

Roots in the Forest



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WALTHAM FOREST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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WALTHAM FOREST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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Roots in the Forest

The Journal of the Waltham Forest Family History Society

March 2025

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THE NEW PREMISES OF THE WALTHAM FOREST ARCHIVES AND LOCAL STUDIES LIBRARY – Mark Carroll

Over the past year there has been considerable discussion within the borough regarding the proposed redevelopment of Vestry House Museum (VHM) in Walthamstow Village. This building was also home to the Waltham Forest Archives and Local Studies Library, which have documents of significance to all those in this part of London with an interest in family, local and social history. The Committee of Waltham Forest FHS was keen to ensure that these vital resources should be located at a site which was accessible by public transport in a building that could be negotiated by all, including those with limited mobility. There needed to be far more space compared with that at VHM, not only for documents on open shelves but also for safe storage of lesser-used items. During the lengthy discussions several locations were mooted for the Archives and Local Studies Library (LSL), including the Town Hall or the Central Library at Walthamstow. In the end the new venue chosen was Chingford Assembly Hall (CAH) in the north of the borough. I went on a visit there in November 2024 to see to what extent the new facilities are an improvement on what had gone before at VHM.

The first impression as one walks into the new venue is that it is an odd place to site an archive or library (see Fig 1). It is mainly just one very large space – a hall, as the name of the building implies – with a stage at one end and some small side rooms. It is, however, light and airy, in stark contrast to the old LSL. The building itself is reasonably accessible by public transport, with public car parks and on-street parking nearby and a space for Blue Badge holders at the front; the search room is also accessible by wheelchair, unlike the library itself at VHM. Much of the space in the hall is taken up by stacks of shelving with books of various kinds, with work-desks and a photocopier down one side and other facilities down the other, such as the microfilm readers and cabinets. There is a staff desk near the entrance door of the library, and another towards the back of the hall; however, there does not appear to be any purpose-built office accommodation. The Archives and LSL staff worked hard over the autumn months of 2024 to expedite the move to the new premises. The Local Studies Librarian, Steven Gardner, and Visitor Assistant, Stefania Gallo, showed me round the venue. With two members of staff on

duty it is feasible for one of them to retrieve material from the archive store, something that was not always possible at VHM. On the shelves during our tour, we came across a box labelled “Waltham Forest Family History Society”. Inside were copies of past membership flyers, plus an incomplete set of past issues of the Journal, *Roots in the Forest*, from 1983 onwards. The Archives and LSL’s collections of local newspapers and parish registers are still available on microfilm, as before, and the Vestry House Museum Photographic Collection is also now housed at CAH. Free wi-fi is available in the search room. The service is currently awaiting installation of computer data ports; once these have been installed, the public-access computer will give on-site access to Find My Past and to Essex Archives Online (for Essex parish registers).



Figure 1. The new Archives and Local Studies Library at Chingford Assembly Hall

As before, one must book a visit to the new Archives and LSL in advance. Opening times are:

Alternate Wednesdays 10:30 to 12:30 and 14:00 to 17:00

Thursday 10:30 to 12:30 and 14:00 to 17:00

Friday 10:30 to 12:30 and 14:00 to 17:00

Alternate Saturdays 10:30–12:30 and 14:00–17:00

Details are provided online on the facility's website pages:
www.walthamforest.gov.uk/libraries-arts-parks-and-leisure/arts-and-culture/waltham-forest-archives-and-local-studies-library

You can book via email at: **wfa.enquiries@walthamforest.gov.uk**.

There is also free wi-fi available in the archives.

What is conspicuously lacking at the Archives and LSL is an electronic catalogue of all its holdings, although some limited information is available on the website. Furthermore, there might be a rational plan to the layout of the material on the shelving in the hall, but it was not obvious to me. The stacks of shelves and the individual shelves did not appear to be labelled, so how does one know what material is held or where individual items are located? I have been told that the library follows a cataloguing system which is unique to this service. The Librarian intends that there will be labelling on the ends of the aisles, and there are currently some labels on the shelves themselves. One can of course ask the staff, who have comprehensive knowledge of the collections, but in a modern facility one should not be dependent on the availability of an individual staff member during one's visit. However, because visits are by appointment, staff can usually prepare material in advance for visitors.

In my view, there has been chronic under-investment by the Borough of Waltham Forest over many years in our Archives and LSL. If one looks around at neighbouring London boroughs, such as Newham, one can see what is possible when the local heritage and its associated documentary evidence are valued. Thus, in conclusion the new facilities at CAH are an improvement over those at VHM, but there is still a long way to go before they reach modern standards. Also, given the unusual nature of the new venue, one has to ask how long the Archives and LSL are likely to remain there.

I am grateful to Steven Gardner for showing me round the new premises and to Stefania Gallo for agreeing to appear in the photo.

THE WORKHOUSE IN THE 20TH CENTURY – Kathy Unwin

The following account is an extract from a letter written by Thomas Coward to his long-lost sister Rosina. Tom's mother was my great-grandmother's sister, Angelina Lucini (born 1863). She was married to George Coward (born 1861), and they had five children, George (born 1889), Thomas (born 1895), Rosina (born 1897), Albert (born 1900) and Richard (born 1901).

The children's father died in 1903 and in 1904 their mother was "taken away". For a while my great-grandmother (with six children of her own) looked after the two youngest. The two elder children stayed on at the family home in Wilmington Square, living off the cash their mother had received from their father's insurance policy. However, Rosina, the only girl, was sent to Canada as a Barnardo's child; she was only seven years old. She did not hear from her family again till she received Tom's letter written shortly before his death in 1916, aged 21. In the letter he tells her his life story, including his spell in the workhouse with his two younger brothers Albert and Richard. I do not know where George jnr went but as he was 15, and working by this time, I assume he was living on his own.

(Mentioned in the story are Aunt Carry, my great-grandmother, and Ange, her eldest daughter.)

The doctor said Mother would have to go away. The carriage came about 9.30 pm one night and Mother came downstairs dressed in Father's clothes, trousers, frock coat, top hat, walking stick and was even smoking a cigar. She would not go into the carriage and they chased her round the Square for over an hour before getting her in. For a short time, Albert and Dick went to live with Aunt Carry, which of course was very convenient for George and I, who still remained in the house at the square. This was not for long though, and one afternoon Aunt Carry and Ange took Dick, Albert and I, and put us in the workhouse. I was put with the boys but Albert and Dick went to the nursery. The workhouse is in Shepherdess Walk, City Rd, where George used to live a short time ago. We were here for three weeks and were then transferred to Mitcham Workhouse Schools.

This place was almost too horrid for words and I had to work very hard, which is not in my line. I went in about November 1904 and remained there until March 3rd 1906. During this time no one came to see us, although it was only about eight miles from the Square.

Dicky was the youngest child in the school out of about 600 of us and was a great favourite with all including the Master and Mistress, Mr and Mrs Lane Drury. He was always ill and was constantly having ringworms, he also became a very knowing and old-fashioned child. I used to take him sweets into the hospital and would play with him on Sunday afternoons.

I used to take Albert little things, and I can vividly recall their poor little faces. After a time I began to feel that I was guardian of them and I have kept that feeling.

My daily work was to –

Clean Dormitorys	5.30–6 am
Breakfast	6am–6.30
Clean Dormitorys	6.30–8.30
School	9–12
Dinner	12.15–12.45 pm
Drill	12.45–1.30 pm
School	2–4.30 pm
Tea	5–5.30 pm
Play	5.30–6.30 pm
Scrub playroom	6.30–8.30 pm Bed

This I found very hard but the punishments were horrible and I stuck it out until one day when the Board of Guardians met. I was sent for by a Miss Baker. She was chief guardian for Clerkenwell, and knew the family well, being one of the benefactors of St Alban's Church. She asked me if I would like to live in the country and knowing that it would be better than this I, of course, said yes. Now I knew that unless one had no parents they were never sent to the country so I guessed that Mother was dead. Eventually on March 3rd 1906, Albert and I were sent to live with a Mr and Mrs Robinson at Watlington, Norfolk.

I will continue Tom's story in the next journal.

JOHN COE'S 1822 MAP OF WALTHAMSTOW – Mark Carroll

Introduction

Waltham Forest FHS gets enquiries via its website from various people who have some sort of connection with our 'patch'. One such query arrived in August 2024 from Mrs L Bryce. It concerned a Shadrack COO (or COE) of Leyton, who made a will in 1771 in which he left land in Wanstead to his nephew, John Coe of Walthamstow. Mrs Bryce posed two questions:

1. Was the father of this John Coe a brother of Shadrack?
2. Was this John Coe the author of the well-known 1822 map of the Walthamstow area (Fig 1), a copy of which used to hang on the wall at the foot of the stairs up to the Local Study Library, when it was located at Vestry House Museum?



Figure 1. Coe's 1822 map of Walthamstow (part)
St Mary's Church is close to the centre of this section of the map.

Initial progress

Mrs Bryce had sent us a copy with a transcript of the 1771 will of

Shadrack Coe, “a gardener of Leyton”, taken from the *Discovery* website of The National Archives (ref 1). In it, he made no bequests to his wife or children; the only legatees were his nephew John Coe and his granddaughter Rebekah Coe “when she should attain the age of 21 years”. So Rebekah was born after 1750 but we did not know the name of her father, who was presumably Shadrack’s son and possibly dead by 1771. Likewise, Shadrack’s wife had also likely predeceased him.

WFFHS has transcribed and digitised the parish registers for Leyton St Mary and Walthamstow St Mary, plus many other local records, so its website was an obvious place to start looking (ref 2). The burials with the surname Coe listed for Leyton were relatively recent and thus of little interest, but some of those at Walthamstow were more relevant:

John Coe, buried 11 October 1750

Mary Coe, buried 11 August 1770

John Coe, buried 26 August 1803

John Coe, aged 63, of Wyatt’s Lane, buried 28 December 1839

Furthermore, the 1821 census of Walthamstow listed a John Coe there, while the 1831 census had a John Coe living at Church Hill. There were no results for the surname Coe.

Then it was on to the usual genealogical websites, including FamilySearch and FreeBMD. Out of interest I also looked at the National Archives’ *Discovery* website for wills pertaining to a John Coe of Walthamstow in the 18th and 19th centuries. One ‘hit’ proved to be relevant: an 1838 will, proved in 1840 at London, in which John Coe made bequests to his wife Abra and his son Edward John. Hence this John Coe was likely to be the one who was buried at Walthamstow St Mary in 1839, aged 63 and thus born about 1776.

Around the same time both Mrs Bryce and I had independently contacted Jo Parker, the Archivist at Waltham Forest Archives and Local Studies Library. Given that the 1822 map had been extensively studied by the former Walthamstow Antiquarian Society, surely the archives would have some information about its author, John Coe? However, in the autumn of 2024 Waltham Forest Archives were in the throes of relocating from Vestry House Museum to Chingford

Assembly Hall. Jo would thus not be in a position to respond to our enquiry for some time. In the meantime, Mrs Bryce had come across Kennedy's 1894 book on Leyton (ref 3), which had two references to the family of a Shadrack Coe:

- John Coe, son of Shadrack, buried 7 July 1730.
- Shadrack Coe, son of Shadrack, baptised 3 June 1734.

So here was a son of Shadrack Coe (or Coo), the gardener of Leyton, and a possible father of Rebekah Coo (born after 1750).

News from the archives

In October, Jo Parker came back to Mrs Bryce and me with the information that the Local Studies Librarian, Steven Gardner, had found relating to John Coe of Walthamstow. It read:

We have a ... hand-drawn family tree (authorship unknown) which appears to be based on the Walthamstow Names Index. The main part of the family consists of John Coo (changed his surname to Coe c1743) married to Mary. He lived at Priory Lodge, Hoe Street, from 1750 and on the Forest from 1770 (according to rate books). John Coe his son (1736-1803) married Barbara (1741-1820), was parish clerk [for Walthamstow St Mary] c1760-1803, and lived at Wood Street; his widow lived [later] at Monoux Almshouses. John Coe (1777-1839), son of John Coe above, married Abra, was parish clerk c1810-1839, and was the author of the 1822 map [of Walthamstow]; they had three children, two of whom died in infancy and Edward John, born 1830. A disconnected part of the family tree shows Shadrack Coe, married to Rebecca; she died 1741 and is buried at St Mary's Church, Walthamstow.

So, this information confirmed several details that had been found already. It also identified John Coe (1777-1839) as the author of the 1822 map of Walthamstow, as well as a father and son with those names as parish clerks for Walthamstow. It added new information, such as the fact that John Coo changed his surname to Coe around 1743. His younger brother Shadrack seemingly retained the Coo surname – at least according to his will of 1771.

A Coe (or Coe) family from Wimbish, Essex

All this research placed this Coe family firmly in the Walthamstow and Leyton area from at least the mid-18th century, but what were their origins before that time? And could we establish a fraternal link between Shadrack Coe and the paternal grandfather of the John Coe of the 1822 map?

At this point I turned again to FamilySearch and to another trusted genealogical database online, FreeREG (ref 4). With a forename like Shadrack (albeit with various spellings) it should not be difficult to find the man who died in 1771 in Leyton. FamilySearch had a family tree for him that named his parents as John Coe and Rebekah née RICHARDSON. It also stated his birthplace as Wimbish, Essex, a small village four miles south-east of Saffron Walden in the north-west corner of that county. There was though no John named as his brother. However, FreeREG had that vital piece of information:

- John Coe, baptised 5 December 1693, Wimbish, son of John and Rebekah.
- Shadrac Coe, born 15 March 1706, Wimbish, son of John and Rebekah.

Putting all this information together enabled me to draw up a tree for this Coe family from Essex (Fig 2).

We now had the answers to Mrs Bryce's two questions. There were indeed two brothers called John and Shadrack Coe, born in Wimbish to John senior and Rebekah, with John junior being the elder son by about 12 years. What we do not currently know is why they moved from the Saffron Walden area to Walthamstow/Leyton, nor what their upbringing was like that enabled one to become a gardener and the other to have parish clerks, presumably well-educated individuals, among his descendants – one of whom was called John Coe, married to Abra and skilled in cartography. Nevertheless, that man's legacy is a map that gives us an insight into land ownership in the Walthamstow area in the early 19th century.

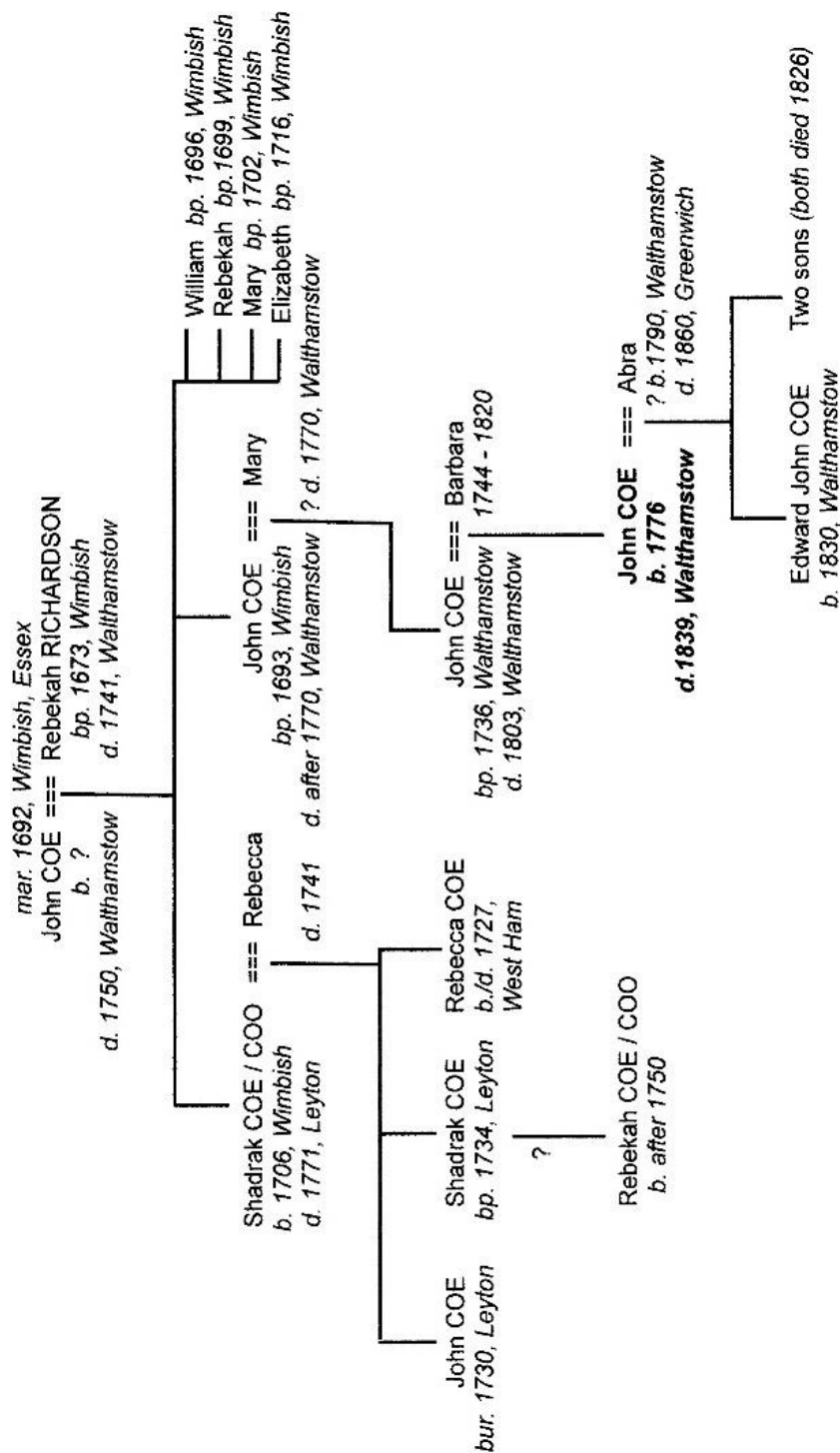


Figure 2. Family tree of John Coe of Walthamstow (1776-1839)

Not always successful

Soon afterwards another query arrived, this time from Kerry William Usher. He was researching a RIGGS family from Fareham in Hampshire and had come across a reference to a tomb in the churchyard of Walthamstow St Mary that was listed on the Historic England website (ref 5). He asked whether WFFHS knew what the memorial inscription was on this Riggs tomb, to which a date of 1754 had been assigned.

An initial search on our records' website produced no relevant burials for Riggs at Walthamstow St Mary. However, the search engine also allows other options, such as the ability to look for records under "Names that begin with ...". By using Rigg as the name in that option, that approach produced the following interesting results:

Burials

Mary Rigg, buried 28 October 1754 (Mrs Mary Rigg)

Mrs Rigg, buried 16 May 1776

Monumental inscriptions

Mary Rigg, died 23 October 1754, aged 72, relict of Mr John Rigg

Jane Rigg, late wife of John Rigg, late of this parish, died 1 May 1776 aged 31 years

The monumental inscriptions were inscribed on the family tomb in the churchyard. However, the listing by Historic England had an error in the family's surname: it was Rigg, not Riggs.

Further information about this Rigg family came from a will written by the widow Mrs Mary Rigg of Walthamstow in 1748 and proved at London in 1754 (ref 1). In it, she left money to "... my dear daughter Elizabeth now the wife of Robert HUDSON Esquire ... to my dear son John Rigg ... to my dear brother Thomas WILSON ..." and additional legatees. By using this and other information one could assemble a partial tree for this Rigg family (Fig 3).

None of the individuals named in this family tree made any sense to Kerry. Nevertheless, was the Rigg family from Walthamstow somehow linked to the Riggs family of Fareham?

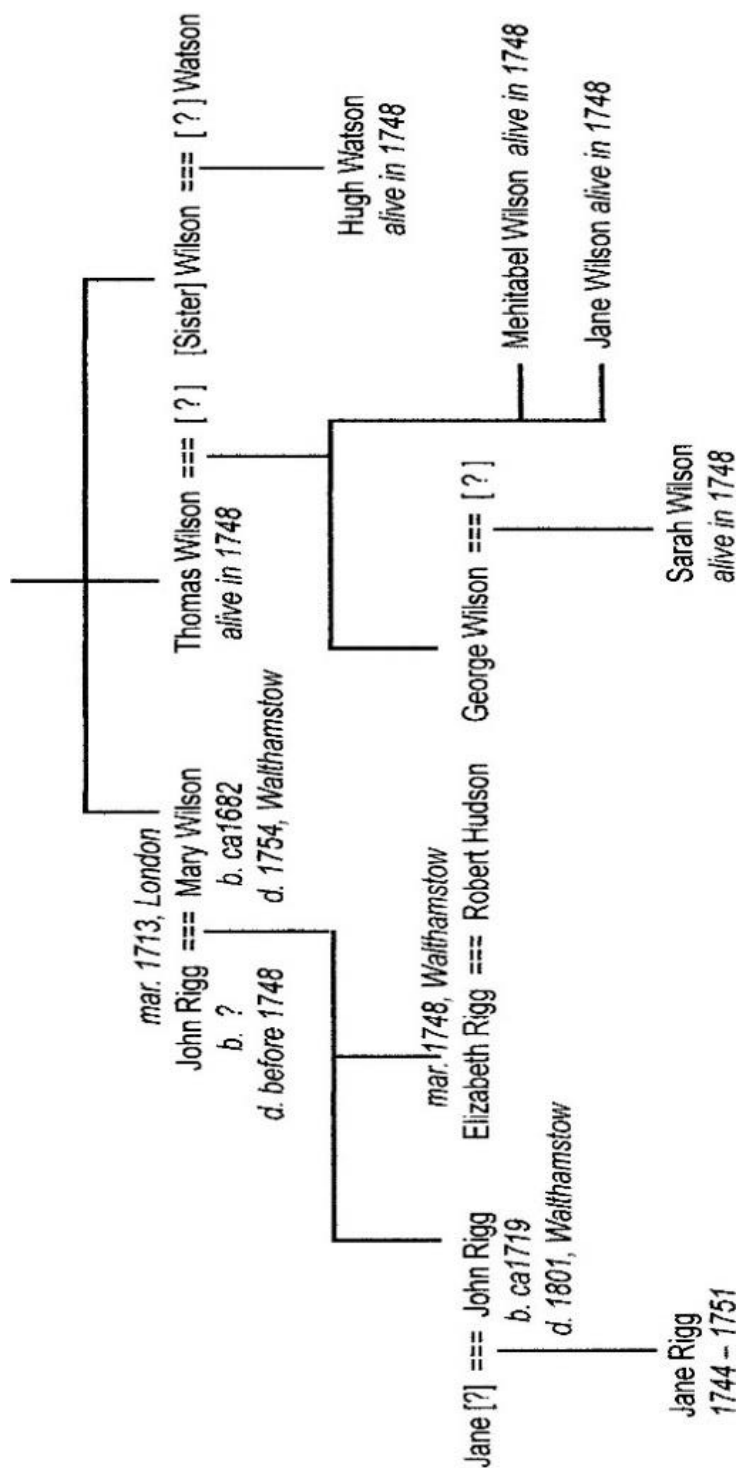
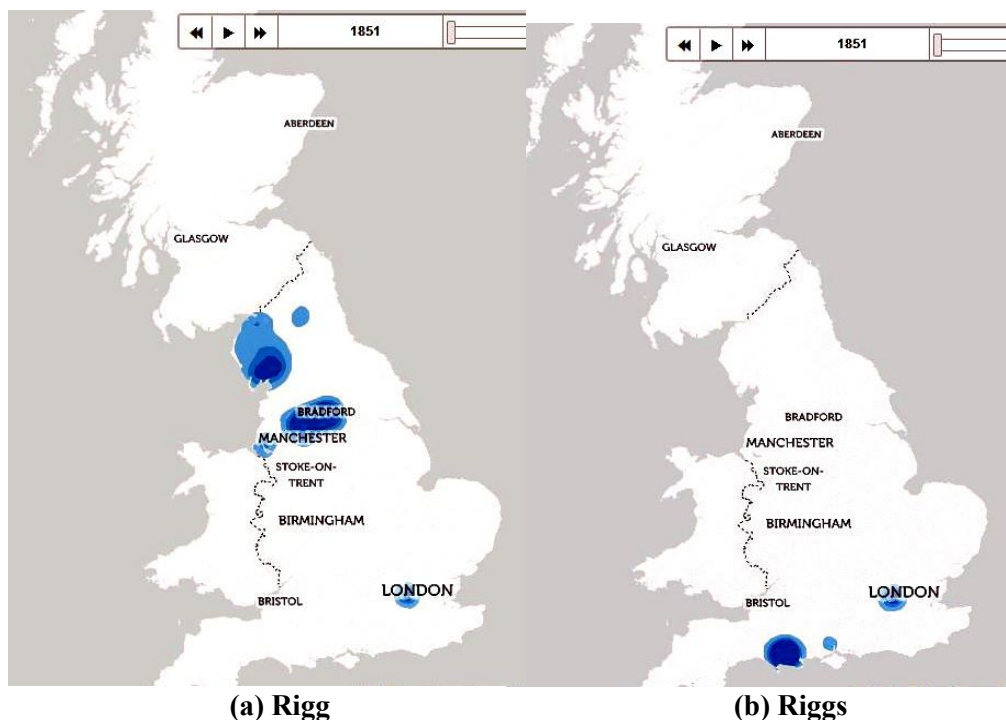


Figure 3. Family tree of the Rigg family of Walthamstow

If one looks online at the distribution of the two surnames in the 1851 census of England (ref 6), one finds two quite distinct outcomes (Fig 4). The Riggs name was indeed concentrated in Hampshire and Dorset at that time, with a few also in the London area, whereas the Rigg name was concentrated in north-west England, with a few in the London area. Thus, it seems unlikely that the two families are related. One could argue that this was an unsuccessful result, in that it did not help Kerry to take his family history research any further. On the other hand it had the useful side-effect of preventing him from wasting time researching a likely unrelated family. Sometimes a negative result can have positive outcomes!



**Figure 4. Surname distribution in 1851 census of England of
(a) Rigg and (b) Riggs**

Two abandoned children

Enquiries sometimes come to us in an indirect way. One such in October 2024 was from Peter Durrant in New Zealand via David Boote of the Leyton & Leytonstone Historical Society. Peter was

looking for his great-grandparents, Frederick and Agnes HUGHES, the parents of Agnes and William Henry. According to the 1901 census of England, Agnes junior (known then as Aggie), aged 6 and born in Hackney, and William (or Willie), aged 1 and born in Leyton, were “nurse children” living in the household of George Henry and Sarah Ann HALL of 4 Aubrey Road, Walthamstow, together with an adopted child, Maud Hall aged 9, and an unmarried visitor, Harriet E STAPSTEAD, aged 74. However, Frederick and Agnes senior were nowhere to be found in that census – what had happened to them between William’s birth in 1899 and April 1901? Had they abandoned their two children? Had they both died in an accident?

It was a simple matter to find the births of Agnes junior and William in the online index of births at the General Register Office website (ref 7). There was no maiden surname given for Agnes’s mother, but for William it was said to be OWEN. WFFHS’s Chairman, Tim Valder-Hogg, found the children’s baptisms in 1895 in Hackney and 1899 in Leyton, respectively, with their parents as Frederick Hughes and Agnes. However, we could not find a corresponding marriage – were they even married? According to William’s birth certificate, he was born at 7 Avenue Road, Leyton, the son of a grocer. Agnes junior’s birth certificate did not name her father; her mother was a domestic servant in 1895. The story in the family is that the children were taken in by a childless couple in Walthamstow, the Halls, who were members of the Salvation Army with an interest in childcare. Agnes junior and William were still living with them in 1911, together with Maudie Hall and two other children.

It is not easy working with surnames like Hughes and Owen! This became apparent when looking for Frederick and Agnes senior on the FamilySearch website, where there was an online tree for their family that included just them and Agnes junior and William. However, the contributors to that tree were clearly confused as to the identity of Frederick and Agnes senior, as there had been multiple changes and merges within their profiles over time. The only other possible avenue of research that I could suggest to Peter was to try the DNA route. There might be other living descendants of Frederick and Agnes senior, who would then be DNA cousins or half-cousins to the descendants of William and Agnes junior. If you have any other ideas for identifying the missing couple, they would be gratefully received!

Conclusions

It is satisfying to help people who approach us with a question relating to family history in our ‘patch’, especially when it involves the use of WFFHS’s specialised records that are not otherwise available online to non-members. Even when we cannot help in a direct way, we can still assist indirectly and prevent someone from aiming their further research efforts in a potentially fruitless direction. We can also sometimes point them to sources that might help them in their future studies.

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RAM’S EPISCOPAL CHAPEL, HOMERTON – Tim Valder-Hogg

The non-conformist history of Waltham Forest is very much linked with Hackney. One example of this is Ram’s Episcopal Chapel in Homerton, though the building now on the site is a later one.

In 1723, Stephen RAM established a chapel in his own garden in Homerton, which then was a small village, when he was unsuccessful

in obtaining a pew for his family in Hackney parish church. Ram's wife (d1720), who was originally buried in Hackney churchyard, was later reinterred at the chapel. Although it was his own chapel, it was established as a place of Anglican worship on a plot of land west of The Plough, on the north side of the high street, which he had acquired in 1722. Ram was a goldsmith, a manorial constable in 1718, and later an active vestryman.

The chapel looked like a big barn, the windows filled with thick green glass, and it had a "quaint little cupola" so that seen from a little distance it might look like a chapel.

Following his death in 1745, the estate passed to Ram's brother Andrew, to Andrew's widow Eleanor (d1744), and to John HOPKINS, owner of Hackney House. The vestry refused to take responsibility for it in 1764 and the chapel was sold to a board of trustees in 1775. The trustees appointed ministers, subject to the approval of the Bishop of London. They built a school behind Ram's residence.

In 1785 John EYRE was appointed minister of Ram's Chapel, now known as Homerton Chapel. Eyre was an evangelical, ordained in the Church of England, who trained at Trevecca College (founded by Lady Huntingdon in 1768). Trevecca College moved to Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, in 1792 and was renamed Cheshunt College. It later affiliated with the Congregational Union of England and Wales. It moved again in 1906 to Cambridge, and merged with Westminster College, Cambridge in 1967.

Eyre started a school in Well Street. Eyre was active as a minister, but he was also largely responsible for the Evangelical Magazine in its early years and was a founder of the London Missionary Society. A scheme was originated in 1796 by Eyre and others for sending out evangelical preachers to labour in the counties south of London, and from this sprang the Hackney Theological College, opened in 1803. He died in March 1803, before the college opened, and was buried in a vault on the south side of the communion table in Homerton Chapel.

The college used Eyre's house and was managed by a committee with George COLLISON as tutor. Others involved were Matthew WILKS

of Whitefield's Tabernacle, Moorfields, and Rowland HILL of Surrey Chapel, Southwark. Students were housed in the converted stable block until new quarters could be built 40 years later. Training of Congregational ministers came to predominate over missionary work, but it founded over 50 chapels, many of which they remained responsible for at the end of the century.

A memoir of Eyre by the Rev George COLLISON of Walthamstow, president of Hackney Theological Seminary, appeared in the *Evangelical Magazine* for June and July 1803.

Ram's Chapel was key in the establishment of four of the local schools, and Homerton College which is now part of Cambridge University. Homerton College was founded in 1768 on Homerton High Street as a non-conformist (Congregationalist) academy. In 1850 it was refounded as teacher training institution for Congregational Board Schools. It moved to Cambridge in 1894 and offered a Cambridge University diploma from 1919.

Ram's Chapel remained in use until December 1932 and the trust that had administered and owned it was wound up in 1936. The Ram and Eyre families were disinterred and reburied at Chingford Mount Cemetery in June 1934 (Fig 1). Ram's chapel was demolished to widen the high street.



Fig 1 Grave marker in Chingford Mount Cemetery

Near Wick Road, a row of almshouses called The Retreat were built in 1812 by Samuel ROBINSON for the benefit of eight widows of Independent and four of Baptist ministers. They were allowed £10 per annum. An inscription on the building read “For the Glory of God and the Comfort of twelve widows of Dissenting Ministers this Retreat was erected and endowed by Samuel Robinson a.d. 1812”.

At the east end of Retreat Place stood Ram’s School for Boys, and at the other end a Unitarian chapel called the Gravel Pit Chapel. The Gravel Pit Chapel was a breakaway group from Ram’s Chapel in Homerton.

A Congregationalist church was established in 1804 at the Old Gravel Pit Chapel on nearby Morning Lane, which was vacated by an increasingly Unitarian congregation who had founded it in 1714. The Congregationalists were seceders from Ram’s chapel after the death of John EYRE. They met at Homerton College and chose John Pye SMITH as first pastor 1804. By 1868, the congregation at the Old Gravel Pit had quadrupled and they decided to build a new, much bigger chapel as part of the new development nearby in Clapton to take account of the increasing popularity of the area. The Clapton Park Chapel, known as the Round Chapel, could seat 1,150 people and would become one of the important non-conformist churches in the area with the largest congregation in Hackney.

There was also a chapel in Well Street, Hackney, said to have been founded by George COLLISON. In 1803 he was tutor at the new Hackney Theological Seminary in John EYRE’s former home in Well Street. It was Eyre’s wish to educate preachers for his Village Itinerancy or Evangelical Association for the Propagation of the Gospel.

In the 1780s, in Walthamstow, the new minister of the Marsh Street (now High Street) Church expressed Unitarian views which caused the evangelical members to form a new meeting. The Marsh Street New Meeting house, identifying as Congregational, opened in 1787 on a site given by William COULDERY on the south side of Marsh Street, near Willow Walk (Fig 2). Under the ministry of George Collison (1797-1837) the New Meeting grew, and the Old Meeting contracted. He began another meeting in Wood Street, Walthamstow,



Fig 2 Marsh Street Congregational Chapel

in 1807. By 1929 he also had two licensed rooms (for meetings) in the parish and a small chapel in Leytonstone. The New Meeting attendance continued to increase under his successor and they had to add galleries in 1838 to seat the congregation. When George Collison died, he was buried in the graveyard behind the New Meeting chapel.

You might be puzzling as to the location of a chapel on Walthamstow High Street with a burial ground behind. It is no longer there. In 1967 Waltham Forest Council agreed to take over the burial ground under the

Open Spaces Act 1906 and lay it out for public use. Little happened until the late 1970s when the Council decided to clear the burial ground and sell it for development. 144 adults and 39 children were exhumed from 111 graves and reburied in Chingford Mount Cemetery.

George COLLISON, minister of the Marsh Street Congregation, had a son, also called George. He was a lawyer who became Secretary of the Abney Park Cemetery Company. Like Collison, the other founders of the Abney Park joint stock company were all Congregationalists.

George visited Massachusetts to see the American approach to cemetery design and did the work to show that such a venture could succeed in the London area. His links with Congregationalists doubtless helped.

Trinity Church, Orford Road, Walthamstow, started in the early 1860s, when some Marsh Street members seceded. The South Grove

mission was started by them in 1881 and in 1882 they also built a large Sunday School in West Avenue. By 1901 they were responsible for three missions, one in Spruce Hill. Spruce Hill Church, Brookscroft Road, originated in 1893 as a mission begun independently by some members of Trinity church. The church was built in 1900. More than a century after the founding of the Spruce Hill Church in Brookscroft Road, Waltham Forest Family History Society was looking for a new place to meet. It now meets in the hall of that church.

In 1972 the union of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England formed the United Reformed Church, though about a quarter of the Congregational churches chose not to join and remain members of the Congregational Federation, the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches and the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches.

The denominational archives of the United Reformed Church are held in the Congregational Library, housed at the Dr Williams's Library, in London, as are the archives of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

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BOOK REVIEW – Mark Carroll

***The Hollywood Strangler*, by Nathan Dylan Goodwin, 2024, 345 pages, Amazon Books, £18.99 in hardback (or £4.99 in Kindle edition), ISBN 9798332474941**

This book is yet another superlative output in Nathan Dylan Goodwin's series of 'Venator cold case' studies – now three strong, to date. It is a stand-alone novel, but it helps to understand the back-stories of some of the characters if one has read the earlier books. Once again, it combines the crime thriller genre involving unsolved murders from the past with a side-helping of modern-day investigative genetic genealogy (IGG), and the two together make an intriguing and potent mix. Once more, it is set in America, where it merges inputs from Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, together with Port-au-Prince in Haiti. Several strands of storyline weave their interlinked ways throughout the novel: the focus is on the hunt for the eponymous serial killer of the book's title, but the personal lives of the main characters are also developed in interesting ways. A new member of the Venator team in Utah provides some useful additional expertise as well as a potentially disruptive relationship.

What makes this book such an enjoyable read? I was once again impressed by the realism that the author achieves. He and his helpers have clearly consulted at length numerous experts in relevant fields, such as police procedures, forensic science, the movie industry, genetic genealogy and even apparently the Haitian Creole language (unless that 'expert' was Google Translate!). Someone has thoroughly scouted out the various locations to provide the many background details that add colour to the developing story. First and foremost, of interest to family historians will be the IGG aspects – how the Venator team works backwards from the outcomes of the analysis of the DNA sample to the common ancestors of the resulting match clusters and then forwards to the present-day generations. Along the way they employ a variety of techniques, not all of them associated with the DNA test: prediction of the killer's visual external characteristics, certainly, but also of his likely personality and abode at the time of the crimes, as well as significant inputs from people's use of social media. The team also has access to the original police investigations from the 1980s that provide additional clues. In the

process the team members make mistakes and draw false conclusions – as we all do in our own family history research.

The style of writing in this book is fluent and authoritative and a cut above that of its two predecessors, with fewer of their occasionally clunky descriptions and dialogue. One gets used to the American English, though I had to resort to the dictionary for the meaning of ‘sophomore’ (a second-year student) and to Google for ‘hiney’ (buttocks) and ‘dumpster’ (a skip). I could find no weaknesses in the elaboration of the genetic genealogy aspects: the centimorgans of shared DNA, the cluster analysis, the predicted relationships, the sources and databases used – all were convincingly and realistically portrayed. It was admittedly hard at times to keep in one’s head all the members of the developing family trees and their inter-connections, but that issue is merely a reflection of the complexity of the investigation. The proofreading has been excellent, with very few errors and typos.

I *did* put this book down – but not for long! The storyline draws you in, and the tension mounts as the Venator team closes in on the identity of Hollywood’s serial killer. The tension also mounts as the other strands of the novel develop: will the husband missing for seven years ever return? Will the father’s nefarious activities in Haiti be confirmed? Will certain team members ever find true love? I look forward with keen anticipation to the author’s next book in this series, when some of the answers will hopefully be revealed.

A to Z of FAMILY HISTORY – Barbara Harpin

L is for:

LONDON LIVES <https://www.londonlives.org>

This site provides access to historical records, in a fully digitized and searchable form, a wide range of primary sources about 18th century London, with a particular focus on poverty, crime and the making of the modern City of London.

More than 240,000 manuscripts and printed pages from eight London archives, and 15 datasets, this gives access to 3.35 million names

from 1690 to 1800. For guidance, see the individual search pages and the Research Guides.

M is for:

Medical Officers of Health <https://wellcomecollection.org/>

Based at 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE

A free museum and library exploring health and human experience and with much available on their website.

The Wellcome Collection is a free museum and library. Through their collections, exhibitions and events – in books and online – explore the past, present and future of health.

Opened in 2007, many thousands of items relating to health, medicine and human experience, including rare books, artworks, films and videos, personal archives and objects, are available. Part of Wellcome, a charitable foundation supporting science to help build a healthier future for everyone.

Munk's Roll

<https://history.rcp.ac.uk/inspiring-physicians/history-of-munks-roll>

Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) from 1518.

Founded over 500 years ago in 1518 by a Royal Charter from King Henry VIII, the RCP is England's oldest medical college. Today, the RCP continues to play a vital role in raising medical standards and shaping public health.

First compiled by physician William Munk, the Roll is still updated and maintained to this day. In March 1855, Munk, a London physician specialising in smallpox, presented a large leather-bound volume to the library of the RCP. This was his Roll, a painstakingly researched collection of biographies of fellows, licentiates, candidates and extra licentiates. These entries spanned from the foundation of the RCP in 1518 to 1600, written by hand on ruled paper, in his own distinctive script. In December of the same year, he presented a second volume, covering the period from 1601 to 1700, and in June 1856 the series was brought up to 1800 with the gift of a third book.

Although he had only been elected a fellow of the RCP in 1854, Munk was appointed as Harveian Librarian in 1857, a post which had

been left vacant since the death of Richard Tyson in 1750. There is nothing in the records at the RCP to indicate why he was chosen, but Munk's proven interest in the history of the RCP probably made him an obvious choice.

COVER STORY – Kathy Unwin

Have you ever visited the Ideal Home Exhibition, which began in 1908, and looked over the show houses? You may wonder what happens to them after the shows. Well, the building in the cover picture was one of the show houses in the exhibition at Olympia in the 1930s. The house sits at the entrance to Chingford Station. It was flat packed and reassembled in its current position complete with a rockery garden. It has been used as business premises ever since.

The Ideal Home Exhibition moved to Earls Court in 1979 but is now back at Olympia and called the Ideal Home Show. I have to say, it is not as good as it used to be.

AN ODD SURNAME IN WALTHAMSTOW – Mark Carroll

We are all well aware of the ethnic diversity of the population of modern-day London, and especially that of Waltham Forest. So it was no great surprise to come across the surname BARAGWANATH while I was checking some transcriptions of the marriage registers of Walthamstow St Mary, 1905-1909. The entry concerned the wedding on 30 March 1907 of an Annie Baragwanath, a 43-year-old spinster of no specified occupation who was residing at the time at Victoria Villa, Whipps Cross, on the borders of Walthamstow and Leytonstone (Fig 1). My immediate reaction was that hers was an Indian surname but with a Christian forename – could she be part of an Anglo-Indian family? The British Raj on the Indian subcontinent was at its height in Edwardian times. Over the years some colonial occupiers had intermarried with the local populace, thereby giving rise to Anglo-Indian families with their distinctive mixed-race culture. A few, no doubt, returned to the mother country and settled here – was this

Baragwanath family one of them? The entry in the marriage register told me that Annie's father was John Phillips (or Philip) Baragwanath, an engineer, and the two witnesses were a Richard and a Lavinia with the same exotic surname.

907. Marriage solemnized at *The Parish Church* in the *Parish*
of *Walthamstow* in the County of *Essex*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
<i>March 30</i>	<i>William Henry Hind</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Book Foreman</i>	<i>6 Rosslyn Rd.</i>	<i>Edward Hind</i>	<i>Justice</i>
<i>1907</i>	<i>Annie Baragwanath</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>Victoria Villa Whiffers Cross</i>	<i>John Philip Baragwanath</i>	<i>Engineer</i>

Figure 1. 1907 marriage of Annie Baragwanath

With my curiosity aroused, I decided to do some research into this unusual and foreign-sounding surname in the Walthamstow area. My first search, on FreeBMD (ref 1), was to ask that database for every entry of someone with the surname Baragwanath over its entire time span of 150 years or more. My expectation was that there would be half a dozen such entries, probably located mainly in east London. Imagine my shock when the results came back – there were hundreds of entries, starting as early as 1837 and located initially in the Penzance area of Cornwall! Over time the family name seemed to move out of south-west England and to appear in places like Cheshire, Warwickshire and London. A rapid reassessment of the situation followed on my part.

Judging by the entries on FreeBMD, the Baragwanath surname seemed to be centred on the village of Towednack, a few miles inland from St Ives, Cornwall. On the WikiTree website (ref 2) there were numerous entries for the surname, mostly in England but also in North America. It was easy to find Annie on the FamilySearch website (ref 3), as she appeared in several Victorian censuses of England. In 1881 she was with her family in Tottenham; in 1891 she was working as a servant in Leyton; and in 1901 she was with her now widowed stepmother Lavinia in Wood Street, Walthamstow. After her marriage to William Henry HIND in 1907 in Walthamstow, Annie was still living there in 1911, together with her husband and stepson. Unsurprisingly given her age, she did not have any children

with William. In 1939, according to the National Register of England and Wales taken in September that year, she was a widow residing at 13 Brookfield Avenue, Walthamstow; she said that her date of birth was 18 March 1863.

In fact, Annie has a FamilySearch identity tag, KH42-J63, that is associated with an extensive Baragwanath family tree on that website. Of course, experience tells us that online family trees can rarely be trusted to be fully accurate and that they often contain howling errors! However, this one was supported by documentary evidence and its trail led back, as expected, to Cornwall. Annie's paternal grandfather, Michael Hitchins Baragwanath, was born on 31 October 1806 in the village of Ludgvan, two miles north-east of Penzance (ref 4). His father, Michael senior, was from Towednack. From there, the male line has been traced back to a John Baragwanath, born about 1523 and living in Towednack in 1569, when his name appears in the historical records on a muster roll; plus, his will was apparently proved in 1574. In an online glossary of Cornish dialect, the word 'baragwanath' appears with the meaning of 'wheat bread' or 'wheat field' (ref 5). So it seems likely that this unusual surname is rare in Walthamstow but common in Cornwall. Just to be sure that there was no south Asian connection, I asked FamilySearch if it had any entry for anyone in India with the surname Baragwanath. The answer came back: "No".

Annie Hind née Baragwanath died on 21 November 1946 in a hospital in Wiltshire but was buried in Chingford Mount Cemetery (section F11, plot number 60026), her final resting place marked by a gravestone that lies flat on the ground (Fig 2) (ref 6). Her husband William, also buried there, had died 13 years earlier; his first wife, Florence Marian (died 1902), lies with them. At the time of her death Annie's home was at 30 Greenheys Drive, South Woodford, Essex. In her will, written in 1944 but proved in London on 19 December 1946, she left a modest estate of £110 (ref 7). She did not name an executor, so administration was granted to her stepson, Thomas (Tom) Hind. She left household effects and her clothes to various members of the Baragwanath and Hind families plus her landlady, and any remaining cash to Tom and his wife.



Figure 2. Grave of Annie Hind née Baragwanath

Are there any Baragwanath folk living now in London and Essex? Yes, for after a search of those electoral rolls back to 2002, I counted at least a dozen such individuals. So if you see a surname that looks foreign in your family history research, don't jump to conclusions – it might still be English!

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KATHLEEN'S WILL QUERY – Mark Carroll

One of our members, Kathleen, approached me with a problem concerning a will. She knew from an Ancestry user that George CLULEE had died in 1868 in Warwickshire and had left a will. However, she could find no reference to it on the Probate Search website (<https://probatesearch.service.gov.uk>). Could I help? Well, I know from personal experience that the Probate Search website can be rather fickle: sometimes if you input into its search engine just a surname and year of death, you get no results, but if you also add a forename, then up pops the details of the will you want. Another key factor can be the date of death and whether it occurred at the end of the year. So when I typed in “George Clulee” and “died 1868”, I too got no results. Looking on FreeBMD I could see that George had died in the December quarter of 1868. In this situation probate might not have been granted until sometime in the following year. I then went back to page 1 of my search enquiry, where there was the option to click on “Change to following year”. When I did so, the reference to George’s will duly appeared, and Kathleen was able to obtain a copy of it. As always, the advice is: if at first you don’t succeed, try playing around with the online options.

THE FUTURE OF FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES – Mark Carroll

A few years ago, shortly after the country emerged from Covid lockdown, the Family History Federation held a seminar for its constituent family history societies (FHSs), with the aim of discussing the impact of the pandemic on societies. In February 2025 the exercise was repeated but with an emphasis on identifying positive steps that FHSs could take to boost membership and diversity, whilst also ensuring succession planning for positions of responsibility, such as committee members. Waltham Forest FHS was represented by its Chairman, Tim Valder-Hogg, and myself. The session was led by an experienced Federation official, Ian Waller, supported by the Federation Chairman, Steve Manning, and others. The goal was for every participant to leave with five self-defined action points.

There were four workshops, two in the morning and two in the afternoon; Tim and I attended two each, but different ones. After each session there was a report back from each workshop facilitator. The four topics were: Improving Relationships; Data Submission and Projects; Running Your Society; and Publicity and Social Media. The FHSs represented ranged in size from those with thousands of members, to WFFHS with its 50 or so members. As a result, some of the discussion, such as around charitable status, was not relevant to us. The venue was hardly ideal either, and the facilitators sometimes allowed participants to ramble away from the designated theme. Yet there was also the shared realisation that almost all FHSs now face declining member numbers, with a lack of diversity, and with too few members willing to volunteer to join the committee or to help with projects. What can be done? What changes can FHSs implement, and how can the Federation help them?

We also heard from the Federation about its recent enhanced activities: improvements to its main website; its new website, *Explore Your Genealogy*; its publicity through attending events around the country; its publications, such as the *Really Useful Bulletin*; its support mechanisms, such as *Parish Chest* with its ability to automate subscription renewals; and its national *Surnames Interest* database. At the same time Tim and I were just as interested in hearing from the other societies what successful changes and

improvements they had implemented in recent years. Some of this exchange of information came not from the workshops themselves but from informal networking over lunch and coffee.

Realistically, given its small size, there is a limit to what WFFHS can achieve. Our best hope is to ‘piggyback’ on the efforts of the Federation and our larger neighbouring FHSs and related groups. We could, for example, write an account of ourselves, our work and unique resources, for inclusion in the *Really Useful Bulletin* or on the *Explore Your Genealogy* website. By such means we could enhance awareness about us without a great time commitment on our part. WFFHS is, on the other hand, unlikely to have members with sufficient expertise and spare time to engage effectively with social media. Yet there are also simple steps we could take: do we make new members sufficiently welcome? Is our programme of activities, with its blend of online talks and in-person workshops, attractive enough to the membership? WFFHS’s Committee will of course be discussing in detail the key outcomes of the Federation seminar. If you yourself have any ideas as to how we can address some of the issues mentioned here, I would love to hear from you!

THE LAST WORD – Kathy Unwin

The social in January went well and the quiz was almost a tie between the three teams.

If anyone has any suggestions for workshop topics, please let any of the committee members know as we are running out of new ideas.

I would be grateful for more articles or letters from members for the journal. Are you writing up your family history or do you have a question about your research? This could make the basis for an article.

**Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month
(except August) at 8 pm
either at Spruce Hill Baptist Church Hall, Brookscroft Road,
Walthamstow E17 4JP
or on Zoom**

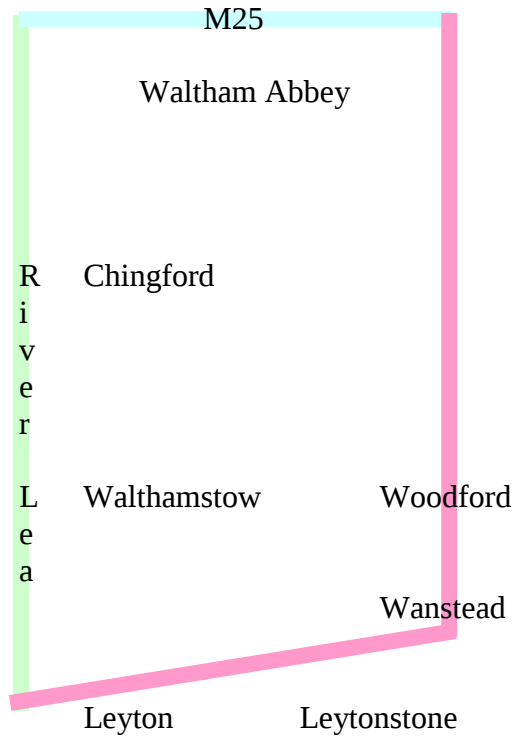
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DIARY

8th April	Talk (Zoom): Old family photographs and how to date them – Steve Gill
13th May	Workshop (hall): Reading old wills and similar documents
10th June	Talk (Zoom): Help! My ancestor is missing – Simon Fowler
10th July	Workshop (hall): Research in the British Isles (other than England)
3rd August	Lunch and walk in Leyton
9th September	To be confirmed

Waltham Forest FHS



The Society covers an area largely defined by the River Lea, M25 and A11/A104 roads, this includes the London Borough of Waltham Forest, comprising the old Essex metropolitan boroughs of Chingford, Leyton and Walthamstow, and extends to Waltham Abbey in the north

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Family History Society

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