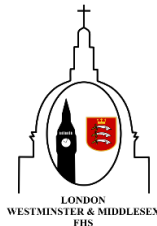


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METROPOLITAN

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Cover picture: The figure of Lady Justice on top of the dome of the Old Bailey, taken by Barbara Haswell. See page 95

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EDITORIAL

Our cover picture shows the 12-foot gilded figure of Lady Justice who stands on top of the Old Bailey, scales in one hand and sword in the other. The scales represent the impartiality of the Law and the sword metes out justice. The sculptor, Frederick William POMEROY R.A. (1856-1924), was born in London and became an important person in the New Sculpture movement. Our article, by regular contributor Sheila Clarke, on page 95 tells about the interactions between her ancestor John BIRCH and the Old Bailey in the early 19th century. The following article looks at some of the resources available for those researching police ancestors in London.

We have Sheila to thank for the article on page 66 too, about another two independent women which was inspired by Sheila's article last September. Jane Ainsworth illustrates her story about two of her great aunts with some great family photos. We were very impressed with the amount of work which went in to the beaded cushion!

'Alfred and his Ships' on page 73 is the second installment of Robert Wilkinson's tales based on the information he received from his Aunt Beatty. Many of you with London ancestors will likewise have connections with the sea. Part three will follow next time.

Our AGM took place on 13 February via Zoom and this provides an opportunity for members to meet and exchange views about our Society. We had some excellent ideas which can be read about on page 88 and will be actively pursued. It was good to see so many of you there and from all around the world. The following talk was a fascinating introduction to researching Irish ancestry and came with a useful handout.

We would like to thank readers who have been sending us a variety of articles. It's lovely to have a few in hand and we will be publishing them all in due course. Please don't let this put you off writing to us! We still need to fill three more journals this year – so please keep them coming.

We would like to send our thanks to Helen Comley, who has been our contact and help at Parchment the Printers for over 15 years. She is now retiring and we wish her all the best.

Barbara, Elizabeth and Paul, the Editorial Team

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Following our AGM I am delighted to be continuing as Chairman for another year. However, Paul Feetum has stepped down from his role as Secretary after doing this for the last year and I would like to record my grateful thanks to him for all his hard work. As Chairman, I do need a Secretary to help me. Ideally this would be someone with some experience of organisation and of taking minutes. Last year we split our Secretary role into three jobs so that no-one would have too much to do and the position we need help with is the Minutes Secretary. Our job description is as follows:

Minutes Secretary:

a) to arrange committee meetings and the date of the AGM, producing agendas and other notices in consultation with the chairman and taking and publishing the minutes of all such meetings.

As our meetings are all on Zoom, this can be done by a member who is not based in London. Also, we record our Zoom committee meetings to help with the minutes and the new AI note taking facility is apparently really useful for those who have not done this sort of thing before. Do please get in touch with me if you are interested in helping in this way or have any further questions. You can email me at: chairman@lwmfhs.org

This time last year I was reporting on the Ministry of Justice plan to destroy historic Wills after 25 years and retain only a digitised copy. I am delighted to report that after a concerted effort by interested parties for both history and the law, with many people writing in and signing a petition on the Government's website, this proposal has now been dropped. See page 70 for our report.

It is by working together that we get things done. Following our survey we had numerous offers of help with our transcription and indexing projects. Our Projects Co-ordinator, Elaine, has spent quite some time scanning and copying documents and we are now getting into a position where we can soon offer these volunteers a project. This will enable us to add surnames to our online Surname Index, making the location of mentions of ancestors easier to find. Our Surname Index is in the Members' Area of our website and currently has 7,599 entries.

It's very exciting to be able to move these projects forward. If you are interested in joining the team, please email Elaine at: projects@lwmfhs.org

Elizabeth Burling

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

I would like to add a bit more information to Michael Gandy's Non-Conformity article, which appeared in December 2024 *Metropolitan*. I have had a brick wall for a few years trying to locate the marriage of Samuel MOULTON and his wife Mary who lived in Sudbury, Suffolk. Their 11 children were all born in Sudbury between 1744-1761. I had Samuel's death in November 1799 age 84, and his membership of The Freemasons of Sudbury in 1729. He had grazing rights with other members of the MOULTON family. These records list him as a lath rivener, as does his Will of 1800. In searching for more information I found a few family Wills. The most information for my tree was from the Will of Thomas MOULTON dated 1793 who names Samuel as one of his brothers. The Will of Thomas MOULTON, Maltster, of Great Waldingfield Suffolk dated 1793 is at Suffolk Archives, Ref: 1C/1/500/1/2475/51. It includes his 2 sisters Ruth and Hannah, and 2 brothers Samuel and Daniel still alive. So some help.

Still no progress for Sam's marriage. I purchased a CD with 3 volumes of Clandestine Marriages of the Fleet Prison dated 1680-1754, still no Sam. A few years later I did find Sam, on the Ancestry site for the Fleet Registers, on 12 December 1740. And no, he was not in prison! These records have a story of their own. The Fleet marriages of London contains many couples from southern England but also many men from Scotland, perhaps fishermen. So I think of the records as the London Gretna Green marriages.

Eileen Blythe, Member No. 02

In the recent edition of *Metropolitan*, in the otherwise very good article on Genetic Genealogy, there is a mistake. The author writes: 'X-chromosome DNA (X-DNA), passed down by mothers in entirety to daughters and by both parents to sons.' It should read: '... passed down by mothers in entirety to sons and by both parents to daughters'.

A father passes on his X chromosome to his daughter but his Y chromosome to his son. A son cannot inherit X chromosomal DNA from his father, only from his mother. A mother with her two X chromosomes passes either of them to each child, and thus the pattern of inheritance of the X chromosome is rather unusual. (Also, I'm not sure why Paul needs the words 'in entirety' in the explanation.)

Nevertheless, since the article focuses on autosomal DNA, this minor mistake does not detract from the overall value of the content.

Mark Carroll PhD (Member No. 6205)

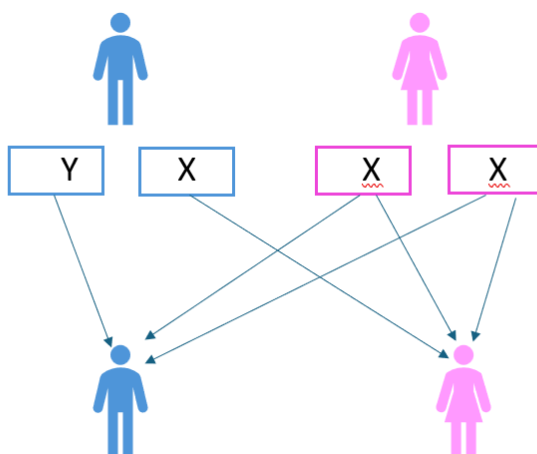
Note: I am much indebted to Mark Carroll (member no. 6205) for letting me know of an error in my article 'Genetic Genealogy: an introduction' published in the December edition of *Metropolitan* on pages 5-13.

Rather than simply make the amendments to the text, however, I thought it better to take the opportunity to expand the two lines on page 5 which attempted to explain the peculiar characteristics of the X-chromosome.

A father has both a Y and an X chromosome. Since he alone is able to pass on the Y-chromosome to his son, he does so and cannot pass on in addition any part of his X-chromosome. In contrast, he cannot pass on his Y-chromosome to any daughter and hence must pass on his whole X-chromosome.

A mother has 2 X-chromosomes. She can pass on just one X-chromosome to her children (son or daughter) but she has 2 such chromosomes from which to do so. She may, as with Y-chromosomes from father to son, transfer one of her X-chromosomes exactly as she inherited them from her father or mother. This, however, is more likely in a recombined form. Blaine Bettinger's study indicates this latter occurs in approximately 86% of cases (see pages 138-141, *The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy*, 2nd. Ed.).

I suspect I was too ambitious in trying to explain this in just 2 lines! Perhaps a diagram might help:



MY INDEPENDENT GREAT AUNTS

Gert and Alice Dearling

By Jane Ainsworth, Member No: 8533

I was inspired by Sheila Clarke's fascinating article 'No Friend Like A Sister' in *Metropolitan* September 2024 to provide this contribution about some of my own family.

I am reluctant to use the derogatory term 'spinster' about my two great aunts. It originally derived from a factual description of women who spun textiles to make a living but, by the 1800s, it had acquired unpleasant connotations



Gertie and Alice Dearling

of 'old maid' with the unkind prejudice that these women were too unattractive to marry. It was remarkably arrogant of men – some of whom can never have looked in a mirror – to judge that women were not complete without being married to one of them or having their children. (Even today some men feel it is acceptable to insult successful unmarried and/or childfree women as 'lonely cat ladies'!). Parties to marriage were described as bachelor or spinster until the Civil Partnership Act 2005 but, sadly, the discrimination persists.

Gertrude Elizabeth DEARLING (1872-1961) and Alice Mary DEARLING (1874-1968) were the oldest of five children of Thomas and Mary Ann DEARLING, whom I introduced in my previous article about their grandson Ralph Thomas DEARLING. I am proud of my relations, who worked hard to maintain a comfortable 'middle class'

lifestyle and supported their mother until she died. We are fortunate to have inherited a lot of photographs of these good-looking women in their fine dresses; they were also strong and determined, liked gardening and enjoyed their succession of pet dogs.

Thomas, my great grandfather, started work as a house porter at the Bank of England in March 1871 and he became superintendent watchman. The family moved from Pimlico (46 Westmoreland Street) to Peckham (1 Sidmouth Grove) to Camberwell (49 Danby Street), where he died in 1893, aged 47. Mary Ann was left to bring up their four surviving children: Gert or Gertie (21), Alice (19), Edie (17) and Harry (13), but Thomas had provided well for them because of working for a bank; his widow received an allowance and, I assume, a lump sum from life insurance. However, they all needed to work: my grandmother Edie was sent 180 miles north to Elsecar, Yorkshire, as a domestic servant or companion for her recently married great aunt while Harry was employed by the Bank of England, starting as a machine boy in the printing and storekeeper's office.

Gert and Alice, who seem to have received a good education, were both skilled needlewomen; Gert, a dressmaker, may have made the elegant clothes shown in photos and she created two



One of Gert's cushion covers.

gorgeous beadwork cushion covers and a tea cosy, which I inherited. By 1901, they were both "clerk C C" (Camberwell Council?), at 30 Grove Hill Road, Camberwell, with their mother, brother and a boarder, a common way of bringing in extra income. (Edie got married that year to Arthur FIRTH and they had seven children, my mum being the youngest). In 1911, Gert was a "clerk mercantile (Blouse Manufacturer)" sharing seven rooms at 8 Melrose Avenue, Norbury, with her mother and Alice, no employment recorded. (Harry married for the first time in 1911 and had two sons; he subsequently married again in 1920 and had a daughter).

Alice had hoped to marry and we have a photograph of her with her fiancé Dudley BLACK, who was killed in WW1. Unfortunately, all I know is that he worked in a bank (Lloyds?) and died on the Somme; I could find no match on the CWGC database. I would like to have found him so that he could be remembered properly.

Mary Ann and her children kept in contact via correspondence, often postcards, occasional visits or holidays together. I have been given different impressions about their reactions to young children. Apparently, my grandmother Edie overheard them complaining that her children were a nuisance when she took several to stay after Mary Ann had died; they returned home early and did not go back.

They occupied six rooms at 27 Winterbourne Road, Croydon, with their mother in 1921; Gert was a clerk for the Inland Revenue at 4 Wellesley Court Road, and Alice was a clerk for Lloyds Bank at 67 Kingsway, SWC2. They moved to Lyndhurst, 19 Kendall Avenue South, Sanderstead, by 1929 and Mary Ann DEARLING died there on 15 June, aged 80; she was buried in the local churchyard.

Signs of their occasional financial difficulties are clear from postcards. In 1930, Gert's birthday greeting to Florrie FIRTH, aged 18, stated: "We are sorry we cannot send you anything this year but think you will understand must hope for better luck later on". A rare undated postcard from Alice at Westfield stated:

"So sorry I haven't a nice present to send you but hope you will have a nice lot".



Gert and Alice with one of their dogs.

Gert and Alice relocated to Lyme Regis area after this, possibly because of WW2. By 1939, they

were two of four unemployed women boarders at 'Westfield', Ware Lane, Lyme Regis, with the DICKSON family. They subsequently ran boarding houses together in Uplyme: by 1948, 'Kendall' (named after their home in Sanderstead), by 1956, 'Avalon' and, by 1961, 'Mount View', Whalley Lane. (Both women were vain about their age and knocked up to 9 years off, which resulted in them not being able to claim the State Retirement Pension when eligible).

Eddie FIRTH died on 8 February 1956, aged 79, in Hoyland – almost exactly a year before I was born. My parents moved to Chorley, Lancashire, in 1960, soon after the birth of their fourth child because dad got a promotion to a new secondary school. Sorting out a newly built house with bare soil garden and settling into a new area with four young children but no support networks meant that mum had little spare time to keep in contact with her aunts. However, her three unmarried siblings did and they went to stay.

Gert Letter 23 July 1956 to George FIRTH: I feel I must write a few lines to thank you for your most generous gift to us ... We were very pleased to have you with us and I only wish it could have been a longer stay. We missed you both [sister Florrie] very much yesterday. ... We wish you were not so far away so that we could have a chat sometimes, should like to see you more often. ...

Gert Letter 3 January 1959 to Florrie: ... I hope you have all spent a nice Christmas ... I wish we were nearer so that we could have popped in to see you all. We have had a very quiet time. I think it was the quietest I ever remember, we were quite alone and it poured in torrents all day. I don't think it ceased once. Harry & Freida have decided to live at Winchester they hope to move about the end of March they say the bungalow has the roof on already. ...

Gert Letter 28 April 1960 to Florrie: We were pleased and surprised to see a letter from you this afternoon but so sorry to see the news it contained. (Charlie FIRTH had visited them recently and told them of a medical check-up due in April; he died in hospital on 10 May 1960, aged 57, following a stroke).

Gertrude Elizabeth DEARLING, “boarding house proprietress”, died on 24 July 1961, aged 89, at ‘Mount View’, Uplyme, of Coronary Thrombosis; her nephew George of Hoyland was present and registered her death the same day. Alice Mary DEARLING died on 1 February 1968, aged 93, at ‘Mount View’.

I do not know where they were buried or remains interred; staff at Lyme Regis and Uplyme Cemeteries plus Uplyme Church checked their records but were unable to find them. I am now waiting for a reply from someone at the museum. I hope that they are resting in peace together.

JOTTINGS

Original post-1858 Wills will not be destroyed

A consultation paper on the storage and retention of original Will documents was published on 15 December 2023 by the Ministry of Justice (under the previous administration). In January the Government published its report on the responses it received.

The proposed was to digitise all post-1858 Wills and then destroy almost all of the original documents as a potential cost saving plan, as storing the 110 million Wills (currently) is estimated to be about £4.5 million per year. This was reported on in *Metropolitan* March 2024.

The Government received nearly 1,600 responses with most being from individual people but others being from legal professional bodies, archive and records management professional bodies, historical associations and family history societies. It was reported that the responses were very helpful and provided a very compelling set of arguments in favour of original Wills being retained.

The large majority of responses vehemently opposed any destruction of original Wills and felt that original documents such as these, with their historic and emotional value, should be preserved. The intrinsic link to the past that Wills represent and also the provenance of an original document as legal proof of a testator's wishes were pointed out. It was suggested that it might be beneficial if these Wills could be transferred to The National Archives or other similar archives after a certain length of time.

It was agreed that digitising the Wills would be a good thing to help protect the originals and to make them more accessible. Currently the only Wills being digitised are new probate applications and those where requests are received to make inspect a will or grant of probate. Reading between the lines, it seems unlikely that there would be funds available to digitise older wills. Also, the report mentions that the current cost of obtaining a copy of a will is £1.50 and this does not cover the cost of providing the service. It is also significantly cheaper than copies of obtaining comparable public records, such as the £12.50 charged for birth certificates. It seems very likely that the Government will increase the fees charged for copies of wills and grants of probate, so it might be worth getting those that you need sooner rather than later.

For genealogical and historical respondents, it was felt that existing law already offers protection to the safe storage and preservation of Wills that recognised their value as a public, historic record. There was some concern

about personal information becoming available with more recent Wills, however current legislation already provides for this. All of these issues will be considered following the Law Commission's report on law reform, which is due early in 2025.

You can read the whole Government response to the consultation paper here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/storage-and-retention-of-original-will-documents>

Prisoners of War

The Online Memorial and Museum of Prisoners of War is organising PoW80 this year, an event commemorating the 80th anniversary of the release of Allied prisoners from Europe at the end of the Second World War. The event will provide a place for relatives, researchers and interested parties to come together, share stories, gather new information, and make connections around common experience, as well as learn from expert speakers about the life and sacrifices the POWs endured. This is taking place at the Midland Hotel, Manchester on 7 June 2025 and tickets cost £109.05, which does include refreshments and lunch. You can find a link to this on their website. The Online Memorial and Museum of Prisoners of War itself was established in 2022 and provides an interactive, historical and educational internet resource which enables the collection and preservation of information concerning prisoners of war, particularly Allied prisoners from the Second World War. The website contains details of the camps holding the prisoners, photos, diaries, help with research and very much more, which can be accessed here: <https://www.prisonersofwarmuseum.com/>

Heritage at Risk Register 2024

Historic England published its most recent Heritage at Risk Register late in 2024, which shows sites newly at risk of neglect and decay as well as those which have been removed from the list following conservation.

From our area, Smith Square Hall, formerly the church of St John Smith Square, in Westminster has been added to the list of buildings at risk. The Grade 1 listed building was constructed in 1713 but has been a concert hall since the 1960s. Repairs are needed to the fabric of the building, including cracks in the corner towers. Further works to services, including electrics, and improvements to the space, are needed to give the concert hall a thriving and sustainable future.

St Pancras Old Church, on the other hand, has been removed from the 'at risk' list as essential repairs to the building have been completed. It had been

suffering from movement, causing significant cracking, which required structural repairs and stabilisation.

Abney Park Cemetery at Hackney, one of the ‘Magnificent Seven’, has also been removed from the list, where it was first placed in 1998 when the list was started. Abney Park was originally laid out in 1839 as a non-denominational burial ground and developed as an arboretum. It reached capacity by the mid-20th century which is when it fell into its decline. Funding from the National Lottery, Hackney Council and Historic England have regenerated the cemetery with repairs to the Mortuary Chapel completed and a new café, community room, and workshop spaces built.

The chapel is the oldest surviving non-denominational chapel in Europe and its restoration means that it can now be used for events – it has already hosted its first ever wedding.

Benjamin Frankin and St Bartholomew the Great

2025 marks the 300th anniversary of Benjamin FRANKLIN’s first visit to London. You might remember reading about him in our article ‘William CASLON, Font Founder’ which appeared in *Metropolitan* in July 2024. Benjamin, who we know mainly as one of the Founding Fathers of the USA, arrived aged 19 on Christmas Eve 1724 to learn the printing trade from London experts. His first job was with master printer Samuel PALMER, whose printing shop was housed in the Lady Chapel of the church of St Bartholomew the Great at Smithfield (the two parts of the church had been separated at the Reformation). Benjamin worked here as a typesetter, arranging the individual letters and spacers in a wooden frame for printing. St Bartholomew is celebrating his time there with an exhibition which includes a working reconstruction of the original Franklin press (borrowed from the University of Reading) and a copy of the third printing of Wollaston’s *Religion of Nature Delineated*, which Benjamin set the type for. There will also be a series of talks about Benjamin Franklin. You can find out more here: <https://www.greatstbarts.com/benjamin-franklin>



New Email Address?

Please let us know: membership@lwmfhs.org

ALFRED AND HIS SHIPS

by Robert Wilkinson, Member No. 8019

Alfred ANDREWS was born on 8 February 1851 at 29 Richmond Street, Marylebone and was baptised at nearby Christchurch, Cosway Street on 25 May 1851. In the census of that year held between these two dates, he appears along with his older brother James, (my 2x Great Grandfather), his parents James and Mary and her ARCHER parents.

To recap from my earlier article, it was said by his daughter Beatrice Lilian ANDREWS that Alfred had ‘run away to sea’ aged 10, sailed around the world with the Royal Navy, and nearly drowned in the Yangtze river in China. I vaguely recall that something of this story had been related to the family even before my research ‘journey’ began in the late 1970’s.

Whatever the case, Alfred, now aged 10, was still present at home along with several more siblings at the time of the 1861 census. He might well have run away shortly after this, but no record has so far been found to throw more light on the veracity of that story.

That was about as much as I knew of this for years whilst research continued in other directions but back in 2006, I encountered online a record from the 1871 census, which listed the crew of HMS *Leven*, a gunboat ‘stationed in China’. On census night, the vessel was positioned ‘off the entrance to the Oosaka River in Japan’. Amongst the crew, (of whom a small number were listed as ‘natives of China or Japan’) was one 19-year-old Alfred ANDREWS, ordinary seaman, born in Marylebone in 1852.

Despite a slight discrepancy in the date, I considered this to be a coincidence worth remembering but proceeded no further for a time. In any case, whilst trying to decipher the handwriting in the record, I was not initially sure of the name of the ship until new information began to surface from The National Archives.

Fast forward to 2017 and some casual browsing in The National Archives’ website revealed a service record for one Alfred ANDREWS, born 8 February 1852. Again, despite the birthdate discrepancy, it seemed somewhat coincidental. A visit to the archives followed and I obtained document ADM/53/69318, which listed a series of ships this Alfred had

served on. It did indeed include HMS *Leven* and a date of 8 February 1870 for the commencement of 10 years continuous service, from the age of 18. However, this service had ended with Alfred leaving the service ‘invalided’ - on 9 June 1875. This record described him as being 5 ft 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches tall with a ‘fresh’ complexion, light brown hair and grey eyes and by trade ‘a bricklayer’. It tells us also that he had broken the second finger of his left hand.

Later on, a fuller record of this service emerged in document ADM 139/836/3522, showing the formal engagement of an Alfred ANDREWS to the Royal Navy on around 7 November 1867 as a ‘boy – 2nd class’, but again with the given birthdate of 8 February 1852 and adding him as ‘for pension on 21 June 1875). With matching references to the first document, this was clearly the same ALFRED as in the first document but here he is described as being 4 ft 11 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height, having a ‘ruddy’ complexion and with a scar on the 2nd finger of his right hand. Following the logic that some years in the Navy would have been more likely to result in a ruddy complexion, I am guessing that at least some of the information in the fuller record was updated at a later point in his career and that perhaps Alfred’s broken finger was not the cause of his early departure. (Unless perhaps he had broken both second fingers given the slight discrepancies in the record—who knows?).

The given age of fifteen at joining remains a puzzle, assuming that we are looking at the Alfred I am thinking of, who was actually 16 at the time. The Admiralty Regulations of 1853 indicated that ‘a careful examination was to be made of the written documents produced by boys in support of their alleged age’ as well as a ‘declaration of age to be made by a parent or guardian before a magistrate’. I am not clear at the time of writing as to whether there was a minimum age for joining, though it appears that some ‘unofficial’ roles were possible for boys and that there was a demand for recruits, so perhaps Alfred had seen some service after all before officially signing up.

Whatever the case, the ‘given age’ is backed up by witness signatures (albeit unclear to decipher) and notes requiring an endorsement from ‘a person of respectable standing’, who had ‘known the boy’ for 5 or ? years, along with assurances that he was not indentured as an apprentice and ‘had never been committed before a magistrate’. Moreover, this is attested through parental consent (dated 20 October 1867) signed by his parents James and Mary.

Given the discrepancies, I had to wonder whether there may have been any other Alfreds with parents named James and Mary whose birthdates happened to be 8 February and who had also seen naval service in or near China, but I haven't found any so far. I dare, therefore, to suggest that the Alfred found here could be the one born in 1851, who for some reason and with the blessing of his parents made himself out to be one year younger than he actually was. As for being a bricklayer, I suppose that it could be conceivable that he had some early experience of this field, decades before his daughter, who remembered him as an omnibus driver, was born. 'Our' Alfred's father James, who was illiterate when he married in 1848 (signed with an 'X') may have learned to write at least his name later on – perhaps further discoveries will clarify matters – research goes on...

Whilst researching Alfred's naval career, a further service record was discovered for Alfred's brother-in-law, Alexander PAIN, a fireman who had married Alfred's younger sister Ellen and who had also joined the navy as a boy on 21 April 1868. His service record with very similar sign-up papers covers a period from 13 October 1871 (18th birthday) until 17 October 1881, thus completing his ten years' service. However, from what I can see, Alexander served on entirely different ships and I fear I will end up with an overlong article if I endeavour to add details on this occasion.

Below follows some basic details gleaned so far about the ships on which Alfred served, along with the relevant dates.

Between 7 November 1867 and 21 June 1869 he was a Boy, 2nd Class on the *Juno*. He is listed as number 68 in the Ship's Books until 10 November 1868 and is then number 39. There appear to have been 2 ships called *Juno*. One of these, a Corvette, launched on 28 November 1867 whilst the other, launched in 1844, foundering with all hands in 1880, a year or so after being renamed *Atlanta*. I am not yet clear as to which one Alfred might have been on in the earlier years.

From 22 June 1869 until 9 May 1870 he was on the *Zebra*. Up until 7 February 1870 he was a Boy, 1st Class (number 39 in the Ship's Books) and after that as an Ordinary Seaman (number 103 in the Books). The *Zebra* was a Corvette (Sloop) of the 'Camelion Class'. 951 tons, launched at Deptford in 1860. Crew: 180, guns: 17, length: 185 feet, this boat saw service in China between 1868 and 1873. The crew were paid off at Hong Kong on 30 April 1873 and the boat was then sold.

The 1 January 1873 saw him as a Ordinary Seaman on board the *Leven*. The *Leven* was the 4th of six successive ships so named. It was an Algerine Class wooden gunboat of 370 tons (3 guns) built in 1857. Her dimensions were 12ft x 23ft. She was built at Northfleet and sold to the Chinese government at Shanghai on 21 July 1873. This ship had earlier been involved in the second Opium War and was also the last ship from which a person was hanged from the Yard Arm (1860), but all of that had been before Alfred's time. He was number 27 on the Ship's List until 10 May when his number became 'List 5, No. 24'. On 1 April he became an Able Seaman on this ship.

He transferred to the *Adventure* on 27 April 1873 (List 15, No. 37). This was a storeship built in 1855 which was broken up in 1877 at Simons Bay (a large naval base in South Africa). On 21 July 1873 he moved (List 16, No. 26) to *Flora*, a wooden sailing ship built at Devonport in 1844 and in service until 1891 when sold. It had a crew of 360, 36 guns, was 1634 tons, 160 ft x 49 ft. This was followed by *Rattlesnake* (launched 1861, serving until 1882, but last in commission 1870s, wooden, screw driven, 240 men 21 guns, 1705 tons, 225 feet) where he was List 14, No. 58. From 7 March 1874 he spent 10 days as Able Seaman (List 15, No. 748?) on the *Duke of Wellington*, which had been built in 1853 at Portsmouth. It was twice the size of *Victory*, which became her tender in 1869.

He was at the naval barracks between 18 March 1873 and 3 November 1874 (List 15, No. 2209?), moving as Able Seaman (List 5, No. 324) to an ironclad corvette which had been launched in 1864 called *Favorite*. This boat tended to roll and could only fire its guns in smooth seas. It was based off the east coast of Scotland from 1872-1876. First reserve guardship. Ran aground 3 August 1875 in Norfolk. Sold 1886.

Alfred is believed to have been ashore from 31 March 1875 to 4 June 1875 and he was invalided on 9 June that year. On 21 June 1875 it was recorded that his total service 'For Pension' was 5 years and 52 days,

Research into Alfred's later life was covered in an article, *Aunty Beattie's Legacy and the Real Alfred* which appeared in *Metropolitan* Volume 11, No. 1, December 2024. The funeral card below is one of 7 acquired from his daughter Beattie after her passing in 1983. The other cards and a prayer book relating to Beattie's maternal family will be explored in a later article.



Alfred's funeral card reads: 'In Ever Loving Memory of Alfred Andrews Who passed away 25th November 1927, Aged 76 Years, Interred at Forest Hill Cemetery, In Grave No 43 Square 117'.

On the other side is a poem: 'A bitter grief, a shock severe, To part with one we loved so dear, Our loss is great-we'll not complain, But hope in Heaven to meet again.'

The undertaker was W.H. Rodd of 345 Kennington Road, SE11.

Sources:

Notes from Beattie's memory and items passed on to me

Census records 1841-1921

Civil Registration and Parish Records

Original Marriage Certificate for Alfred's second marriage 1898

Funeral Card for Alfred (buried at Forest Hill)

National Archives – Naval Service Records

Electoral registers – Marylebone/Paddington

Family Photographs



WEBSITE NEWS

Railway 200

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the very first railway opening. This was the Stockton & Darlington Railway, which opened on 27 September 1825 and initially used steam trains to connect coal mines at Shildon in County Durham to Darlington. These small beginnings lead to the UK railway system carrying 1.4 billion passengers on 9,864 miles of route between 2,578 stations in 2022/2023. It also moved more than 15.7 billion tonnes of freight, taking 6.4 million lorries off the roads. Railway 200 is a year-long nationwide campaign to celebrate 200 years of the modern railway and it invites community, rail and other groups to get involved.

Starting in January, a wide variety of activities and events are being planned to celebrate rail's remarkable past, its role today, and its importance to a sustainable future. You can check out what is available on the website: <https://railway200.co.uk/>

Railway Ancestors

If you had ancestors who worked for the many railway companies, then there are many places where you might find information about them. Perhaps the main one is The National Archives (TNA), which holds all surviving records of private railway companies before they were nationalised in 1947. These are included in the reference RAIL, which also contains the records of private canal companies and the records of the London Passenger Transport Board, 1933-1947. The National Archives also holds records of the British Transport Commission, British Railways Board and other bodies which managed the railways after 1947.

There was a plethora of private railway companies operating across Britain but in 1923, over 120 of them merged into four new groups and their records will appear in these groups: Great Western Railway, London Midland and Scottish Railway, London and North Eastern Railway and Southern Railway. There are an incredible 24 guides to railway records on TNA's website: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/?search=railways>

Railway company employment records dating from 1833-1956 are here. These records cover a broad range of occupations connected with the railways, such as: engine drivers, warehouse workers, typists and office managers but does not include the men who constructed the railways in the first place. There are fairly comprehensive sets of staff records for the larger

railway companies in particular, and these can all be seen online at Ancestry UK. For example, Salaries register No. 1 at TNA. Ref: RAIL 384/284 gives details of salaries for clerks in the following departments: coaching, locomotive, goods, stores, engineering, construction, audit, superintendents and secretary's departments from dates 1840-1846. The records give name, date of first appointment, and details of yearly salary. They also mention staff transfers between departments, dismissals and resignations.

London Transport Staff Registers

Transport for London Staff Registers are at TfL Corporate Archives, 2nd Floor, 55 Broadway, London SW1H 0BD and online on Ancestry UK. These contain some 35,000 records and date from 1863-1931. They cover underground, bus, tram and some clerical staff, mentioning over 100 different occupations altogether. The earliest records are of the first underground line, the Metropolitan Railway, and the registers of the London General Omnibus Company.

The staff records that are held are primarily found in registers, with varying amounts of information contained therein. While some provide quite extensive information, including the height of the employee, disciplinary issues, pay and previous position details, others contain no more than a name, date of commencement of service and a badge number.

Local Archives centres

These places may also have interesting information. For example, Camden Local Studies and Archives have items relating to the sale of land in St Pancras to the Midland Railway and a 'Notice of claim to land at St Pancras by the Great Northern Railway in occupation of William George HAYNES', amongst many other items.

Court records

Court records can also mention railways and their employees. For instance, William ODWELL, whose death at St Pancras was deemed accidental: a quantity of earth fell on him in the tunnel of the London and Birmingham railway in 1835, is at The London Archives Ref: MJ/SP/C/W/1689. Another example of court records are those of Isabella STEPHENSON of 51 Wardour Street, Oxford Street and Robert CUSBY, carpenter, of 25 Upper Seymour Street who were both bound over to keep the peace in 1839: John BEDFORD, Superintendent of the Police of the London and Birmingham Railway, stood bail for both. This record is Ref: MJ/R/P/018/325.

Minutes of quarterly general meetings, directors reports and so on from the London & Birmingham Railway, dated 1843-1845, are also here, Ref: MR/U/CR/002. Those of successor company London and North Western Railway Company, dated 1847-1851 are Ref: MR/U/CR/003.

Railways in the Parliamentary Archives

From 1794, builders of roads, railways, canals and other public works built by Act of Parliament deposited plans which may survive in the Parliamentary Archives. As well as showing the route of the road, railway or canal, they may include other documents of relevance to family historians including lists of names of owners, occupiers and lessees of land or property affected, and subscribers of capital.

Related to this, the Private Bill Witness database contains material from the 5,400 volumes of evidence collected in relation to the above construction works. The collection dates from 1838 and can be searched online here: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/parliamentary-archives/search-finding-aids-to-online-collections-/private-bill-witness-database/>

If you wish to consult the original records you need to make an appointment by email: archives@parliament.uk; tel: 020 7219 3074 or post: Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament, London, SW1A 0PW.

Railway Accidents

A register of railway employee injuries and deaths 1911-1915 and much more can be seen on the Railway Work Life and Death web site at: <http://www.railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk/>

Railway Museum

Other resources can be found through the website of the Railway Museum: <https://www.railwaymuseum.org.uk/research-and-archive/further-resources/family-history>

ADVERTISING RATES

Advertising rates per issue of *Metropolitan* are as follows:

Full Page £40, Half Page £23, Quarter Page £14, Eighth Page, £8.50

All copy, correspondence and remittances should be sent to the Editors.

See inside front cover for address.

SURNAME INTERESTS

The research interests listed here were submitted by members between December 2024 and mid-February 2025.

Each quarter's members' interests are put onto the website just before the journal is published. If you would like to contact a member whose interests are listed, please go <https://lwmfhs.org/surname-interests/> In the search box, type the name you are interested in and a list of entries will appear if a match is found. Click Contact and this brings up an email for you to fill in.

Interests shown are from members: 8541; 8544; 8547, 8549

Name	Period	County	Parish / Area	Mem.No.
BAYLEY	1744-1818	MDX	St Luke's	8547
BOLTON	1800 to date	MDX	Hendon	8451
DAGWELL	1850-2000	Any	Any	8544
FIRMAN	1800 to date	MDX	Hendon	8451
HOPCRAFT	1725-1795	MDX	St Luke's	8547
JONES	1800 to date	MDX	Hendon	8451
MATTHEWS	1700-1900	MDX	Islington	8549
MINNS	1800 to date	MDX	Hendon	8451
MINNS	All	Any	Any	8451
ROFFEY	All	Any	Any	8544

8544	ROFFEY. One-name study
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NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the new members, number 8539 - 8550 who have joined the Society over the past few months and wish them well with their research.



THE SUMPTER/FISCHER FAMILY of Northwood

The Society was contacted by Melanie who had been researching this family on behalf of a friend, who had been entrusted with items which had belonged to a family that seemed to have no issue. There is a tranche of artefacts – many photographs, a large hand-drawn tree, a family bible, cuttings and other ephemera – waiting for a loving home. These relate to the SUMPTER and FISCHER family and some of their ancestors, who include the names HOLMES, MILNER, WAKEFIELD and YOULDEN. Melanie is hoping that her this research might be of some use and someone would be delighted to inherit these artefacts! Failing that, the items will be offered to Hillingdon Local Studies, Archives & Museum Service, or Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society. Here follows a skeletal account of the two families.

The SUMPTER family

George Daniel SUMPTER married Amelia Ann MILNER on 1 May 1859 at St George Hanover Square. George had been born on 21 August 1819 and baptised at St George Hanover Square. He was the son of Joseph and Alice SUMPTER. Amelia was born on 8 October 1834, baptised on 17 May 1835 at St James Piccadilly, daughter of John Bennett MILNER and Amelia, née YOULDEN.

George and Amelia had five children including Frederick Milner SUMPTER who was born on 5 January 1868 in Pimlico and baptised 3 May 1868 at Holy Trinity Upper Chelsea. The 1871 Census returns show the family at Mornington Villas, Wanstead. In 1881 they were at Lake Cottage, Wanstead Flats Wanstead. By 1891 they were at 29 Elm Grove, Cricklewood Hendon.

On 2 June 1896 at St Alban's, Acton Green, Middlesex Frederick Milner SUMPTER married Mary Emily Eliza FISCHER. (See



Mary Emily Eliza
SUMPTER née FISCHER.

below for details of the Fischer family). The couple had two sons: Ralph and Leslie. Ralph Frederick Fischer SUMPTER was born on 28 May 1900 and



Mary and the boys. Ralph was nicknamed 'Robin' and Leslie was 'Brammie'.

baptised on 3 November 1900 at Holy Trinity Kilburn, their abode being Murray Lodge Northwood. In 1901 they were living at Murray Lodge, Northwood, Ruislip. They were still there in 1911 although Ralph SUMPTER aged 10 was a boarder at Lynfield and Leverington Villas, a Prep School, Avenue Road, New Hunstanton, Norfolk.

Frederick died 9 August 1934 aged 66, Shooters Hill Memorial Hospital Woolwich and was buried in Greenwich. Abode: The Moorings Tadworth Surrey.

Ralph emigrated to the USA, first arriving on 31 December 1920 aged 20. In the 1950 Census he is described as Actor, living in Manhattan, New York. He appeared in many stage plays and films between 1921-1959 (IMDb, the Internet Movie Database has details). On 4 June 1925 at Manhattan, New York, Ralph married Virginia Lloyd GROSCHEN. He married for a second time on 26 November 1946 at Stamford Connecticut. His bride here was (Vivien) Lindley STEPHENSON (who died in 1973). After extensive searching there is no evidence of children from either of these marriages, although Ancestry has one tree saying there is a



In 1935 Leslie married Margaret
HOBSON in Edenbridge.

son - no further details known - of the GROSCHEM marriage. Ralph died on 14 December 1980 at Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut.

Leslie Hereward SUMPTER was born on 24 June 1902 and baptised on 1 January 1905 at St James West Hampstead, abode Murray Lodge Northwood. Leslie was later known as Mike. The 1939 Register shows him Leslie died on 15 September 1975 at Four Elms, Edenbridge, Kent.

The FISCHER family



MacDowall and Mary FISCHER.

MacDowall James FISCHER married Mary HOLMES on 7 November 1867 at St Pancras Church, Middlesex. MacDowell James FISCHER was born on 28 March 1835 at Sylhet in British India and baptised on 1 March 1836 at Calcutta, West Bengal, India. He was the son of Thomas FISHER (sic) and Emily Maria TERRENEAU. MacDowell became a Master Mariner in 1861.

Mary HOLMES was born on 2 June 1845 at Brunswick Square, London, and baptised on 19 July 1845 at St Pancras, Euston. She was the daughter of Henry Ogle HOLMES and Eliza Minithorpe née WAKEFIELD. They had two children – Mary and Harry.



Eliza Minithorpe
WAKEFIELD.

Mary Emily Eliza FISCHER was born on 18 October 1868 and baptised on 7 December 1868 at St Pancras, their abode being noted as Clifton Villas, St Pancras. In the 1871 Census they appear at 4 Clifton Villas, Kentish Town, St Pancras. Mary (the mother) died on 15 May 1879 at 82 Gower Street, Bedford Square, aged 33. McDowell died in 1891 in Edmonton RD, aged 56.

Mary (the daughter) is possibly the E. FISHER aged 14, scholar, born London, who appears in Chelsea, 125 St. Jude's Home No.9 (Boarding House with Matron). She is probably the Mary E. Fischer 25 Lady's maid, *born Switzerland ?!* at 59 Cadogan Square (83 households), Chelsea, in the 1891 census. Mary became Mrs SUMPTER (see above for marriage entry). In the 1939 Register Mary E.E. SUMPTER 69, widow, living on private means, is at Watford. She died at Watford RD, aged 89 in 1957.

Her brother Harry MacDowell Earle FISCHER was born in 1873 at Islington RD, abode Bedford Square, Gower Street and baptised on 28 January 1874 at St Mark Tollington Park, abode 36 Fonthill Road, Finsbury Park. In the 1881 census returns he is at Rother House, Clarendon Road, Lewisham, and in 1891 is believed to have possibly been in the USA. By 1901 he was living at Cavendish Place, Eastbourne. Harry died in 1902 in the Eastbourne RD, aged 28.

If you are interested in these items, please contact:

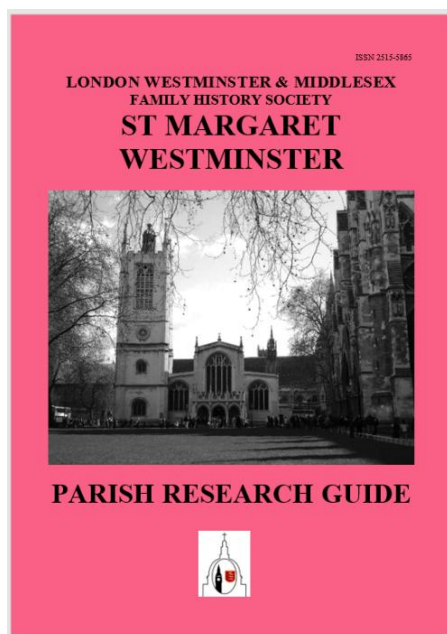
gavin@writehandmarketing.co.uk



ST MARGARET WESTMINSTER

Parish Research Guide

Our revised, updated and expanded list of the main records of interest to the genealogical researcher for the area based on the ancient parish of St Margaret Westminster has now been published. This parish was known as St Margaret & St John from 1728-1922 and was the name of our previous booklet; however we feel the new name shows better the area covered. This parish was in the county of Middlesex but is now in the City of Westminster London Borough.



St Margaret Westminster includes Downing Street, St John Smith Square, Westminster Abbey, Whitehall and also has a large detached area around Knightsbridge. This new edition of our booklet has an extra 28 pages. We have much expanded the sections on the parochial burial grounds, court and prison records and schools and included ones about fire insurance and civil registration.

Apart from the vital records of the various religious denominations, examples of subjects covered in this booklet are military matters, Parliamentary archives and the streets in the area in 1851. Details include where these records can be found, whether they are original hard-copy records, transcriptions in books, or on the internet. This 100-page A5 illustrated booklet is part of our ongoing series of Parish Research Guides.

Our booklet costs £6 and if you would like a copy, you can buy it in person at the fairs we attend or it is available at our two online shops: Parish Chest <https://www.parishchest.com/london-westminster-middlesex-fhs-4577.php> and GenFair <https://genfair.co.uk/search/?q=lwmfhs>. We can post it to anywhere in the world.

LONDON WESTMINSTER AND MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

The following are the draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 13 February 2025 via Zoom.

The Society's President, Michael Gandy, BA, FSG joined the meeting at 7.00 p.m. but, owing to technical difficulties, was not able to continue. Elizabeth Burling therefore stood in and opened the meeting formally, welcoming all present, adding how nice it was for the Committee to see so many of the Members they represent.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Received from Dawn Adams, Jan Brown, Jasmine Marson, Vanessa Oliver, Sandra Robinson and Dennis Sinclair.

2. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD 8 FEBRUARY 2024:

There being no comments raised, Richard Bousfield proposed and April Vesey seconded that they be approved. This proposal was then put to the vote and approved, with no contrary votes.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

None.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chairman had previously published her report in *Metropolitan* and Elizabeth had nothing further to add. There being no comments these are formally read into the Minutes.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2023/24:

This had been published in *Metropolitan*. April Vesey explained that the accounts had been checked by two Members of the Society, as required by the Constitution, and noted that interest rates on the Savings account had reduced (currently 3.15%). No increase in subscriptions was considered necessary although the rate for overseas members who receive hard copy editions of *Metropolitan* would be kept under review due to rising costs of

postage. They were very few in number. Questions or observations were invited, thus:

Debbie Clement was surprised by low levels of donations and April confirmed this varies from year to year, often comprising duplication of subscriptions which members chose not to reclaim.

Sara suggested that the few Overseas Members could be contacted to see whether they would agree to switch to receive *Metropolitan* in electronic form and this will be further considered. Mary Gleadall receives her hard copy in the USA and looks forward to its receipt. The idea of making a contribution to postage through a donation would be welcomed by her and a donation facility on the website will be explored.

6. ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS:

Paul Feetum proposed and Barbara Haswell seconded that the Accounts be approved. This proposal was then put to the vote and approved, with no contrary votes.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Elizabeth Burling confirmed her willingness to continue as Chairman and, there being no other candidate, was confirmed in Office.

Paul Feetum was standing down as Secretary and there had been no proposals for a new Secretary received to date. Elizabeth Burling invited Members to consider offering their services as Minutes and/or Society Secretary at any time including after the meeting. In general terms, Elizabeth pointed out that Officers were elected or appointed for just a year and there was no obligation to serve longer than that.

April Vesey confirmed her willingness to continue as Treasurer (unless anyone else wished to take on the Office) and, there being no other candidate, was confirmed in Office.

9. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

The following were willing to continue in their current roles:

Tony Allen, Rayners Lane Branch

Karen De Bruyne, Events Team Co-ordinator and X administrator

Elizabeth Burling, joint *Metropolitan* Editor, Publications Editor, Virtual Branch Team member

Paul Feetum, joint *Metropolitan* Editor (not Executive Committee)

Barbara Haswell, Surname Interests and joint *Metropolitan* Editor

Tahirih Miks, Family History Federation Liaison

Andrea Olley, Correspondence secretary (not Executive Committee)
Clare Pollitt, Barnet Branch and Virtual Branch Team member
Elaine Tyler, Projects Co-ordinator, Postal Sales and Virtual Branch Team member (not Executive Committee)

Elaine Tyler pointed out that she was continuing as Projects Co-ordinator but stepping down from the Executive Committee. Elizabeth thanked her for all her hard work in the past and welcomed her continuing involvement in Society Projects.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Simon Garbett wished to express on behalf of all Members their thanks to all of the Committee for their hard work.

11. CLOSE MEETING:

The meeting closed at 7.23pm., 48 having attended.

MINUTES SECRETARY NEEDED

We urgently need someone to help.

This role mainly involves taking the minutes
of our Executive Committee meetings.

Please see Chairman's Comments on page 63 for more details.

NEXT COPY DATE

Please remember that the copy date for the next issue of *Metropolitan* is
1 May 2025

Articles, letters, requests and comment should be sent to the Editors.

The Editors reserve the right to edit contributions.

Contributors should indicate if copy is being distributed to other family
history society journals or family history magazines.

Material in *Metropolitan* may not be reproduced in any form without first
obtaining written permission from the Editors.

OUT AND ABOUT

East Surrey FHS Virtual Family History Show



This free Zoom event took place on Saturday 25 January 2025 and was, as usual, friendly and relaxed. There were many family history societies attending, each with their own breakout room, which you could visit for a chat. We had visitors from as far away as Australia and Canada and it was lovely to chat to some of our own member. One, Lynne, wants to find more descendants of her CAIGER and RIGHTON families. She is doing all the right things and has sent her surname interests to Barbara at surnameinterests@lwmfhs.org so they are on our website and also the Family History Federation website just waiting for cousins to contact her. She could also put out a request on our Facebook Help and Discussion group. Cheryl's family had been cow keepers in what is now Mayfair in the 1850s and she wondered what the area looked like then. The Romantic London website has Richard HORWOOD's 1792-1799 plan and Wiliam FADEN's 1819 revision of it, both of which can be easily matched to a linked current street map to see what happened. This can be found here: <https://www.romanticlondon.org/>

Thanks to our team of Elizabeth, Karen, Robert and Susan.

The Family History Show



This online version of the Family History Show was held on Saturday 8 February. There were over 100 societies and businesses represented although most were just a showcase for their organisation. We did have a presence there and did chat with some visitors. Marian asked where might a will from someone who died in St George Hanover Square be located. This is just exactly the sort of information we include in our Parish Research Guides so we were able to tell her of the three most likely courts to have processed a will, all of which archive collections are at The London Archives. If you were wondering, these were the Archdeaconry Court of Middlesex (Middlesex Division) as the most likely, followed by the Court of the Commissary of the Bishop of London (London Division) and the Court of the Bishop of London (Episcopal Consistory), although of course that might depend on property held elsewhere. Thanks to our team of Karen and Elizabeth.

Coming up...

Suffolk FHS Fair, 26 April



This is taking place on Saturday 26 April from 10am-4.00pm at The Hold, 131 Fore Street, Ipswich IP4 1LN (the home of Suffolk Archives). It is Suffolk FHS's 50th anniversary year and the fair will have a theme of 'Looking Back, Looking Forward. Speakers Ian Waller and Nick Barratt have been booked and there will be a free family help desk (from 11am-3pm) and interesting

displays and stalls from family history and related organisations. Entry to the fair is free. For more information, visit their website: <https://suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/pages/view/society-fair>

VE Day in the Gardens at Stephen's House and Gardens, Finchley



An estimated 10-15,000 people came to celebrate VE Day in the gardens of Stephen's House, East End Road, Finchley in 1945. This year, on Sunday 4 May, it is hoped to recreate this photo and a big event is planned, so do come along. You will see us here. In the meantime, did your family come in 1945? Do you recognise anyone in this picture: Do you have any memories from the event? Stephen's House would love to hear from you, you can email them at: <https://www.stephenshouseandgardens.com/contact> (Of course, it might make an interesting story for *Metropolitan* too!)

SPOTLIGHT ON: ALPERTON

Alperton forms the southern part of the conurbation of Wembley in what is now the London Borough of Brent but it has its origins in a settlement, probably a farm, which lay on the road half way (more or less) between Wembley and Ealing in the county of Middlesex. A bridge was built over the river Brent here before 1432 to help travel between these two places, with the lords of the manors of Ealing and Harrow being responsible for funding its upkeep.

For centuries, Middlesex was completely rural and, although near to London, this area was pretty isolated. Alperton had been first mentioned in records in 1199 as ‘Alprinton’, when it was said to contain 12 buildings. This was all to change when a branch of the Grand Junction Canal (now the Grand Union Canal) was cut through in 1801 on its way to Paddington Basin and the Regent’s Canal. The construction of the canal brought the first migrants to arrive in any large numbers, with ‘navvies’ and unskilled labourers doing the heavy work in digging the canal and erecting the necessary buildings. Local clay was used to make the bricks used for the construction and this industry continued.

The hamlet itself grew slowly and by 1805 there were only 21 houses,



Cottages on Ealing Road.

including 14 farms and a couple of pubs but the effect of the Canal on local trade was noticeable. By 1841 the census returns show that there were then 41 houses. There were eight brick makers, a ‘brick burner’ and a

horticulturalist who no doubt used the canal to transport their goods as well as a ‘Canal Observer’ to check that all went well. Other residents of Alperton

were employed in the usual trades as smiths, beer shop keepers, victuallers, sawyers, shoe makers, school mistresses, carpenters with farmers and many 'ag labs'.

One man, John CLARK aged 40, was a 'labourer on railroad'. A railway was built through Wembley in the 1830s heading from London to Birmingham with a small station opened in 1842. This was known as Sudbury but is now Wembley Central Station. Neither John CLARK nor any of his family had been born in Middlesex so demonstrates how the new circumstances led to an increase in the local population, albeit in a temporary manner – they were gone by 1851.

The Canal also attracted tourists. One of the beer shops had developed into a pub called the *Pleasure Boat* by 1851, to which one could obtain a return fare along the waterway from Paddington Basin for 2/6d.

With regards to religion, Alperton was part of the ancient parish of Harrow-on-the-Hill and this is where their church was located until the formation of Wembley parish in 1846. The first church in Alperton was one built for Baptists, who were worshipping locally by 1828, when a chapel stood on what is now the site of Alperton Station. The current building was erected on the other side of Ealing Road in 1937. Increasing population in the whole parish of Wembley meant that an Anglican Mission church opened in Alperton in 1896 and this in turn became a new parish in 1904. The church was consecrated in the 1920s but was declared redundant in 1989 and demolished. The site was used to build housing and also a new multicultural place of worship, St James Church Centre, which opened in 1990.



Alperton Baptist Church.

By 1871 the main occupations in Alperton were still brick and tile making although there were hay dealers, gardeners, a carpenter, a blacksmith and wheelwright in the village. Henry HAYNES (1831-1910), son of James

HAYNES, who rose from being an agricultural labourer in 1851 to being a publican at the *Pleasure Boat* and carpenter employing 8 men in 1861. By 1871 he was a builder and licensed victualler, living at the new Alperton Park Hotel. He owned 70 out of the 100 buildings in Alperton, including the cottages which bear his name, and was the largest employer in the area with nearly 150 people in his employ, comprising most of the people of working age in the village.

An electrified railway line which ran from Acton Town to South Harrow was extended to Park Royal and Twyford Abbey Station in 1903. A station was opened along the route called Perivale-Alperton Station, which was renamed Alperton Station in 1910. A power station was set up next to the canal to supply electricity to this railway. This all encouraged development and the area grew rapidly after the First World War.

Many new industries moved to the area or started up here, such as Wooler Engineering Company, which produced motorcycles from 1911-1926 and from 1945-1956, and L.P.S. Electrical Company, manufacturers of electrical wire and cord, which was founded in 1913.

The construction of the North Circular Road in the 1920s also attracted industry. Key Glass works opened a second factory at Alperton in 1926 with three furnaces and associated machinery producing bottles. The Alperton Bottling Company was close, with mechanised plant making bottles for 'sparkling' Taylor Walker beers and also bottling Guinness from their nearby brewery. All of these factories needed staff and by 1933, the Alperton fields had been totally built over.

Sources:

Alperton: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alperton>

Brent Museum and Archives: <https://www.brent.gov.uk/libraries-arts-and-heritage/brent-museum-and-archives/your-local-area/history-of-alperton>

Parish Guide to Wembley (LWMFHS, 2023)

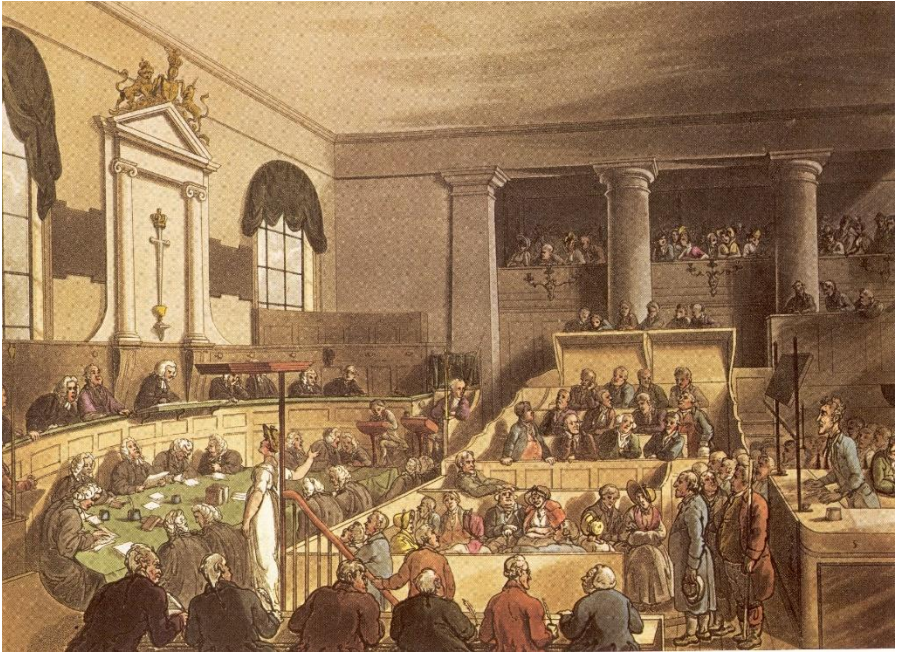
'The Myth of the Irish Navvy' by Robert Barker, *Metropolitan*, volume 9, number 3, (June 2023)

River Brent Alperton: <https://edithsstreets.blogspot.com/2013/01/river-brent-alperton.html>

Wembley Matters: <https://wembleymatters.blogspot.com/2017/09/is-consultation-about-future-of.html>

BIRCH AT THE BAILEY

By Sheila Clarke, Member No. 7900



‘The Old Bailey, Known Also as the Central Criminal Court’
The Microcosm of London. Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Pugin 1808
Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org>.

My ancestor John BIRCH spent a lot of time at the Old Bailey: he wasn't a 19th century ne'er do well, with a penchant for being caught, but a respectable tailor who also served as the law around Uxbridge and Hillingdon in the early 1800s. Unfortunately this magazine does not cover cases tried on his 'beat' but others he played a part in were heard in London. Standing on the ancient route of the City walls the Old Bailey has a history going back to the sixteenth century and was attached to Newgate gaol until its closure in 1902. Previously known as the Sessions House, its name thought is to come from part of the fortifications, the 'bailey' or courtyard, although 'bail hill' - where the bailiff lived - is also in contention. After being destroyed in the Great Fire of London it was rebuilt in 1674 with the first accounts of its cases published the same year. In his 1720 survey of London historian and surveyor John STRYPE found it to be 'a fair and stately

building, very commodious.’ The court had been designed to be open to the weather in an effort to prevent the spread of disease, but in 1734 it was re-fronted and enclosed. How this may have contributed to a 1750 outbreak of typhus which claimed the lives of sixty people including the Lord Mayor and two judges is not known, but given the courtroom’s proximity to the notoriously unsanitary prison it seems extremely likely.

Over 100,000 criminal trials were held at the Old Bailey between 1674 and 1856, the court sitting for three days most months and with four or five juries each session. In 1834 it became the Central Criminal Court and an Act of that name was passed to extend its jurisdiction outside London and Middlesex. Prior to this the majority of cases had been dealt with in their local area, including many in which the BIRCH family played a part.

John BIRCH was the son of my 6x great aunt Harriet TRENLEY and her husband James BIRCH. They were married in 1787 at St Giles, Cripplegate and settled in Uxbridge where they ran a draper’s shop, with John, younger brother William Henry, and father James all serving at various times as either constable or headborough (assistant constable.) The jobs were unpaid, but the responsibility for keeping the peace was not entirely without reward and, for a successful prosecution and conviction, the officer could expect to receive 40s and a ticket for the popular entertainment of a Tyburn hanging.

Theft was by far the most common crime and much of the constable’s time was spent investigating instances of property and animal loss. Although much of John’s work was mundane, there was also the occasional high profile case such as the murder of Buckinghamshire farmer William “Noble” EDDON in 1828. Involving a ghost, sheep impersonation and a possible miscarriage of justice it became a cause célèbre that is still talked about today. John BIRCH was the arresting officer when the suspects were taken into custody, but the trial was held at Aylesbury and so not eligible for inclusion here.

Records show that pickpocketing was the theft of choice, followed by robbery ‘from a specified place’ which is only to be expected in a deeply divided society where poverty was rife. Nowhere was this more evident than in the affluent city of London where wealth existed alongside unimaginable hardship. Our ancestors would have needed to be on constant alert to avoid becoming victim to the opportunists who prowled the streets by day and

night and, although the introduction of street gas lights did go some way towards reducing the incidences of crime after dark, overall figures continued to rise.

By 1826 John is described as ‘headborough of Uxbridge,’ but his first appearance at the Old Bailey comes not in his official capacity but as witness in an 1829 case of theft. In 1832 he returns for the trial of eighteen year old John RANCE accused of stealing from brother William’s tailor’s shop. Found guilty, RANCE’s sentence is respited after William appeals for mercy ‘on account of the bad example set by his (RANCE’s) parents, who have both been transported’ but following a review RANCE suffers the same fate and six months later leaves for Van Dieman’s land.

Another teenager in trouble is John WINKLEY, who freely confesses his guilt ‘due to want ... having not had any victuals for some time,’ and adding that he wants to be transported. John’s haul of two blankets was evidently considered insufficient for his wish to be granted and he was sentenced instead to one year’s confinement.

Next comes the 1837 trial of William SMITH and William GARDINER accused of robbing a Hillingdon warehouse, and notable for giving us a glimpse of the personality of one of the main players but not, as you would expect, the accused. When it is Constable BIRCH’s turn to give evidence he says he has known GARDINER for some years and describes him as living with ‘a girl of the town’. “How long have you been an officer?” asks the prosecutor. “About twenty years” replies BIRCH. “I did not think it improper to say GARDINER lived with a girl of the town – I was asked how he got his living, and know that was the way he got it – his girl was about the town for years, and I know he never did any work.” Could the Constable have received a disapproving look from the prosecutor and fear he had overstepped the mark? His hurried explanation certainly sounds like the sort of damage limitation exercise many of us will have resorted to at some time.

John also has dealings with a number of troublesome females, such as seventeen year old pickpocket and would-be seductress Ann RYDER employing feminine wiles to disarm her victim before relieving him of his valuables but bursting into tears and declared she “would not get into a hobble for any man” when confronted by BIRCH. (RYDER’s name crops up more than once and on this occasion she was imprisoned for two months.)

Another BIRCH arrestee was Hannah HAWKINS who proved to be anything but the Good Samaritan after offering the survivor of a stage coach accident a room for the night then robbing him while he slept. HAWKINS and her three co-conspirators were found guilty and I was able to find details of her transportation and subsequent life. One of over a hundred convicts who left on the *Platina* for Van Dieman's Land in April 1837 it would seem she had something of a drink problem as the ship's surgeon records he had to treat her for 'dyspepsia'. Three years later she was 'reprimanded at the request of her husband for being drunk and absent from home'.

John would certainly have seen life during his visits to the Old Bailey: at each sitting a microcosm of life with all its foibles and eccentricities was paraded before the all-male juries for their deliberation. As I searched for cases in which John played a part I encountered an array of colourful characters such as labourer Joseph BOWES who attempted to cash in on his alleged role in helping an attack victim. BOWES was down on his luck having been dismissed from the police force after entering a public house while on duty but saw the opportunity to raise his profile by producing a letter attesting to his 'praiseworthy manner' and 'great courage' in the attack. This had not been his idea he claimed, but that of an attorney who wanted to help him find work. The subscription he had set up (the Victorian equivalent of crowdfunding) was not down to him either – that had been at the insistence of 'some respectable people from Hampstead' who wished to see him rewarded.

Another individual who caught my eye was William NEWTON embroiled in the extraordinarily detailed case of a stolen hat. A door panel had been removed and NEWTON's dog killed to gain access to his Stepney home and, although a number of items were taken, it was the hat that received by far the most attention. A few days after the theft NEWTON was taken by police to the *George*, Whitechapel where James BROWN was to be found playing cards in a back room while wearing the hat. Although the lining had been changed, NEWTON was able to make a positive identification ('I venture to swear it is my hat') and BROWN was later charged. In July 1829 the Old Bailey jury heard evidence from James KIRKNESS, the shopkeeper who made the sale to NEWTON, confirming that the present lining had not been done by him as it was 'inferior.' Hat seller Thomas MORGAN gave evidence that to the best of his belief he was the one who carried out this 'inferior' work. We learn it was a light hat chosen by NEWTON 'in consequence of

my head not being very well.’ Made of leather and beaver with some wear near the leather, it was not the shape he usually wore being ‘too narrow in the brim.’ The size - 6 ½ diameter – ‘was ... Common ... but not as common as 7 inches’ (James KIRKNESS). NEWTON’s daughter Ann confirmed it was father’s and that she brushed it every day. A newspaper report from the time comments on the amount of time the case took up and, considering the work that must have been involved, the court could be forgiven for feeling somewhat dismayed to hear NEWTON describe the hat as ‘neither liked by myself or my family’.



1840s City of London Police constable's uniform, photo by J Rennocks, Wikimedia Commons.

If this seems amusing to us it was no laughing matter for BROWN who was found guilty and sentenced to death. Apparently he was something of a serial offender and had two similar indictments ‘but this robbery being attended with such aggravated circumstances ... the court did not think it necessary to proceed with them.’ The prisoner was taken to Newgate and while awaiting execution ‘acknowledged the justice of his sentence and prayed fervently for forgiveness’. ‘Great

exertions were made’ by NEWTON in an effort to save his life but a petition to Home Secretary Robert PEEL failed and on 24 August 1829 ‘He ascended the drop with firmness, and in a few moments it fell, and he was launched into eternity’.

On a lighter note, it seems criminals increasingly chose the exact level of crime in order to get the desired result, as pastry cook Henry NOTLEY discovered. It was January 1830 and NOTLEY was relaxing in his sitting room after a long day’s baking in his Newgate Street shop when he saw William LOWE ‘put his whole body in’ through an open window and take a large piece of twelfth cake. This is very like what we know as Christmas

Cake, it being an elaborately decorated concoction of dried fruit and spirits such as brandy and rum made as part of the celebrations for Twelfth Night, a major festivity on the Victorian calendar. LOWE then made off with it, hotly pursued by NOTLEY in his slippers. In Giltspur Street LOWE threw the cake, which was worth ten shillings and weighed 11 lbs., into the road before being handed over to the watchman. When NOTLEY asked him why he stole the cake 'for if he was hungry there were buns and smaller things, he said he would only have four months on the tread-mill and that would not suit him.' The precise punishment he was hoping for is not specified, but if it was transportation his strategy was successful as he received a sentence of seven years, leaving for New South Wales on the *Marquis of Huntley* that August.

Morgan ORAM must have rued the day he agreed to accompany two small boys to Drury Lane theatre when their father was unable to take them. During the crush to enter he was accused of assault by soldier William SHUTTER and in the confusion that followed ORAM mislaid some money, only to find himself accused of trying to buy the soldier's silence in order to cover up his guilt. This led to yet more money being handed over until ORAM confided his predicament to friends. Knowing he 'was a timid man' one decided it was time to put a stop to the extortion, and he was just the man to do it. ORAM was lucky to have a friend like Robert TATE: obviously a man of the world ('I said I know what soldiers are'). He devised a plan to mark the money and then follow ORAM and SHUTTER when they next met. That TATE seems to have relished helping bring SHUTTER to justice is evident from his description of the moment he handed him over to the police ('I was very much excited by this time'). SHUTTER had tried to implicate another soldier, Alexander HOUSTON, but HOUSTON refused to play along. He does however provide more evidence of the unfortunate ORAM's personality, describing him 'trembling like an aspen-leaf' when first accused at the theatre.

And it would be a crime not to mention John YOUNG who had accused James PINK of stealing his hat but arrived at court 'in such a state of intoxication that his evidence could not be taken.' The verdict was not guilty.

The ladies are also in evidence: Mary Ann GOODALL's reaction to having to work in order to support a husband who failed to provide was to invite another man into the marital bed and then marry him too. That her father seems to have been complicit in these arrangements and accompanied her to

church on both occasions adds a bizarre element to the story, as does Mary Ann's written evidence 'that her first husband had brought James MACHIN (husband No 2) home, that they had all three slept together, and in consequence of his brutal conduct she had been induced to marry MACHIN.'

The two women in the life of John HOOD seemed more than happy with the arrangement. Sarah, whom he married in October 1838, and Elizabeth, who became his second wife three months later, had met and discussed their situation during which Sarah appears to have given permission for her husband to commit bigamy as she had never lived with him and steadfastly refused to do so. Believing that this meant 'the marriage did not stand good' John and Elizabeth went ahead with their wedding at St Paul's, Islington. Elizabeth speaks very highly of her husband saying 'he behaved to me as kind as possible – no man could have been kinder.' (I tend to disagree, but am obliged to report the facts as presented). The outcome was a recommendation for mercy and a six month gaol sentence which I've no doubt the sanguine trio considered a small price to pay for things being resolved to their satisfaction.

Caroline MAUNDER was definitely not feeling sanguine: nineteen year old Caroline had been lodging at Mary HART's house in Leadenhall Street but left London taking with her items of clothing and money belonging to her landlady. Caroline was eventually arrested in Fleet Street and in January 1840 she stood in the dock to hear the case against her, reacting furiously to Mary HART depicting herself as a respectable business woman ('I let out rooms furnished'), accusing her of 'being the instigation of my ruin' and of keeping 'a common brothel.' Caroline had been 'decoyed ... away from home' and 'induced to go to her house' with false promises. 'I never was seduced till I was seduced in her house – I have always been in service till now, I have a six years' character at Edmonton.' Not true, countered Mary HART. 'I had other lodgers – what she says about me is false - I never would have decoyed any girl from home – she came to me in a state, which, if she was a virtuous girl she could not be.' The nature of the 'state' is not specified but reading between the lines it seems likely Caroline could have been facing a very difficult future. To compound her problems the jury found her guilty of theft and she was sent to prison for six months.

So what did I learn during my investigation into Victorian crime? Firstly, there was a lot of it about: at times I felt as if most of society was involved

in illegal activity. But I was pleased to see the Birches were on the right side of the law, which is more than can be said for other branches of my family who were frequently imprisoned for debt. I had never heard of twelfth cake, had no idea ‘lobster’ was the nick name for a red-coated soldier, or that a lady of dubious morals was labelled a ‘girl of the town.’ And I know a lot more about hats. But above all I learned that although times may change, people do not. They are all there - the chancer, the femme fatale, the troubled teenager, ‘fallen woman,’ the chronically timid, and the daringly bold, as recognizable today as they were two hundred years ago and, thanks to the Old Bailey transcripts, we get to hear their stories verbatim just as those present did in the iconic London building where Lady Justice reigns on high.



The Old Bailey as it is today.

Sources:

The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org>

British History Online, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk>

London Museum, <https://www.londonmuseum.org.uk>

LAW AND ORDER AT BOW STREET

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

Bow Street has long been associated with the keeping of the peace, especially in its parish of St Paul Covent Garden. Policing was initially carried out by beadles appointed by the vestry to keep watch and some early records appear in the parish chest archive at Westminster Archives Centre. These include Watch accounts dated 1768-1829 and Watch Trustees' minutes, which are indexed and include a list of tradesmen who supplied the beadles' uniforms, dated 1781-1823.

A court house was opened by City of Westminster magistrate Sir Thomas de VEIL at his home at 4 Bow Street in 1740. His successor, novelist Henry FIELDING, took over in 1748. More organised policing in the area started when Henry also organised eight local constables to help him prevent crime and these men became known as the Bow Street Runners.

Sir John FIELDING, Henry's blind half-brother, took over the court and policing operations in 1751 and continued until his death in 1782 when Sampson WRIGHT stepped in. The court expanded into number 3 Bow Street in 1813 whilst the first police station in the road, which was one of the



Bow Street Magistrates' Court and police station as it is today.

founding stations of the Metropolitan Police, opened in numbers 33 and 34 in 1832. These were replaced in 1881 with a purpose-built joint Magistrates' Court and police station at 28 Bow Street. The Court and police station had separate entrances – it was not far to move suspected criminals from the cells to the dock for their trial.

The police station was used by F Division (Covent Garden)

and later E Division (Holborn). Bow Police Station merged with nearby Cannon Row Police Station to form Charing Cross Police Station in 1992, which is housed in the former Charing Cross Hospital near Trafalgar Square.

As for the Magistrates' Court, there were three courtrooms here, one on each of the ground, first and second floors. The Bow Street Magistrates' Court archive dates from 1724-2004 and is at The London Archives, Ref: PS/BOW. Records include court registers, club licensing, domestic proceedings registers, gaolers' records, matrimonial case registers, papers relating to magistrates' salaries, Poor Box financial accounts, bequests, correspondence and much more. Many famous people have appeared here, from Oscar WILDE to Emmeline PANKHURST to the KRAY twins. The court finally closed in 2006 with its caseload being transferred to Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court, since renamed Westminster Magistrates' Court.

You can still visit 28 Bow Street as it is now the Bow Street Police Museum, currently open Friday to Sunday from 11am-4.30pm. The original dock from Court No 2 can be seen here. This was where Oscar WILDE stood when he was accused of breaking the law. The museum's website is at: <https://bowstreetpolicemuseum.org.uk/>



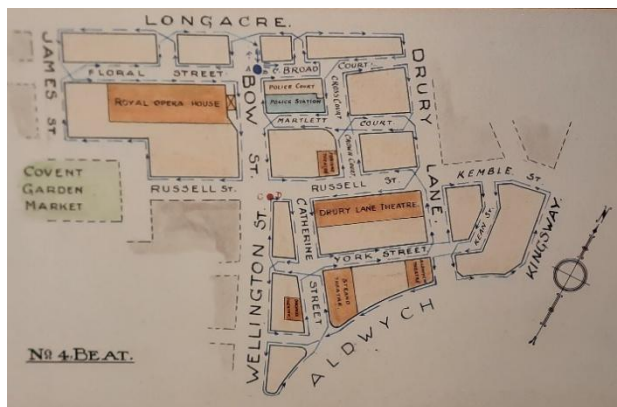
The Police Museum's entrance is in Martlett Court.

For those researching police ancestors, there are a number of other useful sources. The experts in police family history are at The Metropolitan Police Museum, Marlowe Road, 109 Station House, Sidcup, DA15 7ES. It is worth contacting them if you had police ancestors in London as they have Central Records of Service from 1911; a database containing some 54,000 names of police officers from 1829; Police Orders from 1857; many photographs and much more. You can contact them via their website: <https://www.met.police.uk/museums>

The associated Friends of the Metropolitan Police Heritage Charity is also useful. They have a database of officers including Women Police starting with Officer No 1 in 1919; another of police children baptised in Westminster; casualty lists from both World Wars and oral histories. For more information visit: <http://fomphc.com/>

Archives from the Metropolitan Police are all held at TNA and include the following: a Home Office register of the Metropolitan Police Force dating from 1829-1836 at Ref: HO65/26, returns of deaths in the Metropolitan Police Force 1829-1889 is MEPO4/2, a register of Joiners from 1830-1933 at Ref: MEPO4/333-338 which can give other details of officers, however, there are gaps. Records of police pensions from 1852-1993 are Ref: MEPO21 and can include personal information about the officer. The earlier ones have been indexed and are searchable by name in TNA catalogue. The rest are ordered by date of retirement. Those from 1852-1932 have been digitised onto AUK. The vaccination of police officers in 1913 is included in MEPO2/1530.

The Police have published, since their earliest days, a newspaper containing information on crime, criminals, missing persons and other items of interest to the police. From 1773-1776 this was *The Public Hue and Cry, or, Sir John Fielding's General Preventative Plan*; from 1797-1810 *The Hue and Cry*,



Bow Street Police Beat 4 shows exactly where the officers must walk. The other beat routes can also be seen at the museum.

and *Police Gazette*; 1828-1839 *Police Gazette, or, Hue and Cry*; and since then *Police Gazette*. It is intended to add all of these to the British Newspaper Archive and already two tranches have been uploaded.

There is a series of albums on Flickr. This contains photos of the joining and

leaving ledgers for the Metropolitan Police and the albums have the same MEPO references as the National Archives. You can find them online here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/naphotorecords/albums>

Don't forget, police ancestors might also turn up in reports of trials, both in the courts and the newspapers.

Please set out your *Help!* request as clearly and succinctly as possible. All surnames should be in CAPITALS. Members may have one free entry per journal. There is a £3 charge for each

Help!

subsequent entry and for all entries from non-members. Don't forget to include your contact details and your membership number.

Please send any replies to the Editors, who will pass them on to the appropriate member.

WILLIAM JOHNSON

I have an ancestor, William JOHNSON, who was born about 1801. He lived on Millbank Road for many years. I think he was a builder.

His brother was John JOHNSON, born in 1791 and baptised on 15 April 1791 at St George Hanover Square, the son of 'Jane TULLETT and Robert JOHNSON'. I don't have absolute proof, DNA, etc that this is the right one for him but the ages all fit. I thought it was odd that John's mother's maiden name was given, Maybe they weren't married. But as I can't find William with these parents, maybe I have the wrong baptism for John?

John married Mary VIDLER in 1881 and he was the Lord Mayor of London in 1845. He died in Westminster in 1848 and it's in his Will where he names his brother William.

The 1851 census for William Johnson doesn't look as if he ever married. Couldn't find him in 1841 but that's probably a reflection of my inability. Says he was born in Westminster. I have struggled for ages trying to find out more about William without success. He has a fairly common name unfortunately. Thanks in advance for any help you can provide.

Jennifer Monopolis, Member No. 8534

Note: You are very lucky that William had a famous brother, despite the common name. There is much about John JOHNSON in the British Newspaper Archive and with an increasing amount of this available to see for free online, it is definitely worth a look. Looking initially for 'John Johnson' and 'sheriff' and restricting the date to the 1830s so as to reduce irrelevant mentions, there seem to be many items in the press for the south west. When John was elected sheriff, it was widely reported and other details were often included. In the *Exeter and*

Plymouth Gazette dated 16 July 1836, for example, it says that John 'belongs to the Company of spectacle makers and is a freeman of the City of London.' Records of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers are at The London Archives and include court registers and registers of freedom admissions (none digitised) which should mention John.

The *London Packet* adds 'Mr J. JOHNSON was the lessee of the Great Dartmoor stone quarries and had long been distinguished by the integrity and talent by which he executed great national undertakings in the erection of bridges, the construction of dockyards, and especially in ... the breakwater at Plymouth ... on the foundations of his late respected father...'.

Searching then for John JOHNSON and Plymouth explains further about the bias of papers in Devon and Cornwall: he had a house, Lary or Lairy House, at Plymouth. Indeed it was here that his son, John Vidler JOHNSON sadly died aged 22 in 1837.

Further details about the family emerge on John JOHNSON's death. The *Royal Cornwall Gazette* of 12 January 1849: 'Death of Alderman JOHNSON ... The deceased alderman, with his brother (who still survives), succeeded to his father's business, and was in early life extensively engaged as a paviour. They inherited a large fortune from their father, who made a most fortunate speculation in the Dartmoor stone quarries in Devonshire, since known as the 'Haytor Granite' ...'

More information can also be found about William. An article in the *Western Times* of 31 July 1841 detailing the papers read to the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Plymouth, mentions a 'Description of the Machinery used at the Granite Quarries on Dartmoor by Mr William JOHNSON'. His love of science is noted many years later with details published of some patents he obtained: in 1861 for improvements in railway carriages and locomotive engines and in 1870 for improvements of sheet metal saddle trees. In both of these his address is given as The Wynd's Point, Little Malvern. This leads to finding him in the 1871 census returns at The Cottage, Colwall, Ledbury, Herefordshire (about 2 miles away). Here he is noted to be a widower aged 71, a land owner/gentleman who had been born at St John, Westminster. With him

are two servants (married to each other). And in fact, when we look closely at the 1851 census returns for 2 Millbank Row, St John the Evangelist, Westminster, William, then aged 50, is described as married, a landed proprietor born Westminster, and with another pair of married servants.

Looking at FreeBMD, a William JOHNSON aged 74 died in the June quarter of 1874 at Ledbury (which covers Colwall), Volume 6a, page 287. This would seem to be him but it is worth checking, especially now that you can obtain a digital copy of the entry for £3 from GRO.

This, and the two census records, give a date of birth for him of 1800-1801. There is a William JOHNSON born 24 January 1800 and baptised 25 April 1800 at St John the Evangelist, Smith Square, Westminster, the son of William and Catharine JOHNSON. This transcription appears on Findmypast but could not be found on Ancestry, who apparently have these records. (Their Westminster, London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms only covers 1813-1919, whilst their London, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1538-1912, covers Westminster but does not include any entries at all from St John the Evangelist or St Margaret Westminster.) The original images should always be inspected, these can be checked at Westminster Archives Centre. This sounds like our man but confirmatory evidence is required. Searching in The National Archives Discovery catalogue (actually trying to find a Will from a potential father to the brothers) we came across the archive of William Balcombe LANGRIDGE of Lewes, Solicitor and Clerk of the Peace, which includes 'copy and draft deeds, with correspondence, relating to John JOHNSON of Horseferry Road, Westminster, builder and paviour'. Also here is the settlement on marriage of his daughter Elizabeth with Alexander BRICE, dated 1807; and the co-partnership with John JOHNSON the elder and younger, and Alexander BRICE as paviours and scavengers, 1807. (A newspaper from 1823 mentions 'Messrs Johnson and Brice, granite contractors'.) This would indicate that the father of John and William was also called John JOHNSON and so is not the William mentioned above or the Robert you found (and perhaps illustrates why more than one piece of evidence is necessary to confirm a link in a tree). Here, too, is a copy will of Thomas

JOHNSON of Duntahin, County Cork, Ireland, gent, dated 1808 which surely must be looked at. William Balcombe LANGRIDGE, it turns out, married Abigail VIDLER, daughter of John VIDLER of Millbank, coach-maker, on 8 February 1805 at St John the Evangelist, Westminster, and so is a brother-in-law of John and William JOHNSON. This collection is held at East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office.

A further search on The National Archives for a Will finds one for John JOHNSON senior of Holywell Street, Westminster, with a digital copy on Ancestry UK. Probate date is 26 January 1831. It mentions his daughter Elizabeth, the wife of Mr Alexander BRICE, Mr William Balcombe LANGRAGE, his son John JOHNSON, his son William JOHNSON. *The News (London)* dated 2 February 1829 notes: 'On Friday last, at his residence, Holywell-Street, Westminster, in his 70th year, Mr John JOHNSON, who was much respected and now sincerely regretted'.

Further information about William's life can be gleaned from the newspapers. *The North Devon Journal and General Advertiser*, of 23 May 1833 records: 'Births - On the 13th instant, in Eaton Place, Belgrave Square, the lady of Wm. JOHNSON, Esq, of a son.' Digging into the baptism records of Westminster on Ancestry UK does find this son: 'Horace Albert Reginald, son of William and Sarah JOHNSON, contractor of Eaton Place, born 13 May 1833, baptised 1 July 1833 at St George Hanover Square. There are quite a few children baptised to William and Sarah JOHNSONS at this church around this time. Some can be immediately discounted but this one appears to be the correct family: Augusta, daughter of William and Sarah JOHNSON, Government contractor of Eaton Place, born 13 May 1834 and baptised 11 Jun 1834. Her marriage record in the papers confirms this: *The Hereford Journal*, 18 May 1859, 'COLEMAN-JOHNSON, May 3 at St James, Paddington, London, the Rev William Coleman, younger son of the late Walter Coleman Esq of Langley Fitzhurst, Wilts, to Augusta, only daughter of Wm Johnson Esq of Little Malvern.'

We hope we have provided you with many more leads to follow up and look forward, perhaps, to publishing an article from you about William's interesting life in due course!

GONNING

My great grandfather was Henry Augustus GONNING born about 1852 - I cannot find him on the GRO index to order a birth certificate nor can I find a baptism to check the names of his parents. He married Ellen Elizabeth EVEREST in 1874 aged 22 at St Mark, Old Street. His occupation is shown as an umbrella maker and his father as William GONNING, piano maker. I cannot find any records for William GONNING.

In the 1881 census Henry, Ellen and family are using the surname WILLIAMS and living at 10 Gee Street, St Luke. His place of birth is given as Bloomsbury but in later years as St Luke. Henry died in 1908 at 25 Norman's Buildings, Finsbury aged 55. His death was registered in the name of GONNING. As all their children married, they reverted to the surname GONNING. It was only when I received Ellen's death certificate on which was stated, "Ellen Elizabeth GONNING otherwise WILLIAMS" that I was able to find them all in the census records.

I have a possible mother for Henry as I have found records for a Caroline GONNING admitted to the Holborn Union Workhouse from St Lukes Parish in 1892. She died in The Holborn Union Workhouse, Mitcham, Surrey in 1893. And her death certificate states, "widow of ----- GONNING, occupation unknown of Norman Buildings". So, unfortunately no name for her husband and of course no maiden name.

Interestingly, recently I have identified a cluster of DNA matches who I've found all descend from Luzerna GONIN born in 1814 in Bloomsbury. He married Isabella MOSS at St James, Clerkenwell in 1841. He was also a piano maker and lived in Bethnal Green and Shoreditch areas. None of the DNA matches I have contacted know anything about the GONIN family but one remembered his aunt saying she had Italian heritage.

Do you think it's too much of an assumption to believe that William and Luzerna are brothers or perhaps cousins?

I'd be grateful for any suggestions as to how I might find out more about William and Caroline GONNING/GONIN.

Julia Wardle, Member No. 8537

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Note: Your GONNING family certainly seem elusive and we have also failed to find anything about Henry Augustus before his marriage in 1874. However, whilst you should never make assumptions in researching your family tree, the fact that William and Luzerna might be related, bolstered by your cluster of DNA matches, seems to be an area on which

it could be useful to focus your efforts. It would seem to be worthwhile to collect all mentions of the GONIN (and similar) surname and try to sort them into a family.

When Luzerna GONIN (bachelor) married Isabella MOSS (spinster), actually on 3 October 1831 at St James, Clerkenwell, both marked their names with an 'x'. This probable illiteracy, combined with unusual first names, makes tracing the family a little harder than normal.

For example, the baptism of two of Luzerna's children appear on the same page in the registers of St Leonard Shoreditch but separated by 4 days and several other baptisms. Isabelle Elizabeth, is stated to be the daughter of John and Isabelle Elizabeth GONIN of Mary Street, Piano Forte Maker. She was born on 19 May 1840 and baptised on 19 May 1847. Luzerna, recorded as the child of John Luzerna and Elizabeth GONIN, Pianoforte Maker of Paul Street, was born on 1 May 1847 and baptised on 23 May 1847. On the face of it, these could be two different couples but both children unfortunately died in 1848 and their burial records, both at Golden Lane Nonconformist Cemetery, would indicate otherwise: Luzerna of 13 Lizard Street, Bartholomew Square aged 1 year and 4 months was buried on 10 September and Elizabeth GONIN, also of 13 Lizard Street, aged 8½ was on 24 December 1848.

The family can be found in the 1841 census returns at Anns Place, St Mary Newington, Surrey: John GONIN, 30, Piano Forte Maker, Elizabeth GONIN aged 30, and Elizabeth GONIN aged 11 months, all supposedly born in Surrey. In 1851 they are at 33 Coleharbor Street, Bethnal Green: Luzerna GONIN, 37, Piano Forte Maker born Marylebone, Isabella GONIN, 38, born Deptford, Kent and Louisa GONIN their daughter aged 7, born Walworth, Surrey.

The 1861 census returns have a Luzerna GONIN born in Bloomsbury and by 1871 he is stated to have been born in Soho. Is this the same Luzerna? He is still a piano forte maker but in 1861 he is aged only 39 and he has a new wife, Jane, born about 1831 in Devonport (and new children).

Isabella cannot be found in the 1861 census returns, although no death record has been found either. The GRO birth indexes show that the Jane's maiden name was SORBY or SOBEY with the couple's first child, Florence Rosetta Stewart GONIN being born in 1856 in Lambeth. No

marriage has been found for the couple as yet.

Luzerna seems to have died in 1881 and appears in the GRO death registers as Luzana GONIN. Is Jane the Jane WILLIAMS the one aged 50, born Devonport, who is in the St Saviour's Union Infirmary in 1881? We have not been able to find their children in 1881.

With regard to Caroline, we did find an Edwin Augustus, the son of Louana [?] and Caroline GONIN, piano forte maker of Little Coram Street, who was born 25 May 1847 and baptised 31 May 1851 at St George Bloomsbury. Naturally we could not find the family in this street in the 1851 census returns! Edwin appears in the GRO death indexes in 1932 in St Olave Southwark. The Edward Augustus GONIN at 64 Rouel Road, Bermondsey in the Electoral Register for 1931 would seem to be him too. Could Louana be the Levyana [?] GONIN who was admitted to Hanwell Asylum on 7 December 1887 and died a week later on 14 December?

ROFFEY

I am a new member pursuing a One-name study for my surname ROFFEY. I have however a particular interest in this Islington area group as my great great grandfather John ROFFEY (1821-1880) migrated there from the Horne area in Surrey in about 1847 and stayed there about twenty years. Eventually he settled in Portsmouth, Hants about 1867.



Several years ago, a co-researcher, Ron Silverbach kindly sent me the attached 5 photos whom he believed to be 'Dalston' ROFFEYs in the Kingsland area of Hackney. They were reported as being taken in 1882 and sent to him by somebody he could not remember the name of.



Can anybody confirm the identity of any of them? It would be invaluable to my study. There is the possibility however they might be PENFOLDS as they married into the ROFFEY family in Kingsland.

The back of the photos indicate the photographer to be: Augustus W William & Co, Dalson Junction Bazaar nearly opposite Dalston Junction N.L.R, 77 De Beauvoir Road, Kingsland, N.

Would anybody know if it is possible to trace their identity via where this photographer's archives went if known?

I would in any case be pleased to hear from anyone concerned with the ROFFEY family.

Dr. Cliff Roffey, Member No.8854

Email: cgroffey@aol.com

Note: Looking in the British Newspaper Archive, a note in the *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette* dated 9 December 1881 records that Mr Augustus W WILSON, the eminent photographer of De Beauvoir-road, opened a branch establishment at the new Kingland bazaar, opposite Dalson Junction on the 19th inst. This must mean that the photos here must date to late 1881 at the earliest. An advertisement in the *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette* dated 10 March 1893 mentions another medal, gained at the Borough of Hackney Photo Exhibition, 1891. As this is not mentioned on the backs of your photos, it could mean that the images date to before this. All of this agrees with your reported date of 1882. All of the photos are vignettes and all are head and shoulder portraits. Do you think they are the same family, that is, parents with three children? If so, then checking the 1881 census should reveal whether there is a likely looking ROFFEY or PENFOLD family.



FORTHCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS

Virtual Branch – Talks are on the second Thursday of the month. ‘Doors’ open at 7.45 for an 8pm start. To attend, you have to initially register an interest by emailing: virtualbranch@lwmfhs.org (This is once only - you do not need to register for each talk). The details of each Zoom meeting will then be emailed to you a few days prior to the event as well as being announced in *Metropolitan*, on our website and Facebook page.

The talk will be recorded (with the speaker’s permission) and will be available for 3 days in the Members’ Area of the website so that members who live abroad or those who can’t make the live event can watch it at a hopefully more convenient time.

Branch Contact: Clare Pollitt, Email: virtualbranch@lwmfhs.org

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| 13 March | <i>When Ted Met Hatty</i> by Dr Nick Barratt. Nick recounts the search for his illegitimate grandmother's parents across three continents, explaining the various sources and techniques along the way. |
| 10 April | <i>Beyond the 1939 Register: Additional Records of National Registration (1939-1991)</i> by Richard Holt. This talk will look at understanding the 1939 Register as part of a much wider set of records. Discover how the registers were used by the Central National Registration Office and later by the NHS, from 1939 until 1991. Learn about the existence of additional records, the information that they contain, and how they might help you with locating family members between 1939-1991. Also, what information is contained in the redacted section of the 1939 Register? |
| 8 May | <i>The Empress of Ireland – Canada’s Titanic</i> by Helen Baggott. When the RMS <i>Empress of Ireland</i> sank in 1914, more passengers lost their lives than on <i>Titanic</i> – yet few have heard of the tragedy. Helen reveals the story of the sinking – and three families from Dorset and Somerset that were affected. Illustrated by postcards and photographs, this talk remembers a forgotten tragedy. |
| 12 Jun | <i>Getting the best out of newspapers</i> by John Hanson. The lecture will explore what is out there in this much |

underused resource and explore ideas on how to find those elusive ancestors.

Rayners Lane Branch – Talks are on the first Monday of the month unless that is a Bank Holiday, in which case the meeting will be on the second Monday. Doors open at 1pm for a 1.30pm start at Roxeth Community Church, Coles Crescent, South Harrow, Middlesex HA2 0TN. Free parking. Branch Contact: Tony Allen, Email: raynerslanebranch@lwmfhs.org

3 March	<i>None so Queer as Folk</i> by Ian Waller. Most communities have their own traditions, peculiarities and dialects. Many of these originated in early history and have often been preserved in pictorial, written and oral histories. This talk gives examples of these traditions (often humorous) and puts them into the context of village and town life.
7 April	}
12 May	} Please check the website for updates.
2 June	}

LWMFHS members are also welcome to attend the following meetings:

Midland Ancestors London and Home Counties Group – Talks are held on the second Saturday of each quarter from 10.15am to noon at the LDS Hyde Park Chapel, 64-68 Princes Gate, Exhibition Road, South Kensington SW7 2PA. For more information you can visit the group's webpage: <https://midland-ancestors.uk/about/local-groups/london-group/>

East Surrey Southwark Group – Talks are held on a Monday, usually at John Harvard Library, 211 Borough High Street, Southwark SE1 1JA. Doors open at 11.30am and the talk starts at 12 noon. East Surrey FHS ask for a donation from visitors towards a cuppa. You can find their webpage here: <https://www.eastsurreyfhs.org.uk/index.php/event>



FOCUS ON FACEBOOK

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

Bethany wrote in our 'Help and Discussion Group' that she is researching a man, Robert Miles KING, whose death was registered in Westminster in February 1988. She could not find an obituary, notice of a funeral or a place of rest and wanted help with this.

Sharon commented that obituaries are very rare in England. Paula thought there would be more chance of finding a funeral notice in a newspaper rather than an obituary and would recommend trying the archives of local newspapers for the area he lived in. She also wrote that it might be worth looking on the British Newspaper Archive, which has its own website: <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> and is also on Findmypast. Nikki added that local newspapers are often available to view from the digital collections which are held by local public libraries, although she thought that 1988 was probably too recent. Interestingly, she had found a Robert Miles KING reported for thefts in newspapers!

Ian and Jan both suggested obtaining Robert's death certificate, which will give his home address, place of death, age at death or date of his birth, name and address of the informant and so might give some clue as to the place of burial. Bethany should research where he normally lived, and where his family were based, to narrow down all the possible cemeteries and crematoria where he might have ended up. Jan suggested checking previous generations to see if there might be a family burial plot somewhere. Elizabeth pointed out that it is always hard to find where people were buried, especially more recently as this could be absolutely anywhere and there are no central records. Robert may well have been cremated of course. Caroline added that cremation would have been more likely in 1988, when this was the preferred end point for over 70% of people dying in England and Wales. Nikki said to have a look at the website of any crematorium to see if they have a Book of Remembrance – her local crem has one online to view.

Karen recommended using maps to see where local cemeteries and crematorium are and contact them to enquire. Many make a charge for searching. The following websites could also be useful: <https://www.findagrave.com/>, <https://billiongraves.com/>, <https://www.gravestonephotos.com/index.php> <https://www.interment.net>, <https://www.deceasedonline.com/>

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

- 1 To encourage the study of family history, genealogy and heraldry, primarily in the City of London, City of Westminster and the London Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Camden, part of Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, part of Hillingdon, and Islington.
- 2 To help to co-ordinate efforts to make local records more accessible.
- 3 To carry out such activities as are relevant to a family history society

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription covers all family members living at one address, with one journal and one vote per subscription.

There are three subscription rates: £12, £15 and £20 depending on where you live and how your journal *Metropolitan* is delivered.

Our year runs from 1 October until 30 September the following year.

Members joining during the Society's year will receive back copies of journals.

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£15 UK: to receive *Metropolitan* by post

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UK cheques are payable to LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX FHS.

Overseas members' payments must be made in pounds sterling by cheque, drawn upon a London Bank, made payable to: LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX FHS.

All cheques should be sent to the Membership Secretary, address on the inside front cover. Please give your name and, if possible, membership number (which is on the email notifying you of your electronic version of *Metropolitan*, or on the address sheet sent with your paper copy).

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- Set up a standing order payable on 1 October annually (bank details below);
- Make a payment directly into our bank account (details below);
- Pay through Parish Chest directly from our website lwmfhs.org.uk or our stall on the Parish Chest

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MEMBERS' DATA

A labels-list of members is held on computer for the purposes of administration and distribution only.

Data from the members' list will NOT be given out to commercial enterprises.

Anyone objecting to his or her name being on this list should write to the Membership Secretary.

METROPOLITAN Copy Dates: **1 Feb, 1 May, 1 Aug, 1 Nov.**