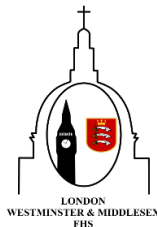


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METROPOLITAN

The Journal of the
LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX
Family History Society



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March 2021

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Cover picture: Highfield Pumping Station, Winchmore Hill
See article on page 56 for information on Edmonton parish, of which
Winchmore Hill is part.

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EDITORIAL

Many people have taken up family history in lockdown and it is a great way to pass the time – there are so many interesting records to find which contribute to knowledge of our family. Unravelling the knotty problems and knocking down brick walls are very satisfying. We have seen membership of our Society and people joining our Facebook group grow during this time which is fantastic. It is also good to be part of such a large community, with plenty of people around who can help if advice is needed.

For new members (and more long-standing members too!), we would just like to say that we are a friendly bunch of people who run things at LWMFHS but we are all volunteers and could always do with a little help. There are a great variety of ways to help. Do you like helping behind the scenes or are you a people person who loves chatting to others? Would you like to help at fairs, read gravestones, edit, proof-read or transcribe documents? LWMFHS would love to welcome more members to our team. We do really need an Events Co-ordinator, see page 61, and our Secretary wishes to step down before too long but however you would like to help, we are sure we can accommodate you. If you would like more information, do please contact any member of the committee – an enquiry will not commit you!

We have had a letter from new member Zoe, who writes “I am really enjoying reading through the back issues of your journal, both for family history stories and London history, which I am very interested in. I hadn’t thought about the local history aspect of your society when I signed up, so it’s like I bought one and got one free. Thank you”. This letter is so true. Local history and the way our ancestors lived add so much to our family stories. Do not forget that older issues of *Metropolitan* can be found in the Members Area of our website.

It was great to see so many members at our AGM and the minutes are on page 78.

Stay safe!

The Editorial Team

FORTHCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS

Please be advised that all face-to-face talks have been cancelled. Current restrictions still need to be lifted, venues will have to reopen (maybe with new social distancing rules?), volunteers, speakers and audience must all be willing and able to attend. Hopefully one day we will get back to normal. For up-to date information on this please look at our website. However, our new Virtual Branch is up and running:

Virtual Branch

‘Doors’ open at 7.45 for an 8pm start. To attend, you have to initially register an interest by emailing: virtualbranch@lwmfhs.org.uk (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 about one week prior to the event as well as being announced in *Metropolitan*, on our website and Facebook page.

Thursday 11 March	<i>The Allenders: Awful or Amazing? A tale of the British Courts, the Royal Navy and Australia</i> by Hilary Blanford
Thursday 8 April	<i>Introduction to DNA for Family Historians</i> by Mia Bennett
Thursday 13 May	<i>Tracing your London Ancestors</i> by Jane Fox
Thursday 10 June	<i>Ratcatchers</i> by David Cufley

The talk will be recorded (with the speaker’s permission) and reshown the following morning at 10am, UTC, so that members who live abroad can watch it at a hopefully more convenient time.

Can you help the Virtual Branch?

Our Virtual Branch continues to grow and we thank you for your positive comments and encouraging support. It is your Branch and putting together a programme that appeals to everyone is not an easy task. At physical Branch meetings, we know the members who attend regularly and can ask for their input to focus meetings on topics of interest. The Virtual Branch allows us to reach our wider membership and it would help to receive your suggestions for topics or speakers. Even better, if you are willing to give a talk please let us know.

You can email us at: virtualbranch@lwmfhs.org.uk

Pam Chambers, Member No. 908, Virtual Branch co-ordinator

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

In my June 2020 Comments I remarked that I was hoping to receive a Vaccine against Covid-19. Being over 80 and lucky enough to answer a phone call from my GP Clinic offering vaccination at 90 minutes notice in December with a booster in early January my wish came true. It should be that by the time that you read this all over 70s will have been offered a vaccination. Others down to age 50 should be vaccinated in the following months. This brilliant technology using a Synthetic Viral Messenger RNA has produced an effective vaccine at a remarkable speed and it also means that if required further vaccine can be produced against mutant viruses.

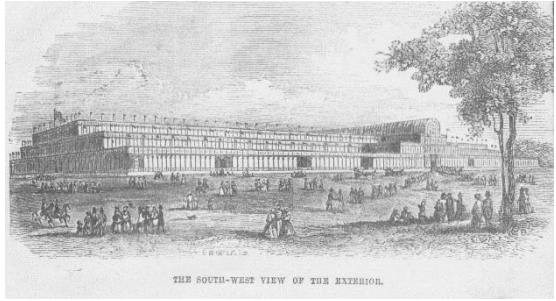
There seems to be great enthusiasm for vaccination in this older group but then the enthusiasm for acceptance seems to decrease inversely with age. This is perhaps because there is less likelihood of serious disease in the young. This may also be because the younger people were vaccinated in childhood and thus did not suffer from childhood diseases and did not encounter children suffering from them, so they have no appreciation of the benefits of vaccination. In contrast, people of my generation suffered unpleasant and even dangerous diseases such as measles, rubella, mumps, whooping cough and chickenpox. A major worry was poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis), which could be fatal but otherwise sometimes left children with non-functioning, or poorly functioning limbs. I knew several people at school and work who had such problems. Because of this, people of my generation were enthusiasts for the vaccination of the next generation.

On another topic: 2021 is the 70th anniversary of the 1951 Festival of Britain and the 170th anniversary of the 1851 Great Exhibition. The 1951 Exhibition was held on the South bank of the Thames on either side of Waterloo Bridge. It was devised by the Labour government to celebrate the improvements and potential for Britain after the trauma of the Second World War and the subsequent Austerity.

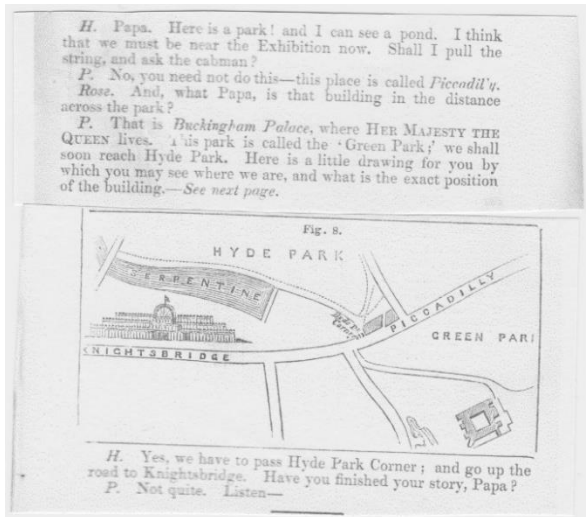
I remember going there as a schoolboy and being impressed by a strange gleaming rocket like spike called the Skylon. I still have my commemorative Festival of Britain crown (a 5-shilling piece). The most important feature was the Festival Concert Hall which was a much-needed permanent cultural addition. The clearance of the site meant that subsequently further concert halls and the National Theatre could be built as well as the giant wheel. The area is now a very attractive part of London.



The 1851 Great Exhibition was more impressive. It was held in the magnificent Crystal Palace erected in Hyde Park at the instigation of Albert, the Prince Consort. I have a delightful contemporary illustrated guide called *Little Henry's Holiday at the Great Exhibition*. It is written as a father explains the details of the background and the construction to his intelligent son. It was not just a British Exhibition but had exhibits from all over the world, but particularly



European. It was celebrating the remarkable advances in science and technology in the previous half-century. It was also celebrating the good will of the nations that had been fighting each other less than forty years before. This all accorded with Prince Albert's view that this would lead to a century of peace and friendship in Europe, led by the



family of Victoria and Albert. Unfortunately, it was not to be, with the Austro-Prussian war 15 years later, then the Franco-Prussian War, the Balkan wars and two World Wars in less than a century. The exhibition did not of course include the advances in military and naval technology. The book had an inscription 'Matilda Ann Miles, Standlynch.' I looked her up in the 1851 Census. I found her age 13 in Standlynch, Dorset, daughter of James MILES, a miller. So perhaps an advanced father who thought that his daughter should be educated in the advances of Science and Technology.

Keep well
Tony Allen

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Today, with nothing better to do in these lockdown times, I have looked again through my older copies of Metropolitan. In the December 2018 issue, there is a photo on page 45 with the heading 'Mystery Photo'.

I know, or should I say I am 99% certain that the warden second from left, second row, was Fred COOK, husband of my mother's cousin Margaret HARWOOD. They lived in Palace Road and Fred was a warden. The wardens are photographed in front of the air raid shelter which was in Priory Road.



Fred CARTER was a member of our Society and used to go to our Enfield Branch meetings. Fred was born in Hornsey and also lived in North View Road. Fred and three of his brothers served in the Second World War and were all in Hornsey TA.

Anne Prudames, Member No. 254

Note: We reproduce the photo here, with Ernest CARTER (also identified) as the man in the top row third, left.

If any of you have hit a brick wall searching for the BUCK family in Paddington in the early 20th century, I may have stumbled upon the hammer to smash it down for you.

I was researching Eliza COURTNEY, a distant cousin. She married William MUSSON in 1899, but had no children until 1913, after which she produced 3 more in quick succession. I noticed that while they were all registered with the surname of MUSSON, they all had Buck as their middle name - a sign that William might not have been their father! These children were: Alfred Buck MUSSON, born 1913 (his mother's maiden name was misspelled, which made him harder to find); Elsie Buck MUSSON, born later in 1913; Albert Spencer BUCK, born 1915, died 1916; and Mabel Buck MUSSON, born 1917 (who married Leon H WHITE in 1944).

I never tracked down what happened to William MUSSON but I did find a baptism for one of the 4 children, Albert, which confirmed that their father was actually Spencer Samuel BUCK and Eliza was now living under the name of Elizabeth BUCK.

Spencer died in France during WW1 and his military papers confirm that he left an 'unmarried wife' as his next of kin. I also found Eliza(beth) and her 3 surviving children on the 1939 Census using the surname BUCK, which is also the surname their deaths were registered under. Interestingly, Eliza(beth)'s death was also registered under the surname MUSSON, so someone in the family knew the truth!

I know that at least one of the children went on to marry and have children of their own and it occurred to me that anyone searching for the births of those BUCK children wouldn't have a hope of finding them, since they were all registered under the mother's married surname of MUSSON.

I must admit, I quite enjoyed figuring out this puzzle!

Carole Button, Member No. 8233

Note: Carole posted this interesting bit of detective work on our 'Help and Discussion' Facebook group and kindly agreed to let us also publish it here, for those who are not on Facebook.



THE POOR IN EDMONTON

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

‘Edmonton’ is also the name of one of the six administrative ‘hundreds’ into which the county of Middlesex was historically divided. The hundred of Edmonton contained the parishes of Edmonton, Enfield, Monken Hadley, South Mimms and Tottenham and for many years it was mainly covered in woodland and used for keeping pigs. However, our booklet is not about the hundred but about the Ancient Parish.

Edmonton is a large parish which is located right to the east of our area, sharing one boundary with the county of Essex. The other boundaries are shared with the Middlesex parish of Enfield to the north, Tottenham and Friern Barnet (both Middlesex) to the south and the Hertfordshire parish of East Barnet to the west. The inhabitants of Edmonton had right of common upon Enfield Chase and when the Chase was divided in 1777, a tract of 1,231 acres was allotted to the parish. These boundaries have changed over the centuries as parts of Enfield Chase were added or removed. The district of Southgate, originally the south gate to the Chase within Edmonton parish, became a separate local government entity in 1881 but in 1965 Edmonton and Southgate were reunited as part of the London Borough of Enfield.

Edmonton village, recorded as Adelmetone in the 1089 *Domesday Book* and later as Edelmeton, straggles along the road to Ware between Tottenham and Enfield. The Tottenham part of the village is called Upper Edmonton (now N18 postcodes) and the Enfield end Lower Edmonton (now N9 postcodes). This road is an ancient one, known since Roman times as Ermine Street. It was then the main road from London heading north to Lincoln and on to York, more-or-less following the route of what is now Fore Street, the Hertford Road and then the Great Cambridge Road (A10). The road was crossed by several tributary streams of the River Lea and tolls were raised to repair and improve the road surface from the 14th century.

Ermine Street and the village of Edmonton are located along a slightly raised crest, having the River Lea on one side and the New River on the other; the higher ground on the west was arable, the lower, by the Lea, marsh land. The Edmonton of old was noted for its market gardens which were established as the forests were cut down, potatoes being one of the main crops. There were also farms, which grew cereals and fodder, and nurseries, growing salad

crops under glass. The Lea was made navigable following an Act dated 1571, with the 'New Cut' allowing goods, especially timber and locally made bricks, to be easily transported from Ware to the City of London. By the second half of the 19th century, the marsh land near the Lea was drained, allowing for the establishment of industry there.

The growth of Edmonton's industry and population were greatly influenced by the development of the railways. The first railway to reach the parish was the Northern and Eastern Railway which built a line along the Lea Valley to Broxbourne in 1840 with a branch line to Enfield Town in 1849. This became the Great Eastern Railway, which eventually had stations at Angel Road and Church Street on the Hertford or Low Level, and at Silver Street and Church Street on the High Level branches. Low-price 'Workmen's Tickets' for early-morning journeys into the new Liverpool Street Station from places on the railway such as Edmonton led to an influx of the working class. These people had been displaced from the large number of poor-quality homes that had occupied the site of Liverpool Street station when it was built in 1875. Inevitably this meant that more housing was built, the old grand houses pulled down and replaced with a greater quantity of smaller dwellings.



Millfield House, Upper Edmonton

A daily coach service ran to London from the 1720s and by the 1810s there was one an hour. The connections to London attracted fashionable residents to the parish and many large houses were built in the late 18th century, such as Millfield House which was constructed at this time in Silver Street. There were assembly rooms next to the Angel Inn for the gentry and a theatre was

built nearby. These local facilities drew wealthy people who had business connections in London but wanted to live outside the capital.

The Strand Board of Guardians acquired Millfield House in Silver Street, Edmonton in 1849 to use as a Poor Law orphanage with an infirmary being added in 1874. This closed in 1913 and the building was used to house Belgian refugees during the early part of the First World War. In 1917 it became a hospital for epileptic males (known as Edmonton Epileptic Colony). It was renamed St David's Hospital in 1930 but its healthcare functions ceased in 1971 and it is now an Arts Centre. St David's Hospital archives are at LMA, Ref: H63/SD.

Strand Union had been formed in 1836 from the parishes of St Anne Soho, St Clement Danes, St Mary le Strand, St Paul Covent Garden, the Liberty of the Rolls and the Precinct of the Savoy. In 1868 it merged with St James Piccadilly to form Westminster Union. This Union also had a workhouse at Edmonton, which was located immediately to the north of the Edmonton Union workhouse, with an entrance in Silver Street. It was built in the 1870s following an exposé in *The Lancet* decrying provision for the local poor at their Cleveland Street workhouse on land Strand Union held at Edmonton. This will have meant that many central London poor from these parishes will have been housed at Edmonton. Records of the Westminster Board of Guardians are at LMA, Ref: WEBG, with some online at AUK. The site of the workhouse is now a housing development and is known as Strand Place.

The local Edmonton Poor Law Union was formed in 1837 and included the parishes of Edmonton, Enfield, Hampstead, Hornsey (including Highgate) and Tottenham from Middlesex; Cheshunt from Hertfordshire and Waltham Abbey from Essex. In 1894 Southgate and Wood Green parishes were added, while Hampstead left to form its own Union. Most of the parishes in the Edmonton Union already had workhouses but of the seven at their disposal, the Union had to stop using four as they were in too poor a condition. The poor children were to be housed at Enfield, the able-bodied at Edmonton and the aged and infirm at Hampstead. The old Enfield workhouse proved inadequate and a new Poor Law orphanage was constructed at Chase Farm in 1886 (which later became Chase Farm Hospital). A new Union workhouse was built at Tanners End in Edmonton, opening in 1842 (which eventually became the North Middlesex Hospital) and the old building was demolished. The archive is at LMA, Ref: BG/E.

Our latest Parish Guide, that of Edmonton, was published on 1 March.

FROM RAUNDS TO MARYLEBONE

By Steven Coggins, Member No. 8210

I have traced my family history back to Raunds in Northamptonshire in 1793. All were cordwainers and shoemakers up to my Grandad, who died in 1977. Due to the lack of work it was decided some of the family should try their luck in London. As a result, two cousins and their families moved to Marylebone. Another member of the family stayed in Raunds and went on to own a factory and farm. This branch lived at The Hall which is now the council offices and a picture of Robert COGGINS (my ggg's brother) is still hanging in the meeting room. When the Coggins' shoe factory was



Coggins' shoe factory, Raunds

demolished and a small housing development built in its place, it was called Coggins Close and the older houses on Marshall's Road, along-side where the factory stood, were known locally as 'The Coggins houses'. The others struggled in London.

In the 1881 census my 3xgreat grandfather Henry COGGINS, a boot maker (born 1854 at Raunds), his wife Mary (née HARRISON, born 1855), their sons John Henry (born 1873), Albert (my 2xgreat grandfather, born 1877) and William (born 1880) along with Henry's brother Thomas (born 1864) were living at 11 Copland Street, Marylebone. Also living in the house were Henry's cousin Cornelius COGGINS (born 1839) with his wife Martha, their six children and a lodger. Henry and family went on to live at 16 Church Street, Marylebone in 1891 and then at 28 Church Street in 1901, where he was a bootmaker working on his own account at home.

The 1891 census returns show that Albert must have gone back to Raunds to live with his uncle William but he returned to London and was married in Marylebone in 1895 to Minnie SIMKINS. My grandfather Harry was born in 1900 at 14 Church Street. By 1905 they were living at 186 Villiers Road, then by 1921 they were living in Fisherton Street, Marylebone.

My grandfather Harry had a boot repair shop in Burnt Oak but this was wound up in 1930. He then worked for a shop in Edgware. His brother William John (born 1897) had a boot repair shop in Willesden. William died aged 28 in a motorcycle accident.



The Burnt Oak shop.

repaired the shoes in the kitchen ready for selling at Chapel Market Islington where they had a pitch held in my aunt's name, as she lived in Cross Street, Islington and was eligible to hold a licence. The repairs were done on a last fixed to short piece of a tree trunk stood on one end, approx 90cm x 30cm, that was rolled out of the walk-in larder.

While at the jumbles I used to buy random items, such as a King James Bible from 1863 and a swagger stick marked C.I.V., for the City Imperial Volunteers, a corps of volunteers formed to fight in the Second Boer War. I keep the bible on my desk at home, as it reminds me of the good times, but it has lost its spine cover so I have applied to BBC 1's *The Repair Shop* to have it fixed.



The Willesden shop.

My Dad had a window cleaning round but to make a bit on the side he would pay to 'clear what was left' of the jumble sale and load it into his Bedford Dormobile van (sometimes I would go with him). This was taken home and

in evening we all joined in sorting the cotton from the woollens, which was taken to his garage and when he had a full load this was taken to the scrap yard. The bric a brac was also sorted, and the good stuff was taken to Chapel Street Market and sold on my nan's pitch, or we would sometimes go to Club Row market and dad would sell on the bomb sites that were still at the entrance to the market. It was said dad could sell a fridge to an Eskimo. The market inspectors couldn't touch you if you were off the main thoroughfare.



Harry Coggins

I learnt my work ethic from my grandparents and dad. If you wanted the extra things in life you had to work for them. Sometimes during the summer we all piled into the van, picked up nan and gramps, dropped them at Chapel market and carried on to Southend for a day on the beach. Nan and grandad would make their way home on the tube after dropping the stock off at my aunt's flat in Islington. Thinking back now most of kids in my class had never seen the sea!!

CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for a person to lead our Events Team. This is not a massive job - it mainly involves sitting at your computer managing emails sent inviting us to participate at various fairs and family history shows.

In a normal year, we usually visit five events held fairly near to London. With lockdown, we have instead been attending virtual fairs. Our Events Team leader would book our tables for 'real' fairs or an online stall for virtual fairs, liaise with April, our Treasurer regarding paying for these, and let our team of volunteers know about them.

If you are interested in heading up this team or would just like more information about precisely what is involved, please contact eventsteam@lwmfhs.org.uk

MY GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER AND ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL

By Peter de Dulin, Member No. 8057

Joseph Earl JAMES Junior was the eldest surviving son of Joseph Earl JAMES and Jemima JUDD. He was born, we think, in Gainsborough in Lincolnshire in 1803. His father at that time was a hawker and draper selling his wares all round the country. His parents had eleven children altogether between 1801 and 1820 and they were baptised in places as far apart as Derby, Birmingham, London, and Cornwall. Joseph travelled around with his parents in the wagon until he was about five. His father then settled in Truro for about five years, declaring himself “Emperor of Truro” in the meantime. (That is another story).

It is thought that Joseph senior was quite well educated and educated his children whilst they were travelling around the country. Joseph helped with his parents in the business and became a draper’s assistant and well versed in the clothes trade.

By 1821 his father had decided to run a menagerie (as one does!!) which was called Earl James and Sons. At the age of 18 Joseph was quite a bit older than his brother Daniel, who was born in 1812, so his responsibilities were quite large. He had to help his father with the animals, organising the shows, taking down the displays after they had finished.

There was a bit of a problem in 1823 when Joseph senior and his family, on their way to Nottingham Fair in October, were travelling in convoy when the horses pulling their carriage bolted. His father had to try and stop the cart and in doing so ran the shafts into the bird wagon “causing bruising to the ostrich to such a degree that more than two handfuls of feathers were afterwards taken up”. Luckily, the family who were travelling in the wagon weren’t seriously hurt. By the second half of the 1820s Joseph senior had sold his menagerie.

Meanwhile, Joseph junior met and married Mary OLIVER in Portsea on 4 August 1827. Whether he had met her travelling around the country we don’t know. There was a fair in Portsmouth in the July, and they may have met there. They decided to settle down in London and their first child, Jemima (named after his mother) was born in June of 1829 but unfortunately died in

August of that year. Rosina came next in 1831 and she survived. She was baptised in Shoreditch, and Joseph was described as a clog maker. Then came Joseph Abraham in 1833 (he died age 5), Charles in 1836, William in 1840, another Joseph Earl in 1842, and finally my great grandfather Edgar Earl JAMES, born in 1844. The places they were living at the time of baptism were Ebenezer Street in 1833, Adelaide Square in 1836, Frog Street, Lambeth in 1840, and Victoria Place, Islington in 1844.

Tragedy struck, however, just before Christmas (20 December) 1845. Mary his wife died of consumption, leaving Joseph to cope on his own with five children between the ages of 14 years and 16 months. By now he was being described as a painter. This was of the decorating side, not an artist.

In 1850 Rosina, his daughter gave birth in the workhouse to a baby boy, John Brock JAMES, and she is found on the 1851 census in Islington Workhouse with baby John. Around that time Joseph became paralysed. The reason for the paralysis is unknown at present but it could have been because he fell off a ladder painting the outside of a house, or because of lead poisoning from the paint he was using. He was admitted into Islington Workhouse in 1853 together with Charles, Joseph and Edgar. The reason for admission is classed as “destitution and infirmity”. Rosina by this time had married in 1851 to William DORDOY, with Joseph being called a painter.

Rosina, meanwhile, had moved out and by 1861 was living in 67 Windsor Street, Islington. Joseph seems to have moved in and out of the workhouse quite freely and was probably on good terms with the master because he is constantly being let out and returning. He was in the workhouse in December 1857 when he wrote to Isambard Kingdom Brunel with regards to the launch of the Leviathan. He starts off the letter with:

Respected Sir,

I have taken the freedom of sending you a few lines on the triumph of your success of the launching of the monster ship the Leviathan, having two sons in the Navy I take an interest in naval affairs you will excuse the paper being scribbled on on the other side as I am short of paper

Yours respectfully

Joseph Earl James, Islington Workhouse.

*Huzza for England's sons, Britons well may boast
When they can build such ships to guard their coast
Shew her to the nations as the wonder of the world
Victoria's pride which stems the tides with flag unfurled*

*She floats, she floats upon the Thames majestic tide
The Leviathan of Iron, with ponderous hull so wide
The Thames flowing, conveyed her to the distant Nore
With all the pride of Majesty to grace our Naval store*



*Stupendous Leviathan, how great thy power sublime
When Vulcan's sons and Engineers of skill their work combine
Man'd with brave Tars, her standard is unfurled
And bids defiance to the Tyrants of the world*

*See her steaming though the boisterous Ocean
Where billow swell in wild commotion
Onwards she dashes through the Atlantic's heaving surge
With ponderous hull of Iron partially submerged*

*Ye mariners of England, Victoria's pride her boast
Who mans her fleet, with honour guards her coast
Propel this great Iron Ship, Old England's pride
That wafts ten thousand men across the briny tide*

*Brunel thy mind so great with power at will
Subdues the toughened iron to thy learned skill
Let merit sound the triumph of great Brunel's name
And to posterity descend to perpetuate his name*

He certainly did scribble on the other side of the paper, but what a scribble! He wrote another poem on the other side. We know he was going in and out of the workhouse, and appreciated what they did for him, as can be heard in the poem which I transcribed. Remember this was written just before Christmas and was very probably never read by anyone.

The Starving Britons

*Come poor hungry gathered, half-starved sinner
Britons use your brains. Make application for a dinner
There is the parish workhouse, why not take relief
Obtain a loaf of bread if minus of the beef.*

*Forget not you toiled for the cards you placed in hand
To feed the poor in want in England's land
Then why demur look dulo* and grievous moan
It is only getting back what really is your own*

*Christmas is very near and very keens the air
Do you mean to live, unhappy, on the chameleon's fare?
A Briton's stomach wants substantial relief
Good turkey, chive, plump pudding with fat beef*

*Britons boldly screw your courage to the striking post
Remember there is plenty, boiled, baked and roast
Never starve old fellow in a land of plenty
A Briton never must sink, with his stomach empty.*

Joseph continued to move into and out of the workhouse, sometimes staying with his daughter. He died at her house in 1868 with Edgar, my grandfather in attendance. A very erudite man, who, through no fault of his own died in poverty.

MISCHIEF, ANARCHY AND CONFUSION, Part 2

by Sheila Clarke, Member No. 7900

An estimated 50,000 people gathered in St George's Fields that day. Lord George addressed the crowds reminding them of their purpose and the need to remain peaceful before the four columns of marchers, wearing blue cockades in their hats and carrying banners with slogans such as 'No Popery' set off for Parliament led by a piper and

a man carrying the enormous petition on his head. They proceeded in an orderly manner to much cheering from onlookers but on arrival at Parliament trouble broke out almost immediately. Windows were broken, carriages overturned, and there were several attempts to storm Parliament. Those arriving for the debate were prevented from entering, with any thought to be sympathetic to the Act 'very badly treated.' Lord Ashburnham was 'torn out of his chariot,' the Bishop of Lincoln had his clothes ripped, Lord Willoughby lost his periwig, and 'Lords Hillsborough, Stormont, and Townsend appeared with their hair disheveled about their ears.' Meanwhile the Speaker, Lord Mansfield, sat on the woolsack 'quivering like an aspen.' The



Lord George Gordon, 1780

City Magistrates had been present to police the event but controlling such a large number of people was always going to be impossible and in this febrile atmosphere the petition was presented.

Witnesses saw Lord George come out several times to update the crowd, his final word being there was unlikely to be a decision that day, tomorrow was the King's birthday, so it would be the following Tuesday and perhaps not even then as there was a possibility of Parliament being prorogued and all business suspended. The crowd repeatedly asked for guidance and each time Lord George replied that they knew best - probably not the ideal advice to a crowd that had already proved itself capable of violence and destruction. By

evening the authorities had succeeded in restoring calm and the crowd dispersed quietly but later that night the rioting started in earnest. Holborn was the first area attacked, the protestors joined by inhabitants of the notorious St Giles slum, ‘street boys, prostitutes, drunks, pickpockets and rowdies’ lured out by the disturbance. With spades, hammers and crowbars they attacked the Sardinian ambassador’s chapel, throwing its contents into the street before setting fire to the building and others nearby. Hearing of threats to the Irish enclave of Moorfields, a Catholic merchant appealed to Mayor Brackley KENNETT for help but he declined saying ‘I must be cautious what I do, lest I bring the mob to my own house,’ a response that would become his legacy. Moorfields was duly attacked and another Catholic chapel ransacked and burnt while the Mayor stood watching. By now the protests had taken on a different tone - no longer was it solely a demonstration about religion, but an opportunity to vent frustration on any symbol of authority.

The next day was the King’s official birthday but instead of celebrations the mob targeted Leicester Fields (the area around Leicester Square) and Kingsway, troops arriving too late to stop further arson and looting. When Lord George visited the Guildhall to offer his services he was met with ridicule and scorn. Rioters gathered outside Parliament, and attempts were made to enter Buckingham House (Palace) but the guards were able to repulse the attack. The Riot Act was finally read but failed to discourage a mob hell-bent on doing as much damage as possible.

One ideally placed eye witness was Mayfair grocer Ignatius SANCHO. From his shop in Charles Street he saw ‘about a thousand men, armed with clubs, bludgeons, and crows ... setting off for Newgate.’ He referred to the ‘barbarity of the populace,’ before adding ‘It is thought by many who discern deeply, that there is more at the bottom of this business than merely the Repeal of the Act.’

The mob’s reason for going to Newgate would soon become clear – those arrested were being held there and now they were to be freed. Fellow rioters were the first to be released, followed by all other prisoners, around three hundred in all, most of whom were never recaptured. The prison was then almost razed to the ground with Governor Richard AKERMAN forced to make his escape via the roof. The Fleet prison was next, where the inmates requested more time to get their things together. When the mob returned to

release them they found the prisoners had started to demolish the building themselves.

Next came 'Black Wednesday' which saw the worst of the unrest. The Bloomsbury area was a scene of devastation with houses and their contents ablaze. Little Turnstile, close to my ancestors home, was also targeted, a landlord suspected of selling 'papish beer.' More slum dwellers joined the protestors, and Lord George again offered his help, but was rebuffed by the King.

As fires burned across the City, the Holborn premises of Catholic brewer Thomas LANGDALE became the scene of the most notorious incident of the riots when some 120 gallons of untreated gin spilled into the street from looted casks. The spirit was unfit for human consumption and, in scenes that must have made Hogarth's 'Gin Lane' seem benign, the mob fell upon it 'with shrieking jibes and curses', only to fall and perish where they stood. Others were pulled from the flames, alight from head to foot. When a fire engine inadvertently pumped more gin into the flames it set much of the immediate neighbourhood ablaze and the fires could be seen from thirty miles around. Bodies of men, women and children littered the streets for days afterwards and it was said that the pump off Fetter Lane brought up gin for several weeks.

With much of the city either lying in ruin or burning our ancestors must have thought it a vision of Hell. The rioting continued over the next few days but after an increased military presence and a proclamation from the King including an offer of pardon and a £50 reward for informers (there were no takers) 'a sudden calm descended' and Londoners were at last able to breathe a sigh of relief. The identities of those arrested began to be made known: William PATEMAN, a journeyman wheelwright, identified as a 'riot captain;' James JACKSON, a watch-wheel cutter (Charles Dickens's 'Maypole Hugh'); Benjamin BOWSEY, a cook, and Charlotte GARDENER, a prostitute; Gypsy father and son Joseph and Robert LOVELL; 'mad Quaker' Richard HYDE; Thomas HAYCOCK, a 'mad waiter' from St Alban's Tavern and 'Jack Ketch,' the hangman Edward DENNIS. A young William BLAKE was also seen at the front of the crowd at Newgate but there is dispute about whether he took part.

On 10 June Lord George was arrested, charged with treason and taken to the Tower. Some felt he had been unfairly blamed for the riots, citing his repeated offers of help, while others were glad to see pay for the 'mischief,

anarchy, and confusion' he had brought upon the City. Most considered the trial result a foregone conclusion - 'Bets run fifteen to five Lord G will be hanged in eight days' - but they had not reckoned with the formidable skills of his young lawyer Thomas ERSKINE. He was able to prove there had been no treasonable intent and Lord George left court a free man. Some of the rioters were not so lucky. Of the four hundred and fifty arrested a hundred and thirty five stood trial and between twenty and thirty were executed. (The hangman escaped because he was needed to dispatch his fellow rioters.) Mayor KENNETT was 'severely censured for want of spirit' and fined £1,000. He died the following year.

After such a chastening experience most would take time for a period of reflection. Not so Lord George, who continued to be as controversial as ever,



The Mayor on the Throne of Easement, Satirical Etching, 1780

campaigning on various issues and corresponding with prominent figures both here and abroad. In 1786 he was excommunicated from the Church of England for refusing to appear before an ecclesiastical court in the case of a disputed will. His responded that 'to expel him from a society to which he never belonged, was an absurdity worthy of an archbishop.'

The following year he took up the cause of Italian adventurer and mystic Alessandro CAGLIOSTRO in a scandal involving the French Queen Marie Antoinette. Lord George believed CAGLIOSTRO was being used as a scapegoat by

the already unpopular Queen but that Royalty was not above the law and a free press should be able to say so. The authorities viewed this latest intervention with alarm. Lord George had remained popular for his challenges to Parliament and with those who believed in a Catholic take over plot, but now he was in danger of damaging Britain's reputation abroad. The country was being made to look foolish for being unable to deal with the maverick Lord, and delicate negotiations with other European powers stalled

amid fear of an open rebellion. Even the militant Scots were now afraid of his extremism. Sensing a way out, the authorities resolved to find an example of him breaking the law so he might be taken out of circulation for a while, and in 1787 he was arrested and charged with ‘unjustly, wickedly, maliciously and scandalously’ libeling Marie Antoinette and this time the establishment would get the result that it wanted.

Events following his arrest signal the start of the most extraordinary period of Lord George’s life, even by his standards. While awaiting trial he absconded to Amsterdam, taking refuge in the City’s large Jewish community. Brought back to London he again absconded, this time to Birmingham where he converted to Judaism taking the name Yisrael bar Avraham Gordon, and becoming something of a celebrity. Tracked down and returned to face justice before the King’s Bench his appearance in court caused a sensation. In contrast to his first trial when he had worn a neat velvet suit, he now dressed as an orthodox Jew in a long cloak, with a large slouch hat, and ‘a beard of enormous length’ He launched into another attack on Marie Antoinette but was interrupted by the judge telling him he was ‘a disgrace to Britain’ before sentencing him to five years imprisonment plus a fine of £500, £10,000 security for fourteen years good behaviour, and two sureties of £2,500.

Lord George’s time in Newgate was served with resignation and good grace. He was able to purchase a cell of his own, so escaped the very worst conditions but nevertheless life was far from luxurious. Despite having a cook and two servants he insisted on simple food with only the occasional glass of ‘porter’ (local ale) and was not above assisting with the preparation of a meal. He continued his campaigning through others working on his behalf and was allowed an unlimited number of visitors, everyone from the Rev John WESLEY to a pregnant woman claiming immaculate conception by the Arc Angel Gabriel admitted to his rooms on the prison’s State Side. Those invited to stay for dinner could expect lively debate, followed by music and dancing, with Lord George occasionally treating them to a solo on the violin or his beloved bagpipes. There was also no shortage of inmates seeking an audience and long queues would form outside his cell. No one was ever refused entry, save Jews whose beards were deemed to be of insufficient length (‘Tarry awhile until thy beard has grown, then return to your sincere friend and servant.’) ‘A sincere friend’ was how fellow inmates had come to regard their neighbour as he moved among them offering solace

and charity. Respected for his humility and compassion, he had fulfilled his ambition to find ‘a safe harbor in the affections of the people.’ The price he would pay for it was costly indeed.

In early 1793 he was due for release but unable to pay the securities and unwilling to ask his family for help he was returned to his cell. In October he fell ill with typhoid and on 1 November he died aged forty one. Lord George



Promenade on the State Side of Newgate, showing Lord George with visitors, each numbered and identified. Etching by Richard Newton, 1793.

had been resident in Newgate for four years when my 4xg/grandfather was sent there in 1792. Isaac was an Uxbridge carpenter whose crime had been to fall into debt at a time when bankrupts could find themselves imprisoned for owing as little as sixpence. We know that both men were housed on the State, or Superior Master Felons side of the prison and I am left wondering if Isaac could have been one of those benefiting from his famous neighbour's benevolence. But was Lord George GORDON really mad, as some claim? Later writers would describe him as a ‘sincere humanitarian’, a man whose ideas were ahead of his time, while others continued to think of him as a hyperactive Lord of Misrule, ‘a hot fanatic’ and ‘rabble rouser,’ intemperate of character and given to wild enthusiasms without appreciating the consequences of his actions. Perhaps the final word should go to Charles DICKENS who immortalized him in his fictionalized account of the period,

Barnaby Rudge - 'There are wise men in the highways of the world who may learn something, even from this poor, crazy Lord who died in Newgate.'

Sources:

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'Lord George Gordon (1751-93)' on History of Parliament Online, available at: www.historyofparliament.org

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The Life of Lord George Gordon by Watson, Robert MD, FRCS (HD.Symonds and DI Eaton, 1795)

Footnote:

Listed below are the jury members at Lord George's first trial. I would be interested to know if anyone recognizes an ancestor - I've lived with these individuals for some time now.

Thomas COLLINS	Berner Street	Surveyor
Henry HASTINGS	Queen Ann Street	
Edward HULSE	Harley Street	
Edward POMFRET	New North Street	Wine Merchant
Gedellah GATFIELD	Hackney	
Joseph PICKLES	Homerton	
Edward GORDON	Bromley	Distiller
Marmaduke PEACOCK	Hackney	
Francis DEGON	Hammersmith	
Simon le SAGE	Silversmith	
Robert ARMITAGE	Kensington	
John RIX	Whitechapel	Distiller



MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The research interests listed here were submitted by members between December 2020 and February 2021.

If you would like to contact a member whose interests are listed below, please email/write to the Members' Interests co-ordinator (see inside front cover of the journal) who will pass on your letter/email to the person concerned.

Interests shown are from members: 8210; 8221; 8224; 8211; 8216; 8229

Name	Period	County	Parish / Area	Mem.No.
ADAMS	1831+	MDX	Hackney	8221
ANKRETT	1765-1803	MDX	St Giles and St George Holborn	8211
ANKRETT	1796-1881	MDX	Holborn?	8211
BAKER	17c-18c	NTH	Rushden	8224
BLACKMAN	19c	HAM	Fareham	8224
BOLTON	1890s	MDX	St Marylebone	8210
COGGINS	1854	MDX	St Marylebone	8210
COGGINS	1900s	MDX	Paddington	8210
COGGINS	1900s	MDX	Willesden	8210
COLES	18c-19c	MDX	Greenford	8224
COLES	18c-19c	BKM	Towersey	8224
COOK	1700s	WIL	All Cannings and Bishops Canning	8229
DACE	1821+	MDX	St Martin in the Fields	8221
DAY	17c-18c	HRT	Ickleford	8224
DUNEVAN + var	1770-1815	MDX	St George, Hanover Squ	8216
GARVEY	1830s	LIM	Limerick	8229
HAYTER	1780-1880	MDX	Marylebone	8216
KING	1830s	DEV	Buckfastleigh	8229
LARGE	1781	CHS	Bunbury	8229
LARGE	1830	CHS	Tattenhall	8229
LEADER	18c-19c	WAR	Any	8224
LOWDER	18c-19c	WAR	Any	8224
NUNN	17c-20c	SFK	Bury St Edmunds	8224
PETT	1828+	SRY	Chertsey	8221
PRATT	18c-19c	HAM	Hambledon/Havant	8224
RUGGLES	1780s	ALL	Unknown	8229
RUSHBROOK	17c-18c	MDX	St Marylebone	8224
RUSSELL	17c-18c	BDF	Shefford/Campton	8224
SCOTT	1814-1889	MDX	Clerkenwell, St James	8221
SHEEN	1789	CHS	Wrenbury	8229

SOUTER	18c-19c	SSX	Walberton/Westbourne	8224
SUTER	18c-19c	SSX	Walberton/Westbourne	8224
TAYLOR	1820	DEV	Dawlish	8229
THORNTON	1870	WRY	Pontefract	8229
TREMELLING	1880-1930	MDX	Marylebone	8216
TROUSDALE	1800-1890	MDX	Marylebone	8216
TROWSDALE	1800-1890	MDX	Marylebone	8216
WILLIAMS	1810-1880	MDX	Marylebone	8216
WILSON	1879	LAN	Bury North	8229
WINDSOR	17c to date	MDX	Hendon, Hampstead	8224
WINDSOR	17c to date	MDX	Kingsbury	8224
YOUNG	18c-19c	HAM	Portsea	8224

SPECIAL INTERESTS

- 8210 **Coggins, Bootmakers** from 1793 in Raunds, N'Hampton. Moved to Copland Street, Marylebone 1854 and then spread out from there
- 8224 **WINDSOR** families of Child's Hill

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the new members, numbers 8208-8239 who have joined the Society over the past few months and wish them well with their research.

Morning Advertiser, Friday 13 April 1827

Among the numerous objects calculated to gratify the inquiring eye, we know of none possessing so many recommendations as the ROYAL MENAGERIE TOWER of LONDON – here a World of “Living Wonder” is displayed; the majestic Lion, the ferocious Tiger, the rugged Bear, the wily Serpent, the Surini and feathered tribe are to be found, exemplified in their various forms and characters the infinite wisdom of the Creator.

The view is rendered additionally pleasing by the circumstance of the Animals being so arranged as to occasion no apprehension of danger; the eye is permitted to wander from one object to another, and embrace all that is rare and wonderful in nature, the collection singularly extensive is divided into suitable compartments exposed to the air: the dens are spacious, cleanly and admirably adapted to display the sinewy beauty of their savage inmates; no Exhibition of the kind can be brought in competition with the one on question, which we may safely aver to be complete in all its pretensions, and such as cannot fail of affording the highest gratification, entertainment, and pleasure; the admission to the whole is 1s; feeding time three o'clock, no extra charge.

LWMFHS PUBLICATIONS

Our Parish Guides are little books crammed with as much information as possible about the Ancient Parishes in our area. We aim to inspire family historians and to help you locate ancestors in places that you might not have thought of looking before. Each guide starts off with a brief history of the area and a description of where the main archives for the parish are located. There are then many different sections about the various types of records that relate to the parish, with a description of what they are and information about where these records can be found. This full list of those available to far is shown overleaf. Coming next are: St Martin in the Fields, Kingsbury and then Holborn.

Our Monumental Inscription booklets were researched by our founder societies in the 1980s and subsequently published on microfiche. We have been updating these and reissuing them as booklets. In checking them for publication, any gaps and anomalies were checked against the Burial Registers in order to try and find out who is referred to on the gravestones. If anyone would like to help with these, with typing or with checking against the stones, please contact our Projects Co-ordinator, Elaine Tyler by email at: projects@lwmfhs.org.uk

We also have a booklet detailing the streets of Westminster as they appear in the 1851 census.

There are several ways to acquire these booklets:

1. They can be purchased for £6 each plus postage and packing online from GenFair at: <https://www.genfair.co.uk/> or from the Parish Chest at <https://www.parishchest.com/home.php>. Post and packing costs vary depending on the size of the booklet and the destination, as shown here. Of course, if you want more than one booklet the postage will be different but the websites will work it out for you.
2. For those not on the internet, you can write to the Editors at the address on the inside front cover of METROPOLITAN stating which booklet you would like and enclosing a sterling cheque made payable to 'London Westminster and Middlesex FHS' for the appropriate amount.

The prices quoted in this table include the booklet plus postage and packing and are correct at time of going to press.

LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Booklet	UK	Europe	Rest of the world
Parish Guides			
Clerkenwell	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Edmonton	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
East Barnet	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Enfield	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Finchley	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Greenford and Perivale	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Harefield	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Hampstead	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Hendon	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Islington	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
Paddington	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Pinner	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
St Anne Soho	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
St Clement Danes	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
St George Hanover Square	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
St James Piccadilly	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
St Margaret & St John	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
St Marylebone	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
St Pancras	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
Stanmore	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Tottenham	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Willesden	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65
Monumental Inscriptions			
Chipping Barnet St John the Baptist	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
East Barnet St Mary the Virgin	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
Hornsey St Mary	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
Monken Hadley St Mary the Virgin	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
St James Hampstead Road	£8.14	£9.85	£13.15
Census Guides			
The Streets of Westminster	£7.55	£9.40	£10.65

ST KATHERINE'S BY THE TOWER

By Dennis Galvin, Member No. 1046

I often find it amazing what you can discover if you are determined enough to engage in what looks to be, like some very difficult family research.

My paternal grandmother was née Louisa Emma BRADSHAW. She was born at Mile End, Stepney in 1881. Her father was Samuel Thomas BRADSHAW born Bethnal Green and baptised at St Leonard's, Shoreditch in 1843 and his father was Samuel BRADSHAW (who I feel sure was the Samuel who was baptised at St Botolph without Bishopsgate in 1817, but I can't prove this).

However, my 2xgreat-grandfather Samuel married my 2xgreat grandmother Sarah JOHNSON at St John-at-Hackney in 1843. He lived at Bohemia Place, Hackney which, by all accounts, was a particularly quaint part of central Hackney but it was completely destroyed in 1940 and is now a big bus garage. Samuel and Sarah's first two children were born before the marriage (baby Sarah died age 1 of measles).

I traced the above Samuel and Sarah in the 1851 census to 4 George Gardens, Bethnal Green and was pleasantly pleased to find that Sarah my 2xgreat grandmother was born at St Catherine's (sic) Middlesex, this of course was the St Katherine's at the famous docks which adjoined the Tower of London. I soon discovered that the old church registers for St Katherine's were held at the Guildhall Library in the City of London and, because I already knew from census information that I needed to be looking for a 1820-1823, baptism I was able to locate the following almost right away:

Precinct of St Katherine-by-the-Tower.

Sarah, of Charles & Mary JOHNSON, (Mariner of Checquer Court)

born:29 October 1820

Jane of " " " " " "

born:13 December 1822

So two sisters both: baptised on the same day: 5 January 1823. Sarah named her first daughter after her sister Jane and the name Charles is used on a regular family basis through the family's history, which always helps with research.

From 1851-1871 children are being born and baptised in Bethnal Green and Shoreditch but the very last child Caroline was baptised at St Thomas, Charterhouse in 1870 and the father Samuel died the following year at 100 Fore Street, Cripplegate in the City of London. In 1881 widow Sarah senior age 60 was living at 3 Ropemaker Street, Cripplegate Without, with 3 grown up children.

Once I had discovered my 2xgreat grandmother's birth I telephoned Bob Aspinall (he was the gent who got the Museum of Docklands off the ground at Poplar Business Park E14 and later at West India Dock). When I first phoned him he could not recall Checquer Court in the Precinct of St Katherine's and asked me to send him all details in the post. This I did and about five days later I received a two-page letter from him and a plethora of print-outs! I think he was particularly pleased - after all the research he had done - that he now had a researcher who had a family connection with St Katherine's church and new docks.



1. Briefly, London Docks at Wapping was doing very well, so different entrepreneurs thought it would be a good idea to open a new dock next door at the Precinct of St Katherine's, easier said than done as it had a big church, cloisters and graveyard plus a population of between 1,500-2,000 residents (even Henry VIII left it alone as it obviously had no money and was happy to become the new C of E). It was also known as the property of The Royal Hospital of St Katherine's in the Parish of St Botolph Aldgate. It was the London Docks Company itself - who were not happy with the oncoming competition - that got up a petition to Parliament for compensation for all those residents who would be without homes. Parliament refused and the new dock was built and opened in 1823. I still do not know where my 3x great grandparents JOHNSON went even though it would not have been very far away because of the local maritime occupations.

2. When they demolished St Katherine's - Parish of St Botolph, Aldgate much was taken to the new St Katherine's at Regents Park. This is now flourishing and is the very well supported Danish church for London. When I visited many years ago they were preparing for a special event, plus had their Danish flag flying! but still left me free to explore! There was a most elaborate tomb in the old demolished church - this was for the Duke of Exeter, who fought at the battle of Barnet in 1471 but died soon afterwards. This tomb can now be seen in the church of St Peter ad Vincula at the Tower of London.



AN ENNUMERATOR'S WOES!

The 1851 census for All Hallows Barking, in the City of London, Ref: HO 107/1531, Folio 193, Page 18, contains the following heart-felt complaint!

'The enumeration of this district was undertaken by me in the belief that I should be fairly paid for my services. I was not aware that all the particulars were to be entered by the enumerator in a book, the work without that being ample for the sum paid, nor had I any idea of the unreasonable amount of labour imposed. The distribution collection &c of the schedule together with the copying of the same, occupied from two to three hours for every 60 persons enumerated, and for that the equivalent is ONE SHILLING!!! What man possessing the intelligence and business habits necessary for the undertaking would be found to accept it is aware of the labour involved? How then can a correct return of the population be expected?

He who proposed the scale of remuneration should, in justice, be impelled to enumerate a large district such as this upon the terms he has himself fixed.'

Folio 136 names the enumerator as Edward Henry BLADE and is dated 16 May 1851. The 1851 census for All Hallows Barking shows he was 26, a 'Clerk to a Building Society's Manager' and a resident of Seething Lane in the parish at the time.



FOCUS ON FACEBOOK

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

The 8 January was the anniversary of the introduction of food rationing, which happened in 1940. Petrol had been rationed since September 1939 but this was now joined by bacon, butter and sugar. Later, meat, tea, jam, biscuits, breakfast cereals, cheese, eggs, lard, milk, canned fruit and dried fruit were also rationed. We asked on our Facebook post whether any readers had experienced rationing and what they had missed most. Of course, this was 81 years ago now but we had quite a few replies and what this brought out for me was how us family historians must try to see our ancestors' experiences in the context of the times they lived in.

Pauline was the first to comment and she made a good point: she said that she was born in 1942 and just ate what she was given. She wondered how her mother had managed to feed the four of them as she never remembered being hungry. Barbara agreed and said that mums were very clever at managing the food they had. Jill added that mothers knew how to make the most out of the food they managed to obtain; nothing was wasted - they knew how to cook and made time to do it. They had to, there were certainly no take-aways then. Christine commented that she was born in 1961 and even then, as she was growing up, whether you didn't like what's for dinner on the table or not, it was eat it or starve. Pauline added that she still has her mum's old Radiation cookery book which had been 'altered' – she is sure carrots figure in the cake recipes! And she still uses self-raising flour and water to make a small pancake for breakfast if she is out of bread.

Lorna pointed out that you would not miss what you had never had and Sian said that although sweets were on ration until she was 10, she always had nice birthday cakes. Frankie, who was born in 1947 when we still had rationing, remembers her first taste of sweets at school in 1952 when the coronation mugs were handed out with a tube of barley sugar sweets! Her family used to receive food parcels which included tins of ham from family in Canada. On the other hand, Annie said that her mother had told her that *her* mother would go without to let her husband (who was a war policeman in London) and children eat.

Pamela commented that there was also rationing in Australia, for five years after the end of the Second World War. Like the British, they had to exchange coupons for commodities like tea, sugar, butter, meat etc and many popular

foods like chocolate and Vegemite were in short supply. They also had coupons for petrol and clothing.

Several people linked these memories to events happening now. Jill reckoned that if ration books were brought back during this pandemic it might prevent 'this stupid, selfish, panic buying'. Queues would not form outside supermarkets because shoppers would be assured that there was enough food to go round! Vi wrote that after seeing people starting to panic in the local shops she felt very irate. Every trolley she saw was loaded with toilet paper. During the War her family had to cut up newspaper and put a piece of string through a hole they made in it and that's what they had to use.

Of course, we historians probably realise how useful the lessons of history can be. They say there is nothing new under the sun and the situation of our ancestors can closely mirror that of ourselves.



We had a query on the Facebook page from Neil, who was looking for his late mother's baptism, which took place at the church of St Peter, Palace Street, Westminster in 1934.

This church started as the Charlotte Chapel in 1770, later becoming a proprietary chapel known as St Peter, Palace Street. The same building later became St Peter's Chapel, Palace Street, a chapel of ease to St Peter, Eaton Square. Baptisms dating from 1822-1831 and from 1890-1921 from this church are at Westminster City Archives. I would have thought that any later ones might still be at the church but St Peter shut some time ago, maybe in the 1970s, Neil thought.

Looking on an old map, the chapel can be seen in Palace Place, directly to the north of the St George's Union Workhouse. Just to confuse matters, it is not the only place of worship dedicated to St Peter in Palace Street, there is a Roman Catholic church of St Peter and St Edward on the corner with Wilfred Street.

I wondered if perhaps the parish had joined with a neighbouring one and if so, then this other parish might have kept the registers? An email to the Diocese of London did not yield any further information and they suggested I contact St Peter Eaton Square, who referred me back to Westminster City Archives. The archivist there clarified the history of the building and said that the baptisms are likely to be at St Peter, Eaton Square, which are currently being digitised onto Ancestry.

Copy dates are 1 February, 1 May, 1 August and 1 November.
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LONDON WESTMINSTER AND MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

The following are the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 11 February 2021 via Zoom.

The Society's President, Michael Gandy, BA, FSG was unable to attend. Our Chairman, Tony Allen, led the meeting, welcoming 40 members.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Donald Berry, Eileen Bostle, Jan Brown, David Cufley, Jasmine and Robin Marson, Vanessa Oliver, Margaret Paine, Rosemary A Roome and Robert Wilkinson. David Cufley passed on his thanks to the Committee and other taskholders for all they do for the Society.

2. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD 29 FEBRUARY 2020:

The minutes were approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

None.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chairman had previously published his report in *Metropolitan*. Tony summarised his Annual report, especially remembering the loss of Doreen

Heywood who had been leading our Events Team and sadly died in April 2020. He invited Tricia, April and Elizabeth, who had worked closely with her, to say a few words.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2019/20

These had previously been published in *Metropolitan*. April summarised her Report and invited questions. She was asked about the state of the Society's finances and was able to say that we are in a good position financially with a surplus of £650 for the year. Some more expensive items, purchased for use at fairs are still unused while all meetings and fairs are online. However, they are ready and will be used as soon as lockdown is over.

6. ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Jim Nelhams queried a figure in the accounts that was found to be a miscopy when the Treasurer's figures were transferred to the Journal. [This has been corrected and the accurate Profit and Loss account is appended at the end of these minutes on page 81.] April was also asked whether the Accounts had been audited. She said that they had. He then asked if we would be appointing auditors at this meeting. He was told that people who might be willing to carry out an audit would be approached in the Autumn. Jim also thanked everyone for the work they do. Members were invited to vote on the Adoption of the Accounts as a true record of our finances by raising a hand. The Motion was carried nem con.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

As all three Officers were willing to stand and there were no other nominations they were duly elected for a further year: Tony Allen as Chairman, April Vesey as Treasurer and Tricia Sutton as Secretary. Tricia added that she would only be Secretary for the next year.

8. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The following were willing to continue as members of the Executive Committee:

Sylvia Thompson, Membership Secretary

Barbara Haswell, Members' Interests and Metropolitan Editorial Team

Elaine Tyler, Projects Co-ordinator

Pam Chambers, Virtual Branch Co-ordinator

Clare Pollitt, Barnet Branch Co-ordinator

Tricia Sutton, Rayners Lane Co-ordinator

Elizabeth Burling, Metropolitan Editorial Team, Publications, Sales and Facebook Page.
Events Team Co-ordinator: position vacant

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No matters for AOB had been previously advised but the Chairman asked if there were any questions from the floor.

Howard King enquired whether we had considered speakers from overseas for our virtual meetings and suggested it would be interesting to invite speakers from Australia and New Zealand. Hilary Blanford said she had some contacts and would get back to us [which she has]. April Vesey, our Treasurer, added that she had no objection to overseas speakers in principle, assuming they can accommodate the time difference, but she can only pay their fees in sterling and by cheque. Howard went on to ask about our membership numbers. Sylvia said they remain fairly constant - we lose 20% and gain a similar number of new members during the year. We are seeing many more members attending the talks on our Virtual Branch, not only from the UK but also overseas.

Simon Garbett proposed a vote of thanks on the Zoom chat facility to all of the committee present and past for all their work on our behalf, especially during these difficult times, which was seconded by Bill Harris. Simon said he had met Doreen a few times and felt she was someone he was looking forward to talking with further, but sadly this was not to be.

10. Our Chairman, Tony Allen closed the meeting at 7.35pm.



The possibility of seeking charitable status for LWMFHS, so we could claim Gift Aid, was raised after the AGM by Jim Nelhams. The Executive Committee has looked at this and does not believe, on balance, that the Society would gain from it. The benefits would be minimal but the amount of set-up work (and cost), record-keeping and bureaucracy would massively increase the work of the volunteers who manage the Society. There are also many members of the Executive Committee who would resign rather than become Trustees, due to issues around liability and personal information being made public. Overall, we do not see any benefit from charitable status.

**Profit and loss account for the year ended 30 September 2020
(with corrected miscopy)**

	30.9.20		30.9.19	
Income:				
Subscriptions	£6,657.92		£6,426.73	
Sales of Parish	£1,392.65		£2,383.92	
Guides and MIs				
Donations	£34.40		£152.45	
Miscellaneous & help with research	£79.10		£35.50	
Interest received	£24.94		£34.22	
Graveyard searches	£20.00		£0.00	
Return of floats	<u>£415.00</u>		<u>£0.00</u>	
	£8,624.01			£9,032.82
Expenditure:				
Metropolitan Journal	-£3,207.72		-£2,813.91	
Branch meeting costs	-£1,319.89		-£2,995.65	
AGM	-£255.05		-£348.62	
FFHS Membership	-£163.78		-£169.10	
Books, maps etc	£0.00		-£176.00	
Fairs and open days	-£4.00		-£449.70	
Administration & general expenses	-£816.51		-£508.40	
Printing of Parish Guides and MIs	-£1,594.40		-£1,376.71	
Storage	-£43.00		£0.00	
Equipment	-£455.28		£0.00	
Depreciation	-£113.90	-£7,973.53	£0.00	-£8,838.09
Net Deficit/Surplus		<u>£650.48</u>		<u>£194.73</u>



THE RAMBLING CLUB OF RINGERS – 1733 to 1735

By Fred Pearson Member No. 8089

This is a short introduction to a project that has been teasing me for some considerable time. I am finally getting round to putting words on paper but there is a long way to go and so much variety that completing the project will be a real challenge – hopefully one I can master.

I became a bell-ringer at the age of 11 and a member of the Royal Society of Cumberland Youths in 1986. Ringing has been a lifelong passion. Some of you may have acquired knowledge of the mysteries of bell-ringing either from personal experience or from friends or family. It is one of the few true English folk-arts still practiced and performed much as it was at the time of the early development of the Church of England after the Tudor reformations of the 16th century. During the latter part of the 17th century London bell-ringers in particular, would meet together for practice and pleasure and over time formed Societies – groups of like-minded ringers who would agree to abide by a code of specific rules and to be governed in a manner after the London Guilds with officers such as Master, Beadle, Warner, etc. elected annually from its members to determine a society's policy and to make arrangements for the forthcoming year. These societies were entirely secular and although their instruments (the bells upon which they rang) were almost exclusively installed in churches their contact with the church authorities was minimal. Bell-ringing did exist outside the societies for the performance of parish duties, ringing for services and ringing for secular occasions for which the ringers received payment (in London, these ringers were collectively known as the Scroof). As the societies did not teach ringing, aspiring novices had to seek entrance to a parish band where a willing teacher might be found, able to impart sufficient knowledge to enable the right candidate to advance.

Within the societies, bell-ringing was looked on almost as a sport but with a peculiarly intellectual twist that intrigued and encouraged some men to devise increasingly complex sequences and patterns determining the order in which each bell was to ring in a performance (governed to a large extent by the physical difficulty of altering the swing of heavy bells) which ringers refer to as Methods. By the 18th Century the recognised standard for a performance of a Method was known as a Peal, being based on a minimum of 5000 non-repeating sequences (Rows) of a Method with each bell striking once in each row. There are still two London societies of ringers that can

trace their origins to these times and these are now, as in the past, the pre-eminent ringing groups. They are the Ancient Society of College Youths (founded in 1637 - ASCY) and the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths (founded in 1746 but who may be descended from the Society of London Scholars whose origins were in the late 17th century - SRCY). These two societies still maintain the old traditions, they are in friendly rivalry (mostly) and have a membership drawn from the most skilled ringers now scattered throughout the world.

In the 18th century the rivalry within and between different ringing societies was not always as friendly as today. From such records as survive it can be seen that from time to time allegiances would change and ringers would move from one society to another (and occasionally ring with members of other societies!). Within the British Library there is a hand written journal composed in 1735, about the doings of a number of London ringers, members of the mainstream and other societies (and from no society at all) between late 1733 and the spring of 1735 (MS 254). At this time sources reveal that rivalries had got out of hand between some of the cleverest ringers of the time and the group who are featured in this journal patently wanted a break from the bad feeling being generated.

The writer of the journal was William LAUGHTON and the group took the name The Rambling Club of Ringers. There were no formal rules for the club, no officers and no particularly high ambitions. Mainly its formation was for friendship and enjoyment. The journal and other ringing sources give some limited information about Laughton. He was a friend of, and addressed his journal to, George CARBORY (a member of the Society of London Scholars and who may have been a benefactor to the Ramblers) from an address of 5 Leather Lane (Holborn). During a visit to Westminster Abbey Laughton records examining the memorial to Thomas TOMPION who he refers to as one of his own profession from which it can be concluded that he was a watch and/or clockmaker.

We know that Laughton joined the ASCY in 1724 and that he took part in every successful Peal performance for that Society from 1725 until 1733. We know that he isn't recorded as a member of any other ringing society. The Rambling Club was inaugurated at the Bell Inn in Angel Alley off Little Moorfields where the landlord was William COSTER, obviously another friend of Laughton, also a ringer and a member of the Society of Union Scholars.

From parish records of St Andrews, Holborn one can find a number of William Laughtons (spelling sometimes varying) stretching back into 16th century - these are probably of one family. Of their male children there was always a William. Also if a William died then the next male child would then be baptised William. Their dwellings were noted inter alia, as Saffron Hill, Union Court and Lamb Alley. It is tempting to believe that one of these could be William the Rambler.

February 1691/2 a William LAWTON (whose father was William) married Mary FLOWER at Holy Trinity church in the Minories, although both being of St Andrew Holborn parish. On the 20th November 1692 a son William to William and Mary was baptised at St Andrew Holborn – this William seems the most likely candidate. On the 9th August 1715, this William Laughton married Anne TERRIL at St Andrews. In their turn, William and Anne had a son (William) and two daughters (both baptised Mary – the name of William’s mother?) who by 1720 had all been buried. Later, in 1735, William and Anne had another son William who sadly died in 1741. During the period 1720 to 1735 William and Anne had no children. This period coincides with the time Laughton the Ringer was active, at the end of the period becoming William the Rambler. After 1735 William Laughton drops out of any written ringing records – if the interpretation here is correct, this coincides with the arrival of his last son after a childless fifteen years and at a time when both he and his wife were in their forties.

The Clockmakers Company record one William LAYTON (close examination confirms the name to be Laughton) on an indenture dated 2 April 1703 for the apprenticeship of William LAUGHTON (son) to William LAUGHTON (father) as a Clockmaker. There is also one William LAWTON noted in the Clockmakers Company records as being free of the Company in 1685. There is a William LAUGHTON baptised at St Andrews on the 2 February 1663/4 which would fit with a freedom of the City in 1685 and marriage to Mary in 1691/2 (their son William being baptised in November 1692). This could be William the Rambler’s father. This interpretation is circumstantial and it is possible that William the Rambler was not from Holborn at all, the only real link we know being his address on Leather Lane. However, in almost all cases the timeline fits well and until further research is completed it seems a reasonable hypothesis. We know that Laughton (the Ringer) was sufficiently skilled to have joined the ASCY in 1724 and by the year after to have been included within that society’s peal

band. To achieve competence as a ringer capable of being accepted into a ground breaking peal band would take 3 to 4 years even today (unless 3 ringing was mastered as a child). The Holborn William would have had time to do that after the death of his third infant if he hadn't learned as a child.

Returning to Laughton's journal, it provides a fascinating insight into the social life of a group of men who had a common intellectual and physical pastime during a time when London could be a lawless place. Draconian punishments for quite minor crimes were the norm. The time of the Ramblers was almost midway between the two Jacobite uprisings (1715 and 1745) when debate as to who should succeed to the crown was hotly contested. It is almost certain that these debates went on in the ringing societies with Whig/Tory allegiances providing additional fuel for the rivalries that developed. Peal ringing by the London Societies in the early 18th century was on rings of eight, ten or twelve bells (twelve bells being recognised then (as now) as requiring particular skill). As a marked contrast, the declared purpose of the Rambling Club was to ring at as many churches as they could within the City of London and the Bills of Mortality that had rings of three, four, five and six bells. These would not have been well known prior to 1733 but a book was published in that year by the Company of Parish Clerks titled *New Remarks of London* which gave details of all the parishes within the Bills of Mortality including the number of church bells and directions to find each church. This book would be known to ringers as it was advertised in the rear of the third edition of *Campanalogia Improved* a small book on ringing also published in 1733 and which would have been in general circulation within the ringing societies. It is probable that the knowledge gleaned from these publications provided the foundation for the formation of William's Club.

Much more research is needed on the ringers who formed the Club - all are named in the journal and some are known from old society records still extant. During its existence, members of the Club visited thirty-five different churches with bells and met on fifty occasions. There is huge detail in the journal, which, in addition to churches visited and ringing performed, records the taverns where meetings took place, the food consumed at 'hang-ups' (gatherings after ringing or even when no ringing was undertaken) - journeys by foot to outlying villages and even a boat trip. It is now my further task to complete this research and record to the best of my ability this fascinating story of a group of men who patently, lived their lives to the full.

JOTTINGS

Westminster records online

Further details have emerged of the transfer of Westminster parish records from Findmypast to Ancestry. Ancestry are redigitising the original records in colour, whereas Findmypast digitised from the microfiche so it is possible that details will be clearer now.

It is worth mentioning that the complete run of parish records is NOT available online – they very rarely are. Westminster baptisms in the Ancestry collection date from 1813-1919, banns and marriages from 1754-1935, and burials 1812-1910. If you wish to look at registers outside of these dates, you will need to go to City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, Westminster, London SW1P 2DE.

Nonconformist records for Westminster were added in January this year, once again, these are not necessarily the entire run of the originals. These records include the following chapels from our areas:

Marylebone: Blandford Street Baptist Chapel, baptisms 1782-1820; Brunswick Methodist Chapel baptisms 1844-1906; Hinde Street Wesleyan Methodist Church baptism 1837 and marriages 1899-1935; Marylebone Presbyterian Church marriages 1900-1935; Salisbury Street Wesleyan Chapel baptisms 1838-1853; St John's Wood English Presbyterian Church marriages 1914-1935; and Trinity Baptist Chapel marriages 1932-1934. A book of marriages dated 1864-1903 and one from 1934 are down as Horseferry Road but are actually from Hinde Street Wesleyan Chapel, Manchester Square, which shows it is always worth checking the original documents!

Paddington: Cambridge Road Methodist Church baptisms 1876-1919; Fernhead Road Methodist Church baptisms 1885-1919; Percy Road Methodist Church baptisms 1876-1919; Westbourne Grove Baptist Chapel marriages 1907-1935; and Westbourne Park Baptist Chapel marriages 1917-1935.

St Anne Soho: Peter Street Methodist Chapel baptisms 1841-1851.

St Margaret and St John: Horseferry Road Wesleyan Chapel baptisms 1887-1919 and marriages 1874-1926; and Methodist Central Hall marriages 1913-1935.

St Mary le Strand: St Mary's German Lutheran Church of the Savoy baptisms 1841-1907, marriages 1839-1875 and burials 1841-1855 and 1942-1965. The first burial book (dated 1841-1855) are actually burials in the parish of St John Baptist Savoy in the German Lutheran Church. This

includes a baptism from 1848 for one Sophia Augusta FLORENCE. The second burial book, (dated 1942-1965) specifies the cemetery/crematorium too.

From outside our area, the Queens Park Congregational Church, Harrow Road, Kensal Town, Chelsea is also included – marriages from 1900-1935. Other Westminster records are due to be added to Ancestry - Westminster cemetery records will be added in June, probate records in August and Poor Law records next January.

Findmypast retains Westminster National School registers and logbooks, Catholic records and, of course, its own transcriptions of the parish registers. Westminster Abbey Muniments has the parish registers of St Margaret Westminster with a copy on microfiche at Westminster Archives Centre.

Willesden Jewish Cemetery

This prestigious Jewish burial ground opened in 1873 on a 21-acre site on Beaconsfield Road, Willesden NW10 2JE. Now the United Synagogue which operates the cemetery is opening it up for the wider public to discover and explore, thanks to investment by the National Lottery. A 'House of Life' heritage project has created a new Visitor Centre and garden areas, is conserving historic buildings and memorials, and has introduced free exhibits and events for new audiences. All are welcome. Find out more here: <https://www.willesdenjewishcemetery.org.uk/>

THE FHF REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

The next event will be held on Saturday 10 April 2021

Tickets are £10, which includes a physical goody bag for pre-registers and a virtual one full of useful items from participating societies on the day.

There will be a series of talks, 18 have been announced so far, each of which will be available for up to a week so you can watch them at your leisure. Some of the subjects of the talks are: adoption, divorce, paupers, photography, the Foundling Hospital and wills. You will be able to 'Ask the Experts' and there is an Exhibition Hall full of family history societies and other historical groups, including us!

For more information visit <https://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/>

MISS ASGILL'S MINUET

By Anne Ammundsen, Member No. 8207

On 27 May 1782 a young British captain, who had been fighting in the American Revolutionary War with the First Foot Guards (now known as the Grenadier Guards), was selected by lot to go to the gallows on the orders of General George WASHINGTON. His name was pulled out of a hat by a



General Sir Charles Asgill

drummer boy. He was thus chosen to atone for a series of tit-for-tat murders between the Patriots and the Loyalists. He was just 20 years old, popular with his peers and loved by his family. Whichever way this episode is viewed, it was essentially his mother who saved his life, by writing to the French court (allies of the Americans) pleading for his life to be spared. After six months awaiting the gallows daily, abused, and beaten regularly, he was eventually permitted to return to England on parole. His name was Charles ASGILL. History has tarnished his name, thanks to Washington's

account being the only record of events. His own account was hidden for 233 years, until December 2019, when his voice was finally heard. However, Professor Peter Henriques has now written about him in his book, *First and Always: A New Portrait of George Washington*, and so for the first time in over two centuries, an accurate and empathetic account of "The Asgill Affair" has finally been written, and was published in September 2020.

All this might never have happened, because his father (another Sir Charles ASGILL and a one-time Lord Mayor of London, who commissioned the golden coach, still in use by the Lord Mayor today) was entirely against the war with America and refused to allow his son to join the army and fight in the Revolution, as Henriques points out in his new version of events. Charles ASGILL's eldest sister, Amelia COLVILLE née ASGILL, could see her

brother's plight – his friends from Westminster School were joining up and leaving for America and he was to be left behind. She pleaded with their father to allow him to join up; and he eventually (reluctantly) relented. The rest, as they say, is history. Nevertheless, when the family became aware that Charles was under threat of execution, Amelia went to pieces and suffered what today would be termed a “nervous breakdown” and was quite inconsolable. She believed herself to be responsible for her brother's plight and couldn't forgive herself.

An unknown (possibly Spanish) composer took pity on Amelia and wrote a piece of music for her, entitled ‘Miss Asgill's Minuet’, no doubt intended to lift her spirits. This music can be heard on YouTube here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH_lZxlwrDw&feature=youtu.be

The ASGILL family, living in London at that time, were very sociable and cosmopolitan, probably because the mother, Sarah Theresa PRATVIEL, (Lady Asgill), was a French Huguenot émigré. Her French heritage had made it easier for her to write to the French court, to plead for her son's life. This letter is on page 229 of Katherine Mayo's book, *General Washington's Dilemma*.



Amelia Colvile, née Asgill

Readers may be interested to know that General Sir Charles and Sophia, Lady ASGILL, went to Broadstairs (where this author lives) to dine with Lord Say and Sele, together with the Duchess of Devonshire (of the film *The Duchess* with Keira Knightly) the Duchess of Manchester, and others, as reported in *The Times* of 16 September 1802. If anyone knows just exactly where this would have taken place, do please contact the author at: anne.ammundsen@aol.com

Anne Ammundsen is a descendant of Charles Asgill.

Sources:

‘Sir Charles Asgill, 1st Baronet’ on Wikipedia, available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Charles_Asgill,_1st_Baronet

‘Sir Charles Asgill, 2nd Baronet’ on Wikipedia, available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Charles_Asgill,_2nd_Baronet.

‘Saving Captain Asgill’ by Anne Ammundsen and Martha Abel in *The Journal of Lancaster County Historical Society*, Vol. 120, No. 3, Winter 2019, (Lancaster County Historical Society, 2019)

First and Always: A New Portrait of George Washington by Peter R Henriques (University of Virginia Press, 2020)

General Washington’s Dilemma by Katherine Mayo (Harcourt Brace & Co, 1938) available online: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000366639>

Miss Asgill’s Minuet (Longman and Broderip) at Europeana here: https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/9200376/BibliographicResource_3000100292436



WEBSITE NEWS

Your Family History Surname Distribution

This website is fascinating if you have a fairly uncommon surname but might be less useful if you are looking for Smith or Wilson... It shows the distribution of any surname by county for all of the censuses from 1841 to 1911. This takes you from when the railways were in their infancy and perhaps families are more likely to be found in their villages of origin, if you are lucky. The main occupations from the censuses are also noted, as are the most frequently used forenames, together with how many of each were recorded. My BICKERS family came to London in the 1840s from Suffolk so I thought I’d have a look at this surname. The site has the largest concentration of the name in London with Suffolk, Lancashire and Yorkshire following closely behind. The top occupation was ag lab (my ancestor was a farmer, which is the fifth most popular job), followed by female servant and then fustian cutter (!). In 1911, London, Suffolk and Yorkshire were still the main areas with a population of BICKERS. My BAKER family also came to London from Dorset at about the same time. I entered this name in the search box with some trepidation but nonetheless, there was a south coast preponderance of BAKERS, especially in Devon, Somerset, Sussex and Kent. Another useful part of this site shows the main name variants for each surname. You can find it at: <https://your-family-history.com/surname/>

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

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



Thomas ANKRETT

I am a new member, feeling my way in to real record searching driven by a need to find out about one particular person, Thomas ANKRETT, my 5x great grandfather. I have contacted someone who also has him as the last ancestor on the line as do all other similar trees I have looked at.

I have enjoyed reading members stories in the journal and appreciated all the tips within them and other parts of the journal. I feel a bit overwhelmed by how much information there is in different places, and how to learn how to get to what I need.

I started my family tree on Ancestry earlier this year and was amazed how easy it was to get back to the 1500s on some lines. I found many interesting people, stories and facts our family didn't know anything about.

Ancestry led me back through 3 generations of Thomas ANKRETT, whose lives are fairly well documented, until the early life details of the 'original' Thomas where I hit my brick wall.

According to Ancestry, Thomas ANKRETT was born in 1765 in St Giles and St George, Middlesex, but I cannot find a birth or baptism register of him online, or any parents for him. When I first found him, in my first week of enthusiastic tree building, I think I saw a document that said father: Thomas ANKRETT, Mother - . But I never could find it again.

St Giles and St George parishes set up the workhouse in Endell Street a few years before this, and I wonder if maybe Thomas started his life there and how I could investigate that further? If he was born there or was left there, would there be admission records? And if he was, then the obvious question is why is he called Thomas ANKRETT at all? ANKRETT is a fairly unusual name.

Maybe he was apprenticed later and that would be on record somewhere?

When Thomas married in Walsall in 1789, his parish of residence was St Giles in the Fields, and he had business premises in Little Newport street and was paying rates there over several years after he married.

If records are correct for him, he died in 1803 and was buried in St James Westminster burial ground in Euston, which has just been dug up by the HS2 project. I was already cross about the effects of HS2 on Camden and the digging up of St James's burial ground, but now it's personal! I have contacted HS2 about this sorrowful situation, they tell me if he is not part of a sample group, he will be reburied at some point, somewhere, and they will let me know...

I've spent hours searching for his birth records on Ancestry and Find my past and I had an email exchange with LMA asking about workhouse and lying-in hospital records. The dates I need are not digitized yet apparently, so LMA couldn't find Thomas and it was too pricey for me to pay a search fee at the time, especially not knowing what I was really looking for.

Obviously COVID-19 has made it impossible to browse real records for the foreseeable future, and being such a newbie, I don't even know what to browse if I could. I would really appreciate any tips for where I might look for details of this elusive Thomas's start in life.

Zoe Jones, Member No: 8211

Note: Looking online, there are land tax records dated 1790-1793 for a Thomas ANKRETT in Earl Street and in 1797 for a Chas ANKRETT of Plum Tree Street, both in the parish of St Giles in the Fields and St George Bloomsbury. It might be worth trying to trace both of these men and their families. There is also a Will dated 1803 of a Thomas ANKRETT, husband of Sarah ANKRETT and father of Joseph and Thomas ANKRETT, who lived in Little Newport Street, Soho, less than half a mile from St Giles. This chap was a leatherseller. The Leatherseller's Company has archives which could be investigated. You can email them here: enquiries@leathersellers.co.uk

A Needle in a Haystack

My brick wall is as follows: I am descended from General Sir Charles ASGILL through his illegitimate son, Charles CHILDS. It's been difficult to find out a great deal about Charles CHILDS but a sketchy story has emerged. Far more difficult, if not entirely impossible, is to track down William Charles ASGILL, who was an imposter and not born an Asgill at all. Since his death the family believed that WCA was the General's legitimate son (i.e. would have become the 3rd Baronet), but was disinherited because of his inappropriate marriage to a miller's daughter, Mary LUETCHFORD, on 9

October 1823, at St. George's, Hanover Square. But that is ridiculous since the General had already died on 23 July of that year and, besides, he could not be deprived of the Baronetcy without parliamentary approval. WCA was a fraudster.

William Charles ASGILL has been reported in the press, in 1823, several times and referred to as 'The Swindler Asgill'. In 1823 he rampaged round southern England on a spending spree, charging all his extravagant purchases up to the General, on the basis that he was his 'nephew' and so his 'uncle' would pay. After his marriage he had his own school in Beddington, Surrey (he appears to have been a well-educated man, teaching Latin and Maths etc.). At one point he was in debtors' jail. Later in his life he moved to Liverpool where he was also a private school teacher (and eventually a pawn broker). The oddest part of this story is that he never abandoned the name William Charles ASGILL (in spite of having been reported as being a swindler in the press under that name), and died, intestate, in Kirkdale, Liverpool on 14 February 1854. He is buried in a pauper's grave. His obituary states that he was the 'second son of Sir Charles Asgill of Regents Park'. Not only did the General have NO legitimate offspring, but certainly not a 'second son' – besides, he never lived in Regents Park either.

The quest is to find a NAMELESS man, who stated that he was from Ewell, Surrey, and born in approximately 1800 (information gleaned from census returns completed by WCA, so he may not have been telling the truth about any of that). He died, as already stated, as William Charles ASGILL, on 14 February 1854 in Liverpool. But who was he really? His family would love to know their true ancestry. DNA tests have proved of no value because whenever a potential match might crop up, then the 'matches' have failed to respond to requests for more information. If you have any ideas of how to find the true identity of WCA, please would you email me?

Anne Ammundsen Member No. 8207

Email: anne.ammundsen@aol.com

Note: Don't write off DNA matches - these are surely the only way to find out who this man is. One of the Editors recently had a reply to a message regarding DNA some 10 months after sending it.

Prudence WEST of Barnet 1713-1802

For the last nine years I have been researching Prudence WEST. She was a London Foundling Hospital Inspector c1757-1770 for Barnet, Potters Bar and other locations in south Hertfordshire. Prudence also set up and managed

a small branch 'country' hospital in Monken Hadley, a short walk from Barnet High Street, which opened in 1762 and closed in 1768. She was described as a widow in a foundling apprenticeship indenture of 1760, when she took on an apprentice. She died in Barnet in 1802 – her will mentions no children of her own.

Prudence's genealogy includes Admiral Temple WEST, her uncle, and Viscount COBHAM. Her father was James WEST, a skinner and almost certainly the tenth child of Richard WEST and Elizabeth PYKE. James married Prudence BAILIE in 1709. Their marriage licence application stated that James was 'of the parish of St. Bartholomew the Less' and 'Prudence BAILIE of Dudley', of 'Worcester 21+', a 'spinster [?] of her own dispose' to be married in 'the parish Church of Dudley or 'Sedgley in the County of Stafford'. I have not found a record of their marriage. The couple had two other daughters, Sarah and Elizabeth. The family were buried in the non-conformist burial ground in London's Bunhill Fields.

I am currently writing a book about Prudence's work with the foundlings from 1757 to about 1770, also her cousin Philip Bodham ROBERTS, also an Inspector of Barnet, to be published by the Hertfordshire Records Society. To add to her biography, I would very much like to discover her husband's name but I can find no record of Prudence's marriage locally. She must have married a man with the same surname, who died young – possibly a relative. (By the way, the Foundling Museum does not have any further information and are hoping I/we can find this out!) I would be very grateful to receive any relevant information for members by email.

Yvonne Tomlinson, Non-member.

Email: yvonne@thetomlinsons.net

Note: We consulted the hive mind of Facebook for this one but although nearly 1,000 people viewed the post, nobody could find a marriage for her. As she seems to have married another WEST, it might be worth investigating all of her immediate family and cousins and reconstructing their history. Prudence WEST is quite an unusual name so it might be worth looking at more local examples to see if they can provide a clue. There was a Prudence WEST who married at Barnet in 1779 and another who left a Will in 1768 – she was also of Barnet. Finally, it might be worth trying to find her husband by seeing if he left a Will. This is a bit of a needle in a haystack but it seems likely that he would mention Prudence as a beneficiary.

Bellringers in Holborn

I am researching a group of church bell ringers who were active in the early to mid 18th century. The leader of the group, William LAUGHTON, being based in Holborn in the Leather Lane/Saffron Hill area. They were active in Shoreditch, Spitalfields and the City and had a base in a pub in Little Moorfields now long gone. The publican was William COSTER. Two other active members of the group were George CARBORY and Jeremiah GILBERT.

If you know of anybody with particular expertise in the Holborn area in the late 1600s - mid 1700s who might be willing to guide me a little, I would be grateful if you could point me in their direction.

Fred Pearson, Member No 8089

Email: crawtepearson@googlemail.com

Note: We are researching our Parish Guide to Holborn at this very moment, Fred, and it will be published in September. We have not come across any records (so far, at least) that specifically relate to bellringers but it may be possible to locate these people in the Holborn community using other records. Meanwhile, does anyone have any good tips for researching bell ringers in 18th century London?

NEXT COPY DATE

**Please remember that the copy date for the next issue of
Metropolitan is 1 May 2021**

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**Full Page £40, Half Page £23
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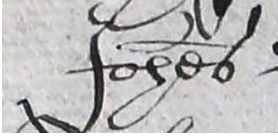
All copy, correspondence and remittances should be sent to the Editors.

See inside front cover for address.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

This image turned up in the baptism registers of St Mary Calne in Wiltshire.



This is out of our area of course, but the challenges of ancient writing know no bounds!

This snippet is from 1584/85 and is a Christian name written in Latin. The other names in the snippet were fairly legible and could be easily translated: Robert, Clement, Richard, Alexander, but this one didn't look like any name we knew! The first letter looks quite like an 'F' but looking at a handy guide picked up at a family history fair some years ago: *An Alphabet for Family Historians* and produced by Lincolnshire Family History Society, it looks like this capital (picture just above here) could actually be a 'J'.

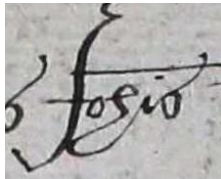


The second letter surely must be an 'o', we thought, but what could that third one be? 'John' starts JO, so could that squiggle be an 'h'? There certainly were similarities with the 'H's on the guide, which is shown on the left here.

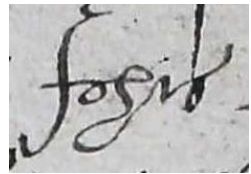


The fourth and fifth letters look like they might be 'e' and 's', so perhaps the word reads 'Johes', short for Johannes, the 'Latin' for John?

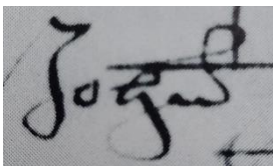
The entries on either side of our one contained another couple of copies of



what we now think must be 'John'. Both of these end 'IS' but they could still be short for Johannes. If you say the word with either an 'e' or an 'i' it sounds the same.



Finally, we consulted a book called *Examples of English Handwriting 1150-1750* by Hilda E P Grieve (Essex Record Office Publications, 1954) has a 'John' written in 1528 which would seem to support that our man above was indeed called John.



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- 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

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

Photos from our Edmonton Parish Guide.



Grovelands House, Southgate, was built in 1797 by John Nash. The landscape designer Humphrey Repton created the gardens and lake. Grovelands Priory, a private psychiatric hospital, opened here in 1986.



Southgate County School, Fox Lane, Southgate. The school moved to Sussex Way, Cockfosters in 1960 and merged with Oakwood County Grammar School in 1967 to form Southgate School. The building was later converted to housing.