



Family Roots

Family History Society for Eastbourne & District

www.eastbournefhs.org.uk



The Lamb Inn. Church Street, Old Town

Vol. 40.1 July 2025



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We have three vacancies. Why not join us?

FAMILY ROOTS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY (EASTBOURNE & DISTRICT)

Copy deadlines for articles please.

February 15th, June 16th, October 16th .

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Editorial

First, a very warm welcome to Tony Pulford who has joined the committee. Tony has some new ideas and we very much look forward to hearing more about them.

Also welcome to West Surrey FHS who are an addition to our journal exchange.

Do not forget to look at the journals in the members area of our website.

You will shortly be receiving details for the 2025 members website login. . It was agreed at the AGM to save costs in printing and postage, the society magazine would now be produced three times a year - March, July and November. The distribution of this magazine has been purposely delayed as we had the visit to Pevensey castle this month.

The magazine will be available to collect at the August meeting when Steve Simms. Will present 'A Blogg Blog's - the history of an Eastbourne family

Still trying to find out if my father is my biological father using DNA but we are nearly certain who his father was using DNA see the last article composed using Chatgpt..

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

Till next time John Titmuss

**MINUTES OF THE 39TH ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING
OF FAMILY ROOTS FHS (EASTBOURNE &
DISTRICT)**

Ocklynge School, Victoria Drive, Eastbourne 3rd April 2025

1. Welcome to the 39th Annual General Meeting of Family Roots.
2. 35 members attended. Apologies for absence were received from Peggy Westwood, Yvonne and Steve Salmon, June Christophi, Shirley Barrow, Shirley Moth, Pat and Bill Turner.
3. Minutes of the last AGM. All agreed they were a true record and Helen Warren signed them.

Matters arising from the Minutes. Following on from our reduced income Lionel Jones was concerned how much we were paying in speakers fees and was surprised that some members were receiving payment for their talks. He asked for an upper limit on speakers fees. Jenny said that the committee were trying to limit the amount we spend on speakers fees but that most speakers had put their fees up and whilst we were fortunate in that some members didn't charge us, it was the livelihood for other members and a lot of research and preparation went into preparing the talk.

Chairman's Report from Helen Warren.

Proposed by June Johnson and seconded by Theresa Hancock.

At the end of the report, Helen asked about the 40th Anniversary celebrations. An afternoon tea was suggested, and by a show of hands this seemed to be a popular idea.

Treasurer's Report presented by Jenny Wootton.

In any questions Lionel again raised the issue of the emphasis for cheaper speakers. It was asked why we are losing members. Helen Lucas responded that a number of our members have died and others no longer wish to or are unable come out in the evenings. In common with many other societies, we don't seem to have younger people interested in joining. June Johnson said that from her experience at the Gather people were far more likely to want to do their research online in their own homes. Someone suggested a questions and answers evening instead of a speaker for a meeting.

Lionel also questioned the £75 paid for the website each year. John Titmuss explained that there was a fixed cost for the domain and for having the website which we have to pay.

The treasurers report was proposed by John Tyhurst and seconded by Brenda Kenward.

Election of Committee. Helen Warren was re-elected as Chairman proposed by Rosalind Hodge and seconded by Ailna Martin. Helen Lucas

was elected as Treasurer proposed by Graham Upton and seconded by Jenny Wootton. Nobody has put themselves forward for secretary and nobody from the floor could be persuaded. Lionel Jones asked if you had to have internet access to be on the committee as he felt it was discriminatory if that was the case. Helen Warren said that anyone could be on the committee and if they didn't have the internet they were welcome to come to her house to join in the meetings as some people have done in the past. The remainder of the committee, John Titmuss, Graham Upton, Russell Ridout, Jenny Wootton, Janet Savage, Marianne Gunther and Shirley Moth were re-elected en bloc. Proposed by John Crane and seconded by Ailna Martin.

8. Election of Honorary Auditors. Russell was re-elected as honorary auditor. Proposed by Helen Lucas and seconded by Jenny Wootton.

Proposed cost cutting. We have made the decision to reduce the magazine frequency from 4 copies a year to 3. Not only will this save on printing costs but also postage costs. Helen Lucas has met with the printers and negotiated a reduction in price as well. We have opened an account with the metro bank and will be closing the HSBC account by July at the latest which means we will no longer pay bank charges. This is despite having a community account there.

Subscriptions & Meeting Fees. The committee proposed an increase in fees from May 1st 2026. The proposal was that single membership be

increased from £14 to £16 and joint membership be increased from £16 to £20. Meeting fees would remain at £1 but visitors fees would be increased to £3 from May 1st this year. There was much discussion about the fees. Some members felt they were reasonable while others felt that with the meeting fees it was expensive. Rosalind Hodge pointed out that most societies don't have a meeting fee on top of the membership fee. Increasing the fee more than the proposal was suggested but without a meeting fee. Helen Lucas said she thought that we would lose some of our distant members if we did that. It was decided to vote on the original proposal. The majority voted in favour of the proposal to increase fees as suggested by the committee with only one vote against.

Any Other Business. Tony Pulford, a member who is a volunteer at the library helping people with genealogy, made some useful comments during the meeting and it was decided to ask him to come onto the committee. Although we had previously asked if any members would like to join the committee it was proposed that Tony join the committee, proposed by June Johnson and seconded by John Crane.

Jenny Wootton has served as the treasurer for about 30 years. She was thanked for her support to the society throughout her years of service. Jenny was presented with a framed certificate, a plant and honorary membership.

Linda Wintle suggested that we have stalls at summer fairs and other non family history events to publicise the society in the hope of increasing our membership. Helen W asked if she was prepared to help with this to which she agreed.

12. The AGM closed at 8.15pm and was followed by a talk by Warwick Davies on Victorian Medicine.

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Chairman's Report For the 39th A.G.M. 3rd April 2025

My report starts with a big thank you to all the committee but especially to Jenny who is now retiring as treasurer after a very long time, about 30 years! Thank you Jenny for managing the finances so well. Thanks too to Helen Lucas for taking over as treasurer! Thanks to John Titmuss for producing our magazine and managing our website, which has proved very tiresome recently. All committee members work well together so thank you Marianne, Members' Secretary, Shirley for arranging our speakers, Janet for continuing to sell our CDs online, Russell who audits the books and emails out the Newsletter and magazine, not forgetting Graham our Vice Chair, without you all we could not function. I am delighted to say that Jenny together with all the others are happy to stand again on the committee.

The past year has been a good mixture of speaker meetings. Our programme started with a talk by Kevin Newman on "Sussex

Smugglers” this was at the 2024 AGM. As a special meeting in May celebrity speaker Nick Barratt came along to tell us all about “Behind the Scenes of Who Do You Think You Are.” Then we had Kevin Gordon on “Collecting Postcards”, Christopher Whittick on ‘Where there’s a Will’ and Tim Cookson ‘Researching the History of Your House’.

Our summer meeting was truly outstanding when we visited St Mary’s Church, Old Town. Not only did Jo Seaman talk about the abundance of medieval graffiti found in the church but we saw many examples.

I really enjoyed our Christmas get-together when once again we asked you the members to bring in and talk about your treasured possessions. With the emphasis on printed matter, old postcards and family photographs this year. It was a great social evening with festive minces and just a shame more did not join us.

We had Zoom meetings in January and February. The first was Gill Blanchard on 'Prison and Criminal Court Records and in February Penny Walters gave her talk about: "Adding Social History to your Family Tree".

In March we were delighted to welcome past member Helen Rimmer who gave a talk on “Uncovering Your Roots: A Beginner’s Guide to Family History”. Helen first became a member when she was only 13, that must be record! Her talk was a great introduction for our “Beginners’ Workshop” which is coming up this Saturday 5th April.

As you know we do need to appoint a minutes secretary in place of Helen Lucas also we would like more to join our committee, so please consider these positions. We are a friendly bunch who meet up monthly for an hour or two on Zoom. Our society will not flourish without your support!

Several of us have been attending the monthly get togethers, arranged by the Eastbourne Society at the Gather in the Beacon. Although it is worthwhile meeting up with the other groups, it does not attract the public so we will not be attending on a regular basis in the future. However, I would like to thank June Johnson and Chris Worsfold for all their help at the Gather.

Next year is Family Roots' 40th birthday. I remember the 25th anniversary where we had dinner and a talk at a seafront hotel. What would you like to do next year to celebrate? Who would be interested in coming to an afternoon tea perhaps with a speaker or entertainment?

Lastly, thank you all for coming to our meetings and supporting Family Roots. We look forward to a great year ahead celebrating 40 years of Family Roots.

Proposed by June Johnson and seconded by Theresa Hancock.

TREASURER'S REPORT for A.G.M. 2025

It has been a disappointing year financially where payments have exceeded our income by £488. The total receipts on the general account for 2024/25 was £2,118 but our payments amounted to £2,606.

Our main income comes from membership subscriptions, which totalled £1,188 last year, a drop of £80 on the previous year. Income from meeting and visitors fees showed a slight improvement over the previous year of £47, but FindMyPast royalties at £267 were down by £126 on the previous year.

Our main outgoings were for hire of the school hall (£630), speakers fees (£893) and the cost of printing the magazine (£609). Ocklynge School have maintained the same hire charge as the previous year and it will remain the same for this year; and with reducing membership and many new members opting to receive the magazine digitally we have not had to print so many magazines each quarter thus reducing the printing cost by £79 over last year. This will be further reduced as we are only producing the magazine three times a year instead of four, and we have negotiated a better price with Planahead who print the magazine for us. This will also reduce the cost of postage.

However, the cost of speakers last year was nearly double that of the previous year (£458). We welcomed some well respect speakers and their

fees reflected that professionalism, with five charging over £100 plus travelling expenses. The cost of renewing the Zoom licence had also increased but your committee felt this was still a benefit allowing members to view the January and February meetings from their own home on the winter evenings and opening them up to non-local and overseas members.

It had taken most of last year to finally dispose of all the books remaining on the bookstall and we owe Janet a debt of gratitude for persevering to reduce the stock and still bringing boxes to meetings for many months to sell off books at very reduced prices. The only stock she now carries is the society's CDs which she will continue to sell through the website, accepting payments via PayPal which will be linked to the general account.

The bookstall bank account at HSBC will now be closed and the closing balance of £4,942 will be transferred to the general account for use in running the society for the future. We have now opened a new account with Metro Bank, which will be the society's main bank from now on, but we will keep the account at HSBC until the membership renewal period is over in July, when the whole balance will be transferred to Metro and our connection with HSBC will end.

There have been no new items added to fixed assets. The laptop bought in the previous year has been depreciated and all other assets had

already been written off. Current assets totalled £5,821, and the net worth of the Society is shown as £6,078 for the year. This is a reduction of £1,750 but most of that can be accounted for by the disposal of book stocks.

I hope I have left the society's books in good order and am now pleased to hand over the treasurer's role to Helen Lucas after 32 years in the role.

FAMILY ROOTS FHS (EASTBOURNE AND DISTRICT)

General Society Account Receipts & Payments Account for the year ended 31 January 2025

	£	£	(23/24) £
Receipts			
Subscriptions	1,188		1,268
Meeting Fees	326		286
Visitors	107		100
Donations	113		20
Share of Raffle income	29		81
Transfer from Bookstall a/c - Cost of replacement Laptop			430
Books sold	74		
Sale of second hand magazines	14		5
Compton Place visit (Subsidised for FR members)			370
Findmypast Royalties	267		393
	<u>2,118</u>		<u>2,953</u>
Payments			
Rent	630		560
FFHS subscriptions and insurance	43		44
Postages and telephone	90		268
Refreshments			14
Printing and photocopying	609		688
Stationery			
Speaker's fees	893		458
Computer expenses			429
Website expenses	74		72
Projects expenses (Bookstall)	13		
Zoom licence	156		144
Bank Charges	78		80
Donation to St Mary's Church (July meeting)	20		
Compton Place visit			420
Equipment - Banner			56
	<u>2,606</u>		<u>3,233</u>
Excess of payments over receipts	-	488	-

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS ACCOUNT
Trading Account for the year ended 31 January 2025

	£	£	(23/24) £
Receipts			
Book sales	495		536
Share of Raffle Income			28
Book stock held before disposal at below cost	1967		
Less stock disposed of below cost	<u>1492</u>		
Closing book stock	<u>475</u>	970	<u>2,462</u>
			3,026
Payments			
Opening stock	2,462		3,390
Purchases for stock			
Bank charges	63		62
Transfer to No 1 account - Laptop			430
Postages, stationery etc.	<u>26</u>	<u>2,551</u>	<u>32</u>
			3,914
Excess of Payments over Receipts		<u>1,581</u>	<u>888</u>
Cash in Hand			
Petty Cash	£46		64
Float	£20		£20
PayPal	<u>£2</u>		<u>£26</u>
Total	£68		£110
Bank Account as at 31st January 2025	£4,942		

**Statement of Assets and Liabilities
as at 31st January 2025**

Fixed Assets

				(31.1.24)
		£	£	£
	Cost	Depreciation		
Microfiche reader	458	458		
2 extendable display panels	132	132		
Laptop purchased July 2023	429	172	257	
Data projector	259	259		
Laptop/projector adapter	10	10		
Radio Microphone (2017)	30	30		
Radio Microphone (2018)	32	32		
SubZero Microphone system	56	56		
Microfiche	2200	2200		
120 white cups and saucers	150	150		
New banner (2023)	56	56	257	

Current Assets

Stock of books and publications	475	2,462
Cash at bank: General Club Accounts		
Current Account No. 1	336	825
Books and Publications Account		
Current Account No. 2	4,942	4,433
Cash in hand: Petty Cash & PayPal	68	110
	5,821	7,830

Liabilities

Net worth	6,078	7,830
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J. Wootton, Treasurer
J. Savage, Bookstall Organiser

I have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of my knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of my examination of the accounts, and certify that they give a true and fair view of the affairs of Family Roots (Eastbourne & District) F.H.S. as at 31st January 2025.

R. S. Ridout

A Voyage of Discovery

(The Cruise of the Marchesa)

Contributed by: Ailna Martin.

When my eldest granddaughter married Robert Worthington, her new husband asked if I would be interested in researching his Family History. Since then, I have made a comprehensive exploration of Robert's ancestry and in the process, I have met a number of fascinating individuals. Amongst these was Robert's great-great-grandfather, Charles Thomas Kettlewell. Charles's great-grandfather was Samuel Eyres (1793 – 1868). Samuel was a prosperous Leeds woollen merchant. When Samuel died his considerable fortune of £1,200,000 passed to his two grandsons, Henry William Kettlewell and his younger brother Charles Thomas. Today that figure of £1,200,000 would be the equivalent of about £115,000,000.

The two brothers came into this huge fortune on reaching their majority, which in those days would have been at the age of 21. Sadly, Henry William was on honeymoon in Italy when he caught malaria. He was advised to travel to Naples to recuperate and whilst there he was felled by typhoid fever. His share of this wealth passed to his bride, Caroline, who had the sad task of repatriating her husband's body to England.

Charles Thomas used some of his inheritance to buy himself a beautiful twin

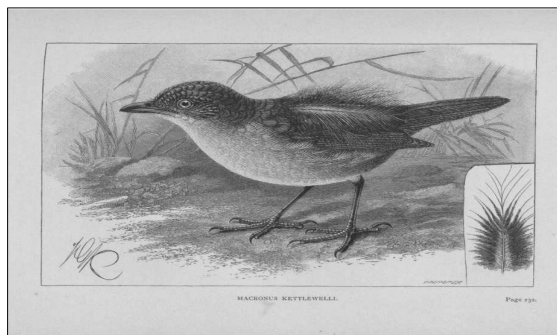


screw steam yacht named "Marchesa".

The newspapers of the time reported that the Marchesa set sail from Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, on 11th January 1882, the intention being to sail to the Far

East to explore the innumerable islands off the East Coast of China, and northwards to the Kamschatka peninsula. The ship was captained by Lieutenant Ffolliot Powell, R.N. Also on board were Charles Thomas's new wife, Anna Ernestina, and a naturalist named Francis Guillemard, as well as the complement of ship's crew. The Marchesa travelled first to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), then via Singapore to Formosa and the Liu-Kiu Islands and Japan. She left Yokohama for Kamschatka, returning to Yokohama three months later, when Charles Thomas and Guillemard toured Japan for four months, then on to China. Leaving Hong Kong at the end of March 1883, the islands of the Sulu Archipelago were explored, including the territory of the North Borneo Company. On returning to Singapore the Marchesa continued her voyage to Sumbawa, the Celebes, and other islands of the Malay Archipelago and on to New Guinea, finally returning to England in 1884, via Ceylon & Bombay. Whenever they made landfall, Charles & Francis would set off to explore the interiors of these islands, collecting specimens of interest as they went, leaving poor Ernestine alone on board with the remaining crew. Of particular interest were the birds of paradise they encountered. Many specimens were brought aboard ship and were eventually donated to the Royal Zoological Society. Guillemard recorded their adventures in great detail in a two-volume publication entitled "The Cruise of the Marchesa". For those who may be interested, pages from the book may be viewed on Google Books. The books are now collectors' items, but I was able to purchase a black & white facsimile copy as an original would have been well beyond my means.

The books are copiously illustrated in both colour and black and white. Below is one of the black and white engravings showing one of the birds collected



New to science, it was named for Charles.

I imagine that Ernestine took a pretty dim view of her neglect by Charles, as it wasn't long after returning to England that she sued for divorce, citing cruelty. Charles, not to be deterred, raised a counter petition, but he was defeated in court with costs against him. Divorce was not only considered highly scandalous, but it was also an expensive business. It hadn't been many years since an Act of

Parliament was required. I was able to access the divorce proceedings at the National Archives at Kew.

Despite his playboy lifestyle, Charles also used some of his wealth to establish a convalescent home at Swanley, in Kent, which was linked to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. He donated £11,000 to establish the home as a memorial to his brother, Henry.

Charles died of a stroke on 17th February 1909 in Aachen, Germany, at the age of 49.

The Lamb, Old Town, Eastbourne

Contributed by: Helen Warren

If you had ancestors who lived in Eastbourne you can be sure that they knew of and possibly drank “lambswool”* in the Lamb Inn in Church Street. When Eastbourne, or Bourne as it was known was a Downland village, the Church and the Lamb, named after the Lamb of God, were the centre of everyday life. It was a hostelry for travellers especially pilgrims on their way to visit the tomb of St Richard of Chichester. By the 19th century it had become the coaching inn for the London stagecoach, with the yard where what is now the small adjacent car park. The yearly Sheep Fair was held in September with the Lamb was the place where business deals were made. Upstairs, the large room was a theatre and dance hall for the local community. Maybe Charles Dickens, who is known to have stayed with his artist friend Augustus Egg in Borough Lane, could have given readings on Nancy's death from Oliver Twist! And maybe the revenue officers stationed at Customs House in Church St frequented the Lamb rubbing shoulders with the local smugglers who were said to have used the Lamb as a base!

A few years ago Harvey's Brewery undertook extensive renovations revealing an interior, undocumented well. Now excavating a well is a dangerous undertaking so the archaeologists did not get down to the bottom just to the water level where they found some of the old lifting mechanism. Wells are also very difficult to date but it is likely that it was first constructed with the original building. But when was this?

David Martin who has been a surveyor and historical buildings officer since 1967, specialising in vernacular buildings, first with Archaeology South East, and latterly with the University College London was asked by Harvey's to survey the building. Here is a precis of David's report: the Lamb Inn is another exceptional building, though it has been much altered and extended over time. The core of the original structure is a Wealden Hall House, the definitive example of which is called the Bay Leaf, at Singleton Open Air Museum. The Bay Leaf has a main hall with a hearth, open to the roof, a cross passage from the entrance in the long side, with service rooms to the right, hall to the left, and

private rooms on the first floor over the services. When first built in the late 14th century, or early 15th Century, the Lamb's main axis went downhill, and faced the church. On the steep slope of Ocklynge Road the stone built basement door gives access to the cellarage, and the greensand chimney adjacent to St Mary's House is original, not a later addition. Unusually the main access to the building was from the end on Church Street, and this was probably an adaptation to suit the sloping topography, but also to allow for access to the vaulted cellar. It was obviously built as a hostelry, as the hall was twice the size of a usual hall-house, there was a gallery along the back of the hall with small accommodation rooms and stair access, and a canopied bench at the head of the hall, with an unusually large fireplace. There is also an extensive basement with a very fine vaulted cellar that has a datable boss at the centre carved with pomegranates and rose leaves. This sort of cellarage is more usually found in trading ports for wine importers and is extremely unusual and rare in an inland site. With contemporary windows to the outside, now blocked, and only visible from the cellar, this area was most probably a tasting room for the tavern. As far as the fabled "secret passage" is concerned, this is a drain, as there was a two floor latrine, or garderobe, installed in the original build, with the drain taking waste downhill towards the Bourne stream.

David went on to say that the later improvements extending along Church Street are Georgian. At this time the half-timbering was plastered over to make it look more fashionable but at the beginning of the 20th century the plaster was removed and old woodwork and stonework exposed.

Interesting to note that the Lamb website gives a brief history stating that: *The Lamb is one of the oldest pubs in England dating from 1180, it had close links to the neighbouring Norman church and numerous ecclesiastical links with local monastic orders. Ancient features include the well, a secret passage, gargoyles, a crypted cellar and a superb huge original fireplace.* Well, the date is far too early, the late Lawrence Stevens, local historian, said that each time they painted the pub sign they put it back another 100 years! Also there is no evidence of gargoyles or a secret passage just the garderobe drain excavated by Jo Seaman**, but then there is no mention either of the white lady ghost who is said to haunt the cellar!

* Lambswool was drank in Sussex, it is a mulled ale, poured over hot apple puree, although some people swear by whole apples, or apple pieces cooked in spiced cider or ale.

** Read www.HeritageEastbourne.home.blog

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Beginners' Workshop

Contributed by: Helen Warren

On Saturday 5th April Family Roots held their first Beginners' Workshop. The venue was in the building that was formally the JPK Café in Old Town. Now run jointly by The JPK Project and SASBAH – The Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus, this was an ideal space with free Wi-Fi, plenty of electric points for laptops and most importantly good facilities for serving light refreshments.

We asked committee members, plus June Johnson, Chis Worsfold, Jodi Lucas, Danielle Wilson and Dave Chester to be our “expert helpers” but had no idea if any members or visitors would come seeking help on the day. However, we need not have worried as before 11.00am people were streaming in.

It was very busy, especially at the start, with people coming in through both doors. Some wanting help had to wait until one of our “experts” was free. Altogether we had 18 visitors and four Family Roots' members, some stayed for several hours, others not so long. Everyone seemed happy with the help they got and what was discovered. Some said they would come along to our next meeting, and some said they would join! Graham and Jan Upton were kept busy continuously serving tea, coffee, biscuits etc.

My first “customer” brought in a wonderful photo album put together by his aunt. This album included copies of 19th, 20th and 21st century photos, all were annotated with names (no places) plus a few notes about the family. What Andrew wanted was a family tree drawn up using the info. from the pictures. The first thing I saw on his aunt's notes was the name Frank Woods. “Oh” I said, “I know a Frank Woods, he's a good friend of mine, in fact I was at his house last week celebrating his wife's retirement”. I soon discovered that the Frank I know is also Andrew's second cousin! However, it was not easy drawing a tree based on the photo album, further research was needed, so I arranged with Andrew that I would continue at home and then invite him and his aunt to see what I have managed to put together. My friend Frank Woods was very intrigued when he heard what had happened.

June said she had three people to help during the day. The first was looking for a person born 1846 in Portsea, but she could not find any record them so decided that they were never registered. The second had a Jewish background. She said that when her father died the Jewish community turned their back on her mother, but it was a puzzle as it also included an adoption record. The last thing June looked into was a change of surname. The visitor came in looking for a CRAWFORD and went home as a CROWFOOT. That made June's day.

Jenny said that together with taking the money she was busy trying to help a lady from Northumberland tracing Irish ancestors but was not a lot of help there.

A second lady, who was a member, was trying to trace her Maybe family name (or was it Maebey, or Mabey, or Meabe?) and she had forgotten to bring any family details with her. But Jenny did manage to find a great-grandparents' marriage, which she was sure was correct.

One person Helen Lucas helped was interested in a farm with the name North America Farm. She thought that the family owned this farm and perhaps it was so named as someone in the family had been to or come from America, but Helen later found out that the family were agricultural labourers, so it was unlikely that there was an American connection to the family. Most interesting was that she found that the woman's grandmother is buried in Ocklynge cemetery and in one of the graves that was previously buried, unearthed and cleaned up by the Friends of Ocklynge Cemetery last year.

Shirley said that she was helping a visitor trace her husband's Dad's family as he knew nothing about his siblings. The visitor had bought birth, marriage and death certificates for her father-in-law and started a family tree but then needed help pulling it all together. Together they looked at Ancestry and FindMyPast with Shirley giving advice on using the records at The Keep and tracing Navy records.

Shirley finished by saying "we made good progress and I'm continuing the research for her. It was such an enjoyable event". I believe that sums up the whole day in two sentences – good progress, continuing research and a most enjoyable event. Thanks again to all who helped or came on the day, Family Roots hope to do it all again before too long.

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Crime on Record: Prison and Criminal Court Records.

Speaker: Gill Blanchard

Family Roots Zoom meeting – Thursday, 2nd January 2025

By: Jenny Wootton

Gill Blanchard is a family and local history researcher and author, and lives in Norfolk. She gave an overview of her talk, which would look at the types of courts, national and local records, and would take a closer look at some particular cases and local sources.

The court system started in the 9th century and was the responsibility of the local manor. By 1066 the Normans introduced sheriffs who oversaw civil matters and held two Assize courts a year to hear grievances. Local courts ran alongside royal courts, and their main duty was to resolve disputes over land. In 1185 Henry II appointed twelve independent knights as judges to keep the peace alongside sheriffs. In 1327 Edward III named keepers of the peace as

Justices, and they are still called that today.

Quarter Sessions were established in 1361 and were held four times a year, to help the Justices of the Peace maintain law and order, and they heard both civil and criminal cases. In 1388 there were six Justices in each county, but by the 16th century there were between 30 and 40 Justices in each county as there was a real need to establish more systems to keep law and order. From 1485 in Tudor times through to the Stuart period in the 1700s major changes were introduced. Parish Constables were also appointed to help maintain law on the streets.

In the 17th and 18th centuries Petty Sessions were established to assist with the workload of the Quarter Sessions, such as licencing, gambling and drunkenness. They continued to exist until 1971 when they became known as Magistrates Courts and dealt with all civil and minor criminal cases. Crown Courts heard major crime cases and the officers were professional judges and were paid.

Records of the Assize Courts from the 13th century onwards are held at the National Archives and relate to major crimes. Quarter Session and Magistrates Court records can be found in local record offices and they relate mainly to petty crimes. Petty Sessions and Quarter Sessions often heard the same cases and records may overlap. Before proper court houses were created the hearing of local cases often took place in the back room of a pub or in the officer's home.

By the time of Henry VIII anyone who felt they had not been fairly treated under the common law system could appeal to the King, who appointed the Lord Chancellor to hear such cases of grievance in the Court of Chancery, mainly concerning civil disputes. The Court of King's Bench was the central royal court, hearing only the highest level of cases such as treason against the king. The Common Pleas Court heard high level civil cases. The Exchequer of Pleas dealt with debtors to the crown. Records of these courts are held in the National Archives.

In the Middle Ages law enforcement and policing was organised locally by town authorities. From the 1730s local improvement Acts provided paid watchmen and constables to patrol the streets at night to maintain law and order. In 1829 Sir Robert Peel, then Home Secretary, introduced the Metropolitan Police Act, establishing a full-time, professional, and centrally organised police force for Greater London.

At about the same time changes were taking place in the 300-year-old Assize Court system, and around 1830 the Central Criminal Court (the Old Bailey) was established, unifying the administration of justice in London and the surrounding areas. Criminal cases heard in Petty Sessions could be referred up to the Central Criminal Court for trial if they were serious enough and could not be dealt with locally.

Church courts (ecclesiastical courts) were extremely powerful and dealt with the morality of parishioners and clergy, witchcraft, parenting, and included

probate cases up to 1858. Gill Blanchard highlighted the notorious case of the Reverend Harold Davidson, who was became Rector of Stiffkey in Norfolk in 1906. Despite having a prosperous living and large family home in Norfolk, Davidson spent much of his week in London. Before being ordained he had tried a career on the stage and when he went back to London he spent time in Covent Garden and became chaplain to the Actors' Church Union. He befriended young actresses and dancers who had fallen on hard times, often giving them money and helping them to find work to keep them out of prostitution. He became known as the "Prostitutes' Padre". His activities in London often led to him neglecting his parish duties in Stiffkey and a formal complaint was made to the Bishop of Norfolk in 1931. Despite his assertions to the bishop that he did not molest any of the girls he helped, Davidson was found guilty of five counts of immorality and was defrocked. The case made the national headlines, and although he continued to loudly plead his innocence in a series of public performances in Blackpool, Davidson was never reinstated into the church.

There were also separate military courts for members of the armed services, where court martial and offences in war time were heard.

Where to find the records

Assize Court records are indexed and housed in the National Archives. They include minute books, witness statements, crime registers, details of debtors and bankrupts, prisoner lists, Metropolitan Police records up to 1828, and Home Office warrants.

County record offices hold Quarter Session records from 1361 and Petty Sessions from 1600s of minute books, depositions, statements and calendars of prisoners in gaol. Early records may be in Latin. Justices of the Peace often had other responsibilities such as checking weights and measures, licensing printing presses, licensing and supervising asylums up to 1860s, checking parish surveys, supervising gaols, collecting Land Tax returns, storing plans of canals and railways, recording oaths of super numeracy and loyalty to the Crown, and lists of militia 1673-1828. Local directories list magistrates for an area and when and where the courts were held, they also list court officers.

The Quarter Session and Petty Session minute books list the court proceedings, list of prisoners and results of cases but they can be confusing. It might help to look in local newspapers for more detail of where a case was heard. Examination of witches, including statements, are very valuable if they still exist and give a lot of information. The records may also include recognisances, bail bonds, details of registered charities from 1786 (Friendly Societies and Free Masons). Quarter Session examinations may include details not reported in local papers, for example Poor Law disputes and domestic abuse cases.

Prison records include criminal registers of prisoners in gaol and may include a physical description of the prisoner and personal details as well as details of the crime committed. The National Archives hold some calendars of

prisoners, and some may be found in local archives. The Assize Court was usually held in London and the records give details of the crime and sentence. Gaol wardens kept diaries and journals of the day-to-day activities inside the gaol and these can be found in local record offices if they still exist.

Other sources to look at if you are researching a particular case include newspapers, private and estate collections, diaries and letters, where you may find further details of a crime and court proceedings.

Parish records may contain parish constables' reports as they were responsible for maintaining law and order, supervising local militia and alehouses, removing paupers not resident in the parish, and dealing with bastardy orders.

As a brief guide to where to find records:

- The National Archives holds Assize Court proceedings, prison registers, debtor and bankruptcy cases, Metropolitan Police records from 1829 and Chancery records.
- Local records offices hold details of Quarter Sessions and Petty Session proceedings
- Black Sheep Ancestors hold transcripts of the Old Bailey and other court cases and can be found at www.blacksheepancestors.com
- Many of the family history websites such as Ancestry, FindMyPast, FamilySearch, The Gazette, Old Bailey Online, London Lives, have indexed records available to search online.



By; Helen Warren

Adding Social History to your Family Tree

Family Roots Zoom meeting – Thursday, 6th February 2025

Speaker: Dr Penny Walters.

By: Jenny Wootton.

Dr Penny Walters is a university lecturer and family historian, and author of several books on genealogy. She asked the question: “Are you dissatisfied with just finding birth, marriage and death records; with all your ancestors being ‘ag labs’, and do you want to know what they did with the rest of their lives?” History is written by and about the victorious, the great and the good, but what did the ‘little folk’ do all day?

Penny found out she had Irish ancestors and wanted to know more about their background. She researched the period of the Irish famine and by looking at oral histories written at the time, discovered that many of the Irish felt their imports were being sabotaged and the native population was starving.

Gathering information from birth and death certificates and looking back retrospectively, we tend to make assumptions about our ancestors’ lives, who they were, when they lived and died, but often mistakes were made on the certificates and they do not give an accurate picture. There was much more going on in their lives – family interactions, ethnicity, religion, labour ability, crime and health disability.

By delving deeper into social history it is possible to gain an insight into the time your ancestors were living and a background to their social standing. Researching what was going on in their world and putting them into a definite place and time we can get a better understanding of what life was like in their day, and what was going on locally, regionally, nationally and internationally which would all have had an effect on their lives.

For researchers in the future looking at lives today, they may wonder why there was such a high death rate in the early 2020s (Covid), which led to changes in shopping, university study (lectures online), working from home, health issues and sporting activities. Similarly life in our ancestors’ day would have been affected by customs and traditions, food, and changes in working life.

Why did families move around the country? Consider farmers markets, moving from agricultural land to an urban area, which often meant marrying someone

away from your original home. Tracking down families that moved around the country can be helped by looking at the censuses, and family naming patterns can help to identify the correct family. First-born sons and daughters were often named after their parents, and more unusual names make it easier to identify families.

The census gives a ten-year snapshot of families growing up and can reveal gaps where children have died between censuses. Look at other families living in the same street and close by, as often children growing up and marrying did not move far away from their parents, and in large families younger siblings may have moved in with a married sister or brother.

Dates on birth, marriage and death certificates, and on the censuses, only give an accurate picture of what your ancestor was doing on eight or nine days of their lives. What did they do in all the times in between? Occupations are rarely given for females on the census as they were expected to stay at home and help run the house. Longer gaps between the ages of children in a family may indicate the death of an infant. Children in poorer families often had to start work at an early age and may have worked in the same environment but with different job titles, as in milling or coal mining for example.

FindMyPast now has clickable links to maps of places where your ancestor lived which can give some background to the places where your family or person lived, and by zooming in and out on a map you can see changes in a location and how it developed over time.

The 1921 census is available on Ancestry and FindMyPast which gives more details of a person's occupation and the company he/she worked for. There was mass unemployment after the First World War and huge numbers of death from the 'Spanish flu' epidemic, as well as coal rationing and crippling strikes.

Putting your ancestor into a timeline shows the limitations in evidence. Write a timeline for the ancestor you are researching, putting in the information already available and then identify what further research you need to do to fill the gaps.

As there was not another census after 1921 for twenty years because the 1931 census was destroyed by enemy bombing and the 1941 census was not taken during World War II, the only source available is the 1939 register but this gives limited details of connected families.

Newspapers can be amazing sources of information about people and families as they would have recorded details of birth, marriages and deaths, but also may contain an obituary for your relative, or specific details of a marriage including who attended and even information on wedding gifts and who gave them. If you

cannot find a named relative in the newspapers but know the name of the house, farm or place they lived, you may also find information on who lived there before or after your ancestor. Was it a relative who inherited the property?

If you still have living elderly relatives try and ask them to write down or record details of their early life and what they did, naming other members in the family and also what they did. It is so important to record oral history and one should write down details of your own life to continue your family history for future researchers.

DNA testing has also given a new approach to finding lost family and can uncover hidden or lost ethnicities. Are we looking for who they were or who we are, when delving into our DNA background? We share 50% DNA with each parent, but going back six generations only a very small percentage of DNA is shared.

Penny is an ethical genealogist, and she asked “are you researching respectfully and truthfully?” What is the reason behind changes in an ancestor’s lifestyle and does it have an impact on his living relatives? One should always ensure the respectful treatment of personal information and family histories, and be sensitive to the affect disclosure of family secrets may have on living relatives. Sharing family histories on any of the online family history sites will never show details of living descendants and one should always respect the privacy and rights of living individuals..

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Memories of VE day.

Contributed by: Ailna Martin

I had just celebrated my eighth birthday in 1939 when Neville Chamberlain announced on the radio, (or the wireless as we called it in those days), that we were at war with Germany. I was on holiday with my family in the Lake District and we were nearing the end of the long summer holidays from school. Home was in Liverpool and my elder sister was about to start at her new grammar school.

As the days went by and we returned home there ensued a period that became known as the Phoney War. It had been anticipated that Liverpool would be a target for any bombing as it was an important port into which imports from the Americas and the Far East arrived, but all remained quiet until the early months of 1940 when the anticipated bombing began in earnest. Liverpool was particularly devastated, being the second city after London to be affected.

It's easy to imagine the unbridled joy when Winston Churchill announced, on 8th May 1945, that the Nazis had been defeated. That momentous day became known as Victory in Europe Day, or VE Dy for short. A family friend got in touch with my Mother to suggest that he would like to take me and my siblings to the Town Hall which stood at one end of Castle Street, a wide thoroughfare that ran parallel to the River Mersey. He had privileged access to the building as he had been an ARP warden, (air raid precautions warden) all through the war. We all assembled on the balcony on the first floor of the beautiful Georgian building and were able to look down on the sea of people cramming the street below. One felt that it would have been possible to walk on the heads of everybody gathered there. People had found flags and rosettes and were singing with abandon and dancing with each other. No doubt much alcohol had been consumed which must have contributed to the uninhibited behaviour!

The Liverpool newspapers at that momentous time reported on the events and may be read today on the FindmyPast website. They were the Liverpool Daily Post” and the “Liverpool Echo”.

For my parents however VE Day did not mark the end of hostilities altogether as we were still at war with Japan. This was of considerable cause for concern for my family as my father was a Merchant Naval officer and his company was involved in the trade with India. His ship, the S.S. Dramatist was in fact dive-bombed by the Japanese whilst docked in Calcutta (now Kolkata). During the war passage to India had to be made via South Africa in order to avoid sailing via the much shorter route through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal. It wasn't until August 15th 1945 that my family felt more secure knowing that my father would only be facing the hazards that seafarers have encountered down the ages.

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Uncovering Your Roots: A Beginner's Guide to Family History

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 6th March.
Speaker: Helen Rimmer.

By: Jenny Wootton.

Helen Rimmer's talk took us back to basics and focussed on how to find resources, manage expectations and overcome pitfalls.

Helen highlighted the free online resources for family historians such as

FreeBMD and Family Search. They are also available to search in libraries, where you can also access Ancestry and FindMyPast for free.

FindMyPast (FMP) and Ancestry are the two most popular subscription services for family history research, where you can create your own family trees using the records found. FMP is helpful when looking for the places where your ancestors lived, Ancestry is good for finding connections with other families. They also hold card indexes for more unusual records such as the RNLI and railway pension records. International records are easier to find on FMP.

Both Ancestry and FMP are available on a monthly or annual subscription and sometimes offer free access over a bank holiday weekend. If you have created family trees on either but then decide to cancel your subscription, you will still be able to access your own family information but no longer search further records. Your family tree can easily be downloaded as a Gedcom file for personal use. Ancestry will accept user corrections to records, and has the largest DNA collection in the world.

Helen indicated some of the common terms used in family history:

- A family tree may be referred to as an ancestral chart or pedigree
- DNA match, where you share several segments of your DNA with someone else, indicating a common ancestor
- Direct ancestry means a direct family line going back, for example through father, grandfather, great-grandfather etc
- A 'brick wall' in family history is a problem that is not easy to solve
- Surname variants means looking for other spellings of a surname that will sound the same, for example Lacey, Lacy, Leacey, when a name misspelled can easily be overlooked
- Transcription errors: misspellings in record transcriptions can easily occur and it is important to check the original document
- Vital records refer to birth, marriage and death certificates which give the accurate date of a family event
- Source citation refers to where a fact was found. It is important to note which records have been searched, even those that were unsuccessful, so you do not waste time going over them again
- One Name Studies, which focus on a single family surname, can be useful in tracing a family back to an original place or location
- Local record office: most counties have a central storage place for the county's parish records and important documents. In East Sussex they are stored at The Keep in Falmer near Brighton, which hold East Sussex and Brighton & Hove records as well as the archives of Sussex Family History Group (SFHG). SFHG is very helpful when looking for Sussex ancestors as they have records that are not always available elsewhere. The Keep also houses the Mass Observation Archive, which is very interesting when searching for social history

in the 1930s and 40s

- The National Archives in London holds records of the UK Government and legal history going back over 1000 years. You will also find military records from World War I and earlier, criminal records, landed property, Poor Law records, naturalisation records and many others. Some of the earliest records may be written in an old style of script which can be difficult to read, but be persistent and ask for help if needed. Always look for other records to confirm what you have found, never assume.

Helen gave us some helpful Dos and Don'ts:

Always verify every fact for accuracy as some transcriptions are not always correct. Never copy someone else's family tree online and assume it is correct.

Be mindful of privacy and careful when sharing information online. Also be careful when merging with other family trees.

Be wary of family myths that have passed down the generations, but however farfetched they may still have a grain of truth in them.

The further back you go the fewer records there are available to search so don't be disappointed if you cannot find information about your ancestors back in the 1600s.

Write down all the facts you know about recent ancestors then trace the family back through the censuses to compile a family tree. The censuses go back in ten year gaps from 1921 to 1841 and will help to build family groups. The 1841 census will give you a rough age of family members, but from 1851 onwards the ages are much more accurate and also give details of where a person was born, their relationship to the head of house, whether married or single, and their occupation.

The 1911 census was completed in the householder's handwriting and gives details of how long a couple have been married, how many children they have had and how many have died. The 1921 census is the last one available to search online and it gives details of where your ancestor worked and who he/she worked for.

There will be no census for 1931 as the entire collection was destroyed in a fire at the storage unit in 1942, and no census was taken in 1941 because of the Second World War, but the 1939 register gives a snapshot of the population just before the war. This continued to be updated after the war when a woman's married name was added over her original surname. Many names on the 1939 register have been blacked out if a person is believed to be still alive. If a male name is

missing from a family group it could mean he is in the military or on naval service, but there are many transcription errors.

Once you have been able to put together a family group from the census you can then look for birth, marriage and death certificates. These are free to search online on FreeBMD and will give you the file, page and location details needed to order up a copy of the original certificate from the General Register Office at <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp> There is a cost involved when ordering certificates.

You can also look at parish registers for baptisms, marriages and burials and many of these have now been digitised for English and Welsh churches and are available to view on Ancestry and FMP. Irish records are very limited as the Irish Public Record Office and all documents were destroyed in an explosion in 1922 during the civil war, so researching Irish ancestors is more difficult and may require going to the individual parishes where they lived and died. Scottish ancestry can be searched on the Scotlands People website. You will need to register for an account and statutory BMDs, Catholic marriages and deaths, and census returns up to 1921 can be searched online. Non-conformist and Catholic records give more interesting details than English ones.

As well as the local record office it is worth checking libraries and history centres in the area you are searching as they can contain additional information to support your family history.

In the local record office you will also find Poor Law records, which contain bastardy bonds relating to illegitimate children, settlement certificates where paupers were removed from one parish back to their home parish, and workhouse records.

School records are also worth looking for which would contain the register of when children joined and left a school, but also school diaries give a day to day records of what happened in a school.

Wills are another important area to look at as they can give details of other members in a family who may have been left a legacy or inheritance. Before 1858 wills were part of church records, were usually hand written and were dependent on the value of an estate. After 1858 wills had to be proved in the Principal Probate Registry in London, they have all been indexed and give date of death, the value of the estate and names of the executors. The indexes are available to search on Ancestry and FMP.

Searching in newspapers can be very useful, especially if you find the report of a wedding or someone's funeral and obituary. They may name other members of a

family who attended an event, what the bride wore, who sent flowers, and useful details to fill out a family background. You may also find details of a murder and the trial involved, or an inquest if someone has died in an accident, which can be quite gruesome.

Military and immigration records will also give information of where an ancestor fought or served or travelled to, and many of these records have been digitised and indexed and can be searched on one of the family history sites. The full documents in these categories are available to access at the National Archives in London.

When deciding to trace your family history the best starting place is to write down what you already know about your family. Talk to living relatives and get them to tell you about earlier generations that they knew and any family stories or mysteries. Then draw up a family tree using this information and input it to one of the family history websites.

And join a Family History Society where you can ask for help and advice from experienced family historians!

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A Spoonful of Victorian Medicine

Speaker: Warwick Davis

Family Roots meeting – Thursday, 3rd April 2025

By: Jenny Wootton.

Following the Annual General Meeting, Warwick Davis (no, not that one!) gave us a thought-provoking talk on the comparison of Victorian medicine and treatments with 21st century NHS healthcare. He had worked for the NHS for many years and seen the good and bad sides of modern day healthcare.

He introduced us to healthcare in Eastbourne in Victorian times when the town was regarded as a healthy resort. Many letters were written to local newspapers at the time complimenting Eastbourne as a resort to come to for the healthy sea air if other forms of medicine had not helped improve your condition. In the 1870s and 1880s Eastbourne liked to advertise the fact that it had clean water and a good sewerage system to encourage tourists.

Sadly newspaper reports in 2023 showed that the resort has gone down hill a bit with street crime, drugs and alcohol abuse reported on a regular basis and dissatisfaction with the NHS. The Office of National Statistics now classes

Eastbourne as the third most miserable place in the country.

The Registrar General in Victorian England was keen to compare death rates around the country and Eastbourne was very keen to show that their death rate was better than anybody else's, particularly compared with their neighbours Brighton and Hastings, and with the larger conurbations in the country. The powers-that-be wanted to show that Eastbourne was a healthy place to visit and that they could prove it statistically, but because they were encouraging people to come to the town to convalesce they didn't then want them to die here and mess up the statistics.

The Eastbourne Medical Officer was frequently publishing his data. In 1877-78 there were 207 deaths, equally spread between males and females. There were 39 deaths under the age of one, 32 dying from consumption. In the 1870s you were more likely to die under the age of five than make it to old age, compared to modern day when people live into their 80s and 90s. Many causes of death were given. Consumption, measles and whooping cough were common, but also toothache and constipation. Constipation was a regular occurrence on death certificates and there were numerous remedies available for it.

Looking back to 2019 when we were faced with Covid, there were many things we were advised to do, for example wear a mask, wash hands regularly, isolate, many people were taken into intensive care in hospitals, and we were told there was no cure and it might have long term effects on our health. Meanwhile pharmaceutical companies were working to find a vaccine.

In the 1850s when smallpox first appeared people were told to wear a mask, wash everything every time, isolate, and that there was no known cure, no preventive measures and those who survived might have long term consequences – exactly the same as we were told 170 years later for Covid.

They did produce a vaccine for smallpox from cowpox, and the same arguments arose then as now, with those who were for the vaccination and those who were anti-vaccination. Does it really work? Is it government controlled? Are they injecting something into your body that could be dangerous? You could die if you had the vaccination, and you could die if you didn't have the vaccination. There were huge arguments particularly in Eastbourne, which was strange as there were no smallpox cases in the town. There were newspaper articles and public meetings, and in 1884 a slightly eccentric lady named Comtesse de Noailles, living in Meads and a virulent anti-vaccinationist, paid £1,000 to organise protest meetings in the town. The protesters were fined but refused to pay, and their exploits were widely reported in the newspapers.

In the 21st century we are now able to diagnose illnesses and modern treatments have been identified for most diseases. In Victorian times it was much harder to diagnose and offer appropriate medication even for recognisable illnesses. There were many remedies available which claimed to treat a multitude of ailments, and the newspapers were full of advertisements for 'miracle cures' for everything from coughs, toothache, constipation, morning sickness and pimples to feeling low and old age. If you didn't buy the medicine you could send off for

guides to help identify your ailment and what to treat it with, but not many were proven to work and some were positively dangerous.

One of the popular medicines was Collis Browne's *morphina composita*, which claimed to treat constipation, toothache, hysteria, migraine, cancer and many other ailments. Fraser's Sulphur tablets was another popular health remedy, but it was very helpful to know that there was no opium, arsenic or mercury in the tablets.

You could send off for books on 'do it yourself' cures that would give advice about the ailments and how to treat them. You could create your own remedies, and take the 'prescription' to a pharmacist to have it made up. People tended to treat themselves as it cost money to go to a doctor. What was in these homemade treatments? They were mainly herbal and vegetable materials as the Victorians were very into homeopathy. There might be a bit of sulphur or iron or quinine, but what else? There was no health control back in the 1850s and the producers of these treatments did not like to reveal all the ingredients and were very coy about calling themselves doctors, as a lot of them had no medical qualifications.

If you didn't need any medical treatment you might subscribe to the Royal Surgical Aid Society, of which there was a branch in Eastbourne. In the 1850s you paid an annual subscription to belong to the Society, and every so often you could claim some sort of treatment, for example false teeth or spectacles, as the Society was keen to offer aid that would help people get back to work.

There were many homemade remedies for first aid in the home, such as what to take if you swallowed something poisonous, but some of the treatments were as dangerous as what they were treating. Others had no obvious beneficial result for the ailment, such as bathing chilblains in soup. But some remedies still work today, such as oil of cloves for toothache.

In Victorian times young ladies were recommended to have all their teeth removed even if they didn't want to have any problems with your teeth, because that would save their husbands having to pay for dental treatment later on.

There was no suggestion that gentlemen should have all their teeth taken out! Tooth extraction was very painful until the introduction of 'painless extraction' using gas, ether and cocaine.

Another improvement the NHS has made since the Victorian era is in the treatment of blood diseases and the use of transfusions. Until hematologists discovered there were different types of blood the medical profession thought all blood was red so blood could be transferred from one patient to another, even using animal blood, with fatal consequences.

There weren't that many GPs in Eastbourne, and no specialists or real surgeons, but the three elements recommended for good health were a good diet, don't get upset, and keep happy.

That was primary care before the NHS.

In 2025, if you saw someone who had been knocked down by a vehicle in the street, you would be able to call 999 to get all the emergency care for the patient

– ambulance, paramedics, pain relief, helicopter if necessary, and all NHS professional staff at the hospital once the patient arrives in A&E.

If you witnessed the same thing in 1874, what would you do? You would not have access to any of those resources, except perhaps laudanum or brandy to ease the pain. There was no hospital to go to and none of the facilities that would have been available if there had been one.

There was only access to all the lotions and potions available from the local pharmacist, where anyone could still buy poisons like arsenic over the counter. The pharmacist was supposed to keep a register of who bought poison and what they needed it for, but this was not closely supervised.

Doctors only had a limited knowledge of the human anatomy. There were no specialist surgeons, no anaesthetics or disinfection, doctors didn't wear surgical gowns or wash any of the equipment, and there was no after care for the patient. When anaesthetics were discovered the surgeons became more confident in their investigation as the patient was asleep, but with no improvement in disinfection or hygiene the patient still died.

There were no specialist surgeons in Victorian times as people had faith that the medical man could diagnose and cure everything, but calling out a GP cost money. There were no hospitals in Eastbourne to send patients to for further treatment like Bartholomews and the Bethlehem (Bedlam) hospitals in London. All Saints Convalescent Hospital opened in 1867. It was very popular and in the 1872 1,400 people had passed through their wards and there was a waiting list. It became world famous and was run by a religious order, but they would not accept soldiers as patients as the nuns did not support war.

There was a military hospital in Seaside, mainly for soldiers returning from war but they also accepted local patients. Infectious diseases were sent to an isolation hospital. There was a smallpox hospital in Langney, which was far enough away not to spread the disease to the town. The workhouse in Church Street became St Mary's Hospital, where they had a ward for lunatics and epileptics. Epileptics were considered a danger to society and had to be housed in an asylum along with lunatics and the insane. The local asylum was at Hellingly and could accommodate 1,500 patients.

The first 'real' hospital in Eastbourne was the Princess Alice Hospital, it took a large committee to plan and build. It opened in 1883 and originally it only had 12 beds and patients had to pay to stay there until the NHS took it over in 1948. In one year they performed 26 operations, many of which were reported in detail in the newspaper as there was no data protection in those days.

Warwick concluded by asking the audience which system of care we would prefer – modern day NHS with all its problems, or the Victorian system of healthcare and its problems? I think there was only one choice!

Eastbourne Lady Drowned in Paris.

Contributed by: John Tyhurst

13th March 1906.

There came to light last week in Paris a mysterious tragedy concerning Miss Ethel Amelia Brown a lady well known in Eastbourne. Her dead body was on Monday found floating in the Marne Canal at Charenton, a suburb of Paris approached from the French capital through a somewhat poor district, and although diligent inquiries have been pursued nothing as yet been discovered to throw light upon the cause of death. The deceased lady who was 30 years of age was the youngest daughter of the late Mr. Josiah Brown of Gildredge Road a gentleman who formerly held the responsible position of manager of the Eastbourne branch of the Lewes Old Bank for many years and was a well known inhabitant. Both Mr. and Mrs. Brown died about 2 years ago. Miss Ethel Brown spent a good deal of time in travel, and after a description of her body had been published in the Daily Mail of Tuesday a letter was received at the office of that paper from a lady living at Ross-on-Wye in the west of England stating that the description coincided with that of Miss Brown who stayed at her house last Autumn. One of the deceased sisters accompanied by Mr. L. C. Wintle, the family solicitor journeyed to Paris on Wednesday and there identified the body.

We understand the deceased lady left England for the continent on January 28th last. From letters previously received from Miss Brown, and also from information obtained from the hotel where she stayed on her arrival in Paris, it is clear that she went to the French capital with the intention of meeting some friends, who, however do not appear to have arrived. After staying one night at the hotel Miss Brown stated that she would be obliged to proceed to Nice in order to meet her friends, and she accordingly left the hotel with her luggage. Up to the present neither her subsequent movements nor her luggage have been traced, though it is hoped that with the assistance of the Paris Police authorities the latter will be found. Neither is there at present any evidence forthcoming as to how Miss Brown met with her death, though from facts which have since been ascertained there does not seem to be any indication of foul play. Certainly it was found that there were some injuries at the back of her head, but the French Police consider that those were caused a steamer proceeding up and down the canal after the deceased had got into the water.

And another -

23rd March 1906 William Parsons.

Late on Monday night the body of an aged man was found floating in the sea at Eastbourne. It was taken to the Mortuary and next morning was identified as that of William Parsons aged seventy two, a tailor of Silverdale Road, Tunbridge Wells. Deceased is stated to have been depressed on account of slackness of work. He had left home on Monday morning.

(The Faringdon Advertiser 24th March 1906)

—000—

The Life of Alfred Schofield:

A Journey Through Love, Family, and Change

By: Chatgpt

Contributed by: John Titmuss

The life of Alfred Schofield is one that spans the dramatic social changes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries—a period marked by the expansion of industry, two world wars, and the evolving fabric of family life in Britain. His story, rooted in London, reflects the resilience of an ordinary man navigating the complexities of love, family, and personal loss.

In 1898, Alfred Schofield entered into marriage with Ellen Beatrice Dallas in Hackney, London. This union marked the beginning of a family that would grow steadily over the next two decades. That same year, they welcomed their first child, Ellen Faith Schofield. It was the dawn of a new century, and with it came hopes for a prosperous and fulfilling family life.

Three years later, in 1901, the couple celebrated the birth of their first son, Alfred Henry Schofield. Life in London was bustling and often difficult, yet Alfred and Ellen built a strong family foundation. By 1907, they had welcomed their third child, Frederick Leonard Schofield, followed by Dorothy Kate Schofield in 1911. Their family continued to expand with Leslie Schofield in 1913 and Ivy May Schofield in 1916. Each birth was a new chapter in their shared life, anchoring Alfred and Ellen in a rhythm of family growth, domestic responsibility, and enduring partnership.

However, amidst the continuity of their growing family, a surprising development occurred in 1909: Frank Hamilton Titmuss was born in St Marylebone, London, to Alfred and a woman named Ethel. This event hinted at a parallel relationship in Alfred's life, or perhaps a complex domestic situation

that would only be clarified in later years. The presence of Ethel and her son Frank would grow in importance as Alfred's life progressed.

By the 1920s, the world had changed dramatically. The First World War had left its mark on every British family. As the nation slowly recovered, personal tragedy struck. In 1927, Ellen Beatrice Dallas—Alfred's wife of nearly three decades—died in Shoreditch, London. In the same year, a second death was recorded: "Ellen Schofield." Whether this refers to the same person or another family member remains unclear, but the loss was significant regardless.

Two years after Ellen's passing, in 1929, Alfred began a new chapter. He married Ethel Eliza Titmuss in St Pancras, London. This marriage formalized a connection that had perhaps existed for many years, especially given that their son Frank had been born two decades earlier. It may have been a relationship forged through complicated circumstances, yet it also represented a fresh start for Alfred in his later years.

The years that followed were quieter, as Alfred and Ethel aged together. Their marriage spanned three decades, witnessing not just the Second World War but also the emergence of modern Britain. While records don't indicate whether they had further children or moved homes, the bond between them endured.

In 1959, Ethel Eliza Titmuss died in St Bartholomew's Hospital in Smithfield, London. Her passing brought to a close a long companionship with Alfred, and likely left him once again widowed and reflecting on the many phases of his life.

Just two years later, in 1961, Alfred Schofield died in Marylebone, London. His death marked the end of a life that had witnessed the reign of Queen Victoria, two world wars, the introduction of the motor car, telephone, and television. He had been a father to at least six children with Ellen and one with Ethel. He had endured personal tragedy, found love again, and lived through a time of extraordinary transformation.

Alfred Schofield's life is not one of historical fame or grand public achievement, but of the deeply human journey of love, loss, and resilience. His story, pieced together through the births, marriages, and deaths recorded over more than six decades, provides a meaningful reflection on the strength of family ties and the capacity for renewal in the face of sorrow. It is a life that speaks to many—ordinary, yes, but quietly remarkable in its endurance.

For descendants of the Schofield and Titmuss families, these records are more than historical dates. They are echoes of lives lived fully, of choices made in complex times, and of a legacy that continues through generations.

The above article is the result of collaborating with a distant cousin regarding our family name.

Frank Hamilton TITMUSS's birth certificate shows 'father not known'.

As a family we thought his father could have been ? HAMILTON as it is not a common first name..

DNA matches on Ancestry linked us with the name SCOFIELD, no 'thru' lines but reasonable Centi morgans.

This enabled us to contact a SCOFIELD living in Queensland Australia who, had a lot of research which he shared with us.

I asked Chatgpt to write me a 700 word article on A5 paper with 1cm margins and 11pt font to include dates, names and places which I entered.

The result was I think quite reasonable with more detail than I would have thought of. No mention of Queen Elizabeth 11.

What do you think? Let me know.

Now this cousin's sister has Ancestry pro tools and she is going to help me resolve my mystery 'is Frank Hamilton TITMUSS my bio father or not'?

(See my editorial Vol 37.2 November 2022 regarding my circumstances).

So with a bit of luck I may, I say may get my answers.

So I may have been a SCOFIELD, or some name completely different who knows? Watch this space.

—000—



MEMBER'S INTERESTS

SURNAME	PARISH/COUNTY	DATES	MEM No.
Leggett-variable	Brabourne, Kent	Pre 1800	3
Leggett-variable	Hackney, Middx	Pre 1840	
Mitchell-variable	Burford, Oxford	Pre 1760	
Simmon (D) 3	Hackney, Middx	Pre 1841	
Price	Hackney, Middx	Pre 1850	
Lewis	Eastbourne		631
Betteridge	Eastbourne		
Dyer	Sussex	1690-	673/1306
Hart	Sussex & Kent	1800-	
Pavey	Kent	1750-	
Lishman	Cumbria, Liverpool	1700-	737
Cooper	Sussex, Leicestershire	1700-	
	Liverpool		
Morgan	Newfoundland Canada	1895-1982	778
Harmer (Elizabeth)	Herstmonceux	1760-1800	940
Knight	Hastings		1080
Gutsell	Brede	18th & 19 th c	
Gausden	Battle		
Sprange	Eastbourne	All	1489
Taylor	Buxted/Sussex	1850-1950	
Wanmer	Kent	All	
Wanmer	World	All	

MEMBER'S INTERESTS

SURNAME	PARISH/COUNTY	DATES	MEM No
FITZGEORGE	Yorks	1760-1900	261/262
PAULSON	Oxton, Notts	1590-1960	261/262
GREAVES	Notts	1590-1900	261/262
WRAGG	Derbys	1600-1860	261/262
BURNHAM	London	1700s	261/262
WABY	Hackthorn, Lincs	1800s	261/262
WARREN	Uffington, Berks	1600 onwards	261/262
SAYERS	Eastbourne	All dates	1314/1315
HARRIS	Alfriston	All dates	1314/1315
HALL	Any	All dates	1569
BRIMS	Any	All dates	1569
WILLIAMS	Any	All dates	1569
MILLHAM	Kent & Sussex	All dates	1570
STRETTON	Eastbourne	All dates	1572
VINE	Hailsham	All dates	1572
TALBOT	Hailsham/Brighton	All dates	1572
SMITH	Croydon/Hailsham	All dates	1572
SMITH	Eastbourne	All dates	1572

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MAP OF "DISTRICT"

Showing parishes for "Family Roots" local research.



Map reproduced by kind permission of East Sussex County Record Office.

Alciston * Alfriston * Arlington * Berwick * Bishopstone
 *Chalvington * Chiddingly * Dallington * East Blatchington
 *East Dean * East Hoathly * Eastbourne * Folkington
 *Friston * Glynde * Hailsham * Heathfield * Hellingly*
 Herstmonceux * Hooe * Jevington * Laughton * Litlington
 *Lullington * Ninfield * Pevensey * Ringmer *Ripe*
 Seaford*Selmeston* Warbleton * Wartling *Westdean *
 West Firle *Westham * Willington * Wilmington

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