian.

Dorothy Nicolle – “Don’t you know there’s a war on? – Shropshire in the Second World War”.

Although miles from any front line the war came to Shropshire too. The talk includes evacuees, the way the whole county served as a storage depot for anything from food to ammunition etc, the work force (who were largely women), hospitals, rationing and the lead up to D Day

Dorothy Nicolle has been a Blue Badge Guide for over 20 years and shares her love of history and Shropshire with guided tours and talks. Some years ago she was asked to write a book on Shropshire for the Francis Frith Book Company and has now written over 30 books altogether - all of them dealing with local and general history subjects.

Church Stretton Local History Group – ‘Could be worse’

In 2021, members of the Group researched the inmates, vagrants and three staff members who were in the Church Stretton Union Workhouse on the evening of the census of 3 April 1881. They traced their lives, the reasons they were in there and the life they led once inside creating a biography for each person. This talk includes some of the stories they uncovered.

The Church Stretton History Group holds regular talks and also undertake research which can be as part of a group project such as the 1881 census or member’s own research. They welcome new research articles from both members and non-members willing to share their work

We look forward to seeing you if you can join us and do invite others who might be interested. It is free to attend - just bring your own picnic and a mug.

Jane Wilcox 7853, Dawn Blundell 4669, and Pauline Maguire 7517

The Duncalfes, the Pickens and Chappel House Farm

Whenever I go to the garden centre in Albrighton I always look out for the sign for 'Chappel House Farm'. It's just past it on the opposite side of the road.

My great grandmother's family (DUNCALFE) lived there from about 1850, when it was a big farm. I always wondered how they came to be there, so I did some research and found how the Duncalfes were connected to the Pickens, who were the original owners of the farm.



Chappel House Farm was built following the Enclosure Acts in about 1780. It was named after the Rev John Chappel-Woodhouse, vicar at St. Cuthbert's, Donington from 1772 to 1834. It is mentioned in the parish records in 1792.

My 4x great grandfather Richard DUNCALFE of Tong died in 1789 and his wife Sarah very shortly afterwards. In Richard's will, his friend John Picken, of Chappel House Farm, Donington, was named as executor. At the time of their death, their son John DUNCALFE was only about 14 years old (b 1775). It is reasonable to suppose that John Picken played some part in the young boy's upbringing.

In 1792 John PICKEN died, and Chappel House Farm passed to his son William. In 1796 John Duncalfe married William's sister Ann Picken and they went to live in Honington Grange, Lilleshall. John leased a farm from the Duke of Sutherland. John and Ann's son John (b 1799) helped William Picken at Chappel House Farm. They are both there on 1841 Census with William's elderly housekeeper.

William Picken's brother George also had a farm at Tettenhall, near Wolverhampton and in 1841 another of John and Ann Duncalfe's sons - Henry, was with him there. When George Picken died in 1844, Henry Duncalfe remained at the farm, firstly helping George's widow, then he remained there with his own family until his death in 1886.

When William Picken died in 1849, he left a huge estate. As well as Chappel House Farm, he owned a farm in Pattingham and several houses in Albrighton. In addition, he was very wealthy, having money and many investments. Apart from money left in trust for some other nieces and nephews and his old housekeeper,

all his estate was left to his nephews, the sons of John Duncalfe and wife Ann (Picken) – namely Richard, George Humphrey and Thomas. John, who had helped him on the farm had died in 1846, just months after his father's death.

Richard would not have wanted to take on the farm at Chappel House as he had inherited the lease of his father's farm at Honington Grange. Henry was already farming at Tettenhall. George Humphrey Duncalfe was a successful surgeon with a practice in Newport and Thomas was a veterinary surgeon, chemist and druggist also in Newport. (He later emigrated to America and died in Pennsylvania in 1863.)

Their younger brother – my great, great grandfather William Duncalfe (b 1810) was learning to be a farmer. He married Ellen (Eleanor) Hammond (image to the right) in Llangedwyn in 1837. In the 1841 Census he was working on a farm in Llanfair Waterdine, whilst Ellen was living with her mother and sisters at Llangedwyn Hall, Denbighshire. Their first three children were born in Wales. Two children were then born in Sutton Coldfield where William was working as a Bailiff. By the time their son Harry was born in 1848 the family were living in Donington. They may have already been living at Chappel House Farm, as William Picken had moved to his smaller farm in Pattingham prior to his death.



By the 1851 Census the family were definitely resident at Chappel House Farm, together with several farm workers and house servants. William Duncalfe (image



to the left) is mentioned in several gazetteers as being farmer and bailiff resident there. The inventory of his estate following his death in 1870 shows that the farm was very large and successful. He had about 235 acres of land, some arable land with various crops, large herds of livestock including many horses, and a brew house, and good quality furniture and possessions. He left an estate valued at £2000 to his wife Ellen.

By 1881 Chappel House Farm had been sold (to a William Dimelow) and Ellen had gone to live with

her son Harry and his family at their farm in Beckbury. Her unmarried son George Cheveley, a coal merchant, who had been living at Chappel House with her, was lodging in Albrighton. When Ellen died in 1888, she only left an estate of £50.

William and Ellen Duncalfe had eight children, Ann, John, William Picken, George Cheveley, Ellen, Harry, Betsy and Isabelle Harriet (my great grandmother).

Ann married Richard Meanley, a farmer, and lived in Norton Canes, Cannock.

John was a horse breaker by trade. He married Elizabeth Hollis. In 1861, however, he was the publican of the Bush Inn at Tong. This had changed by the next census. They remained local to Donington, living at Boningale, Codsall and Albrighton, where he died in 1888.

William Picken was a chemist and druggist. He married Caroline Moth and lived in Gnosall. The family emigrated to Canada in 1887. He had a chemist's shop in Manitoba.

George Cheveley, as stated earlier, was a coal merchant in Albrighton. He never married. He filed for bankruptcy in December 1870, but this was annulled six months later as his creditors were paid off, perhaps by his mother after inheriting his father's money!

Ellen married John Callow Morris, a grocer who had a shop in Kinver. By the 1901 census they had retired from the grocery trade, and he was now a farmer living at Ryton Farm, Ryton near Shifnal. (His father had been a farmer.)

Harry was a farmer and bailiff like his father. He married Elizabeth Fox. They lived at the Farm House in Beckbury. After his mother died in 1888 the family emigrated to Manitoba Canada.

Betsy married Frederick Holloway, a bank clerk and they lived in Balsall Heath.

Isabelle Harriet was my great grandmother. She married Richard Bailey, an Inland Revenue/Excise Officer from Mountmellick, Southern Ireland. They went to live in Edinburgh, 16 Caledonian Place. My grandfather William Bailey was born here in 1884. Richard Bailey committed suicide in 1885. I can't trace the family on the 1891 Census, but by 1901 Isabelle and son William were living in Wellington. William went on to marry Ethel Poole, my grandmother, and, as they say, the rest is history!

Gill Lewis 7635

A trip down memory lane!

When Michael and I travelled up for the TFH LIVE event in May we took a detour into Albrighton, and, for me, a trip down memory lane. In the late 1950s until about 1964 my great-grandparents, Herbert and Lucy Fothergill, were living at 27 Lyncroft, which I could remember visiting as a little girl. It was a small bungalow with a small 'range' in the front room where food could be cooked and the kettle boiled; a dresser in the room with handles on that I could 'rattle'; and in the bedroom immediately off the main room was a tall cupboard on which was kept the glass syringes and other 'paraphernalia' for my great-grandfather's insulin injections, which were administered by the District Nurse. Bear in mind that I was no more than six years old when we were visiting but I had already made up my mind that I was going to be a nurse when I grew up, so I would watch very closely while these injections were being given, such that at one time the nurse suggested I could almost give one myself!

So we went to see, and on arriving there were two gentlemen talking in the garden so I approached to explain why I was staring at the bungalow. The resident of No. 27 very kindly invited us in to have a look. As you might expect it had been changed significantly, with a smart kitchen and internal bathroom created at the back, but the main room and bedroom at the front of the house were essentially unchanged, although the old 'range' had been removed and the space boarded up. Yet, standing in these rooms I could still sense the presence of my great-grandparents and picture the rooms exactly as they had been more than 60 years before! I had not expected quite such a visceral feeling of the connection with the past, but it was wonderful.



And, with the owner's permission, we got a photograph of me in the front garden, which can sit alongside the one I have with my great-grandmother (on the left) standing in the doorway back in the early 1960s. It looked so different, yet just the same!



From the Society's Journal - 40 Years On

The Editor, Vera Raxster, opened the September 1986 Journal with a word of thanks for the support given to her during her first year in office and suggested that she would like to try a 'Members Query Page', limited to 30 words to enable members to share their Family History questions.

The AGM of the SFHS was planned to be held at the Shrewsbury Gateway. Members were encouraged to bring along their family trees and photographs to share with other members.

Mr. Tremlett from Wellington told a story of how a letter from a cousin in Canada and a casual conversation on holiday in France led him to discover that his surname dated back to the Normans and a Coat of Arms.

The Society of Genealogists, working in consultation with the Family History Federation, were conducting a survey designed to identify computer equipment and software currently being used by family historians. In particular this meant *'liaising with the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints and the mass of privately held computerised family history data'*. It would seem that the race to centralise the sharing (*and control? -my question*) of family history material had begun.

Mrs. J. Hughes was wanting to remember the tragic loss of 28 workers (all named) at the Coalport Porcelain Works in 1799 when their ferry capsized.

A 19th century story reported that *'When Alderman Cross, the newly elected Mayor, took his seat at the Borough Police Court, Margaret Lawless, charged with being drunk and riotous was told by a smiling Mayor that she was free to go, as it was a rule that he should release the first case of drunkenness brought before him'*.

A useful article explained the value and importance of Church Courts and how they dealt with many the aspects of 15-19th century life. It was reported that the records *'currently exist in the form of the 'Court Act Books'*.

Member 130, Joyce Simpson reported that *'we had been recording M.I.s in a large city cemetery, no longer in use and rather overgrown with grass to your knees, so we were well equipped with shovels and knives, and were all stood in a*

group having a well earned cup of tea when the Police arrived. Someone had reported we were having a black mass in the graveyard!!'

An extract from the 'Family Historian Enquire Within' by F.C. Markwell informed readers that there were 40 living descendants of Henry VIII. The USA group called 'Descendants of the Illegitimate sons and daughters of Henry VIII' claimed there were 250 descendants in USA .

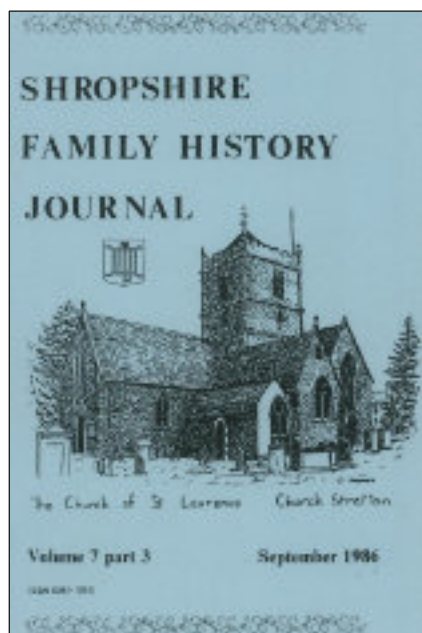
Four pages were taken up with the books kept in the SFHS library. *Do we still have them?*

The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies was offering four residential courses designed to help people with their family history and/or heraldry.

Mrs. P. Woodward provided a whole page of unfortunate deaths extracted from High Ercall records from 1591 to 1714. They included a Raph Lawnes by misfortune of water at Acoll Mill, John Pritchard killed making a barn, Edward Phillips who lived in the church yard, Anne Besford who killed herself with a knife, Thomas Floyd, Welchman who hung himself, and Marie Williams who drowned by mishap. There was also Thomas Goughs, one of six men of the Parish above a hundred years old.

Reg Wilford 5564

Editor: Yes Reg, we do still have a library of books, stored at Cross Houses, and the catalogue can be viewed on the Members Only section of the website. Access to the Library is not easy as we no longer meet every month but they can be accessed/ borrowed at our Talking Family History LIVE events, with the next one taking place on 3 October this year (see page 113 for details). If you do want to borrow something at the next event please contact Graham Moore in advance at library@sfhs.org.uk with the details.



Thomas Jackson's Snuff Box

Thomas Jackson is my three times great grandfather. I have traced his life through the usual documents and built up a picture of him along the way.

He was born in Maer, Staffordshire, just over the north Shropshire border. He was the eldest of five children that I know of, and his parents were John Jackson and Elizabeth nee Cotton. He was born in 1824 and baptised on the 24th March that same year in Maer. In 1841 he is living and working in Mucklestone, Staffordshire and it is here he meets his future wife.

Thomas and Caroline Craddock were married in Newcastle Under Lyme in December 1841, and they settle down to married life in his wife home town of Market Drayton. On the 1851 census they are recorded living in The Tanyards, Market Drayton. They have a family of seven – 4 girls and 3 boys. Although their first child Mary Ann is born in Maer the others are all born in Market Drayton from 1849 onwards. Sadly, they lose their first son Frederick James as a baby in 1855.

Thomas and Caroline live their whole married life in Market Drayton. They are recorded here on every census from 1851 through to 1881. Caroline died in 1884 at the age of 66 and at the time of her death they were living in New Road, Market Drayton.

When the 1891 census was taken, I found that Thomas had left Market Drayton and had gone to live with his youngest child in Stoke on Trent. John Jackson is living here with his wife Elizabeth. Thomas is shown on the 1891 census as part of the family and his occupation is Agricultural Labourer, something he has done all his working life, just the odd variation in his job description from Labourer, General Labourer to Agricultural Labourer.

After this Thomas disappears. I have not found him on the 1901 census and as yet I have not found his death, although I think he stayed with his son in Stoke on Trent.

From all this Thomas comes across as a hardworking family man, the husband of Caroline and father to seven children. However, I was recently given a real and tangible article from his life – a brass snuff box. This has come down to me through his wife's side of the family, and it is lovely to have. And it's clearly his as someone, possibly Thomas himself, has engraved his name and his home town

across the front of the box - T. Jackson Market Drayton. There are actually two of these boxes, but the other one is plain. This little box is lovely to have, and after all the paper documents that we use to build up the story of an ancestor's life, to have



something that they used, carried in their coat pocket and took enough care to engrave their name on it, helps to add to their story and bring to it that little bit of extra detail.

If anyone reading this knows where Thomas Jackson died or anything else about him, please get in touch, it would be great to finish his story.

Clare Brown 7718 clarebrownfamilyhistory@gmail.com

Ancestors in Numbers!

I'm sure many of you will be familiar with the numbers of direct line ancestors we all have, each of whom will have had some impact on our own lives!

2 parents - 4 grandparents - 8 great-grandparents - 16 great great grandparents -

32 great-great great grandparents - 64 great great great great grandparents - etc!

But I wonder how many of them you have identified **and** have robust evidence to demonstrate/prove the links?

I have confidence in three of my four grandparents (I know the parents of one but not which child it is!!), and all of my great and great great grandparents but then it gets a little more uncertain. However I will keep searching, time permitting, to see if I can resolve those uncertainties, or if, like many family historians, some of my past remains unclear. DNA testing can help, it certainly has in my case, but even then it can leave us with some unanswered questions.

Karen Hunter 7646

Read all about it! - using newspapers to bring ancestors to life

Review of talk by Dave Annal on 16 June 2026

There has been a huge increase over the past few decades to researching ancestors, but records alone don't put '*meat on the bone*' and we rarely discover anything about their characters. But newspapers, especially local ones, can give important details.

The speaker initially summarised the history of newspapers. They first appeared in the 17th century, but they were very much centred on London news, with very little local news. The first was the Norwich Post in 1701, followed by the Edinburgh Courant in 1705. Examples showed they copied the London news with very little local news.



Image: Title page of the Norfolk or Norwich Chronicle, 1776, British Newspaper Archive

In 1712, a stamp duty of 1 penny per sheet (1 halfpenny for a ½ sheet) was imposed, which made printing costs rise, and is blamed for a decline in local newspapers. Without it we could have had excellent 18th century newspaper records! The speaker showed several examples of front pages where the taxation stamp could be seen (not always clearly!). By the mid-18th century, there were >7million newspaper units being purchased in Britain. There was a campaign to have the stamp duty revoked, and in 1836 it was reduced and finally abolished in 1855 under the Newspaper Act. Without the tax, local papers started to print local news. The earliest local newspapers had four pages, but that was soon increased to eight and even small towns could support many titles. The speaker mentioned several including Macclesfield (Cheshire) which had seven or eight simultaneously.

What do newspapers contain? The speaker quoted the (now infamous) line from the defunct News of the World that “all the world is there”. Newspapers started to report on a whole host of diverse local matters: criminal trials, coroners’ reports, workplace accidents, lives lost at sea, school prizes to name a few. Personal names sold newspapers, so reports on those winning prizes at agricultural shows, or cricket matches, school prizes etc, were usually reported. Most genealogists will be familiar with the births, marriages and deaths (BMDs) columns which often contain family details, while obituaries of local politicians or local workers, and reports of their funerals often contain familial details. In the 20th century, there were more reports of local weddings, often with pictures.

What of the layout of newspapers? Victorian editions almost always filled the front page with adverts for almost everything, and few would be complete without medical remedies of some (?all) kinds. The speaker showed how the text was very dense, and tedious on the eyes. Eight-page editions had more room but still had few illustrations. The Illustrated London News, started in 1842, was one of the first to have regular woodcut illustrations.

The best site for accessing newspapers is probably the British Library’s British Newspaper Archive (BNA), which to date has about 100 million pages on-line!! (BNA is a subscription site although they have a large number of pages free to view.) The Findmypast (FMP) website shares the archive but has a different type of search engine. Anyone who has searched the BNA archive will be familiar with the ‘gobbldegook’ precis of found articles. The speaker showed an example, then showed where on the page each section had been plucked from, and how scattered they are across the page. The FMP website uses a different scanning method to reduce this.

**.. §.C O T LIA“N®D: rvom the Edinburgh Courant, Déc. 25. ~ . To the
Piblifir. ' The followirig Linesbeing calculate wit] i View to' ferve the
Publicy your givin| }g P s L YT ey TI a 2 }fflrmrflpflé'giqfi'wchm'r&fi swill
obligg flgm“ 1 e NERLRL D 4 4:- clttvrir ...**

Edinburgh Courant Friday 11th January 1754

Above is an example of the ‘gobbldegook’ generated when searching for reports in the British Newspaper Archive (* see note at end).

A growing number of search sites are free to use. The best for the UK is The British Newspaper Archive which also has some Irish titles. Records covering Wales are almost all free to use on-line thanks to the National Library of Wales (<https://newspapers.library.wales/>). For Irish ancestors, Irish Newspaper

Archives <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/>) is good, and for US and Canadian relatives, Newspapers.com is recommended. For Australian records, Trove is excellent and is free to use. But don't forget your local library as they are likely to have full copies of local newspapers.

He pointed out that all websites rely on Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to digitise archives, and this has advantages and disadvantages. Without it the available archive would be much smaller, but older text is often not very clear. Be aware of the use of extended 'f's for the letter 's' in older text.

To search we can either focus on a particular event, or use a 'scattergun' approach, putting in a name and seeing what is revealed. He also suggested being flexible with names, e.g. John may appear as John, Jon, Jno etc.

For the second part of the talk, the speaker used an illustrated example of James Dobson GRAVESON, born in 1839 in Westmorland, one of his wife's ancestors, and showed by many newspaper cuttings just how much detail of his life can be gleaned.

Following an enjoyable talk, there were a few comments but no direct questions.

Reviewer's note: I wanted to add an example of the 'gobbledegook' generated when searching the BNA for articles which I have seen many times and managed to quickly save the one above. Before this review was written, I had to renew my subscription, and when I made cursory checks, I couldn't find any. Does this mean that BNA has updated its equipment?

Peter Tandy 7709

Editor: From reviewing this site it does appear that some of the 'gobbledegook' has been replaced, both on the British Newspaper Archive (BNA) and FMP.

I wonder if any of our members have tried out the updated BNA website? I have heard mixed reviews of it so far and it would be interested to hear what your thoughts might be or if you have any helpful tips for others when using it.

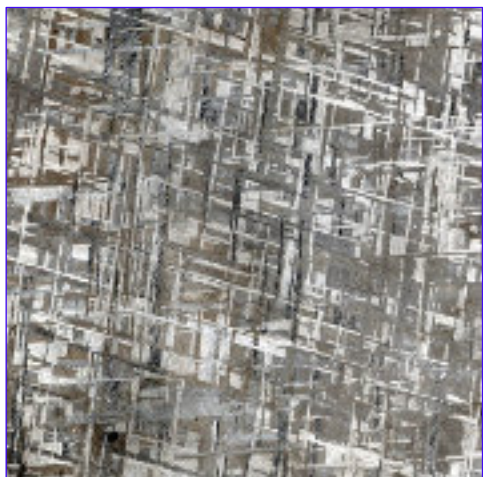
I have to admit that, as I have a subscription to Findmypast I tend to use that to access Newspapers rather than take out a further subscription to the BNA. However the BNA does also have a number of 'free to access' pages so it is always worth a look.

Also, don't forget that a number of local councils in England (sorry but not sure about other parts of Britain) do provide free access to the BNA via their Libraries so it is always checking that out.

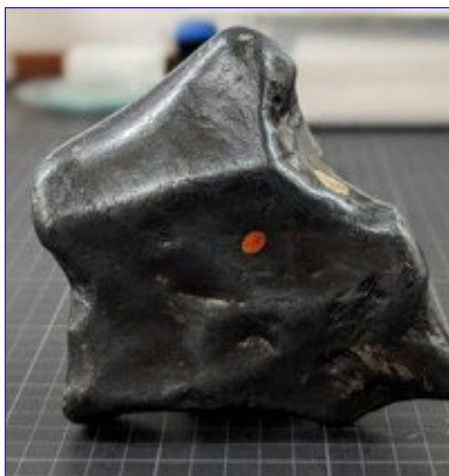
The great Rowton event of 1876...and 2026!

Part 1 - 1876

Rowton is a tiny Shropshire village about 10 miles NW of Wellington, Telford. At around 3.40pm on 20 April 1876, workers in the fields witnessed a unique event. This was the fall of the only known iron meteorite in England. The iron, about the size of a large grapefruit and weighing about 7¾ pounds is said to have buried itself to a depth of c. 15" in the soil. On alerting the tenant farmer, who probed the hole with his stick until it would go no further, it was dug out. The meteorite would pass through a number of hands fairly rapidly, until it was sent to the Keeper of Minerals at the British Museum, London, where a section of it was cut off and the surface polished. This showed a criss-cross pattern (known as the Widmanstaetten pattern) characteristic of iron meteorites.



A typical Widmanstaetten pattern in an iron Meteorite (Wikipedia under CC licence)



The Rowton meteorite (author's photo)

At the time of the fall, meteorites (or aerolites as they were then called) were barely understood. Theories of their origin varied from material ejected from volcanic eruptions, to volcanic dust in the atmosphere, coalesced by lightning. The notion that they originated from beyond Earth's atmosphere was hard to imagine and not really believed.

The land on which it fell, quite close to the (now closed) Wellington to Market Drayton railway line, was owned by Harry VANE (1803-1891), the 4th Duke of Cleveland. He is said to have owned 25,604 acres in Shropshire alone and was the biggest landowner in Britain. The meteorite was excavated by farm worker George Francis BROOKES. He was born in 1851 in Much Wenlock, the son of John BROOKES and Frances GROVES who were married on 29 June 1850 at St Phillips Church, Birmingham.

The BROOKES family

The BROOKES family had been farming in the area for decades. John BROOKES may have been baptised in 1804 at St Phillips Church, Birmingham, (the Register is unclear) the son of John and Mary BROOKES. By 1841, he was living at Bourton Hall, just SW of Much Wenlock. John BROOKES married Frances GROVES from Spoonhil near Bourton, on 28 June 1850, at St Phillips Church, Birmingham; he was 20 years her senior. By 1851 he was farming 450 acres and employing eight men in Bourton (given as Burton in the census), Frances also lived there with her parents, Samuel, a carpenter and Elizabeth. By 1861 John and Frances had moved to Rowton where he farmed 310 acres and employed seven labourers and a boy. They also then had four children, George Francis (bn. 1851), Fanny (1855), Emma (1857), and John (1860), living with Samuel GROVES as a visitor. Emma appears in the 1871 census, as a pupil (age 13) at an all-girls school at 'Rose Villa', King Street, Wellington. The school (not otherwise named) had 27 pupils, mostly from Shropshire, but also from Wiltshire, London, Lancashire, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, Gloucestershire, plus individuals from Scotland and Ireland. Music and French appear to be the taught subjects.

John BROOKES died in 1863 (the National Probate Calendar gives the date as 2 July), leaving Frances to manage the farm (and its workers), and her children. On 18 May 1867 Frances married Thomas BAILEY (43), son of a shepherd. Oddly, this was also done at St Phillips Church, but in Liverpool and it's not clear why Salopians living in Shropshire went that far away. Also, the marriage register document says they both lived at 4 Seymore (?) Street (Liverpool presumably). Was it just co-incidence that both churches were dedicated to the same saint? They settled again to farming 300 acres at High Ercall. Thomas and Frances continued to farm there until at least 1881. A year later, George Francis BROOKES married Elizabeth ADNEY but two years later, Thomas, his step-father, died aged 59. It's believed George lived and farmed at Rowton, until about 1889, as his first four children [John (1883), Emma (1884), Henry (1886), Ellen (1887)] were born

in High Ercall, but Margaret (1889) and George Adney (1891) were born in Shawbury and by 1891, he was farming there.

By 1901, they had moved again and were farming at High Offley (Staffordshire) while another child, Beatrice (1892) had been added. George Francis BROOKES who is credited with digging up the meteorite, finally moved back to Wellington, living in Heygate Road, and acting as a farm bailiff. After retirement he lived at Tan Bank, Wellington and died there in 1937 and is buried in Wellington cemetery.

The meteorite goes to London

And what of the meteorite? Mervyn Herbert Neville Story-Maskelyne had been appointed Keeper of Minerals at the British Museum, in 1857, with a remit to improve the meteorite collection. Mention of the fall came via fossil and mineral collector Spencer G. Percival (1838-1922), the grandson of Spencer Percival, British Prime Minister who was assassinated in 1812. Initially, for an unknown reason, the meteorite was passed to Arthur Winkler Wills (1833-1903), the President of the Birmingham Natural History and Microscopical Society. Why a Shropshire meteorite should be examined in Birmingham isn't known unless Shropshire was too rural for anyone there to understand them; Birmingham was more academically advanced. Wills was a graduate chemist, and in 1876 was in partnership with Francis Davis Gibbons, a Wolverhampton-born manufacturing chemist, producing artificial fertiliser. Gibbons was also a city council alderman who eventually became Mayor of Wolverhampton and was involved with St Peter's Church there. Consequently, he briefly borrowed the meteorite to exhibit it at a bazaar to raise funds for the church!

Following this the meteorite was passed to Samuel Harding Ashdown (1816-1892) the land agent to the Duke of Cleveland. Ashdown lived in Uppington and had succeeded his father as land agent. After a request by Story-Maskelyne, he negotiated with the Duke to allow it to be added to the National Collection, and it was duly despatched by rail in June 1876. Ashdown died on 20 December 1892 in the Atcham district, and was buried at Uppington churchyard. He had been the agent for 47 years and was in turn succeeded by his son.

Once in London a plaster cast was made, then about 250 gms was cut off for research and specimen exchange. The polished surface showed the typical criss-cross Widmanstaetten pattern of an iron meteorite confirming its space origin. Small pieces were exchanged with collectors and institutions in London, France, Germany, Sweden, Russia, and the USA, and these have been mostly traced.

...events in 2026

The author realised that 2026 would mark the 150th anniversary of the fall, and thought it would be good for this to be marked with some kind of monument. There are three monuments in England to meteorite falls, one for the Wold Cottage or Wold Newton (near Scarborough) fall of 1795 (England's largest single piece meteorite), one at Barwell (Leicestershire) (England's heaviest fall, c. 44kg) for the 1965 fall, and one recently (2022) at Ashdon (Essex) for the 1923 fall.

After initial thoughts of a grand monument (as at Wold Cottage), it was gradually reduced to a public information panel. The date was set for exactly 150 years after the event, and at the same time. About 60 people, from local villages and councils, as well as a few meteorite collectors and scientists, gathered for the unveiling. After a few short speeches, this was performed graciously by the King's Representative for Shropshire, Anna Turner, JP. The local Rowton brewery (now located in Wellington) celebrated by brewing a special ale (called '1876') for the occasion, and brought a few polypins to the unveiling. Alas, the brewery doesn't bottle it, so if you want to sample it, you will have to go to Wellington. All agreed it had been a fine day but sadly, while we managed to replicate the exact day 150 years ago, and the same time of day, we were unable to control the weather. Instead of blustery conditions and rain showers as it was in 1876, we had to make do with blue sky, warm sunshine, and some cloud. Well, you can't win them all!!

Peter Tandy 7709



The information panel erected on the 150th anniversary of the fall of the meteorite. More information can be found at <https://ercallmagnaparishecouncil.gov.uk/rowton-meteorite>



Peter and friend (Gerald Lucy) examining the grave in Wellington cemetery of the man who dug up the meteorite (George Francis BROOKES)

THE ROWTON METEORITE

At approximately 3.40 p.m. on Thursday, 20th April 1976, the only rain meteorite known to have fallen in the England landed about 1,470 feet (448m) south-east of this point. The weather at the time was recorded as being heavy rain, but without thunder or lightning. Workers in the field heard a rumbling noise, followed by a bang said to resemble the discharge of a cannon. The meteorite fell in the field and reportedly buried itself up to 18" (35cm) in the soil.

RELIABLE FALL OF A METHOGLATE
IN SHOSHI.[illegible]

Support of the fall in the Dollar independent Monday 14 April 2014

Grades and acknowledgments

Thanks to Tom Angier and the Visual Microscope team for allowing the photographs to be used in this panel.
Photographer Andy Tudge (image copyright The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London), Dr Ashley King (NHM London), Errol Magnus Parish Council, and the Manchester Museum. Samuel Taylor, for their completion and support of this project. This interpretation panel was initiated and funded by Peter Tord, formerly animal carver at the NHM, London, to mark the 150th anniversary of a fall.



04-28 such as the
state map, 1990
1991, showing the
unimodal pattern
of rainfall and the
annual climate in the
study area.



Reprinted
by permission of George
C. Davis, Jr.
Copyright © 1988

Common meteorites from England are very rare.

There have been only 14 recorded falls since 1623.

1. Smeethigh, near Hydebridge SW Devon, 10th January 1822.
2. Hatfield, Chalfont and Baking, Bucks/Beds, 9th April 1628.
3. Wild Cottage, Yorkshire, 12th December 1795.
4. Lorton, near Bristol; Gloucestershire, 15th February 1830.
5. St John's, Gloucestershire, 18th March 1835.
6. Barton, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 26th April 1874.
7. Motton, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 14th March 1881.
8. Appleby Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire, 13th October 1914.
9. Aylesbury, Salen Walden, Essex, 9th March 1923.
10. Burnell, Leicestershire, 24th Dec 1965.
11. Dunsbury, Hampshire, Fall date unknown found 1974 in an archaeological dig
12. Glinton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, 5th May 1991.
13. Hambleton, North Yorkshire, Iron Age date unknown. Found 2006.
14. Wickhampton, Gloucestershire, 28th February 2021.

The Fourier transform
 Note the π is polished
 Note showing the integral
 from zero to infinity
 structure (like approximately
 $\frac{1}{2} \pi \approx 1.57$ rad)



The Rowton meteorite is about 15cm in its longest dimension and weighs about 3.5 kg (7½ pounds). It is composed mainly of iron and nickel, with some cobalt and other trace elements.

The exterior surface is smooth with some hollows formed by burning up of material as it travelled through the Earth's atmosphere. These hollows, which look like 'thumbprints', are called *neomajors*.

After Rowton was collected, a piece was cut off and polished to reveal the interior structure, which showed the typical criss-cross (Widmanstätten) pattern found in iron meteorites. This is formed by the simultaneous crystallisation of iron and nickel during planetary cooling.

The meteorite is now in the Natural History Museum, London.

Find out more:



Research into the Memories of War



Research into the Memories of War in a small market town leads to unexpected benefits from the supporting IT Development.

As Wem Civic Society we are concerned with 'Respecting our History, Designing our Future', and that involves 'heritage' meaning more than just 'physical heritage' – it should include the people and stories that define our community. To this end, the project, *Wem: Memories of War (WWI and WWII)*, was designed to produce a website, a book, and QR Trail based on research carried out by the Society. Major funding was essential – the small local grant-giving bodies would not be able to cover the estimated costs. This is where The National Lottery Heritage Fund came in. The Society cannot praise the organisation sufficiently for their support both during the grant application and the project itself.

Priority was to be given initially to archival research and the building of the website. The thrust of the work was to be through the stories of people who lived during those times. The two-minute silence observed on Remembrance Day is composed of one minute for the fallen, and a second minute for those who also served but survived. Research would cover both groups in line with the views of many Wemians. The Home Front would be included. We realised that this would cover a considerable area, but the decision was to '*go for it*' but to set a deadline halfway through the project, when emphasis would be placed on 'memory catching' and the publication of the book.

It was anticipated that a major problem would be 'mission creep', with a desire to include topics that were valid for research but outside the agreed criteria for the project. A number of areas were raised for late inclusion, but the original guidelines were accepted with good grace.

A small team of researchers was brought together; most would concentrate on searching of 'Ancestry', 'British Newspaper Archive' and 'Forces War Records'. Initial training, using 'difficult' worked examples, was carried out.

In order to ensure the website met the specific requirements we employed a website designer. Developed for the society, the system was to make local heritage more accessible to residents, families, historians, schools, and researchers. Through carefully curated archives, visitors would be able to search

and learn about the lives, service, and sacrifices of men and women connected to Wem during WWI and WWII. The platform includes military records, photographs, memorial references, family histories, and contextual information that helps bring individual stories to life.

Good system analysis at this point was essential, or the society might have ended with a system that we wanted but not one that was compatible with the needs of younger generations. A requirement was that there would be multiple access points so that users with limited data or training would be able retrieve the information required. High priority was given to the accessibility of the website: making content easy to read, keeping interactions simple, and building an intuitive system.

The society planned for a stand-alone system but given that there are other projects in the pipe-line it was more sensible to design a system, which would host a stable of projects. The home page is shown below and the website can be accessed at <https://www.wemcs.org.uk>.



Following the *Wem: Memories of War* tab takes you to the following opportunities:

Search for individuals who died. A majority of Wemians enlisted in the army – a search on the local regiment, KSLI, brings up 44 results at the moment;

Find details of locations, cemeteries and memorials. A search on Menin Gate provides a list of Wem servicemen commemorated: **Bromley**, Howard John; **Cartright**, Alfred; **Jarman**, Joseph; **Lloyd**, Percy Ernest Kinsey; **Smith**, George Josiah; **Williams**, Thomas Richard; **Wright**, John; **Wycherley**, Fred Cecil. There is also background on individual memorials and the campaigns associated with them.

Discover more about objects and artefacts that tell some of the stories, including banners and rolls of honour. 'The Martyr's Print' gives access to data about the airmen killed in The Great Escape. The image is of The Martyr's Print (Stalag Luft III), which shows the memorial built by POWs of that camp. The surround is made of images of the pilots who were killed, including Cyril Swain from Wem. This roll of honour is in St Peter & St Paul's Church, Wem and was presented to Wem by the Canadian PoW Association. The escape took place in March 1944. There is also a PDF listing the airman killed and an image of one of the commemorations that are held on significant anniversaries of Cyril Swain's death.

A section for memories, to include snatches of Reminiscence sessions. The system allows the uploading of video and music, as well as images. For example: **The meat that had no name:** WWII sausages consisted of rusk/rusk/rusk/meat/rusk/rusk/rusk. One week, the butcher had no meat. Some of the GIs from the US Camp, who had been helping out in the shop, came to the rescue, and Wem had 'sausages'.

The research has resulted in numerous community contact. Our strategy has become increasingly adaptive. Little thought had been given to PoWs as a group until Wemians asked that their relative's stories as PoWs should be included.

There is still a lot of work required – re-editing data and refining images to say the least. As ever with such research, we wished that we had started earlier. The comment from one Wemian sums it up, "I have no-one left to ask about that generation and no mementos are left". The project has had a significant impact on the society's mindset. The system analysis carried out by the website developer showed us the crucial difference between what we wanted and what the society, and wider community, needed. Pivoting approach and material to a younger and 'digital generation' has been a steep learning curve, and one that has benefitted us within the wider society.

The Society thanks The National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Lottery players for their support; they will allow vital records and memories to be preserved and made available to the wider community. The National Lottery Heritage Fund <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk>

For more information, please contact Shelagh Richardson, Chair, Wem Civic Society wemcivsoc@yahoo.co.uk

From a Postage Stamp to a Mobile Phone or 'How communication has reversed in a lifetime'

I was in hospital after an operation for a new ankle last year. After I recovered, I reached for a mobile phone to send a message to my family to say that my operation was complete and I was ready to receive visitors.

When I told my grand-daughter that my mother couldn't have done that she said, *'Why, what do you mean?'* She was staggered to hear that *'such instant communication would have been impossible when I was growing up'*.

I went on to tell her that when I was aged seven in an isolation hospital with scarlet fever in 1946, I had no communication with my parents. She was horrified. *'Didn't they let you talk on your mobile?'*, came the innocent question. She found it hard to believe that we had no telephone in our house when I was a child, let alone any means of direct communication.

I had to tell her that the only telephone conversations that could be made were from the local telephone box, some quarter of a mile away and then only to people fortunate enough to have a telephone at home. I had to tell her that most communication was achieved through writing a letter, which could be posted with a penny or two penny stamp and would probably have been delivered the next day or even the same day. That was especially true in Victorian times, proven by a postcard in my wife's collection where her grandfather sent a postcard in the morning to say he would arrive home via the late afternoon train. The postcard was delivered by a postman on a horse and her grandmother was there to meet him!



By contrast today, my wife recently received a letter concerning a hospital appointment a week after the appointment was due and dated two weeks earlier. Technology may have created instant communication on a mobile phone, but it seems that we are far less efficient at delivering a simple letter. How things have reversed in a lifetime!

Reg Wilford 5564

Queries from the Helpdesk

A customer came in with the name CZEPUKOJC, a polish name. His father was released after the war, and he was checking on the names available. There were 212 instances on Ancestry all told. We gave him sites to look at and he went away for further checking.

Another one was looking on the Ordnance Survey maps for Hadnall which was over two maps but a better one showing a full map was in the green books. He was after tythe maps as well, looking after ponds. He was also looking for the first sermon at the Great Bolas church on 23 June 1728. We couldn't find anything in the archives but found a large account on the church itself on the Internet to which he went away to go through.

We had a customer asking about families known to them, as it was found that two on Free BMD had errors in names. Changes were sent via info and going to "add a postem" in box below. errors in GRO would cost £92 to change!

Another customer was asking about Kingsland area to give a talk.

A lady came in asking about WILLIAM BARNES, born 1904. We had him in 1939 register from her information but could not find which one to go for as we did not know parents or place of birth. No certificates. tried on free BMD, GRO, could not find which one. Told her to find a marriage certificate of William (which we found her the details). She could then get Dad and look in lower censuses. Learnt a new village, Cotwell, where her family had a farm. Found to be only six miles from me!!

A couple, with a large printed tree, were looking for JOSEPH BATHO who died in 1797! They also had an old book on the BATHOS of Tilstock. They produced a probate of a Joseph BATHO in 1799, a paviour, who was in the Guild of Paviours* in London. We unfortunately could not find the connection to the book, a copy of which is in the Archives. There was a document at the National Archives, but it could not be read online. It was suggested that they try our Forum for any other help. I could not progress the search on Ancestry but later found a tree of Joseph Batho, d1797, showing his wife Ann and children but no more.

We had a gentleman asking for a marriage certificate for a William ABBOTT born 1856 to a Harriet HOMER/LLOYD. This was quickly found in 1910 and details were shared.

A regular visitor was looking for a Joseph OSWELL, married to a Sarah INKLEN and a Joseph to an Elizabeth STREPHAN/STEPHAN, born 1801. It was thought this one was a China painter at Coalport. We did find an Elizabeth Stephan and one of the family had a pub in the lost village called Werps**.

A couple from Connecticut USA who were looking to live eventually in Shropshire had connections to Richard de SANDFORD (and other variations) in the 1200s, most from Family Search! It was thought they could be related to the generations who owned Sandford Hall in Whitchurch, built I believe in the 1720s. Thomas SANDFORD was born 6 April 1597 in Essex but move to Connecticut. Thomas appeared in US Family History Book and also the 1911 Sandford's book by Carlston Sandford and genealogy of Ohio of the Sandford family. This shows a family tree of the Sandford's of Essex.***

A lady from Devon was looking for a will of Cherles PRATT, born 1818, but it could not be found. However he was identified in Kelly's Directories as he was a butcher in town.

There was also a couple of visitors looking for a butcher by the name of Arthur WATERS born abt 1853, he had eight children, and came from a family of butchers and lived at 86-87 Castle Foregate. Most of the family came from Castle Acres, Norfolk. He was found in the electoral register and there was a will. (The wills had been newly added to Ancestry.)

*The Worshipful Company of Paviments had records back to 1276 and being responsible for regulating street paviments, road maintenance and labour standards.

** The Werps was situated opposite the old Coalport China works and has been swallowed up by Jackfield in the Broseley parish. It looks to be that the pub was *The General Gordon* and one of the landlords was a Mr G. Stephan, his daughter met tragedy in 1904 when burnt.

*** Sandford Family Papers are held at Shropshire Archives (https://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCA_X8736)

The Helpdesk is now open on Wednesdays and Thursdays and the team is looking for more volunteers to support the additional opening. If you could help, please contact Gill Lewis – details at the back of the Journal.

Barry Deakin 4412

Brewers and Bakers

I was fascinated by the talk by Mike Brown on the Brewing industry of Shropshire and the fact that Bakers in the 1700s would have made beer as well. I had always wondered why my ancestor Richard Marston who lived in Bishops Castle, in Shropshire, as a Baker, also seemed to be a Brewer.

I followed up Mike's talk and looked up how bread and beer were made at that time and found this interesting explanation.

"Once upon a time, breweries and bakeries lived side-by-side harmoniously. Brewers merrily went about their noble work, mashing, sparging, fermenting. One blessed by-product of the process was a foam that frothily formed on top of the fermenting liquor. The dusty baker from next door would welcome consignments of this malty foam – barm – and use its natural yeastiness to leaven his dough."!!

In Richard Marston's inventory written in 1754 I found he had a Mill room in which he had a dressing mill, a malt mill, measures and grain in the Granary.



In the brew house he had one brass and copper furnace and one boiler.

In the two cellars there was a stock of ale, beer and cider worth £50 (£11,000 today!)

Stocks of wine, rum and spirits worth £10

Brewing tubs, coolers and other vessels.

Richard also had 2 mares and 1 horse, 1 cow, 1 heifer and 4 pigs.

Thank you Mike for stirring me into action.

Ruth Wilford 72

Image: Roberts' Three Tuns Brewery, Bishops Castle, taken from Mike Brown's presentation - not Ruth's ancestor but from the same place.

SFH Hub Update

We invite you to drive down memory lane



"I've got something for the Hub but don't know where to start..."

Is this you? Have you been exploring the Shropshire Family History Hub and thinking *'I've got some memories, knowledge or research but I don't know where to start'*.

Well, you're not alone and several members have been in touch with the Hub team. The parents of one ran the post office in Dorrington, and they have researched the census records for all those who had run the post office since 1841 and put together an article complete with a photo and piece about their parents.

At a recent Talking Family History Zoom meeting (1st Thursday every month at 7:30pm) it came up in conversation that our very own Michael Hulme had grown up in that same area. He talked us through the various businesses and buildings he remembered, one long since demolished and now just an open space. One of the Hub team captured the information by adding the places to the map on the Dorrington Hub page, as well as a short piece about each location. The information is now a lasting memory.

Michael's material is publicly available, but the Post Office research is private to SFHS members, so you will need to be logged in to see it. Note that anything you wish to submit yourself can be set to members only or visible to the public at large (your choice).

So have a think and a rummage, your contribution doesn't have to be large and formal, it might just be a few lines or an old photo, but every piece of information adds to the fascinating story of Shropshire. If you'd like to know more or how the Hub team might be able to help you then please email hub@sfhs.org.uk, we're looking forward to hearing from you. **Simon, Dawn, Isobel and Jane**

'Read all about it'

In June 2026 I had the good fortune to be part of the SFHS audience when Dave Annal gave a talk about newspaper databases and their importance, *Read all about it*. He demonstrated this by showing how he was able to trace one of his ancestors who had risen up the ranks of a local council during the 19th century. This was illuminating for many reasons. Dave pointed out the value of these newspaper databases and how they could lead us to develop understanding of our ancestors. Enthused by his talk it led me to extend my own research using newspapers and it led to the article below.

The talk was excellent, not only in its content but also its presentation. Dave is clear, exact and helps the listener enrich their research by his own encouraging style. All his talks are the same.

Several years ago I heard Dave speak about the importance of fiction in Family History and reviewed his talk in SFHS Journal 45 Part 4 December 2024. This talk enabled me to go onto use fiction to move my own work forward which led me to write an article for SFHS Journal 46 Part 1 March 2025 called '*More than a Book Review*'.

Keep Searchin', Searchin', Searchin' (Hats off to Del Shannon)

Bear with me. Thesis: Family History is an addiction. After the stories, photographs, BMDs and Census material you still want more. Even though it might make you hit your head against brick walls and chase you down rabbit holes, you still want more.

I have had *Findmypast* for many years now but I had never really explored the Newspaper Database. So, one afternoon with nothing better to do than Family History - what could be better than Family History - I thought I'll go down a few rabbit holes. I rather timidly thought - OK here we go. But what had my family ever done to get themselves in the newspapers? To begin at the beginning, I punched in my dad's name - Kenneth George Allison (1922-1977) and pressed 'Search'.

Presto – to my surprise, there he was top of the revealed list in the Ludlow News Section of *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* Friday January 7, 1938.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PARTY. — The Christmas party of the Church of England Sunday school was held yesterday afternoon in the Town Hall. After tea, served by the teachers, the Rector distributed the prizes, and a variety entertainment, arranged by the Rev. G. W. Whistock, was held; it included carols and handbell ringing. Those who received prizes were: — Senior girls, Doreen Williams, Elaine Lewis, Myrtle Williams, Barbara Brown, Eileen Reynolds, Joan Bowen, Betty Nash, Audrey Jacks, Joan Powell, Mary Mason, Della Langley, Grace Stewartson, Vivien Nash, Margery Allison, Margaret Head, Doreen Farnham, May Head. Boys, Harry Mann, Willie Humphreys, Charles Taylor, W. Jaine, Cecil Everall, Ralph Jones, Peter Pitt, Edward Shildon, Henry Dovey, Ernest Humphries, Clive Davies, Donald Smoot, Kenneth Lucas, Harold Birmingham, Trevor Nash, David Pitt, Victor Dovey. Choir: Kenneth Allison, William Matthews, Stanley Hiles, Ivor Reynolds, R. Dovey, J. R. Stewartson, Gordon Baker, Leslie Morris, Harold Gray, B. Edwards, Gordon James, John Batley, Thomas Davies, Stanley Cowall, Albert Matthews, Fred Hiles, Peter Judd, John Langley, Donald Reynolds, Bernard Felton, Peter Morris, Albert Elliot.

There he was as a member of the Church Choir!!!! I didn't know that. Well you could have blown me over. People had always said that he was a bit of a 'Jack the Lad', a 'wrong 'un'. But his start in life must have been all right, Church Choir and all. I have my dad's Bible that was awarded to him from Ludlow Parish Church in 1932. So this very brief information in the newspaper and the Bible taken together helped me form a fuller picture of his youth and his religious activities. Interestingly enough, one of his sisters, Margery, was awarded a prize. There are a few other names in my extended family that I recognised too. Flushed with success I looked for what else I might find about him.

Users of this database will be aware that there may be several extracts about any one person. So there was a second one about my dad in *The Kington Times*, Saturday November 11 1950.

Maybe people were right. He was a 'wrong 'un' after all. How times change and how motorists get done. Fined 10 shillings – I might have to remind younger readers 10 shillings equals 50p - for leaving his car on the street without side lights on at night. Interesting word – obligatory. It's certainly not obligatory now.* Still, it told me he was out of his religious phase.

Other information - the point being there is that there are always other ideas about your family in these newspaper articles to extend your knowledge. The article refers to 24 Steventon Crescent, the prefab bungalow, where we lived and pins down a date when we were there. What is also of interest is that he had a motor car in 1950.

No brick walls. No rabbit holes. So far so good. I decided I would move up a gear so to speak and look for my Grandfather George Allison (1894-1956). I have written before in this Journal that there were so many George Allisons in my

WITHOUT LIGHTS
—
Four Ludlow Men Fined
For leaving motor vehicles in thoroughfares in the Borough after darkness without obligatory lights, Ludlow Borough Bench on Tuesday imposed fines of 10s. each on Kenneth George Allison, 24, Steventon Crescent, Ludlow; Eric James Smith, 10, Steventon Crescent, Ludlow; Herbert George Widdling, 66, Sandpits Avenue, Ludlow; and Joseph Edward Potts, 6, Steventon Terrace, Ludlow.

family I gave them all some kind of nickname to help differentiate them. Previously I have written about George Allison (1790-1868). He was a piano tuner, so I gave him the moniker *Piano George*. Some readers may remember articles about him and he is referred to again later in this article. In my family there was a suggestion that my Grandad had something to do with horses at a large stables in Ludlow. So I called him *Horse George*.

So in went his name and...from *The Kington Times*, November 15, 1924 I found this.

Well, Horse George seemed to get his come up penance for this particular event. 5s-25p this time. But isn't there something wonderful about this. Like son, like father. Without these cuttings I would never have found this lovely pattern of events. There is poetry in family history, and this is it. Several things about the family stories were confirmed too. His voice comes through. The addresses are correct and he was a groom so I was right to call him Horse George. What a hunter is and who the Captain was, I will have to research later. Any offers?

COUNTY POLICE COURT.
Monday, before Messrs. E. T. Evans, H. E. Whitaker and J. Bough.
RIDING ON THE FOOTPATH.
George Allison, 37, Holdgate Fee, Ludlow, a groom, was summoned for riding a horse on the footpath, on the 14th October, at the parish of Richard's Castle.
P.C. Evans stated that on the day in question he saw defendant riding a hunter on the footpath and leading another horse. He stopped him and asked him why he was doing it. He said the Captain told him not to go on the roads.
Defendant said he did not think he was doing any harm. He saw tracks of other horses on the path.
Supt. Williams said that in consequence of complaints and damage to the footpath, they had taken these proceedings.
Defendant said the road was very slippery.
Fined 2s., including costs.

I now want to skip a generation and turn to my great, great grandfather, Thomas James Allison (1821-1875) who I am curious about and particularly interested in, probably even felt sorry for. In about 1835 Thomas James Allison left London with his parents, Piano George and Elizabeth Allison to settle in Oswestry, Shropshire where he stayed for rest of his life until 1878. Most of his story I drew from primary sources BMD, Census and other research. I wrote about him in SFHS Journal 42 - Part 4 December 2021 and SFHS Journal 43 Part 1 March 2022, in an article called Piano George and Me. First of all I am going to outline these primary sources about Thomas James Allison to tell his story and what I deduced from them.

March 24th 1849	Thomas Allison	28	Bachelor	Gardener	Cyrn-y-Bwch Oswestry	George Allison	Musician
	Susannah Hales	22	Spinster		Cyrn-y-Bwch Selattyn	Thomas Hales	Farmer
Married in the Primitive Methodist Chapel according to the Rites & Ceremonies of the Primitive Methodists by me John Morton Officiating Minster							

In 1849 Thomas James Allison (I am going to refer to him as TJA from now on to save typing out his name every time he is mentioned. I hope that is acceptable.) married Susannah Hales, as shown in the transcribed marriage certificate on the facing page.

When I first saw this marriage certificate I had no idea what Primitive Methodism meant or what Primitive Methodists stood for or what it might reveal about TJA and Susannah as they married in the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Oswestry. I researched it. Primitive Methodism enjoyed very considerable success in the counties along the English Welsh border particularly in Shropshire. Primitive Methodism sought to reach out to the working classes, conveying the simple Gospel message by plain preaching, an approach which ensured considerable growth. It seemed to me that TJA fitted exactly the economic and social paradigm of those becoming Primitive Methodists or indeed recruited by them.

TJA was obviously involved in what observers must have seen as something revolutionary. Historians have seen the Methodist Movement as a second Reformation, something that sought to challenge the established Church of England. People had always looked upon the Methodists as somehow wanting to wobble the balance of the status quo. But they saw the Primitive Methodists as wanting to upset the whole apple cart.

By the 1851 Census, TJA's circumstances had changed.

Name of street, place or road or number of house	Name and surname of each person	Relation to head of family	Age, Sex, M/F	Profession or occupation	Where born
1 Cynr-y-Bwch	Thomas Allison	Head	29	Gardener	Middlesex
	Susannah ditto	Wife	25		Flint Hammer
	Elizabeth ditto	Daughter	2		Salop Selatynn
	Ellen ditto	Daughter	6m		Salop Oswestry

TJA and Susannah and two children were living at Cynr-y-Bwch, Oswestry. However, before we move on to consider the next Census in 1861, on 3 September 1859 Piano George signed his last will and testament.

This is the Last Will and Testament

of me George Allison of Cynr-y-bwch in the Parish of Cynr-y-bwch in the County of Salop, pianoforte maker. I give and bequeath all my real and personal estate

of what nature or kind soever or wheresoever situate after payment of all my just debts, funeral and testamentary expenses unto my daughter Ellen Isabella Allison of Kilsyth in the County Stirling, the kingdom of Scotland, spinster and absolutely I appoint the said Ellen Isabella Allison the Executrix of this my Will, thereby revoking all other Wills by me at any time heretofore made. This to be my last will and testament to witness whereof. To which I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of September one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine.

George Allison

Piano George left everything to his eldest daughter Ellen Isabella Allison. (I told her story in SFHS Journal 45 Part 1 and Part 2 March and June 2024 *Follow the Yellow Brick Road*), not to his first-born son, which would be the norm in a Victorian world. It would be expected that everything would have gone to TJA as the eldest son, as was the norm in the 19th Century. But it didn't. This in itself could be said to be rather surprising. So why should this be? Why would Piano George do this? Could it perhaps suggest TJA had annoyed his father by his membership of the Primitive Methodist Church?

By the time of the 1861 Census TJA's family had grown. He had gone up in the world. He was listed as a gardener and keeper of six acres of land. He and **Susannah** now had seven children.

Name of street, place or road or number of house	Name and surname of each person	Relation to head of family	Age, Sex, M/F	Profession or occupation	Where born
Under Hill Cottage	Thomas Allison	Head	40	Gardener & keeper 6 acres of land	Middlesex, London
	Susannah	Wife	36		Flintshire, Hammer
	Ellen Jane	Dau	11	Scholar	Salop, Oswestry
	Emma	ditto	9		Ditto
	Thomas Watson	Son	7	Scholar	Ditto
	William Lancelot	ditto	5		Ditto
	Walter Henry	ditto	3		Ditto
	Mary Isabella	Dau	1		Ditto
	Sara Ann	Dau	7mths		Ditto

Four years after the 1861 Census, TJA and Susannah, despite being married in the Primitive Methodist Church in 1856 as I have shown and presumably practising

as Primitive Methodists at that time, on 14 August 1865, had their seven children baptised into the Anglican faith at St Oswald's, Oswestry Parish Church.

Were TJA and Susannah disaffected by Primitive Methodism? They had lost a child, Sarah Ann Allison, who only lived for fifteen months. This must surely have affected their outlook. But would be it enough to make them return to the Anglican Church.? Could it be that this was an attempt by TJA to ingratiate himself with his father? TJA must have known of the will and how it would seem to him knowing that he had been left out. Perhaps his father had told him why. Who knows? Perhaps we never will now.

By 1868 events moved on at a pace. On 20 May 1868 Elizabeth, Piano George's wife died, as reported in *The Wrexham Advertiser*, Saturday May 23 1868.

D E A T H S .
ALLISON—On the 13th inst., aged 89, Elizabeth, wife of
Mr George Allison, Cynrybweh, near Oswestry.

Later in the year Piano George himself died at Underhill Cottage where TJA was still living at the time. We can only presume that TJA, despite Piano George's seeming animosity towards him, took him in. Perhaps after Elizabeth's death he couldn't cope on his own or he was seriously ill. He died on 29 November 1868 at 79 years of age from exhaustion.

By the time of the 1871 Census TJA was again was listed as a gardener. Ellen Jane had left home and Harriet Louisa, their last child, had been born. The primary sources reveal little else until his death at 55 years old, nearly half his father's age at his death, on 9 November 1876, as reported in *The Wrexham Advertiser*, Saturday November 18 1876.

D E A T H S .
ALLISON—Nov. 9th, aged 55, Thomas James Allison,
Gobowen, late of Underhill Cottage, Oswestry.

The certificate stated he wasn't living at Underhill Cottage but in Gobowen. Cause of Death was recorded as: Congestion of liver and kidneys six months. Inflammation of the mucous membrane of stomach one month. Certified by William Mitchell M.D.

So, in modern terms, TJA probably suffered from long-term liver and kidney disease, with a final bout of severe stomach inflammation with chronic hepatic and renal insufficiency and acute gastritis. A doctor friend of mine suggested that

there was a very good chance that it was alcohol related. He referred me to the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cirrhosis/> That leaves me upset but there is obviously little I can do about. But I can still wonder what led to it.

I had never been sure what to make of TJA or perhaps what his father may have thought of him. Whatever Piano George thought of TJA and Primitive Methodism, something caused him to write his son out of his will. Several years later TJA had seven children baptised into the Anglican Faith on the same day in August 1865 as I have shown. Was this to placate his father?

There seemed to be little information available about TJA from the 1871 census until his death in 1875.

The final piece of information that was to hand was that TJA was buried in a grave next to his father in Oswestry Cemetery. Piano George's grave might be described as a sarcophagus costing more than £30,000 today. Money probably provided at the time by Piano George's daughter Ellen Isabella Allison who eventually left £9,000 in 1897. (Money worth about £1,500,000 in 2026.)

TJA's grave is immediately in front of Piano George's sarcophagus. TJA's grave has no headstone. Nobody in Oswestry Cemetery could explain to me why this was. They suggested maybe that it had fallen over and been destroyed over time or perhaps there had never been one.

All this left me feeling anxious on TJA's behalf. Too many questions with no real answers. I came to the conclusion, although he had done one or two good things perhaps in the end I should see him as a bit of a wastrel. So I entered his name into the newspaper data, expecting to find very little if anything and maybe if I did, it would confirm my worst fears. Remember his great grandson and great, great grandson appeared in the newspapers recorded as receiving fines in court. I didn't know what I would find. But here goes.

Wow!! Biff!! Kapow!!! My grandad and my dad both had one entry each. Both bad news. My great, great grandad dad TJA had...wait for it...twenty entries and counting. What could these be? What had I let myself in for? But when I investigated I was delighted. They changed my opinion about TJA completely. He turned out to be a *right 'un* after all and without the newspaper research I would never have known that. So let's look at them and put them in context.

The Oswestry Fruit and Flower Show was founded in 1862 and is now in its 139th Year 2026, albeit as part of the Oswestry Show. In 1863 the Show moved to the newly open Oswestry Victoria Rooms.

From 1865 throughout the mid 1860s and early 1870s, TJA exhibited produce and won many, many prizes. Perhaps a little explanation of how the Show operated is necessary. Primarily, of course, it was an opportunity for the aristocracy, the Lords, Ladies and lesser grandees of Oswestry and District to exhibit from their gardens. Amongst the many categories was a section headed "Prizes for Cottagers", indeed. The section was prefaced by a heading that read "For cottagers who pay less than £12 annual rent." It was this category, in which there were 35 sections encompassing every kind of fruit, flowers and vegetables it would seem possible, that TJA entered. Prizes were as follows – 1st Prize – 3 shillings. 2nd Prize - 2 shillings. 3rd prize -1 shilling.

During the period covered, TJA won no less than 21 First Prizes, 10 Second Prizes and seven Third Prizes.

There were, in fact, many entrants, so TJA was up against some fierce competition which pointed to the quality of his produce. The prizes were awarded in strict categories. TJA was particularly adept at the 4 Dahlias Distinct and 3 Stocks Distinct categories, winning 1st Prize 1865 -1868. Vegetables were a strength of his too, winning prizes for Peas 12 Pods 1st Prize four years on the run. Kidney Potatoes, Cabbages and Lettuce also brought Prizes. These prizes in monetary terms over the period of time would add up to a considerable amount.

I don't think at this point we are in a position to know how this money would have affected or enhanced his domestic economy. However as a point of reference the last sentence of the article to the right (from *The Wrexham Guardian*, Saturday August 17 1872) is illuminating. We haven't got a clue really as to what went on have we?

APPLICATION FOR INCREASE OF WAGES.
The roadmen under the Commissioners, named David Morris, Robert Roberts, and Thomas Evans, applied for an increase of wages. The advance of labourers' wages throughout the country, and the high price of provisions entitled them, they thought, to an advance.
Mr Roberts (Bodran) thought if they gave more money they ought to have younger men.
Mr Griffiths thought the rise ought to be given, as they could not get better men.
Mr John Williams said if the men were not very young they had grown old in the service of the Corporation, and it would be very wrong to behave unkindly to them. They ought to have the rise at once.
Mr Evans opposed it, and thought 15s. per week excellent wages for labourers in constant work.

Amongst the prizes awarded, one of the most curious might well be for rustic woodwork which he was awarded over several years. Such was TJA's skill in this

section that in the article to the right, from *The Wrexham Advertiser* on Saturday September 5 1868, he gets a special mention for his work. It is praised in the Introduction to the article on the Show in 1868. TJA's name is featured amongst the aristocracy. A good 'un indeed. In one article it suggests that the rustic woodwork is a table on which TJA's entries were on display.

They may have spelt his name incorrectly such is the care we have seen in multiple other documents in our own work when enumerators scribbled down what they thought they heard. However there is no mistake that it is him because Underhill was his home address. Another pleasing aspect of TJA's work that has helped me build a different way of considering his actions I had previously held was that he also encouraged his children to exhibit, for which they too won Prizes.

So clearly my discovery of newspaper information over and above the primary records I held for TJA were illuminating. We can only marvel at the love, care and devotion TJA put into this work whatever his challenges were. He was not the person I had assumed he was. In fact, in many ways he was completely the opposite. For a family historian, indeed for any kind of historian, this is revelatory. What we think we know and what we don't know is a yawning chasm. The primary sources are only a beginning and may more often than not offer simplistic and limited information which I have I think ably demonstrated, and

FLORAL AND HORTICULTURAL SHOW.

The third anniversary of the Oswestry Floral and Horticultural Society was held in the Victoria Rooms, on Tuesday and Wednesday last. The amateur exhibitors' productions, and some of the best specimens from cottage gardens occupied the lower room, while the large hall was devoted to the gardeners and nurserymen. As an exhibition this year it was quite equal to its predecessors both in variety and excellence of the productions shown, while the attendance was numerous and respectable. To aid the attractions of the show the gardens of Wynnstay contributed a magnificent group of stove and greenhouse plants, which filled the orchestra of the upper room, and from the Quinte there was a rich and choice selection of fruit, including pines, apples, peaches, grapes, plums, &c., not for competition. The contributions sent in competition included specimens from Habesc, Peckington, Otley Park, Oakhurst, Ellismere nursery, Mr Longueville's Penylan; Moore, Evans and Son, Llanywnech, &c., &c. The competition in dahlias and for the prize for flowers for table decoration was very close. The amateurs were numerous, and their show of fruit, flowers, and vegetables, first class.

The rustic work exhibited by Mr Thomas Allinson, Underhill, was very generally and deservedly admired.

LABOURERS AND SERVANTS.

To the man who by his daily labour has reared the greatest number of children without parochial aid, having a good character from his employer, the youngest child to be at least seven years old : 1st, 4l., James Prosser, in the employ of Oakley Park Estate from 16th October, 1837 (92), had 10 children, none dead, youngest 11; 2nd, 3l., no award.

To the labourer who has lived the greatest number of years in one service under the same master, or worked on the same farm not less than five, with a good character from his employer, the time he may have served as an in-door servant to be included; and if parochial aid has ever been had, the circumstances, time when, and amount so nearly as may be to be stated: 1st, 4l., Edward Mound, in the employ of John Rawlings, his father, and others, at Stoke, from 25th March, 1832; 2nd, 3l., Thomas Passy, in the employ of Sir C. H. R. Boughton, Bart., and Sir W. Rouse Boughton, Bart., from 1835.

may lead us to a wrong conclusion. It is therefore vital as the title of my article suggests to keep searchin', searchin', searchin'. Newspapers are a rather wonderful port of call.

While I am dealing with newspapers, it is perhaps

worth reminding ourselves of the obvious. We have learnt as family historians that we should always read around certificates,

considering not just the names of our ancestors but other names or ideas that may offer clues to further develop our knowledge. In this respect it is of great value to read other articles

that may appear on the pages of newspapers that we study. This surely will provide a context for the world our people lived in. Just a couple of examples will suffice as shown at the bottom of page 144 and above: prizes given at the Ludlow Show 1875, as reported in *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal and Salopian Journal*, Wednesday September 29 1875.

It is vital to keep searching. Newspapers are a rather wonderful port of call. Hats off to Dave Annall!!!

All newspaper articles referenced in the text, sourced from Findmypast.

Bill Allison 7760 juliaallison@btinternet.com

*Editor: *In fact there are still laws relating to where and when you should have your sidelights on when parking, although judging by some of the on-road parking I see many people are not aware of them! As they say, every day is a school day!*

If the road has a speed limit of 30mph or less, you don't need to leave on your sidelights, as long as: your spot is in a recognised parking bay or lay-by, or you're facing in the direction of the traffic flow, close to the kerb, and at least 10 metres (32 feet) from the nearest junction.

If a road operates a speed limit greater than 30mph, under The Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 you're legally required to leave on your sidelights when parking on it at night. You must not park on a road at night facing against the direction of the traffic flow, unless in a recognised parking space.

<https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/driving-advice/parking-lights/>

To the farming in-door man servant who has continued in the same service the greatest number of years, not less than five, having a good character from his master : 1st, 4l., Samuel Sanders, general servant to J. Green from 9th May, 1861 ; 2nd, 2l., no award.

To the female servant who has lived the greatest number of years, not less than five, in one service, having a good character from her master or mistress : 1st, 4l., Martha Whistall, housemaid to Mr. Knight from June 4th, 1858 ; 2nd, 2l., Sarah Sanders, cook to Joseph Green from 2nd of May, 1860.

To the female servant who has lived the greatest number of years, not less than five in one service, in the borough of Ludlow, having a good character from her master or mistress : 1st, 4l., Susan Glover, cook to Mr. J. Valentine from May 1st, 1870 ; 2nd, 2l., no award.

To the in or out-door man servant or labourer who has lived the greatest number of years, not less than five, in one service, in the borough of Ludlow, having a good character from his master : 1st, 4l., Thomas Stokes, Stter, &c., to Mr. E. Black from 1st of September, 1857 ; 2nd, 2l., Edward Ward, moulder to Mr. E. Black from the 10th of November, 1857.

Surnames, Language and Identity in Shropshire

**Review of the talk by Dr Harry Parkin, University of Chester,
given on 21 July 2026**

The speaker started with an introduction to English surname history. There are four main types of surname which were originally given as descriptive non-hereditary 'bynames'.

1. Locational – e.g. Hill, or London. These are toponyms, connected with places
2. Relationship – e.g. Johns, Johnson. These are usually related to a father (John's son)
3. Occupational - e.g. Smith, Bowman. These are related to jobs or occupations.
4. Nicknames – e.g. Redhead, Proud. These are linked to physical appearance.

Before surnames, many had nicknames (or 'bynames'). Some of these are not obvious, e.g. Bishop might refer to an ecclesiastical person, but as the clergy were not supposed to have children, it may be more likely to be a nickname. Bynames became more common after the Norman Conquest in 1066. Anglo Saxons had enough names from which to choose, and surnames were not needed. The Normans brought a vast number of names with them and it became necessary to distinguish between them e.g. 'John' was very popular. The higher classes adopted hereditary surnames probably to ensure correct inheritance of land or goods. By 1350 in the south and 1450 in the north, most people had hereditary surnames.

Surnames reflect the history and identity of an area, and some are more common in different areas. A regional study for the 'English Surnames Index' shows by maps where surnames occur. The index can be looked at across the whole country or broken down by county and even districts. The speaker showed maps based on numbers for the names Richardson and Richards, taken from the 1881 Census. He also pointed out that the names Fuller, Tucker and Walker, all connected with treating raw wool, but varied in location because of regional dialects. Similarly, the name LAING referring to someone who is tall, is usually spoken as 'Lang' in Scotland and N England, but 'Long' in England.

To look back at the past we need to know the etymology of the name, and need to trace it back to the Middle English period. Relying on present day surnames is problematical. He then asked members what they thought the origin of the surname TWELVETREES was. The obvious answer is not the correct one! Going

backwards he showed that TWELVETREES was recorded in 1743, as a corruption of TWELVETREE from 1705. Further back it is recorded as TWELLTRICKE (1666), and TWELLTRICK in 1600. In 1572 it was TWELRIGGE, derived from WALDRYCK (1377) and de QUELDRYCK (1343) and de QUELDRIG (1377).

While awareness of the distribution of surnames is very important when studying the etymology of them, it's not the best way of studying them. Until recently distribution tended to be done from phonebooks, but now on-line surname atlases are available. Some surnames are county specific, and the atlas shows this at different levels

Some typical Shropshire names are:

BEAMOND: some 95% are centred on Clun. It is derived from the Welsh 'ap Edmond' ('ap' is Welsh for 'son of'). Similar names are BEVAN (ap Evan), PRITCHARD (ap Richard), PARRY (ap Array) and PROBERT (ap Robert).

JUCKES; 56% were in Shropshire in 1881, mainly in the Wellington area. It can be traced back to the Anglo-Norman French IUCKE or JUCKE.

MELLINGS: 72% were in Shropshire (1881) again in the Clun area, but it is a Lancashire place name. It can be traced back to Henry de Mellinges in Pipe Rolls from 1194.

FERRINGTON: 68% in Shropshire but it is mainly derived from Farrington in Lancashire.

CHETWOOD: 67% in Shropshire. There is a place Chetwode (Bucks), but also Cheetwood in Cheetham, Manchester. This could show a historical mass migration from Manchester to Shropshire.

DIDLICK: 75% are in Shropshire mostly around Ludlow. It can be traced back to Jone Dudlicke (1577, in Bridgnorth) and derives from the village of Duddlewick in 1715.

DARRALL: 56% in Shropshire. It comes originally from de Arel (1166) and from Airelle, in Calvados.

A surname study should never be linguistic only! For an example, he showed that the name HAASTRUP, which looks instinctively Scandinavian (?Danish), can be found as the surname of a number of Nigerian families - beware in making assumptions!

Place names may be pronounced in different ways due to an interaction of dialect, accent and sociological factors, e.g. Great CLOWES Street (Salford, Manchester) may be pronounced as 'Klooz', 'Klowz', or 'Kleeze'. There is a

Talks Programme

September 2026 - January 2027

Researching House History

Gill Blanchard

15 September 2026

Discover how to trace the history of your home and where your ancestors lived with leading house historian and author of 'Tracing your house history'.

In search of Scottish Ancestors

Christine Woodcock

20 October 2026

Learn the basics to start finding your Scottish ancestors. We will learn about using the Scotlands People website, glean information from the documents, the importance of understanding the Scottish naming pattern, irregular marriages and so much more.

Using social media for family history research

Kelly Cornwell

17 November 2026

Social media has made the world a smaller place, allowing us to share experiences with people from all over the planet. Discover how you can harness it to enrich your family history research. It is a valuable tool for family history, providing new opportunities to uncover, record, and share your family's story.

The British Almshouse

Judy Hill

15 December 2026

The talk will illustrate the history of the almshouse movement and will reference specific almshouses in England.

Getting the most from British death records - preceded by AGM

Nicola Johnston

19 January 2027

In this wide-ranging but compassionate talk, Nicola Johnson shows how to get the most from British death records – from indexes, certificates and burial records to lesser-known sources rarely covered elsewhere, such as coroners' inquests and death duty registers. She also gives clear guidance to finding pre-1858 wills, helping you break through long-standing brick walls and uncover ancestors who've eluded you for years.

New Members

Welcome to all our new members who have joined us in the past few months, (up to 20 August 2026). 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

10156	Suzanna	Burnay	Newbury, UK
10157	Janet	Thomas	Smethwick, UK
10158	Helen	Shields	Thornton le Clay, UK
10159	Carol	Howie	North Vancouver, Canada
10160	Martin	Cadman	Stamford, UK
10161	Joanna	Cadman	Stamford, UK
10162	Beverley	Fisher	Port Macquarie, Australia
10163	Sue	Gill	Leamington Spa, UK
10164	Shawn	Clutton	Whitchurch, UK
10165	V M	Wilkes	Winchester, UK
10166	Simon	Owen	Lille, France
10167	Angela	Woolrich	Wrexham, UK
10168	Tony	Woolrich	Wrexham, UK
10169	Kaira	Marsh	Cable Bay, New Zealand
10170	Glenys	Goldsmith	Ashford, UK
10171	Heather	Myford	Nr. Potters Bar, UK
10172	Ros	Matthews	London, UK
10173	Julia	Fowler	Oswestry, UK
10174	Richard	Fowler	Oswestry, UK
10175	Wendy	Maddox	Bedworth, UK
10176	Karen	Rodgers	Wilmslow, UK
10177	Rachel	Waterson	Telford, UK
10178	Paul	Roberts	Evesham, UK
10179	Barry	Collins	Loudon, United States
10180	Douglas	Phillips	Welshpool, UK
10181	Pamela	Cram	Swansea, UK
10182	Michael	Spruce	Hornsby, Australia
10184	Cathy	Webb	Coventry, UK
10185	Robert	Bolas	Wickford, UK
10186	Alison	Ackland	York, UK
10187	Gary	Dickens	Columbiana, United States
10188	Tracy	Simm	Adelaide, Australia
10189	Judith	Littler	Wigan, UK

10190	Harold	Dodd	Worcester, UK
10191	Roger	Ford	Shrewsbury, UK
10192	Richard	Micklewright	Northampton, UK

We have been advised of the deaths of the following members in recent months and we offer our condolences to their families and friends.

852	Keith Ferrington	Shrewsbury, UK
2853	Baden Bishton	Portsmouth, UK
1890	Joan Kinsella	Horncastle, UK

During the 1990s Keith Ferrington managed the local interest books for the Society.

Shropshire Family History Society Annual General Meeting Advance Notice

Our AGM date has been set for **Tuesday 19 January 2027 at 7.30pm**. This will be held online and will precede the talk scheduled for that day.

The papers for the meeting, including the agenda, minutes from last year's AGM and the Annual Report and Accounts will be published in the December edition of the Journal and in the December/January Newsletter.

In the meantime please can we ask you to consider if you might be interested in joining us on the committee. There are vacancies! If you want to find out more about what is involved please get in touch with Dave Morris at secretary@sfhs.org.uk

The officers, (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer), have all indicated they are willing to stand again for election to their current roles but that does not rule out others putting themselves forward. Again, for more details of what is involved contact the people involved. Email addresses are on the inside front cover of this Journal.

All nominations must be received by the Secretary no later than 22 December 2026. That is also the date by which any items of 'other business' must be submitted if they are to be considered at the meeting.

Dave Morris, Secretary secretary@sfhs.org.uk

From the Editor

I hope you have found something of interest in this edition of the Journal. There are a good variety of subjects covered and I am, as ever, grateful to the authors. I am now rather short of items for the December Journal so please get your pens/keyboards busy and let me have your contributions as soon as possible. Perhaps you have your own 'story' to tell: a special heirloom; a trip down memory lane; the discovery of previously unknown details about an ancestral family through researching newspapers; some good hints and tips that you could share with others; or a completely different story to tell.

Remember they don't have to be long articles, and images to go with the written words are always welcome. However, please can I ask that you send any images as separate files (at as high a resolution as possible) rather than putting them in the article itself as it makes it much easier and less time-consuming to manage them at this end. You can then indicate in the article where you would like the images to be included and I will do my best to fit them in as requested, although sometimes space means that they may need to be shifted around slightly.

Please note it will not be possible for me to get the December Journal to the printer before the first week in December therefore it will be late hitting the streets. Also the madness of the Christmas post may well delay delivery. However, there will be a digital copy on the website (in the Members Only area) from the middle of December for you to read.

You may have noticed that there has not been a plea for a new editor in the past couple of editions however this does not mean we are not still looking for one!! I am finding it increasingly more challenging to combine both the Chair and Editor roles and therefore I ask again that if anyone is interested and would like to know more about what the role of editor involves please get in touch. It could be a role undertaken by more than one person - someone to manage the content and someone to put the content into the software for the printer. So if you have skills in one of these areas and think you could help please get in touch.

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.

Ordnance Survey Maps on offer

2½":mile Ordnance Survey maps for disposal

Does anyone want editions of c.1950 2½":mile Ordnance Survey maps, which were originally withdrawn from museum service about 30 years ago? These are ex-museum quality maps, mostly mounted on linen (there are some paper ones). Most have been used but are generally in good condition, although the card covers in some cases are a bit 'tatty', while a few may show pencil marks or sellotape repairs.

Numbers vary but there are at least a few for most (but not all) counties in England, Wales and Scotland (not many for Shropshire). Many cover several counties so it's not easy to list them (or locate them in the storage boxes!).

If you have specific areas of interest, please contact Peter Tandy in the first instance on 07508 778101 who has a large number to dispose of. You will need to state the county, major town(s) or areas of interest, or perhaps a grid reference or OS map number if you know it, and he will look to see if he has them.

Copy Dates

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

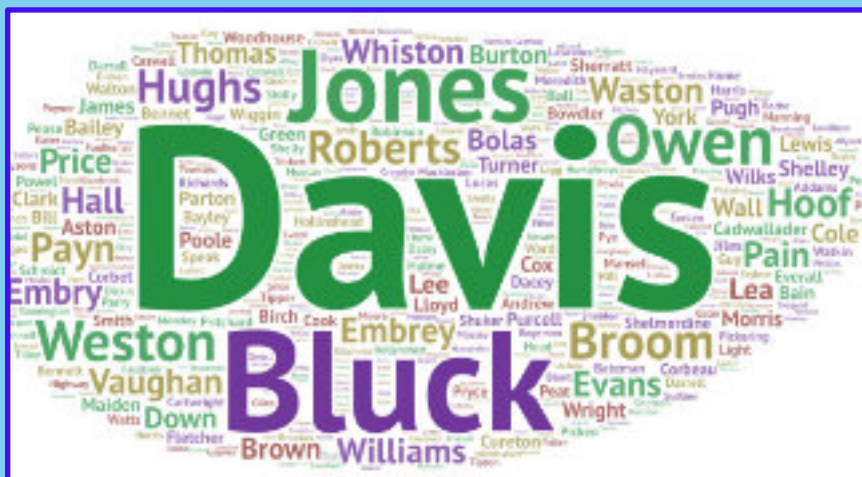
Projects

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: The Surname Word Cloud created from all the members' interests registered with the Society as of August 2026.



Published by

SHROPSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Printed by Joshua Horgan Print & Design,
Range Road, Witney, Oxfordshire OX29 0AA

The opinions expressed in this Journal do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or of the Society. Any items submitted to this Journal may be edited or omitted, without consulting the author and must not be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the Editor. The Editor and Society accept no responsibility for any loss suffered by any purchaser or reader as a result of any advertisement or notice, nor for any breach of copyright that may still be in force on any submitted material. Any downloaded items submitted must have permission to print granted by the official licensor and must be correctly acknowledged.

© Shropshire Family History Society 2026

ISSN 2050 053X

September 2026