

Encouraging the study of family history since 1976



in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire & the Isle of Ely

THE JOURNAL



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VOLUME 31 : 1

SPRING 2025

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HUNTINGDONSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

PRESIDENT: ELIZABETH STAZICKER MA (OXON), DIPL ARCHIVE ADMIN, FRSA

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENTS: NED WAYNE & CAROL NOBLE

A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION

REGISTERED CHARITY No. : 278815

The Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society exists to encourage the study of genealogy, heraldry and family history within the old counties of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, and Huntingdonshire. We reformed on 1 January 2020 when the separate family history societies representing Cambridgeshire (est.1976) and Huntingdonshire (est.1984) amalgamated into a single organization.

We actively support established guidelines for good practice and aim to promote considered, informed and quality research. Our projects teams continue to work to scan, transcribe and index name-rich resources of genealogical interest, to enable researchers to pursue their county ancestors wherever they happen to now live. Volunteer researchers will offer their collective opinion on almost any query.

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For latest news, and updates

WATCH THE WEBSITE & NEWSLETTER & FACEBOOK

CONTACT US (for additional contacts/services see p51-2

All general correspondence via the Secretary, please :

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We aim to publish The Journal quarterly : mid-late Jan / April / July / Oct
You can submit material for publication at any time. We will include it in the next available issue (please be patient, space is finite and we will keep you posted)



CAMBS & HUNTS FHS JOURNAL

VOL 31 : 1

SPRING 2025



Welcome to the Spring edition of the CHFHS Journal—this issue includes an eclectic mix of articles and reports. This year sees our programme of online talks bring consolidated into a single session, and a new research surgery to be run monthly at St Neots Library (in place of Huntingdon)—we hope to see you there. Another new venture is a monthly series of online sessions based around the parishes of the various Poor Law Unions of Cambs & Hunts (see p.25 & website for details)

Feature articles and shorts in this issue include—Graham W tells of the descendant of a distant relative who ended up in America and made it “big” in the early movies; a personal slant on a sad local tale which had far-reaching repercussions is summarised by CJ at its 150th anniversary; Gill S reminds us that locals who go “missing” might (if you are lucky!) just turn up mentioned in records far removed from the local area; and, Robin P recounts the grisly tale of an unearthed skeleton.

All the regulars features are to be found dotted throughout—research surgeries and meetings’ diary; reports of talks; book reviews—and much more including a couple of dates to note later in the year: the AGM in May with a live talk by Peter Calver of LostCousins.com, and a free research day with The Farmland Museum in September

Print too small ?? Swap to the e-journal—it can be **enlarged** to suit all vision !!

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cover photo : A Mystery Photo : where is it??

... the where, the when, the how ... and the who ...

... all will be revealed in the next issue ...



MEMBERS HAVE FULL ACCESS TO THE ONLINE RECORD SEARCH

Keep an eye out for new content on the website

All members have FREE access to the transcription database,
which is accessed via the 'Members Area'
(click top right; then select <search the database>)

- **Registering for zoom talks** : you will receive an acknowledgement by return whenever you register, but no zoom link. The link will **only** be issued 48hrs ahead of the event—so, please recheck your emails.
- **Cambs and Hunts Research** : a new records database search / retrieval system that is accessed **only** via the members area login. The [big difference now](#), is that :

all searches and results are FREE TO ALL MEMBERS

THIS MIGHT INTEREST YOU ...

Kelly's Directories for Cambridgeshire

1883 - 1892 - 1896 - 1916

available as **FREE** downloads (pdf) on CHFHS website

listed under "Shop>Library"

The Society offers condolences to the families of :

Richard DAVISON **6481**

Keith BIGGS **5811**



A WORD FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN



My Cambridgeshire ancestors – keep talking

I have written several times about my not having any ancestors from Cambridgeshire or Huntingdonshire. However, I gave a researching family history talk to the Duxford Local History Group and one of the members mentioned that Robert de Todenai owned land in Duxford. I have checked the evidence for this, so can no longer claim no direct links with Cambridgeshire, although Robert did not live in Duxford.

During the same week, our Society talk about the Gatward family evidenced a branch from Ingatestone in Essex, where my second great grandmother was born. Oliver Gatward married Mary Braiser in 1610, and my ancestor Lucy Finch married George Brazier in 1809 in the neighbouring parish of Great Baddow. A link for me to follow up.

Two references to my family within the same week. I also received a comment from someone attending their first talk and feeling inspired. I did not foresee that either the Duxford or our Society talk would link to my family. Our talks are a very rich source, and I encourage everyone either to attend, or if you are not able to do so, look at the recording. You can never tell what you will learn or what connections you can make.

New year, new records, censuses

At the start of each year, new records come online as part of the 100 year rule, I can now see my mother in the 1939 register. The 1921 census is now on Ancestry as well as Find My Past, and there is an additional year in the General Register Office records.

The Society of Genealogists has now completed moving all its microfiche holdings to the Wharf Road library, and these can be made available for research through the usual booking process. I had been waiting for some time to consult an early census (1821) which unusually includes family names, so I made the booking but the fiche could not be found. This, however, worked to my advantage as the SoG Librarian alerted me to the collection of early censuses now accessible online and free of charge,

<https://ebc.byu.edu/Home/Browse>. I quickly found my family enabling me to confirm that the conclusion I had reached many years ago fitted the evidence far better than many published family trees; to distinguish between two people of the same name, birthplace and age, is a not uncommon problem.

There are 18 early 1801-1831 Cambridgeshire censuses on the Brigham Young University website, and 4 for Huntingdonshire. The details vary from parish to parish, but searching is easy; do have a look if you have not already done so.

Family Search Affiliate Libraries

The Family Search website often includes a reference that the full filmed document can be seen by visiting a FSAL. These may have limited opening hours and be some distance away. Following a suggestion from our journal editor, we have been in discussion with Cambridgeshire public libraries, about meeting the criteria for a FSAL and I am delighted that this is now available at Cambridge Central library. There are a few things that need to be completed before publicising that the FSAL content will be available in all the County public libraries, but the official announcement should come out fairly soon.

You can read about FSAL, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/affiliates/about>, and to view the content, you will need your library membership card; book a library computer, and have a (free) log in to Family Search. You will not be able to access this at home as with some other public library online content. Our thanks to Mary Burgess and her colleagues.

Is your subscription payment correct and up to date? Action required

The majority of our subscription renewals take place at the start of each year. Anyone who pays by Standing Order must make sure that the sum they are paying correctly matches the subscription chosen, as the Society cannot amend any Standing Orders. Although our rates changed at the start of 2023, despite several reminders, there are 66 members who have paid an outdated sum, and chasing this takes a large amount of time. We will email the 57 of these members for whom we have an email address, and if they do not make the additional payment, they will all be transferred to the environmental e-journal option. Those then contacting us about non-receipt of print journals, will then have the option to revert back after they have paid the correct subscription. For the 9 members who do not have an email address, we will send a letter, costing the Society unnecessary postage and time, and they can either let us have an email address, and receive the e-journal, pay the correct amount for the print journal, or their membership will

be suspended. We hope this will prompt those 9 to contact us, sort out payment, and add an email address if they can.

Some members pay by cheque, and paying the cheques into our account means travelling to find the nearest branch. We are all aware of how many banks have closed in the last few years. When your renewal is due, please try to pay by Stripe as this is safe, secure and automatically updates both your membership and the Society records.

Spinning House project

We have recently paid Cambridge University Library to create a digital record of the three Spinning House books in their collection. Many of you will have heard our member, Caroline Biggs, talking about the book she wrote about the women and the University. The talk is in our member archive if you missed it. The image creation is now in progress, and the results will be published in the Cambridge Digital Library in the coming weeks. You will be able to read about the 6,000 women named in the books, all of whom are indexed. Some were local to Cambridge, others came from elsewhere. We are discussing how best to find the other names that are in the three books.

Law Commission consultations

The government has now decided not to proceed with the destruction of original wills, and the Law Commission will publish its final report on the outcome in April. Many of you will have responded recognising that when an original document is destroyed, the digital copy does not provide everything that an original does. The government recognised the great concerns from the responses and you can now read their conclusions,

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6780fd71d5422b88ec018416/will-storage-consultation-response.pdf>. This is not the end, because long term storage of the increasing number of wills needs space and incurs significant costs, so there will be further work.

Another Law Commission consultation about burials and cremations has recently ended and the conclusions are awaited. This is arguably an even more sensitive subject than wills, as burial ground and cremation space both have close emotional and family links. Other important factors include environmental space and public health. The Society response has been acknowledged, and we await the outcome.

David Capsey

January 2025

Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society AGM 2024

Saturday 17 May 2024 at 1.15pm

@ Cambridgeshire Archives, The Dock, Ely, & By Zoom

AGENDA

- 1) Apologies for absence
- 2) Acknowledgement of member organisation representatives
- 3) Minutes of the Virtual AGM held on 11 May 2024
- 4) The Chairman's Report
- 5) Financial Report for 2024
- 6) Election of the President
- 7) Election of the Officers and other members of the Executive Committee (Trustees)
- 8) The appointment of an Independent Examiner of the Charity's Accounts for the forthcoming year in accordance with clause M3
- 9) Annual Subscription
- 10) Discussion and decisions on any submitted motions (Motions for submission to the AGM shall be in the hands of the Secretary at least fourteen clear days before the Meeting, not counting the day of the Meeting)
- 11) Any other business, at the discretion of the Chairman

MINUTES OF 2024 AGM ARE AVAILABLE ON THE CHFHS WEBSITE

AGM 2025

SAT 17 MAY

@

**CAMBS
ARCHIVES
ELY**

11.00 ... doors open for document exhibition

11.45 ... live talk by Peter Calver

(founder of www.LostCousins.com)

"It's NOT About Finding Cousins"

13.15 ... CHFHS AGM

Getting there ...

*Car (satnav CB7 4GS) free parking available on site
Railway station (5min walk)*

Bus #9 from Cambridge to Ely Tesco (2min walk)

Bus #112 from Newmarket to Ely Tesco (2min walk)

WHEN THE STORY BECOMES MORE INTERESTING THAN THE FAMILY: OVER TO HOLLYWOOD Part One

By Graham WEBSTER (2978)

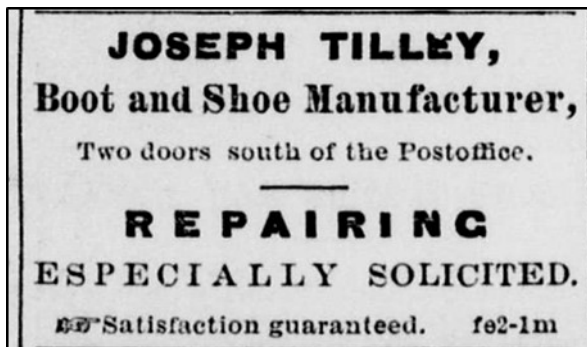
Genealogical research relies heavily on what others have researched. This, in my family history journey, includes family historians of Over, Cambridgeshire, in particular Carolyn REDMAYNE and her *The Spirit of Over* ¹, tracing of inhabitants and places in that village. Looking through it and taking down details of individuals loosely connected to my family tree I came across a story that was too good not to research. So while I have (I find) barely any family link to it, it was a fascinating look at social history.

The story starts with Mary WAYMAN (4th great granddaughter of paternal grandfather of wife, my 1st cousin 8x removed – and that is the closest relationship it gets!!) who was born in November 1830 in Over, Cambridgeshire. She marries Joseph TILLEY, a cordwainer from Fenstanton, at the Holy Trinity church in Cambridge on 26 November 1854. They welcomed their first child, Elizabeth M, in May 1855, followed by William Berry in July 1856, Bertha Urania in December 1857, Justin Joseph in November 1860, all born in Over. In the 1861 census the family is living in the High Street, Over; he is still a cordwainer. Edith Angela is born in Fenstanton in August 1861 and Linna Anna in the same village in May 1863. There was apparently ill-will between Joseph and his brother-in-law, Samuel WAYMAN, as a Petty Sessions court case was dismissed after the latter was assaulted by the former ². Tragically, on 22 March 1866 it is announced that Mary gives birth to triplets (Susan, Laura and Gertrude) who die shortly after birth ³. The records show that on 2 May 1866 the family arrive in New York on *The Queen* en route to Iowa. They obviously travelled to Ohio as, in February 1868, son Christopher C is born in Crestline, Crawford City. In the 1870 census they are living in Marshall County, Iowa where on 10 January youngest child, Anna Laurie, is born in LaMoile; Joseph is recorded as a boot/shoemaker and owning real estate worth \$1,500.

As some time shortly thereafter the family moves to Los Angeles, where the family continued to live throughout this story, as in 1878 Joseph is granted

American naturalisation in October 1878. Joseph is trying to develop his business:

Los Angeles Herald,
13 February, 1878, p4



In 1880 he is a delegate of the Workingmen's Club to the annual convention, living at 30 Georgia Street, Los Angeles. It is here, on 14 April 1882, that Mary dies; she is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Los Angeles County, on 16 April 1882. To briefly round off this part of the story, Joseph goes on to marry Mrs Eleanor J BIEN in April 1883, divorcing in September 1884, marrying (again) Mrs E J TRAMBLEY in June 1890 ⁴. In the 1890s he gets involved in proposing improvements to the public infrastructure (pavements, streets and bridges); spiritualism, the Temperance movement and astronomy. He lived at 808 East Thirds, Los Angeles in 1900, and 1800 Essex Street, Los Angeles. Joseph died on 4 September 1915 and is also buried at Evergreen Cemetery. It is, however, this image that set me off to research the story rather than family members:



**Joseph TILLY and granddaughter
Winifred BRISON**

*Photograph from the Security Pacific
National Bank Collection, part of the
Los Angeles Public Library* ⁵

Winifred was the daughter of Annie Tilley. She had moved to Los Angeles with the rest of the family (see above). She married Oliver Alfred BRISON in Los Angeles on 16 January 1890 at the house of her father, Joseph, 100 Georgia Street. The newspaper report ⁶ of the wedding has a fascination list of gifts – from a “bed-room set” from the bride’s father, to “a box of cigars”! Daughter Vivian Carolyn is born on 23 August 1890 and on 20 December 1892, Winifred is born, both in Los Angeles. Winifred is recorded as living in San Bernardino, California, in 1900, but in back in Los Angeles in 1910.

Winifred, using her stage name of Winifred BRYSON, began to perform publicly in 1914, initially on the musical comedy stage, and in the drama *Regeneration* with Bert LYTELL ⁷. Described as a ‘... sultry, olive-skinned California native...’ ⁸, Winifred’s first film was *Peer Gynt* in 1915,:

...[a] fantasy silent film directed by Oscar Apfel and Raoul Walsh and adapted from the Henrik Ibsen play by Oscar Apfel. The film stars Cyril Maude, Myrtle Stedman, Fanny Stockbridge, Mary Reubens, Mary Ruby and Winifred Bryson. The film was released on September 16, 1915, by Paramount Pictures ⁹

She performed as a leading lady on the New York stage with the David Belasco Theatrical Co. and later with the Morosco Theatre ¹⁰, and appeared in several musical comedies ¹¹. Working in New York may well explain why, on 29 January 1918 she married Warner Leroy BAXTER in the Bronx (his second marriage, the first to Viola CALDWELL in 1911 ended in divorce in 1913). He had an interesting back story:

...[he] claimed to have an early pre-disposition toward show business: "I discovered a boy a block away who would eat worms and swallow flies for a penny. For one-third of the profits, I exhibited him in a tent." When he was age 9, his widowed mother moved to San Francisco where, following the earthquake of 1906, his family lived in a tent for two weeks "in mortal terror of the fire." ... ¹²

It is said that his start on stage in Columbus was in 1910, in vaudeville, when a dancer broke his ankle and Baxter replaced him (he had previously been an office boy) ¹³. He stuck to the theatre thereafter, with the occasional period as an insurance agent, sales manager and commercial traveler ¹⁴ and for example joining the Oklahoma Stock Company in 1913 mixed in, one must assume to make ends meet. Solid, handsome, with dark flashing eyes and a pencil mustache, he began acting in silent movies, with an uncredited bit part in *Her Own Money* in 1914 (but not released until 1922):

*Mildred Carr (Clayton) is a working class wife who has saved her money and marries Lew Alden (Baxter), a struggling business man. After five years of married life, a financial crisis occurs so Mildred loans her husband her savings apparently through a third party which causes Lew to leave her when he discovers the fraud. She goes back to work and, after he regains his losses, he asks her forgiveness and they make up*¹⁵.

Winifred and Warner then appears to have relocated back to Los Angeles as she appears in *A Heart to Let* in 1921. Warner in the meantime appeared in *First Love* also in 1921 (it is recorded he appeared in two earlier films but uncredited¹⁶):

*...[a] romantic comedy film produced by the Realart Pictures Corporation and distributed through the related Paramount Pictures. It stars Constance Binney and was directed by Maurice Campbell. [Plot] As described in a film magazine,[3] factory worker Kathleen O'Donnell (Binney) has fallen in love with ambulance driver Harry Stanton (Webb). After her father Tad O'Donnell (Hernandez), who knows Harry's true character, forbids him in the house, Kathleen leaves home and works overtime at the factory for funds for Harry to complete his medical education, a course of study which exists only in fiction. The efforts of her family and other employees to show her error lead her to quit her factory job and take a job as a waitress at a restaurant, where she sees him dining with his lady friends. Her discovery of his perfidy results in an attack on him that injures his sight. She later has a happy ending as the owner of the factory Donald Halliday (Baxter) has an interest in her*¹⁷.

Winifred goes on to appear in a further 17 films¹⁸.



Winifred BRYSON

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18815386/winifred_bryson

It was generally agreed, however, that her best film was *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, released in 1923, in which she portrays Fleur De Lys¹⁹.

Fleur de Lys (Winifred Bryson)

[https://
www.thehunchblog.com/2012/06/21/
wasted-tragedy-a-character-review-of-
the-1923-version-of-sister-gudule/](https://www.thehunchblog.com/2012/06/21/wasted-tragedy-a-character-review-of-the-1923-version-of-sister-gudule/)



A review said:

...any fan of silent film will remain transfixed by the film's staggering production design and opulent sense of occasion. Chaney's makeup is dynamite, the effects utilised throughout the film superbly rendered (the legendary Bastille is rendered as what appears to be a matte painting of some sort) and the performances from all are solid enough to keep the film moving even when the title cards threaten to overwhelm²⁰.

The film:

... was a huge undertaking for Universal Studios. It was produced on a grand scale at a then-phenomenal \$1,250,000. Movie magic recreated Notre Dame. The cathedral set ended just above the main doors. For wider shots, the church's upper portion was actually a large-scale hanging miniature. It would be lined up between the camera and the full-scale set to create the illusion of the edifice²¹.

Winifred's last film was *Adoration* in 1928, around which time talkies began to appear in cinemas.

Part Two continues the stories of early Hollywood, tracing Winifred's husband, Warner's, career from early talkies, Oscar award and further fame, never neglecting Winifred's role in that career.

Notes

¹ REDMAYNE, Carolyn (2021) ISBN 978-1-8381228-0-5

² Samuel Wayman, of Over, farmer, was charged with assaulting Joseph Tilley, at that place, on 25th August ... *The Cambridge Chronicler and University Journal, Isle of Ely Herald, and Huntingdonshire Gazette*, 9 Sept 1865, p7

³ Over: Triple births, *The Cambridge Independent Press*, 31 March 1866, p8; Laura's death certificate records that she was born prematurely and was '1 minute' old on her death (courtesy of Carolyn REDMAYNE)

⁴ FamilySearch

⁵ Caption in REDMAYNE *op cit* "Joseph Tilley with granddaughter, Winifred Brison, in Los Angeles, Winifred was an actress in the early silent movies, marrying a silent screen star, Warner Baxter..."

⁶ Brison-Tilley, *Los Angeles Herald*, 19 January 1890

⁷ *Winifred Bryson*, https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Winifred_Bryson ; *Winifred Bryson*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winifred_Bryson

⁸ *Winifred Bryson*, https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0117479/bio/?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm

⁹ *Peer Gynt*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_Gynt_\(1915_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_Gynt_(1915_film))

¹⁰ Winifred Bryson, Actress, Dies at 94, *Los Angeles Times*, 23 August 1987, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-08-23-mn-3076-story.html>

¹¹ *Winifred Bryson*, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/18815386/winifred_bryson

¹² *Warner Baxter*, https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0062828/bio/?ref=nm_ov_bio_sm

¹³ *Warner Baxter – A Brief Biography*, <https://immortalephemera.com/4433/warner-baxter/>

¹⁴ *Warner Leroy Baxter*, <https://www.geni.com/people/Warner-Baxter/6000000027862301844>

¹⁵ *Her Own Money*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Her_Own_Money

¹⁶ *Warner Baxter*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Baxter

¹⁷ *First love*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Love_\(1921_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Love_(1921_film))

¹⁸ See *Winifred Bryson*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winifred_Bryson ; *Winifred Bryson*, <https://www.allmovie.com/artist/winifred-bryson-vn15431838>

¹⁹ See for example *Movie Review: The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923)*, <https://shamelesspile.blogspot.com/2016/01/movie-review-hunchback-of-notre-dame.html> ; *A look at the glorified extras of the 1923 version of Hunchback*, <https://www.thehunchblog.com/tag/winifred-bryson/>

²⁰ *Movie Review – Hunchback Of Notre Dame, The (1923)*, <https://www.fernbyfilms.com/2019/05/13/movie-review-hunchback-of-notre-dame-the-1923/>

²¹ *Hunchback of Notre Dame, The (1923)...*, <https://thedigitalbits.com/item/hunchback-notre-dame-kino-2021-bd>

Cover photo story ...

A recent enquiry asked us for help in identifying a mystery photo. Accompanying information as supplied proved, however, to be somewhat of a "red herring". The answer to a successful identification was to be found in clues revealed through looking at the wider family away from the local area—and playing a hunch!

All will be revealed in the next issue ...

A VICTORIAN TRAGEDY : revisited

by CJ (a local story 150 years on)

Just a day or so ago, at the time of writing in mid-Jan, the BBC Local News website carried a piece announcing a formal “blue plaque” at the former Fulbourn Asylum to mark the 150th Anniversary of the death of 11-year old George Brewster. George is in good company as other blue plaques around the county commemorate locations associated with, among others, Charles Darwin, Oliver Cromwell and Alan Turing.

CJ had drafted this backstory research on occupations in his own family history a while ago, and although not a new story by any means, it does seem apt to include it here from the personal perspective—

I think it is fair to say that when most people get in to Family History there is always the anticipation that they may find something in their family tree which is at least ‘interesting’. For many however their researches find that those ancestors from rural areas are not infrequently described as the ubiquitous ‘ag lab’ and the urban ancestors’ census records show the mundane occupations of the local staple industries. No music hall artistes or Army pensioners with stirring tales of service in the far-flung reaches of the Empire here. It is a situation common even to people who have, themselves, reached a certain fame. The BBC’s ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ series famously looked into Michael Parkinson’s family and informed him they couldn’t find anything at all in his background which they could base an “interesting” programme around.

Being in this sort of position encourages people to look a little further into the occupations our ancestors did have, as a form of social history if nothing else. When I looked into the occupations of my ancestors one great-grandfather born in the 1850s was down in several census records as a chimney sweep. Nothing very exciting here I thought - childhood memories of Edwardian sweeps terrorising the rooftops of London with outbreaks of mass dancing in Mary Poppins notwithstanding. Further investigation into the actual life and times of sweeps in this earlier Victorian period painted a very different and grimmer picture. One in which, ironically, Cambridge itself featured nationally at a critical point.

Background

The Great Fire of London raged through a large part of the city in September 1666. When the city was being rebuilt, the building regulations governing acceptable chimney designs were changed in an understandable attempt to

prevent a re-occurrence of the blaze. All newly-built fireplaces now had to have smaller flues in narrower chimneys, as coal shipped in from the north-east had replaced wood as the usual fuel. Coal required a better 'draw' of air for efficient combustion.

However a side-effect of the narrower chimneys was that the build-up of soot and creosote within the flues as the by-products of coal-burning, but could not now be easily accessed for removal. Equally certain was that the build-up of waste products would cause the fire below to burn inefficiently and fill rooms with smoke. The available spaces where the flues ran were often narrow, sometimes only 14 inches wide (the black line at the edge of this page is 7 inches—imagine a space just double that in diameter!!) A grown man couldn't possibly reach the soot to clear it – but a small child could.

Thus began the infamous practice of sending small boys (and very occasionally girls) up and down chimneys in order to ensure that they were cleared of harmful deposits. It was a common practice in England for over 200 years, condemned by some as a social evil akin to slavery, but never properly prevented, and which lasted long after the emancipation of slaves...

The job of cleaning a chimney was carried out by a child who would climb the chimney while holding a brush over his head. The soot would fall down over the child and down to the bottom of the fireplace. The child would then slide back down the chimney, collect the soot, and hand it over to the master sweep who employed him and in effect "owned" him.

As you may imagine recruiting willing volunteers to become a child sweep was difficult. Small boys, usually 6 years of age, were 'purchased' from their poverty stricken parents by a master sweep. Orphans were another common source (shades of *Oliver Twist*), a practice encouraged by the worthy Poor Law Guardians as it by relieved the parish ratepayers of the need to support them. The children were formally apprenticed to the master sweep, effectively becoming his 'property' for the duration of the apprenticeship and very often cruelly treated, living in some of the worst conditions imaginable.

The boys recruited by the chimney sweep 'masters', were underfed so that they would remain thin enough to continue working within chimneys, and might find themselves back on the street if and when they grew too big for the chimneys.

There were many hazards associated with human chimney sweeps

besides having to scabble up in the gloom up walls of soot. Children got stuck in the narrow chimneys (often only 14-18 inches wide, as described) and of a winding construction, with awkward turns where the child could become wedged at the tight corners. Sometimes a second child would be sent into a chimney to rescue the first, and they might both end up dying. On occasions, the walls of a home would have to be torn down to remove the child or children trapped in a flue, or their bodies..

Inevitably as a result of their work, the children often had lung problems; their eyes would swell, becoming sore and inflamed. Many children acquired disfiguring skin conditions and had stunted skeletal growth due to both their poor nutrition and the cramped working positions they had to adopt when their bones were still soft. When the boys became adolescents, it wasn't unusual for them to suffer from a painful cancer of the scrotum. Chimney Sweep Cancer was unique to chimney sweeps and has the dubious privilege of being the first officially recorded form of an industrial cancer. A child who worked as a chimney sweep rarely grew to live past middle age.

This is not to say that some attempts were made to prevent the worst excesses. In 1788 a law against the use of young children, under the age of eight, as chimney sweeps was enacted. This law declared that the master sweep had to offer proper clothing as well as decent living conditions and had to allow the children to go to church on Sundays. However the law was widely ignored and children as young as six were still being used to sweep chimneys.

Fifty years passed and another Chimney Sweeps act in 1840 stated it was not legal to make someone or even allow any person under the age of 21 to climb up or into a chimney for the purpose of cleaning it. Again this Act was widely ignored. By this time there was even less need to use children as it had been demonstrated that newer methods of sweeping could be done more safely and just as well by using the flexible brushes system we are more familiar with today. However a set of these was expensive and orphans were cheap.

As an aside, the popular Victorian children's book, "The Water Babies", by the Cambridge-educated clergyman and author Charles Kingsley, published in 1863, features a child sweep as the protagonist of the story. It is thus clear that the knowledge young children were still being used illegally was common knowledge. Yet a blind eye was still being shown to the practice.

The last act

This brings us to the victim of our tale. George Brewster was the last child of John & Rebecca (née Fleet) Brewster. He was born in London in 1863. His

parents were both originally from Ely. His father John worked as a sawyer the same as his father and brothers. John and Rebecca had married in 1839 when she was probably only 16 years old. They had three sons and a daughter while living in Ely: William (born 1842), James (born 1844) Barnard (born 1847) and Sarah Ann (born and died in 1850). After Sarah Ann's death they had moved to Shadwell in London. Three boys in were left in Ely as they appear in the 1851 census in Ely workhouse. In 1855 the couple had another daughter also called Sarah who was baptised at St Paul's Church, Shadwell. In 1861 John and Rebecca were still in Shadwell with Sarah who was now 6 years old. Eldest son William lived nearby. In 1863 Rebecca gave birth to George, although this was 21 years after the birth of her first child she was only 40 years old. His birth was registered in Stepney in the third quarter of the year. Rebecca became ill and died in June 1864. She was buried in Victoria Park Cemetery, Hackney.

By 1871 George had been adopted by his elder brother William and his wife Mary Ann and was living at 3 Comet Yard (off Castle Street, Cambridge). At some point George was sent to work for William Wyer, a Cambridge chimney sweep.

On 11th February 1875 George was taken to the Fulbourn Asylum, just outside Cambridge, where Wyer had been engaged to sweep the boiler chimney. George was sent up the tiny flue and became stuck. Part of the chimney had to be dismantled before he could be released. He was still alive and efforts were made to revive him but his lungs had taken in too much soot and he died.

William Wyer was tried for manslaughter for sending an obviously underage boy up the chimney. Claims were made that the boy was 14 when he was really only 12 (and remember the 1840 Act had made 21 the minimum). The defence lawyer even, unconvincingly, tried to blame both George for having eaten something before entering the chimney and the builder of the chimney for making the flue too small. William Wyer was found guilty and given just 6 months hard labour, and was to pick up where he left off (still listed as a chimney sweep in the 1881 and 1891 censuses).

The Brewster case became a 'cause célèbre' nationally. The noted social reformer Lord Shaftesbury this time made sure that the old Chimney Sweeps Act of 1840 was superseded with a new, stringent, Chimney Sweeps Act of 1875. This was finally to legally mandate that no boys were ever sent up chimneys again. Henceforward all chimney sweeps were required to use the expensive flexible brush system which they had previously been unwilling to buy when using boys was so much cheaper. Under the new Act of 1875 it

was required that all chimney sweeps had to be registered with the police. Their work also had to be officially supervised.

George Brewster, the last child sweep to die in England, was buried in the Mill Road Cemetery in Cambridge. The tragedy of poor 12 year old George Brewster at Fulbourn had finally put an end to 'sending boys up chimneys'.

As to my great-grandfather, by 1875 he was in his mid-twenties and described in the census as a 'journeyman sweep' and thus an employee, not yet a master himself, so I prefer to think he was a survivor - one of the new breed of sweeps who henceforward always used the flexible brushes.

RECEIVED FROM DAN PITTMAN : re PITTMAN / PITMAN

We're researching Pitman families in Cambridgeshire and surrounding shires who possibly had a PITMAN / WALL ancestor that migrated to the American colony of Virginia (in the 1648 – 1650 time period). We are a large group of Pitman / Wall researchers in the United States looking for distant cousins. We do this with DNA testing. View the Pittman DNA Project website at: www.familytreedna.com/public/pittmandna/

Also, you can view our Facebook page at:

www.facebook.com/people/The-Pittman-Project-Bridging-Genetics-and-Genealogy-Globally

If you are a Pitman (or Pitman researcher) and can go back to at least your male Pitman grandparent, we are searching for a male Pitman from your family line to take a free DNA test.

We need only one male tester from each Pitman family line. If you can help, please contact me at Dan.pittman@comcast.net

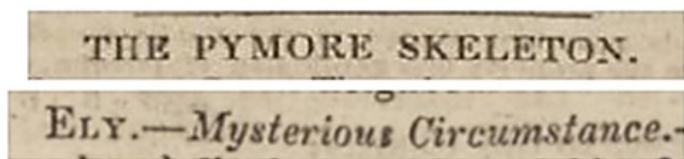
ELPHICKS OF HUNTINGDON

In recent weeks, several newspaper articles have been noticed which report on the closures of family businesses of 100yr-plus standing—victims of the times, online competition, rent/rates, or the lack of a next generation to take up the reins. It's heartening, then, to see that just such a local business is going from strength to strength and being taken up by the 5th generation.

The furnishers, Elphicks of George Street Huntingdon, was founded some 121years ago by Edward William Elphick. The son of London-born Richard Elphick, a solicitor's clerk latterly living in St Neots, Edward first worked in London, and then as a travelling furniture salesman before settling in Huntingdon. He married Kent-born Frances West in Kent in 1901; they died in 1955 and 1977, respectively, in Sussex and at Upwood, Hunts.

THE PYMORE SKELETON

Received from Robin Pearl



In April 1839 the following was reported in the Huntingdon, Bedford & Peterborough Gazette:

Two men last week were employed digging clay in a field of Mr Upsher's, at Oxloade, near Downham, in the Isle of Ely, and when they got to about 2½ feet below the surface, then discovered a skeleton. Considerable excitement has prevailed in the neighbourhood as to whose skeleton it could be; and the following particulars seem to give a reasonable cause for the general opinion which prevails, that they are the remains of John Peckett, a native of Downham. About nine years last December a person of that name left Downham in company with a man named John Edis, alias "Andrew Jack", for the purpose of proceeding to America together. Peckett had about 20 pounds in his pocket, and the latter only 3 pounds, which was given him by the overseers of Downham, for the sake of getting rid of him; some time afterwards, "Andrew Jack" wrote word that when they arrived at Liverpool, the ship could only take one passenger, which he went by, and that he had not heard of Peckett since. It is certain that Peckett had lost a front tooth; and the skeleton found was likewise deficient of one. No intelligence whatever has been heard of Peckett since his departure.

John Hiblin Peckett was baptised at St Leonards on 4th June 1809 the son of John and Mary and it seems that this could have been his sorry demise. The punishment for murder in the 1830s was death by hanging and, on the basis of the lost tooth, this seemed to be an open and shut case.

However there was somebody with different ideas and a couple of weeks later the paper printed the following letter:

Sir- There is something so dreadful in being even suspected of the crime of murder, that it is the unquestionable duty of every man to assist in clearing the character of a fellow creature (whom he believes innocent) of

such a fearful imputation, more especially when the injured party is not present to vindicate himself, as is the case with poor John Edwards, on whom a correspondent in your paper of the 13th inst. so summarily fixes the charge of murdering his companion John Peckett. Being intimately acquainted with both parties, and the circumstances connected with their emigration to America, and feeling anxious to rescue the character of John Edwards from the foul (and I believe false) charge which the writer of the "Mysterious Circumstances" has brought against him, I beg leave to trouble you with a few particulars relating thereto. Edwards came into Downham Fen in the summer of 1829, and continued working for different farmers in the neighbourhoods til the Christmas of that year; the latter part of that time for myself and brother, during all which time his conduct was unexceptional. The account he gave of himself was, that he was born in the army, had lost both father and mother in his childhood, and never knew what parish he belonged to; under which circumstances he could not be removed from the parish of Downham. Emigration to America being the rage at that time, and flattering accounts of that country the constant subject of conversation, he became anxious to go thither, if the parish officers would assist him, which they agree to do, and gave him £3 for that purpose. He also went round the neighbourhood with a petition, and to my certain knowledge, collected upwards of £3 more; so that he had above £6 when he started. Peckett was a native of Downham, and sold a cottage left him by an uncle, to the parish for £15, to enable him to emigrate. They started from my house on the morning of 2nd January 1830, between four and five o'clock, and afterwards breakfasted at the house of Thomas Cole (who has since emigrated to America), with whom Edwards had been a lodger. and where they were seen by Richard Foreman, now living at Downham, who was also a lodger with Cole at that time. After this they were seen and spoken with by Sarah Martin (a cousin to Peckett, and now living in the neighbourhood), on the Hundred Foot bank above Oxloode and at least a mile beyond the spot where the skeleton, mentioned in the "Mysterious Circumstances", was lately found on Mr Upsher's farm. After adding that it was in the time of a hard frost, the ground being covered with a deep snow, I ask, was it probable that they came back to this place, or possible for Edwards to have disposed of Peckett's body in such an open, public spot without being seen, as it must have been broad daylight before he could have done so. The finding a skeleton in such a place undoubtedly prove that some poor creature was foully dealt with some time or other; but from the decayed appearance of those bones, the event must have taken place long before Peckett, or even his father, was born. Not a particle of hair, flesh, ligament or clothing

was attached to the skeleton; the teeth were much worn, and must have belonged to a person much above twenty-one years, which was Peckett's age at that time; and as to the tooth being wanting, neither his father or mother recollect any such deficiency in him. But I have further evidence to adduce that Peckett was not murdered in England, and, if in America, certainly not by Edwards, who has sent several letters to me and my brother since his settlement in that country, stating that they went in different ships from Liverpool, himself to New York and Peckett to Philadelphia; and assigning the reason of their separation, exactly in accordance with the particulars given in the following extract from a letter written from Liverpool by Mr James Waxham, who emigrated the following year, and whom Peckett's father requested to make inquiry about his son. The letter is dated May 16, 1831, and the extract as follows: "Tell John Peckett that I have been making inquiry at the Passenger's offices about his son; I have been today with Becket, the agent, and saw him examine the ledger, in which I saw the names of John Packet and John Edwards both together in the book, dated January 1830. Tell him I saw it myself and am satisfied. The agent told me that the name of the ship Peckett went in was the Bainbridge, for Philadelphia. He says it arrived safely, and has made several voyages since.

Printed for M. Deitch, J. H. Barnes, Wesley Parker and Ship Brokers Office, under the Custom House, Philadelphia. J. H. Barnes, Printer.

REPORT OR MANIFEST of all the Passengers taken on board the *Ship Bainbridge* whereof *J. H. Barnes* is Master, from *England* and owned by *Joseph H. Barnes* and bound to *Philadelphia*

409 Tons *40* and owned by *Joseph H. Barnes* and bound to *Philadelphia*

leaveth

NAMES	AGE	SEX	OCCUPATION	To what Country belonging	Capacity of which it is their intention to land in the United States	Number and Names of Passengers who have died on the voyage
<i>John Wilson</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>Seaman</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>United States of America</i>	
<i>Wm. Bennett</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>James Wilson</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Henry Freeman</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Richard Freeman</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Benjamin Parson</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Wm. Freeman</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Wm. Gray</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Sam. Parker</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Charles Clark</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Sam. Rogers</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>John Peckett</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>do</i>				
<i>Isaac Platt</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>do</i>				

Edwards went in the *Ariadne* for New York, he says they both agreed for their passage in the *Bainbridge* for Philadelphia; and that John Edwards had to go in another ship in consequence of the first being full of passengers."

When Edwards wrote last, he was living at a place called Matteson Mills, in the State of New York, and had found himself apprentice to a shoemaker. Is it at all probable we should ever have heard from him, or been made acquainted with his locality, if he had committed himself in such a dreadful manner, and left the proof of his guilt under our very noses? To those who are not absolutely blinded by prejudice, I think the answer must be obvious. As to Peckett, I admit he has not been heard of, but if there is no proof of his being alive, there is certainly none of his being dead. He was a very ignorant, illiterate young man, could neither read nor write; and I firmly believe was unable to dictate even the direction of a letter to his friends in England. Many emigrants have fallen victims to the climate of America immediately on their arrival; which was the case with two of my neighbours, who died within of their landing. But whether Peckett is alive or dead, I trust that the above facts (in the judgement of all unprejudiced minds) will clear poor John Edwards of his death, of which I believe him to be guiltless as I am, or any of those who have shown such an inhuman anxiety to blacked the character, and murder the reputation, of an individual who never did any of them the slightest injury.

I am, Sir, your's respectfully John Harrison, Pymore.

So what became of our protagonists?

As we have seen, John Peckett did board the *Bainbridge* and there is an immigration slip for his arrival in Philadelphia. I can find no direct references

PECKETT		John	
Family Name		Given Name	
Accompanied by			
Age	21	M	
Yr			
Mon			
Sex			
M		S	
W		D	
Occupation		Painter	
Nationality		Irish	
Last permanent Residence		Destination	
(TOWN, COUNTRY, ETC.)		Philadelphia	
Port of entry		Date	
Philadelphia		4-22-1830	
Name of vessel		Date	
Bainbridge		1837	

to John after his arrival but there is an entry in the 1875 Philadelphia street directory:

Ellen Peckett, widow of John

John H Peckett, Painter,

—possibly a son?

ania > Philadelphia > 1875 > Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, City Directory, 1875

Peck William, weaver, h 519 N 23d	ONG MEEN MARK
Recker Elizabeth, wid Jacob, h 915 Kurtz	
Pecker John, h 915 Kurtz	
Peckett Ellen, wid John, h 3915 Story	
Peckett John H., painter, h 3915 Story	
Peckham George L., grainer, h 1635 Park av	

And John Edwards, alias John Edis, alias Andrew Jack?

He is listed on the passenger manifesto for the Ariadne and his letter home stated that he was an apprentice shoemaker in Matteson Mills, Otsego county, New York.

DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK — PORT OF NEW-YORK.						
List or Manifest of all the Passengers taken on board the Ship <i>Ariadne</i> whereof <i>Edmond McElroy</i> is Master, from <i>Liverpool</i> burthen <i>372</i>						
NAME.	AGE.		SEX.	COMPL.	The Country to which they are really belong.	The Country to which they intend to become inhabitants.
<i>Andrew Duriman</i>	22		<i>male</i>	<i>Latvian</i>	<i>Latvian</i>	<i>Latvian</i>
<i>Andreas do</i>	26		"		"	"
<i>John do</i>	22		"		"	"
<i>John do</i>	24		"		"	"
<i>John Edwards</i>	28		"		"	"
<i>John do</i>			"		"	"

There are many John Edwards in the 1950 US census, but no shoemakers—so his story ends here.

A One-Name Study, Kidman

At the age of 12 my grandfather helped me start my lifetime of family history. Over the next few years I made some headway but working in London in my late 20s I realised that there weren't many Kidmans. That made me think of a one-name study and off I went. When my grandfather died I discovered that he had been writing to various parishes for Kidman information so I would suggest that he was the pioneer.

With the help of my aunt and my wife, we transcribed every Kidman birth, death and marriage registration from Somerset and then St Katherine's House. I then put each birth on a computer punched card, adding in death and marriage where I could. Before long research extended to the microfilms in the then Public Record Office, census, pre-1858 wills and probate calendars. I also used county record offices and even knocked on peoples' doors to ask for more information. Everyone I visited was interested

and helpful.

During this time I joined CFHS as Cambridgeshire was the county I had researched back to and the GOONS as I was doing a one-name study.

I processed the punched cards using a set of programmes to give me summaries, lists and trees. The next stage was thinking what to do with the results and a book was the obvious choice. I managed to get it into print in 1984 with some text, some lists of the name in various places such as authors, patent-holders, suburb names etc and all of the trees that I had assembled with 10 or more Kidmans. I made that decision to avoid pages being taken up by only a very small and potentially meaningless tree.

The 143 copies available after six for copyright and one for myself were sold over the next few years. I went to the public library to transcribe all Kidman 'phone book entries and then direct mailed them with a simple form explaining what I had done and with a reply slip to make their purchase.

Since then there have been four more censuses released, the 1939 register and many more BDM events and probate index entries. Indeed the amount of information available now means that my plans to produce a second edition about 20 years ago went out of the window. I can't keep up with all the updates I need to do to my data which have now moved from card to disk! I still use the same programmes and have added a few along the way. On top of that I spend so much time on other branches of the family that I will need to concentrate for months if the second edition is to become a reality.

The other big impact of recent years is the use of DNA matching for family history. It has been very useful in confirming known and finding new branches of cousins all over the world, but it is a bit more difficult with the one-name study. There seem to have been few Kidmans who have had a DNA test and the results I have had whilst confirming most of my research have called into question one or two of my assumptions. I would love to resolve those questions before any second edition book but that could be a very long job.

All my studies have shown that most Kidmans came from a fairly small area around Cambridge and west into Huntingdonshire, for example Eltisley and Great Gransden. There is however what seems to be a completely unrelated group in Norfolk and a very few Kedmans emanated from Kent. There were also some Kidmanns in Thuringia just to add an international twist. The two most well known Kidmans, Nicole and Sir Sydney, both go back to the aforementioned Cambridgeshire area.

I hope work will continue and I get the second edition into print. After that I think it will be more important to find a way of passing on all my research for future generations. Preserving one's research could well be a subject for future articles.

Thomas H F Kidman (287)

Let's spread the family history word ...

We are all aware how numbers of family history (FH) society members are falling. This will be down to a variety of reasons but I believe we may be able to help in one way.

If more people get interested in their own ancestors then there are more people who may join FH societies. Here is my suggestion how we may be able to help and have a bit of fun at the same time.

You may have made or received a calendar with a personal photograph for each month, produced by one of the many photo-product companies. How about designing your own calendar for family members?

The photographs could be ancestors, either individuals or groups, one or more to a page. Alternatively places where ancestors lived or worked. In all cases there would be some indication of the subjects and their dates.

One could then go a step further by using a FH programme to list dates of birth of close cousins. Such cousins would ideally be listed in the relevant date box but it may be easier to have them in a table as an addition to the photograph(s). That way recipients could see which other family members share their birthday.

I am sure there are many more options so this is meant to be just a starting point for your imagination.

© 2025 Thomas H F Kidman

DOUBLE & TRIPLE SIBLING MARRIAGES

In the course of our researches, many of us will, undoubtedly, have come across “sibling marriages” : the recollection of having seen a spouse’s surname before and then realising that two brothers have married two sisters, or perhaps a brother/sister and sister/brother, or twins and siblings, or even twins and twins. Double weddings crop up from time to time, and we see duplicate surnames in BMD Indexes with the same reference numbers. I have recently encountered one better—where two brothers and their sister from “my” family married two sisters and a brother in 1918, 1921 and 1924!

Try googling the topic for some interesting stories from around the world ...

ONLINE WITH CHFHS—

Poor Law Unions Research Surgeries : programme 2025

We are going to be running a series of monthly online research surgeries, via Zoom, to look at the county parishes of Cambridgeshire/Huntingdonshire Poor Law Unions (a number of which do cross-boundary into neighbouring counties). Further locations/dates to follow

Each session will run twice to optimise attendance options, or to continue discussions—so, get your questions together. You can submit in advance to enable the research team to look into the topic ahead of the session—

—or just join in, and see what comes up on the day.

Visit the “Events>Talks” page of the website to see which parishes fall under which union, and to book a place (zoom links will be sent nearer the date)

Chesterton Union Wed 19 Feb 10.30am & Thurs 20 Feb 7.30pm

**Huntingdon &
Oundle Unions** Wed 12 Mar 10.30am & Thurs 13 Mar 7.30pm

Ely Union Wed 16 Apr 10.30am & Thurs 17 Apr 7.30pm

Royston Union Wed 14 May 10.30am & Thurs 15 May 7.30pm

**Peterborough, Stamford &
Whittlesey Unions** Wed 18 Jun 10.30am & Thurs 19 Jun 7.30pm

**St Neots & Thrapston
Unions** Wed 9 July 10.30am & Thurs 10 July 7.30pm

Any advance questions to secretary@chfhs.org.uk, please.

SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY FAIR

50th Anniversary

“Looking Back, Looking Forward”

**Saturday 26th April 2025 10:00 to 4:00 at The Hold, Suffolk Archives,
Ipswich Waterfront, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich, IP4 1LR,**

*Talks by Ian Waller and Nick Barrett
on the past and the future of family history,
plus hopefully, a talk on DNA.*

This promises to be “a grand day out” should you be in the area

SEARCHING FOR LOST CONNECTIONS

by Gill Shapland

Sometimes your research hits a dead end. You've searched every parish in the county but the family or person has just disappeared. Maybe you've even gone 'over the border' to neighbouring Suffolk, Norfolk etc. but what about further afield?

I decided to look around the country for any records relating to Cambridgeshire tucked away in unconnected archives, starting in Cornwall. My aim is to work my way up through the country. My search term was simply Cambridgeshire but of course you can tailor it more specifically if you just want one name. Cambridge causes a slight problem with references to the University and its Press which results in men with no other connection than having studied at the University, or books published by the Press. However, I did find the following items of interest at Devon Archives:

DEVON QUARTER SESSIONS Settlement and Removal Papers for the year 1740

Settlement examination of Sarah Horn, 19th March 1740 claiming settlement as Fulbourn, **Cambridgeshire**...

Removal order for Sarah Horn, wife of Thomas Horn, and Mary their daughter, rogues and vagabonds, 19th March 1740 Settlement established as Fulbourn, **Cambridgeshire**. Sarah Horn and Mary Horn to be removed from the parish of Colyton to Fulbourn....

Settlement examination of Robert Brown, 19th March 1740...Robert Brown declared he was born and served an apprenticeship at Cherry Hinton, **Cambridgeshire**...

Removal order for Robert Brown, his wife Elizabeth and their daughter Constance, rogues and vagabonds. 9th March 1740 Settlement established as Cherry Hinton, **Cambridgeshire**. Robert Brown, his wife Elizabeth and their daughter Constance to be removed from the parish of Colyton to Cherry Hinton....

Settlement examination of Shedrach Bossell, May 13th 1746...Shedrach Bossell claimed he was born at Fulbourn, **Cambridgeshire**. his father was a pedlar.

Settlement examination of Robert Bossell, May 13th 1746 ...Robert Bossell claimed to have been born at Fulbourn, **Cambridgeshire**, and never gained further settlement. He left his wife and five children at Harraday Hill near London, and had been travelling...

Settlement examination of Dorothy Buckley, May 13th 1746 ...Dorothy Buckley said she was the wife of John Buckley, and believed he was born in Fulbourn, **Cambridgeshire**, and had never gained further legal settlement. They had 2 children, Anne Buckley...

I found these of particular interest as I have catalogued numerous vagrants in the Isle of Ely in the same period. There was famine around this time caused by volcanic ash in the atmosphere affecting the climate, causing crop failures.

Will (Copy) of Mary Ground of Kilkhampton, Cornwall, spinster. 31st October 1849 ...To Edward Loomes of Whittlesea, **Cambridgeshire**, £950, on trust to pay dividends to brother William Ground for his life. Upon trust to pay the said sum of £950 equally to the children of her brother...

Assignment of lease for remainder of term of 99 years; for £1800. 27 Jun 1653 ...Richard Benett of Kew, Surrey, Esq., Thomas Benett of Brabram, **Cambridgeshire**, Esq., and John Benett of Grays Inn, Middlesex., Esq. to The Rt Hon. Arthur Lord Capell, Baron of Hadham, Hertfordshire...

DEEDS FOR THE MANOR OF ALDWICK

Draft deed of separation. 1862 ...

- The Rev. William de Stuteville Isaacson of Willoughby House, Newmarket, **Cambridgeshire**.
- Anne Mitchell Isaacson, wife of William.
- John Rodon of New Grove, Kells, Meath [Ireland] and William...

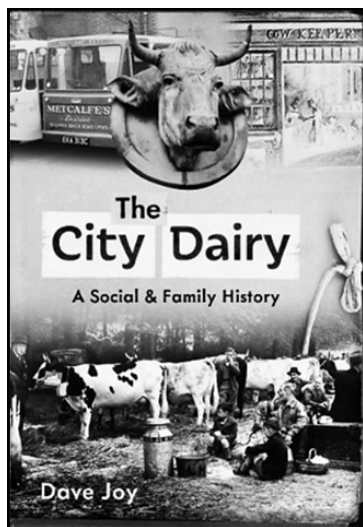
Gore family papers, volume II, page 10, 14 May 1648 ..., to Sir Thomas Hatton, of Long Stanton, **Cambridgeshire**, kt, bt...

Conveyance. 1418 ... etc. in Balsham and Wrotyngye [Wrattling, **Cambridgeshire**] called Oxecroft halle which they had by feoffment of Thomas Fodryngeye, father of the above Gerard. Witnesses: William Alynngton, John Burgoyne...

WALKER-HENEAGE AND BUTTON FAMILY AND ESTATE PAPERS, COKER COURT

Cornwall records presented a long list of documents relating to Wimpole Hall estate, there because the estate was connected with Lanhydrock House. I have not listed them here, but worth checking if you had family on the estate. Similarly, they hold a collection relating to an estate at Isleham which may be worth checking but no named individuals listed. I hope to continue northwards in future journals

If you are interested in following any of these leads, please refer to the relevant catalogues at Devon or Cornwall Archives.



The City Dairy by Dave Joy

www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

Synopsis from the P&S website :

"The early nineteenth century witnessed the mass movement of people from Britain's countryside into its burgeoning towns and cities; people came to the city in search of work. This prompted many dairy farmers to follow suit and move themselves, their family and their cows into the country's growing metropolises, where they opened the first generation of city dairies.

In the 1830s, transportation in Britain was revolutionised by the coming of the railways, enabling foodstuffs, including milk, to be transported in bulk from countryside to city. Large dairy companies took advantage of this

opportunity, opening a new generation of retail dairies. The demand for milk was so great that some cities boasted a dairy at the end of every street.

For the next hundred years the cowkeepers fought a rear-guard action against the mighty corporate dairies and their attempts to monopolise the liquid milk market. The cowkeepers continued to produce their own milk, selling it — 'fresh from the cow' — over the dairy counter and out on the milk round. These dairies were kept in the family, handed down through successive generations.

Despite surviving two World Wars, the rapid technological, social and economic changes that followed, brought about the demise of the traditional cowkeeper. But the city dairy continued as a family business, working as part of a national distribution network, overseen by the Milk Marketing Board. Out on the round, the family dairyman was almost indistinguishable from the corporate milkman.

The sixties and seventies saw the arrival of the Supermarket, a game-changer in retailing. To survive, the city dairy had to change once more. It expanded its offer and seamlessly joined the ranks of those other most British of institutions: the Corner Shop and the Convenience Store.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY ...

HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2025

Sat 20 Sept @ Farmland Museum, Chittering

Free entry to the museum & CHFHS RESEARCH SURGERY

Watch for further details nearer the day ...

RESEARCH SURGERIES—scheduled locations/dates/times

CHFHS volunteers hold regular help & advice sessions at society meetings and at public libraries around the county
there are no charges for these services
enquiries : secretary@chfhs.org.uk

Ely Library	3 rd Wed alternate mths	Jan / Mar / May / July / Sept / Nov	drop in between 10.00-4.00
Norris Museum St Ives	2 nd Wed alternate mths	Feb / Apr / Jun / Aug / Oct / Dec	drop-in between 10.30 & 3.30
Bar Hill Library	3 rd Mon <u>every</u> mth	Jan / Feb / Mar / Apr / May / Jun Jul / Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 1.30-4.00
*** St Neots *** Library	4 th THURS <u>every</u> mth	NEW FOR 2025 Jan / Feb / Mar / Apr / May / Jun Jul / Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 2.00-4.00
March Library	1 st & 3 rd Tues <u>every</u> mth	*** TWICE MONTHLY ***	drop-in between 10.00-4.00
Cambridge Central Library	2 nd Sat <u>every</u> month	Jan / Feb / Mar / Apr / May / Jun Jul / Aug / Sept / Oct / Nov / Dec	drop-in between 11.00 & 2.00
	NB : we are now working from a table in the foyer outside the Cambridgeshire Collection (3rd floor)		

Project co-coordinator, Terry, updates on progress

With the end finally in sight, work on completing the WisMus project has, unfortunately, remains temporarily suspended (this was to enable the switch over to the new data management system which is embedded in the new website). This transition has been slower than was initially anticipated.

Hunts Parish transcriptions are also progressing in the background and a number of parishes are now awaiting upload to the Name & Place database at the earliest opportunity:- Alwalton, Bythorn, Diddington, Easton, Elton, Eynesbury, Warboys, Chesterton (Hunts); Covington is on checking

**If any of the old volunteers, or new ones (and particularly if you have skills with old handwriting and/or reading Latin) would like to help with the final push to completion of WisMus and progress Hunts Parishes—
—please get in touch via my Projects e-mail
Terry Garner**

MARCH BRANCH PROGRAMME

Wednesday Face-2-Face Meetings

1st Wednesdays at 2.00pm

March Library, March

enquiries : march@chfhs.org.uk

Wed 5 Mar	Four People's Stories That Deserve Telling with Charlotte Paton <i>The four are from Norfolk and Suffolk — listen to Charlotte bring them to life.</i>
Wed 2 Apr	Foul Murders Of East Anglia with Mike Wabe <i>An outline of murders committed in East Anglia, 1827—1943. While ten of the perpetrators were hanged, one of the murders remains unsolved ...</i>
Wed 7 May	Evans of Ely, Solicitors with Gill Shapland <i>A selection of snippets and interesting records researched whilst reviewing the cataloguing of this collection. The Evans papers span 1812-1943, and contain references to countless families and businesses from Ely and the surrounding area.</i>
Wed 4 Jun	A Sign Of The Times with Sarah Doig <i>A history of village signs throughout East Anglia—looking at what they contain and how they relate to the villages they represent. The first signs were in Norfolk, and spread from there.</i>



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RootsTech 2025

Thurs 6—Sun 9 March

150+ FREE talks/classes on a wide range of world-wide topics over 4 days, view live online or catch up later—visit the website, register and make your selection ...

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/registration-open-rootstech-2025>

CHFHS NEWSLETTER

—are YOU a subscriber?



If you haven't yet signed up to the free CHFHS newsletter, why not do so—right now—by visiting the website home page www.chfhs.org

Sign up to receive the latest details on upcoming talks and research surgeries, local events with a genealogical slant, and on-going feature series “spotlighting” local surnames and villages histories.

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH PROGRAMME

3rd Wednesdays* of the month at **7.30pm**
enquiries : programme@chfhs.org.uk

Cambridge Branch talks are Zoom only—**NB * new day * from 2025**

* Wed * 19 Feb	Following In Family Footsteps with Andy Browning <i>They say a picture paints a thousand words, well not this one. Having stared at the same unremarkable photo on his grandparent's wall for years, Andy was surprised to discover not only was this picture taken in Sudan, but also the slightly dusty and angry looking man holding a bicycle was in fact his Great Grandfather – a revelation which could only lead to one thing.</i> <i>"Following in Family Footsteps" is the story of how an old sepia photograph inspired a three-month adventure following 80-year-old family footprints through the mountains and deserts of East Africa. As well as negotiating sandstorms, pool sharks, rogue bus drivers, active volcanoes, and some of the hottest temperatures the planet has to offer, this is also the story of an often-misunderstood corner of Africa through the eyes of two people, three generations apart.</i>
* Wed * 19 Mar	Was this the 'Woman In White'? with Alan Powell <i>A Victorian scandal that shocked the nation. The inspiration for an enduring classical mystery novel creating a link between Ely, Canterbury, Lincoln, Liverpool and York, with the final chapter closing in Switzerland—and as a bonus, there's a family history connection as well!!</i>
* Wed * 16 April	How Conflicts Around The World Shaped My Family with Claire Topping <i>This talk focuses on some of the historical forces that have influenced my family tree. My research journey has taken me to many places, both geographically and in terms of the sources used to piece together the story of my family.</i> <i>While some intriguing gaps remain, there is a discernible thread that runs through my discoveries so far. There is a clear role that conflicts around the world have played in bringing together a diverse group of people from different countries and continents.</i>
SAT 17 MAY	CHFHS AGM at Ely Archives <i>Live talk by Peter Calver founder of www.LostCousins.com</i>
* Wed * 21 May	Migration : when we get stuck! with Laurie Page <i>A look at migration patterns and how families were affected. Clues can be spotted which can open up new avenues of research when we reach apparent "dead ends".</i>

OUT & ABOUT WITH CHFHS—

MEMBERS' VISIT TO

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY : NOV '24

Kevin Roberts, one of the University Library archivists, organised another “show and tell” visit to the UL for Society members. As with previous visits, the places were quickly taken. The tour began with Michael Taylor giving us a history of the building, and a walk round both public and staff spaces. The building opened in 1934, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, the Architect, used his iconic design for the red telephone box in the internal design of the library. Michael did tell us which of the Scott box designs K2 or K3 (kiosk 2 and 3) he used, but I did not take notes during the visit. Some of the group had used the Library for detailed research, but did not realise the breadth and depth of the resources held in this copyright library. We are very fortunate to have this wonderful resource for our members to use.

Kevin and his colleagues had put on a display in the map reading room. We spent time looking at the range on display; the large scale maps from various dates allowed us to see how streets have changed over time and the Soviet maps of Cambridgeshire gave us an appreciation of the military importance of accurate maps.

The visit finished in the manuscript reading room, the display included manuscripts likely to be of interest to family historians. Jacky Cox, Keeper of the University Archives, spoke about the three Spinning House books that were on display. These are now being digitised, paid for by the Society, and the full content will be available for scholars worldwide in the near future. Kevin introduced each item he had selected; we were able to see at first hand the richness of the manuscripts both as works of art and for their content, as well as the challenges that reading these sources presents.

Comments during the visit and emails after the event showed how much this visit was appreciated by everyone. All the group now have a (free) membership ticket so they can follow up their own interests in subsequent visits. Our thanks to everyone involved in planning another informative afternoon for our members.

David Copsey

NO DOUBT THERE WILL BE FURTHER VISITS—LOOK OUT FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS.

ALSO: REMEMBER, ALL CHFHS MEMBERS CAN CLAIM FREE READERS' PASS—CONTACT MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY FOR DETAILS & “LETTER OF INTRODUCTION”

MEETINGS REPORTS

*Don't forget that many of the talks
are recorded and available in the
members area of the website*

HOW YOUR FAMILY HISTORY HAS MADE YOU WHO YOU ARE

WITH **MARIANNE POWELL**

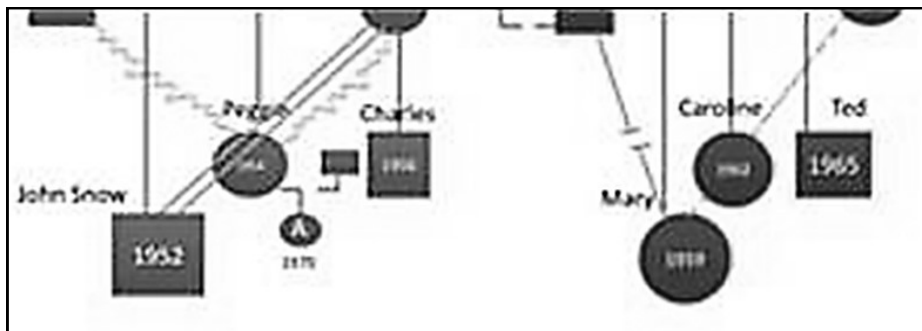
(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : SEPT 2024)

Marianne's interesting and informative talk focused on the surprising ways that our ancestors continue to influence us now. There are so many things that our families pass down to us, and most of the time we don't even realise. But when we ask the right questions, we can unlock new insights that might even help us right now. Questions like: what were the rules in your family? What was valued? What was taboo? Who were the legends and the black sheep?

Our family history is not just in the past, and the lives our ancestors lived, but continues to influence our lives today as our DNA passes down the generations at both a physical and emotional level. It is helpful to consider the sorts of stories you know about your family and the types of 'rules' that were passed down such as 'don't waste food'. However, we all know the consequences of eating food that is well past its sell/use by date! The audience provided other sets of 'rules' within their families – some of which can be good or bad whether we still follow them or not, and impact our lives in various ways.

Marianne's talk looked at 'genograms' a kind of map to our family history that can help us understand our ancestors - and ourselves - even better.

Extract from a GenoGram



In this example the straight lines link family members who got on, the squiggly lines those that didn't and the broken line shows where there was a rift in the family for a period of time. The internet can provide more information if you are interested in genograms.

Marianne talked about the value of the stories that have been passed down through the generations and how some relatives are remembered more than others, perhaps through bravery, accumulating wealth or for the careers they followed. Her maternal side of the family from Ireland were involved in the Irish war for independence in the early 1900's and there were also some 'black sheep' in the family!

The way to unlock the stories of our ancestors is to speak to older family members – ask things such as what their earlier life was like, what they did for fun, what they enjoyed etc.

This was quite an interactive presentation and can help explain who we are today.

Reported by Muriel Halliday

**THE CRIME OF BIGAMY :
A GUIDE FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS**
REBECCA PROBERT
(CAMBRIDGE BRANCH : OCT 2024)

Although bigamy has an international element, Rebecca's talk concentrates on the laws of England and Wales including the changing parameters and punishment of the crime and ways of finding bigamous ancestors in the criminal records. Obviously, it is difficult to find those who were not prosecuted and one of the reasons being that many had left the country for places such as Australia, New Zealand, America and Canada.

Changing parameters

1604 - Seen as an offence against God. An Act, in England and Wales only, was passed restraining all people from re-marrying until their former husband or wife be dead. The first marriage had to be valid and, if not it was declared void, and the second marriage would be legal. There were however a number of exceptions involving 7 years which Rebecca explains and also the reasons for marriages being voided. At that time the age of consent for marriage was 12 years old for girls and 14 years for boys, but such marriages were pretty rare.

17 & 18thC bigamy is seen as an offence against the institution of marriage by both men and women

Offences against the Persons Act 1828 – replicated in 1861

The offence of bigamy was widened to include the whole world, but only British subjects could be prosecuted in England & Wales even if the offence happened abroad. A number of other exceptions were amended, and the 1861 Act is still the law of the land to this day.

The 7 year absence rule was often used during the intervening centuries and was clarified by the later Acts. Rebecca gives examples of bigamous cases, which are important particularly for second marriages during WW1, where the wife had good reason to believe their husband had been killed before entering a second marriage.

Changing Punishment

In 1604 bigamy was punishable by death! There were exceptions and few were convicted after 1693. In the 18th century the punishment for bigamy was branding! After that period, the punishment was either imprisonment for around 1 year and/or a small fine. However, from 1795 the punishment was 7 years transportation or up to 2 years imprisonment. From then cases were mainly for abandonment, marriage for financial gain, deception towards the second wife, multiple marriages etc. Women were very unlikely to be transported for bigamy.

From 1861 the penalty was 3-7 years penal servitude or up to 2 years imprisonment for the worst cases. Penal servitude could involve time in a special type of convict prison and include solitary confinement and hard labour.

1948 – 7 years imprisonment – but it is a very long time since this was imposed by the Courts.

Changing scale of the crime of bigamy

The Old Bailey is the best source for bigamous cases in the 18th century. Most cases in other Assizes have not to date been transcribed but data suggests that there were relatively few cases during the 18th century. However, the number increases over the 19th century. During the 2 World Wars number increases enormously – probably due to the spouses being presumed dead. In the first half of the 19thC Huntingdonshire recorded 8 cases of bigamy and Cambridgeshire 16 cases, both of which are at the lower end of recorded cases throughout the country.

Finding bigamous ancestors who have been prosecuted.

The data available depends on where they were prosecuted - the Old Bailey being the best source, records of which can be found on line. Assizes

records for 17th & 18th centuries are rarely available and where 19th century records are found they will give limited information such as the names of the parties and the details of the 2 marriages. The outcome is recorded but no evidence that given to the jury etc. National Archives are starting to transcribe some of the Assizes records.

1869-1929 Calendar of Prisoners includes bigamous marriages also known as 'felonious married' or simply 'feloniously'. The Calendar is searchable. Newspapers are another source of bigamous marriages and give more details, although some of the reports may be journalistic interpretation!

This talk was extremely interesting and well researched so I would certainly recommend listening to it!

Reported by Muriel Halliday

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FENS / EASTERN FRONTIER

MATTHEW WARD HUNTER

(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : SEPT 2024)

Our guest speaker was Matthew Ward Hunter, an Historian and Broadcaster who has appeared on television and radio. He is a Director of HistoryNeedsYou, a public history consultancy working with museums, historic houses and heritage organisations across the UK, together with Gill Fraser Lee, who introduced Matthew to our zoom audience.

The subject of the talk was the Eastern Frontier, which was based on a project from the last five or so years in the Fens. Matthew began by reminding us of the well-known frontiers of England; Hadrian's Wall in the north separating England and Scotland; Offa's Dyke in the west on the Wales/England border; and the chalk cliffs of the south coast providing a natural frontier to southern England.

The remaining border is the Eastern Frontier in East Anglia and is the area between Central and Eastern England. This idea became more and more clear as Matthew described its position and vital strategic importance over two and a half thousand years of history, referring throughout to a sequence of maps showing significant natural geographical features and man-made structures.

Once geography was added to the map it was apparent that East Anglia is practically cut off from the rest of England by the Fens to the northwest, and the rivers Great Ouse and Granta (or Cam) from Kings Lynn to Cambridge, and the Stour from Ipswich up to Haverhill where these two rivers almost touch each other.

Matthew then took us through the history of this area and how the natural boundaries helped the inhabitants of East Anglia defend their territory against incursions from the kingdoms around them.

He started with the Iron Age when there were three kingdoms surrounding East Anglia – the Iceni in Norfolk, the Trinovantes in Suffolk and Essex and the Catuvellauni in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. The kingdoms were often in competition with each other for resources and trade. Matthew added the route of the Icknield Way on the map, which followed the route of the underlying chalk ridge from Norwich to Luton and on to Stonehenge, a route that lies above the boggy ground below. A number of hill forts were constructed to defend the frontier along this line commanding the gap between the two river systems.

Once the Romans landed in the southeast of England they moved north and west but did not initially invade East Anglia, instead forming an alliance with the Iceni which left them in control of the area. Eventually the Romans reneged on the agreement with the Iceni king (Boudica's father) and staged a hostile takeover. This led Boudica to start an uprising against the Romans and after some local successes she tried to take on the main Roman army near Coventry but was defeated, and disappeared from history.

The Romans then inhabited East Anglia but were not completely successful in building their new cities in the area, and in the 300's broke down the country into smaller organisational and economic areas called dioceses. They gradually left the country and by 410 AD had gone.

Now we moved onto the Anglo Saxon era and faced invaders from across the North Sea, particularly Jutland and Germany. They took over the Romans' British territory and East Anglia became the kingdom of Raedwald, with settlements established, and the Angles built a series of fortified ditches across the necks of the two rivers to produce an impregnable frontier. One ditch - Devil's Dyke near Newmarket - was a bigger structure even than Hadrian's Wall. This meant that fewer Angles were needed to defend the territory and keep the Britons from middle England out. Such was the strength of the area that the king of Angles was regarded as the king of England for a time.

The next invaders were the Vikings from Denmark who had the same cultural background as the Angles. With many people in England now converting to Christianity the frontier became a border between the invaders and the rest of the country. Then the Normans invaded from the south east and moved north like the Romans but the eastern frontier was again significant in standing in their way. A major battle was fought at Belsar's Hill, near Willingham, which the Normans won despite several setbacks, and

eventually arrived in Ely with help from the monks of Peterborough, travelling across the Fens.

Matthew moved onto the Medieval period and in 1143 Geoffrey de Mandeville fortified the Eastern Frontier to try to limit King Stephen's power, but Stephen started to build a huge fortification near Newmarket called Burwell Castle, inside the frontier, and in the ensuing battle de Mandeville was killed. There were further conflicts at the frontier but notably the War of the Roses never ventured into the area due to the strength of the frontier. We then reached the Tudor age.

Following the deaths of Henry VIII and son Edward the country was divided over the successor – Protestant Jane Grey or Catholic Mary Tudor. Mary retreated to East Anglia and maintained the Eastern Frontier against the forces of Northumberland, who came to Cambridge and declared Jane as Queen. He then marched east to Bury St Edmunds to arrest Mary but his army deserted him and he was captured and forced to declare Mary as Queen. He was later executed.

The Eastern Frontier continued to feature in conflicts through the ages, especially during the Civil War when Charles I, with Oxford as his capital, and the Midlands and the North on his side faced the Parliamentarians, supported by the protestant South and East, including Ely – Cromwell's town. Charles needed to transport arms via Kings Lynn and the river system and on to Oxford, with the result that Kings Lynn declared allegiance to the King and lead to Parliament forces besieging the town. They also constructed further fortifications at the frontier, such as Earith bulwark. This prevented help coming to Kings Lynn from the Royalist army based in Oxford.

For more than 200 years East Anglia and the Eastern Frontier experienced more peaceful times, as new conflicts were largely fought across the channel from the south of the country.

Matthew then explained the role of the frontier in the 20th century and the two World Wars. In 1912 it was thought that Germany would attack across the North Sea, landing on the Norfolk coast and then march down the Icknield Way to London. In preparation, war games were held which showed that the attacking army progressed easily across the flat lands but were stopped in the hills just north of Linton at the Eastern Frontier, again demonstrating that this was the stop line that defended England from attack. Of course history showed an entirely different course of events.

In WW2 East Anglia was again prepared for invasion, this time with a series of stop lines created to defend the entire east coast, including several across

East Anglia along geographical features. Pill boxes were built to defend the lines, some even being built where hundreds of years earlier similar posts had been constructed to defend the frontier.

Matthew's tour through history reached its conclusion with the Cold War and the construction of six major airfields around Ely to defend against attack from the East, which are still active today.

This was a talk full of facts ably backed up by simple to follow maps and packed into 45 minutes. Such was the interest that the questions and comments from the large zoom audience occupied a further 25 minutes.

Matthew is a very engaging and enthusiastic storyteller. The combing of so many historical facts with an explanation of the local geography and ancient structures proved to be extremely compelling and ensured we all now know about the Eastern Frontier, and its strategic military importance equal to the White Cliffs of Dover, Offa's Dyke and Hadrian's Wall.

Reported by John Bownass

FENLAND FOLKLORE

WITH MARY BURGESS

(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : OCT 2024)

Our guest speaker was Mary Burgess, our local studies librarian, who many will be familiar with for her work at the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Library. Before beginning her presentation she reminded us of the many documents, photos, books and ephemera available in the collection which can be helpful in tracing family history.

Mary started with some animal tales and the first was Black Shuck, an enormous black dog, often with red eyes but with many variations, cropping up all over East Anglia. Currently the A10 appears to be a favourite sighting ground. He was seen only at night and usually as an omen of death but sometimes quite the opposite as friendly. Another dog features in a story at Littleport in the 1500s when a local girl was attacked by a lustful friar whilst gathering mint at Redmere. A huge black dog fought off her attacker but both were killed in the struggle. The local men buried the dog with honour and it is claimed its ghost haunts the local bridge.

Cats followed the dogs. Visitors to the library had shown photographs of supposedly giant cats to Mary, which did not convince her except for one she witnessed herself in 1994 when she saw a cat-like animal which was definitely too large to be a domestic cat. Owls had a quick mention as they were often thought to be witches in disguise, a bad omen, so if you find a dead owl never touch it or you will suffer!

The final animals covered were horses and their connection to the Toadmen, who in East Anglian folklore had made a pact with the devil which gave them control over the horses. Mary described a long process starting with catching and killing a toad, drying it out and extracting the bones, which were then thrown into a running stream, to finally recovering a specific bone which you carried to the stable of horses. This had the desired effect of giving the Toadman power over horses; it also meant that when you died you went to hell.

Water featured in the next set of legends. Mary started with King Canute who was trying to reach Ely, but did not dare cross the marshland south of Soham and sought help from a local guide which resulted in an enormous man named Pudding showing them the way. This he did, they reached Ely safely and Pudding's position in life changed considerably when he was rewarded with lands and sheep. Another time, Canute and his wife Emma were being rowed up the river when they heard monks singing and so he ordered his men to row nearer the bank to hear it better. They were so pleased with the singing that his wife read out a poem which Canute had written about the occasion – it still exists.

More stories related to water followed, including PC Thomas Lamb who was on midnight patrol on the 23rd December 1841 on Godmanchester bridge but failed to turn up for work the next morning. Despite much searching his body was not found until a month later when it was fished out from under the bridge; it is said that his ghost now patrols the area. A strange one this – in Wicken Fen you may see lights that are supposed to draw you into the mud where you get stuck and you should never look at the Lantern Men or whistle as these actions will also get you stuck in the Fens.

Mary's final collection of the weird and wonderful centred on famous people. It appears that the Lord of the Manor in Doddington was a wicked tyrant. The locals decided to mark all his possessions with a red hand and in the choir stalls in Doddington church you can still see a tiny red hand – but who he was remains a mystery.

At the time of William the Conqueror there was a boy named Tom Hickathrift who lived with his mother, and despite having the strength of twenty men he was very lazy. His mother sent him to work for a King's Lynn brewer, carting beer across the Fens. He travelled a roundabout route as other locals did, to avoid an Ogre who lived on the direct route, but after sampling the beer decided to take the quick route with inevitable results. In the ensuing fight Tom removed the axle from the cart and used it as a club and killed the Ogre. He then found the Ogre's cave and discovered a locked box of money which he took and subsequently bought a house and land where he lived for

many years as a local hero. He decided where he would be buried by throwing a stone as far as his incredible strength allowed. It is said to have landed at Tilney All Saints Church in Norfolk.

Matthew Hopkins was the Witchfinder General who operated between 1644 and 1647 around Great Wenham and tortured suspects until they confessed. At one time there seventeen witches were tried at Ely Assizes. Another witch story comes from Warboys where the church clock tower has a weather vane in the shape of a witch to this day. The Lord of the Manor Lord Throckmorton had five daughters and Jane, aged nine, started having fits in 1589. Alice Samuel, the village wise woman, visited the house and Jane blamed her for her fits and accused her of being a witch. In time the other four daughters and seven servants also became ill, but the servants all recovered once they were moved from the Manor House to other homes. The daughters remained ill but suddenly recovered when in the presence of Alice Samuel, who was then forced to move into their home. News spread and Lady Cromwell became involved and accused Alice of being a witch, even cutting off her hair as a punishment, resulting in Lady Cromwell becoming ill. Alice later confessed and the children's fits stopped. Later Alice Samuel and her family were tried and hanged.

Mary concluded her talk with a couple more stories about witches and then the questions and comments flowed freely – clearly a subject that stirs the imagination. Mary's inimitable story-telling style perfectly suited the subject.

Reported by John Bownass

FAMILY HISTORY FROM MILITARY RECORDS

WITH CHRIS BAKER

(HUNTINGDON BRANCH : NOV 2024)

Our speaker was Chris Baker, who shared his insights on how to extract points of interest for family history purposes from military records. He began by sharing his background, including his involvement in the TV show "Who Do You Think You Are?" and his work on the website "The Long Long Trail," which focuses on the British Army in the 1st World War, and encouraged everyone to visit it.

Chris discussed the comprehensive nature of military records and their usefulness in family history research. He highlighted that these records often contain personal information such as birth, marriage, and death details, which can be useful in tracing family connections. Chris also explained that military records contain personal information primarily for identification purposes, such as next of kin and contact details, and for managing pay and

pensions.

First, Chris discussed the challenges and opportunities in accessing historical military records. He highlighted that many records from the past were weeded down, and a significant portion of 1st World War records were destroyed in a 1940 air raid. However, he noted that many records from the 1850s onwards are now digitized and available online, making them more accessible, though the quality of digitization and indexing varies between different online platforms, with Find My Past being his preferred choice. He emphasized that the richness of family history information depends on the timing of the records, with earlier records being less valuable.

Chris discussed various resources for researching military personnel, particularly those who lost their lives during World War I. He highlighted the usefulness of casualty lists, which often included details about the next of kin or where the soldier enlisted. He also mentioned the Red Cross records for missing men and prisoners of war, which can provide valuable information about the individual's next of kin and their address. Chris emphasized the importance of not just stopping at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records, but also exploring other documents like financial effects registers and soldiers' wills. He also mentioned the National Roll of the Great War and Soldiers who died in the Great War as resources, but cautioned against taking their information as completely accurate due to potential errors.

He highlighted the importance of starting with service records, usually via Ancestry and FindMyPast. He also mentioned the Naval and Military Archive, de Ruvigny Roll of Honour, and the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve as valuable sources. Chris noted that naval records are often limited in terms of family information, but can still be valuable. He also mentioned the Royal Air Force Records, which are available from the National Archives or FindMyPast. Chris emphasized the importance of pre-assembling all available information before starting the search and suggested looking into pension records for additional details.

Chris provided a comprehensive overview of other resources for research, including online forums and social media platforms. He emphasized the importance of these resources for understanding military history and encouraged attendees to reach out to him for assistance. Chris also clarified that records from 1922 onwards are not readily available due to privacy acts and the destruction of some records in a 1940 warehouse fire, and that the digitization of these records is a work in progress.

Another resource that could be useful were the records of those who served in the Territorial Army. He explained that records from the Territorial Army

are mixed with those of regular army and the New Army from the 1st World War. He also mentioned that records from the Second World War period are being digitized and should become available in the future. Chris advised that local archives, such as those in Huntingdon and the Cambridge area, could be a rich source for records related to regiments of the Territorial Army. He also emphasized the importance of being careful with names, addresses, and other details when searching for records.

There followed much discussion and questions, during which Chris shared his personal experience of finding his grandfather's service record 10 years after he thought it was lost. He also highlighted the differences between digitized versions of service records on Ancestry and FindMyPast, noting that the quality of indexing can sometimes make it difficult to find a record. He also suggested that absent voters lists and pension records could be useful resources for finding information about WW1 service. He emphasized that persistence is key in these searches, as records may not always exist or may be difficult to locate.

Chris discussed other sources of information, including historical local newspapers and service records. He clarified that while Army records are currently inaccessible due to digitization, records for the Navy and Royal Air Force can be obtained through the government website. When the question of deserters was raised, Chris suggested looking at the Police Gazette and enlistment records. He also noted that conscription records from World War One no longer exist, but there are records of local tribunals that considered deferment or exemption claims.

This was a very well researched and presented talk as one would expect from a leading expert in this field. It certainly opened up so many more avenues for research for those of us looking at our ancestors who serves in the military.

Reported by John Bownass

APPRENTICESHIP RECORDS

WITH RICHARD HOLT
(MARCH BRANCH : SEPT 2024)

Richard Holt talk on 'Apprenticeship Records', was based on Bartholomew Alders of Wisbech.

Apprenticeships date back to the 12th century in London leading to them being a practice and customs for the craft guilds. The Statute of Arificiers and Apprenticeship Act 1563, also known as the Statute of Labourers. This sought to restrict workers freedom of movement and to regulate training. Guilds regulated wages of urban trades. The Statute also gave powers for

two justices of the peace to bind out as apprentices the children of paupers, vagrants and those with very large families.

This was during the reign of Elizabeth 1 when records for boroughs and city registers were required to be kept. The Tudor government placed a moral obligation on all men to work, meaning a state control of all occupations in terms of usefulness to society and to regulate life. Similar assumptions were made in the Elizabethan Poor Law 1561 that aimed for a minimum standard of living for all men and women with a non-competitive society and the children of the poor, paupers and young beggars. The Stamp Duty Act 1709 imposed a requirement for apprenticeship registers of payments to be kept.

Other relevant dates :

1601 The Poor Relief Act – further allowed the use of apprenticeships to bind out any child for whom churchwardens and overseers were responsible for, with the consent of two justices. The aim of this was to stop children roaming the streets, begging and forming gangs. Any child under the age of 14 could be disposed of this way that became a way of reducing poor relief. In 1691 apprenticeship by indenture provided a child with legal settlement in a parish.

1766 Parish Poor Children Act

1802 Register of Pauper Apprentices said that registers of those apprenticed should be kept in home parishes.

1834 Changes in the Poor Law saw an amendment transferring authority from overseers to guardians. If the authority was given to the overseers or guardians then the parents no longer had a say in the matter. Parishes still raised money to support apprentices for instances such as the father had been transported and children left destitute.

1851 Improvements in conditions for Private Apprenticeships between the parent/guardian and the master.

Richard had found records relating to apprenticeships in records for Indentures, Guild Records of trades, Register of Freemen – giving the right to vote, Poll Books, Charity records, Quarter Sessions and Court records, Newspapers and Settlement Examinations.

An indenture, a binding agreement was drawn up with the agreement of a parent or guardian for the apprentice and with the master. The master personally taught the apprentice and could have no more than 3 apprentices at any one time.

An apprenticeship could not be ended without a Justice of the Peace approval. Quite frequently apprentices absconded. Newspaper reports giving accounts of missing apprentices can be found in newspaper archives.

Unless they returned to the master he would not be able to take on another apprentice. During the 1800s if apprentices who absconded were caught, they could be sent to Canada.

The Relieving Officer would visit masters half yearly to make checks. Minute books were checked for the Board of Guardians, and very few loose records survive. Examples of further records can be found in workhouse and transportation archives.

Richard's research was carried out using Ancestry, the National Archives, Find my Past and the Society of Genealogists. Richard showed a Stamp Duty record with Stamp Duty on the left side, details of the date, terms and payments on the right. Exemptions for paupers who were publicly funded are not found in records. Private apprenticeship records can be found in Guild Records, Court Books, Registers of Apprentices, Registers of Freeman, Quarterage books (a record of quarterly payments made by a guild showing information about members occupations and addresses), can be used as timelines tracing through the career of an apprentice and later his career as a master.

Richard showed examples of Court Books listing: 'Full and faithful apprentices being admitted to be a Freeman'. Freeman Registers, not all served apprentices inherited the business from their father. Some who had completed their apprenticeship became journeymen. Poll Books contain the companies, names and details— some boroughs gave the right to vote.

John and Jane Alders of Long Sutton, Lincolnshire moved to Wisbech between 1736 and 1744. Their son Bartholomew had moved to the US by 1763. Richard had reached a 'brick wall' in his research and found apprenticeship records as an important part of looking further than the usual research sources. He suggested looking at apprenticeship records especially for the sons in the family, although girls could also be apprenticed, mainly for craft businesses. He followed his research through apprenticeship records making interconnections with wheelwrights and suggested Find my Past for county apprenticeships and London Guilds. Records for London Livery Companies can be found on Rollco.

Images of Long Sutton and Wisbech parish registers and Bishops Transcripts include entries for the Alders/Aldis family. 1742 shows the Aldis family of Wisbech having a family business. They were wheelwrights, recorded earlier in 1724. In 1719 the family are perukemakers (wigs for men). A case in the Court of Chancery at The National Archives was found showing the family moving between Wisbech and Long Sutton. But Richard found large gaps in information between 1743- 1763.

Richard found Aldis & Co in 1762 had Matthew Freeman apprenticed to

Bartholomew Aldis as Cheesemonger. Although family information thought Bartholomew had died in America, Richard proved that he had died in London. The original indenture for Bartholomew Aldis was found dated 1767 in London.

Information from a will dated 1781 gave more information on property and tools of the trade were mentioned. In the will Aldis asks for co-trades to carry on with Mr Freeman's apprenticeship plus a ring as a token of his high esteem

Reported by Linda Peckett

EDITH CAVELL

*WITH DR MARTYN THOMAS
(MARCH BRANCH : OCT 2024)*

Martyn started by saying Edith Cavell was not only a nurse, she was a pioneer, heroine, martyr and devoted to her cause.

Edith Louisa Cavell was born at Swardston, a village near Norwich in 1865, the eldest of four children, three girls and one boy. Her father Frederick was the vicar of the parish church of St Mary, where he stayed for 46 years. Her early days were spent playing in the fields in the summer and ice skating in the winter. Edith became a skilled watercolour and pastel artist, focused on nature that she loved. She produced cards and sold them to raise funds for a Sunday School room in the parish. Rev. Frederick Cavell home tutored the children together with a governess. When she was older Edith attended boarding school and at the age of 19 attended Lauren Court School, Peterborough where she learnt French and became a pupil/teacher in lieu of paying the fees. Lauren Court is a Grade 1 listed building in the grounds of the cathedral. Today there is a blue plaque dedicated to Edith.

Martyn showed a photograph of the family taken in 1870, showing Edith's mother Sophia (aged 26), her father (aged 40), Edith and her siblings.

Edith became a governess to the vicar of Steeple Bumpstead's children and later Keswick Hall (1888) and Colney Hall to the Gurney banking family. Edith went on to teach French to a family in Brussels. She needed to have perfect French for this position and also taught in Bavaria.

In 1895 Edith returned to Swardston as her father was unwell. She looked after him and developed an aptitude for nursing and caring for others. After his death, although she was not a trained nurse, Edith worked at Fountains Fever Hospital, Tooting. She applied to the London Hospital (no longer exists) and started her five years nursing training in 1895 at the age of thirty. A blue plaque in her honour is at the site of the London Hospital.

Edith went on to nurse at an Infirmary in St Pancras and then Shoreditch Infirmary (1903 – 1906). Typhoid broke out at Maidstone in 1897, 1700 people contracted the disease, but only 132 died. Good hygiene was an important factor in the survival of so many. Edith became assistant matron supervising the wards, laundry and teaching nurse probationers. The hours were demanding, working from 7am until 9pm.

In 1906 she was appointed to a temporary position as matron at Manchester and Salford Sick Poor and Private Nursing Institution where a lot of the disease resulted in working in the mines and mills.

Edith was working at a similar time to Florence Nightingale who had worked with soldiers wounded in Crimea. She funded a school for nurses at St Thomas hospital with a focus on hygiene as well as nursing skills.

In the early 20th century nursing standards in Belgium were not of a good standard, training was needed as lay nurses with no training were not answerable to the doctors. There was a need for change. A surgeon, Dr Antoine Depage at the University of Brussels was keen to have trained nurses. Edith had looked after his sick daughter. In 1907 he acquired four houses as a base for the first school of nursing and wanted a matron trained in Florence Nightingale traditional methods. Edith fitted the requirement and by 1913 had made the school a success.

WW1 broke out in 1914. Edith was caring for wounded soldiers from both sides of the conflict in Belgium, as a nurse she was protected by the 1864 Geneva Convention. In 1915, with other Belgium and French nationals Edith was arrested for assisting the escape of over 200 Allied soldiers from German occupied Belgium. She was interrogated and held in solitary confinement in prison. Edith confessed to having received a letter that the Germans considered an act of treason, punishable by the death penalty. She along with 34 others was tried by a German Military Court. Six were sentenced to death and five to fifteen years of hard labour. Although there was an appeal for clemency, Edith was shot by firing squad on 12th October 1915, aged 49 years. Edith did not want to be thought of as a martyr.

Following her death, Edith was buried at Tir Nationale (the National Shooting Range in Brussels) in a grave with a wooden cross.

Edith's death resulted in shock waves through the country, recruitment of nurses doubled within 8 weeks. Edith's execution was used as propaganda by the allies. She was acclaimed as a martyr and heroine which she did not want. Her death was used to sway neutral opinion against Germany, later the USA forces were brought into the war.

After the war arrangements were made for her reburial. Westminster Abbey

was considered but Edith's mother wished her to be brought home to Norfolk. Her remains were escorted to Dover and on to Westminster where a memorial service was held on May 15th 1919.

The remains were taken by train to Norwich then travelled on a military gun carriage to Norwich cathedral. Edith's final resting place is in the cathedral grounds in a place called Life's Green. Edith's name is included on the Norwich War Memorial.

There is a memorial window in Swardston parish church dedicated to Edith. The picture is taken from one of her drawings (Kate Greenaway style) of children playing outside, possibly on Swardston village green.

In 1917 two national newspapers ran fund raising campaigns that lead to the creation of 6 rest homes for nurses. The suggestion for this came from the family who thought that Edith would have liked to provide this type of care. Today work still goes on with the Cavell Nurses Trust.

There are many worldwide memorials dedicated to Edith Cavell. These include hospital wards, wings and buildings. Importantly for Cambridgeshire, is the Edith Cavell Healthcare Campus at Peterborough this replaced the Edith Cavell Hospital open from 1988 until 2011. Worldwide there are many examples of sites containing Edith's name, including:- 1 in Belgium (consisting of a group of 5 hospitals), 2 in Australia, 4 in Canada, 1 in USA and 1 in New Zealand. There are also many streets worldwide and in this country, school houses and buildings. In 2015 a £5 coin was minted in her memory.

The 110th anniversary of her death is later this year.

Reported by Linda Peckett

MIX'n'MATCH SEARCHING

Many of you will have noticed by now that the **1921 Census** has been made available via Ancestry, and so adds to the great pool of online resources which we can draw on in the quest to find our ancestors and relatives.

Most key records sets are now available through more than one online provider—some being freely accessible while others are behind some form of pay-wall—but together, these resources give us a range of “options”.

Considering “options” by **mix'n'match searching** can open up new avenues to explore when looking for someone who is can't be found as expected in a particular records set. Although different providers give access to the same records sets, their means of doing so differ with their own search systems and transcribed database, search parameters, defaults, wildcards, etc. If one provider doesn't find your person, try another—you might just strike lucky ...

D DAY & THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN

WITH RICHARD GIBBON

(MARCH BRANCH : NOV 2024)

This proved to be a fascinating presentation. We have all seen on numerous times, the stock images from the Newsreels of the day which have become rather stale through repetition. Richard introduced us to a totally new series of scenes shot from both the Allied and German perspective. These were not polished professional views, but the sometimes shaky and unfocussed pictures presented a feeling of reality and immediacy which was incredible.

In retrospect the ability to move the population of a fair sized city from a 50 mile stretch of coastline over 100 miles of ocean to an inhospitable shore IN SECRET is a pretty impossible task. The statistics are mind-boggling – 3,000 landing craft, 1,213 warships, 864 merchant ships, 20,000 land vehicles, 13,000 aircraft (two thirds from the RAF). Operation Overlord was originally planned for May 1st, then June 5th delayed at the last minute by bad weather. The Luftwaffe meteorologists in Paris had confidently predicted two weeks of storms, on the basis of which the Hun went on holiday. Rommel went back to Berlin for his wife's birthday. They were certain the Allies were planning to invade but had been cleverly convinced by multiple deceptions that Calais would be our main objective.

Shortly after midnight on D-Day, June 6th 1944, more than 2,200 Allied Aircraft began bombing German defences in Normandy. They were followed by 1,200 aircraft carrying more than 23,000 American, British and Canadian airborne troops. By 1.30pm the US Airborne Division begins landing behind Utah beach. At 5am battleships bombarded German Coastal defences, by 6.30am the beach landing began.

Ultimately the Allied victory in Normandy stemmed from several factors. German preparations along the Atlantic Wall were only 18% complete as resources were diverted elsewhere. The Allies achieved and maintained air supremacy, which meant that the Germans were unable to make observations of the preparations underway in Britain. The transport infrastructure in France was severely disrupted by both Allied bombing and the French Resistance making it difficult for the Germans to bring up reinforcements and supplies. Indecisiveness and an overly complicated command structure on the part of the German High Command were also factors in Allied success.

Battles would continue for weeks with great loss of life on both sides, but we were now on the road to Berlin and eventual victory.

Reported by Wendy Hill



A LOCAL SUPER-CENTENARIAN compiled by CJ



Sawston was once home to England's oldest woman. In a 1979 Cambridge Evening News printed a feature about Alice Empleton (née Williams) who, at the time, was the inhabitant of a care home in Sawston. In it she reminisced about her long life:

Alice was born on 9 Sept 1870 in Wantage, Berkshire, her father Joseph, a monumental stonemason who had trained in Italy, was from Brecon in Wales. For a time she lived in Brecon with her parents and one sister and brother, but her father died when she was young and her mother moved back to Wantage and later remarried; she had several half siblings. Alice was bright and did well at school, and on leaving hoped to work as a pupil teacher. Although she was qualified for this role, the family finances were insufficient to allow her to do this, and as many young girls did at that time, she perforce had to enter domestic service. It is probably fair to say she was not happy with this employment. Whilst in Windsor in the 1890s, she happened to see the elderly Queen Victoria in her carriage, and thought her disappointingly 'frumpy' and unregal and said so to her employer's wife! It was also in Winsor where she met Frederick James Empleton, lately a soldier in the Suffolk Regiment (the 'local' regiment for recruitment in Cambridgeshire) who was originally from Sawston.

In 1897, they married in Sawston but went to live in Walthamstow, London, where Frederick worked for the Gt Eastern Railways. They had no children of their own, but did bring up a young nephew when his mother couldn't manage. On Frederick's retirement they lived back in Sawston (and are there in the 1939 Register). Widowed a year later, Alice left the village for a time but returned in 1948 where she resumed her passion for gardening. She died at Sawston on 7 Jan 1981, at the age of **110 years and 116 days**.

At the time, Alice had been recognized as England's oldest living woman, and 13th (documented) oldest woman in the world. [The UK's oldest at the time was Jeanetta Thomas of Wales (2 Dec 1869—5 Jan 1982)].

Our thanks continue go to everyone who has sent in contributions—whether as articles about your families and researches, or just shorts pieces, please keep it coming—getting something down on paper to share “the story” with others is the key. Family history is so much more than just genealogical facts, it's the stories which we either know or have deduced from the raw facts, and these need to be written down. Apologies if your piece hasn't appeared as yet, it's very much a jigsaw puzzle to fit the material into the available pages.

The Editorial Team

MEMBERSHIP

The Society offers a regular programme of meetings designed to appeal to the specialist and beginner alike; the quarterly members' journal is also available, if preferred, as a digital download. The UK subscription, due on joining and annually thereafter, is £12, and includes the member's partner. The overseas subscription is £17, which gives airmail postage of the Journal. If you chose to receive the e-Journal, the annual subscription for all locations is £9 (we also offer a life membership for x10 annual rate). Subscriptions/renewals may be made online through the CHFHS website via debit/credit card or PayPal, or by DirectDebit; alternatively, sterling cheque/etc payable to *Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire Family History Society*, should be sent to the Secretary. Changes of address/email and members' interests to the Membership Secretary, please. See p52 for contacts.

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RESEARCH SERVICES

The Society will undertake a limited amount of help for members who have reached a sticking point in the work. This can be done in two ways :

- # general enquiries can be addressed to the Secretary by email secretary@chfhs.org.uk (or by post, with an SAE please)
- # more detailed requests should be sent to our Research Team, preferably by email, via the request form on the website research@chfhs.org.uk

We will attend to requests as our time allows. We ask that you remember we are all volunteers, so please be patient and reasonable in your requests.

Please supply as much information about the topic/person as possible (such as the sources of “facts” you already have, and which records/resources have already been consulted (eg. BMDs, census, wills, parish registers, a family tree, Ancestry, FindMyPast, FamilySearch, etc)

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