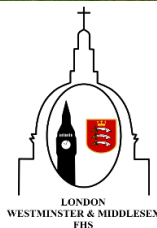


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METROPOLITAN

The Journal of the
LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX
Family History Society



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Cover picture: The churchyard of St Andrew Holborn with City Temple beyond.

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EDITORIAL

The Society has the good news that two of our branches will re-open in September - Barnet and Rayners Lane. The very popular Virtual Branch will continue to take place on the second Thursday of every month and our Annual General Meeting in February 2022 will again be online, just before the Virtual Branch meeting. Our Society year starts on 1 October so make sure you have renewed your membership to take advantage of our branches.

Of course, there are other benefits for people joining LWMFHS. Perks of membership include submitting help/brickwall queries to the journal and with over 500 members reading this journal, someone may have the answer! Also, members have the chance to publish an article about their London or Westminster family. In this edition, there are family stories with a brick wall on page 146. In the June journal a member wrote about being a patient in the Cambridge Military Hospital and we have had a response from another member who actually worked there at the time. See page 174.

Facebook always gives us some interesting tales and problems and the Society has landed on Twitter, too, so more for our members to look at online.

Furthering our popular Zeppelin theme and following on from the two accounts of bombs dropped from them, our Chairman has now written about the shooting down of these airships in his Chairman's Comments on page 143. Editor Elizabeth has written about Birth Records on page 168 (and maybe there will be guides to Marriages and Deaths to come!). The next Parish Guide to be published is Holborn and an article about its many extra parochial areas is included in this journal.

There is an important notice about Members' Interests on page 164 which will explain why some members cannot find their research names on the website.

Do keep your articles coming in as it is your contributions that make this journal. The Editors are happy to receive items by email or by post and photographs are welcome too.

The Editorial Team

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

There have been interesting accounts of Zeppelin bombings of London which were published in the September 2020 and June 2021 editions of *Metropolitan*. These accounts were written in 1915. At that time flying at over 3,000 metres (9,842 feet), they seemed to be able to bomb with impunity. In 1916 a technique for shooting them down was developed by an heroic pilot who died in 1918 and was buried in Harrow.

The Zeppelins were airships which were designed by a remarkable aeronautical engineer Graf Ferdinand von ZEPPELIN (1838-1917). He was a Count and a member of an aristocratic family of the Kingdom of Wuerttemberg (which after 1871 was part of the German Empire). His factory in Friedrichshafen in the southwest of Germany was producing Zeppelins from 1900 onwards.

In London, with 556 deaths as a result of the bombings, there was a wave of protest at the inefficiencies of the air defences. So, in February 1916, the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was made responsible for all aircraft for home defence. Also, searchlights and better anti-aircraft guns were produced. Crucial developments were producing aircraft capable of safely reaching 3,000 metres and then giving them weapons capable of shooting down the airships. The airships had lift because they were filled with hydrogen gas which is 14.4 times less dense than air. The disadvantage is that hydrogen is highly inflammable. It was found in spite of this, that even if a fighter plane managed to hit an airship with machine gun fire the small holes produced had little effect. But then incendiary bullets were produced.

The first successful attack using these bullets in a mixture with conventional bullets was made on the night of 2/3 September 1916. The RFC pilot was Lieutenant William LEEFE-ROBINSON flying a converted BE2c Night-fighter. It was the night of the largest raid in the war so far, with 16 Zeppelin and other airships attacking London. It took him over an hour to reach the altitude and then he spotted an airship (he thought that it was a Zeppelin L21, but it was actually another make, an SL11) which had been lit-up by searchlights. He hit the airship with the contents of two drums of ammunition without effect. Then with his last drum he went in closer to 500 feet and attacked the underneath rear-section and set the airship on fire. The burnt remains crashed near Cuffley, Herts. All the 15-man crew died. LEEFE-

ROBINSON landed after 3 hours and 40 minutes in the air. His plane had been damaged by return fire from the enemy machine-gunner.

His method of attack was followed up by others using the same night-fighter and a further six airships were shot down between September and December 1916. This actually caused the Germans to switch to the use of biplane bombers in 1917.

The Government was of course delighted. LEEFE-ROBINSON was awarded the Victoria Cross within two days and presented with it at Windsor on 9 September. He then got fed-up with his celebrity and pestered the authorities to allow him to join the fighting in France. Promoted to Captain, he was leading his first patrol of six fighters on the 5 April 1917, which unfortunately encountered a flight led by the famous ace Manfred von RICHTHOFEN. Four of them were shot down including LEEFE-



The grave of Leefe-Robinson, still honoured with wreaths.

ROBINSON. He was held prisoner, despite several escape attempts, until the end of the war. He was able to return to UK in early December 1918, enjoyed Christmas with his family but he caught influenza and died on 31 December aged 23 at the Stanmore home of his sister. It was said at the time that the conditions of his imprisonment may have weakened him and contributed to his death. However the 1918 epidemic was particularly lethal for the young and fit.

He was buried with great ceremony at the All Saints Extension Churchyard in Harrow Weald. He is also remembered by a memorial at Cuffley, Herts, near

the crash site of the SL11 Airship (technically not a Zeppelin). There is also a Steakhouse (former pub) near the cemetery that is named after him.

References:

Leefe Robinson. Wikipedia (2021)

RAF. The Birth of the World's First Air Force by Richard Overy (Norton and Company, 2018)

Grave inscriptions.

At the base of the Cross: Sacred to the ever-loving memory of/ WILLIAM LEEFE ROBINSON. V.C./ CAPTAIN Vth BATTALION WORCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT./ ATTACHED ROYAL FLYING CORPS/ BORN JULY 14th 1895 in SOUTH COORG, SOUTH INDIA./ DIED DECEMBER 31st 1918 at HARROW

On the right margin (if facing the headstone): He was the first airman to attack a Zeppelin at night. After a most daring single-handed fight to bring down L21 a flaming wreck at Cuffly on 9th Sept 1916. Thus he led the war against the German Zeppelin attack threatening England.

Tony Allen

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Please make sure you let Sylvia know by emailing your new address to:

membership@lwmfhs.org.uk

NEXT COPY DATE

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

Articles, letters, requests and comment should be sent to the Editors.
The Editors reserve the right to edit contributions.

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A DISAPPEARING TAILOR

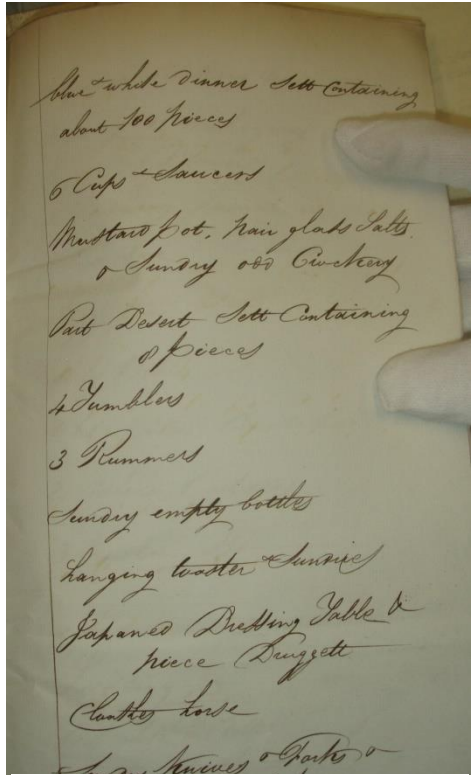
By Clare Pollitt, Member No. 7503

For some years I have been researching my father's line and have uncovered a fascinating mystery which seemingly has everything: bankruptcies, a prison sentence, potential fraud, a pursuit across the Atlantic by a Bow Street Runner, a shipwreck, a disappearance and two orphaned children. I have no doubt that if I were a famous person, the team at *Who Do You Think You Are?* would be falling over themselves to make a programme about it! There is a wonderful paper trail of much of this story and I have discovered yet more evidence only recently. However what I have failed to find so far is the fate of my great-great-grandfather, Henry GRAVES and his wife, Susan DAVENPORT WILLIAMS.

My father's mother was Rose Malvina GRAVES, born 1883 in Tottenham. Her father was Henry James GRAVES, a grocer and oilman who lived at 116 then 161 St John's Street Road, Islington. He was born in 1835 and baptised at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London. A brother, Robert, was baptised the following year. Their parents were Henry GRAVES and Susan Davenport WILLIAMS, who were married by licence at the same church in 1834. I have discovered that Henry's father was William GRAVES (Junior) and his mother was Elizabeth HOLMES; they too were married at St Martin-in-the-Fields in 1795. Henry had a brother, Richard, born 1802 in Guernsey. I have yet to find out why the parents were there, but it could have something to do with the Napoleonic Wars. Henry was born in Southampton 1808 and was privately baptised. This usually meant that the child was sickly and not likely to live. Brother Richard was baptised twice, privately the first time, so probably both children were born with health problems. I have found no records for Susan other than the marriage licence.

Henry GRAVES became a tailor and draper. I have Sun Fire insurance records from 1831 which make interesting reading. At 105 Strand, London, wearing apparel, books, plate, pictures, china, glass, stock and other contents were insured for £2000. This is considerably more than other householders on the same page. The stock alone was £1500 (about £160k today). I also have detail from rate books dated 1831 showing rates due for 105 plus 202 Strand. Henry was in a partnership with William SMITH GOODING at 105 so presumably this was the main address. At 202 a Robert MORRISON was joint occupier/owner.

I have found many references and notices to Henry GRAVES' bankruptcy in 1831. There is also notice of the business partnership being dissolved. To my absolute delight I discovered that the entire bankruptcy file was in The National Archives. This was the most exciting set of documents I have ever seen and took some while to look through. I still need to make a second visit to re-read what I may have missed. I took copious photographs to study documents at a later date. There were extensive lists of debts amounting to nearly £1600, including money owed to his own brother, Richard, account details including a balance sheet, cheque book stubs, various other documents signed by Henry and, possibly the best thing of all, an entire inventory, running to several pages, for the house and shop. Aside from lists of textiles and various shop items, I could see what my ancestor actually used: a Romford stove, painted roller blinds, a tent bedstead, a straw mattress, calico sheets, a 100-piece blue and white dinner set, a mustard pot, tumblers, rummers and, my favourite bit, 'sundry empty bottles'!



One page from the inventory.

There were also documents revealing that Henry was held in the debtors' prison at Whitecross Street for six weeks. Subsequent *London Gazette* notices suggest that debts were eventually settled and that Henry was granted a certificate in 1835. He clearly carried on trading at 202 Strand as an insurance document for 1836 puts a value on the house, contents and stock at £4000! It has always puzzled me how he managed to be worth so much money in the first instance and just a few years after a bankruptcy. Maybe it was inherited but that is another line of research.

The *London Gazette* and other sources reveal the next chapter in Henry's life. A fiat in bankruptcy was awarded against him in October 1838. Sadly there are no records for this second bankruptcy at TNA but my next eureka moment was a *Times* article dated February 1839. This stated that Henry GRAVES had absconded four months previously having shipped most of his stock to Montreal. His creditors had a Bow Street Runner despatched after



The Colbourne.

him who was “in active pursuit of the fugitive”, who it was thought would soon be in custody. It transpired that the *Colbourne*, the ship carrying the stock, had been shipwrecked in the Bay of Chaleur on the coast of Canada and all cargo was lost along with 43 men, women and children. Henry had sailed on the *Britannia* from Liverpool. I can only imagine the shock he must have had when he learned of the shipwreck and loss of his stock.

A letter to the editor of the *Times* in July 1839 from HARDWICK & DAVIDSON, presumably acting for Henry, refutes most strongly the allegation that he absconded, stating that he was merely going to sell his goods in Canada. They claimed that Henry intended to sell any salvaged goods from the shipwreck in order to pay his principal creditor, R. MORRISON (joint occupier of 202 Strand in 1831). The letter stated that Henry had been advised to surrender to the fiat of bankruptcy rather than contest it to save litigation costs. The letter writers demanded an apology for the implication of dishonesty on Henry's part.

The disaster that befell the *Colbourne* on the night of 15 October 1838 is well documented online. The ship was a barque of 350 tons and was laden with merchandise such as spirits, wines, spices, valuable plate, ornaments and some £40,000 in gold sovereigns, largely intended to pay the troops in Canada. A fatal navigational error by the captain meant that the ship was way off course and instead of passing up the Gulf of St Lawrence, it ran aground on a rocky shore. There were just 12 survivors. Some items of cargo were salvaged and sold at auction for owners and insurers but much was never accounted for, having been lost or simply collected by locals and put to good use.

A recently discovered newspaper article (*London Courier & Evening Gazette*) dated 25 October 1838 details how Henry had “connived” with a Mr HAMILTON to enter into an export trade of tailoring and cloth to Montreal. Large quantities of cloth were purchased, packed and despatched on the *Colbourne*. HAMILTON gave Henry a cheque to finance this but the cheque was not honoured. Henry’s foreman, WESTLAKE, followed Henry to Liverpool to warn him that all was not well! Henry clearly had his doubts by then and promptly set off for Canada, worrying about the safety of his goods already despatched. His foreman was given instructions to pay any debts if the cheque was eventually honoured. However, it appears that the stock was not even entered into the stock books. Henry GRAVES was therefore adjudicated a bankrupt. It was presumed that as HAMILTON had not been seen since he had ordered WESTLAKE to sell the stock in the shop and hand the proceeds over to him, that he had followed Henry to Canada. A Bow Street Runner, KEY, was despatched to Canada in search of the bankrupt and his goods. It was estimated that the liabilities were some £5000 but it was difficult to prove or estimate assets. Proven debts as of October 1838 were £1777.

The *Morning Advertiser* of 7 November 1838 details household and shop items for sale at 202 Strand the following week. Included were superfine cloths, fancy silks and velvets, a mahogany four-poster bed, Kidderminster carpets, mahogany chairs, japanned French bedsteads, kitchen utensils, four noble-size looking glasses and an eight-day dial clock.

It is clear that the search for Henry was still going on in February but the *Times* letter of July 1839 states that he had returned by then. There is evidence of his not having attended bankruptcy court examinations earlier in the year. There is a Court of Review document dated 19 April 1839 giving Henry’s address as 15 Lawrence Street Chelsea and in it Henry is asking for time to disclose his estate and effects. This was clearly allowed but further *London Gazette* notices referring to June and July indicate that these sessions were adjourned.

A report of the final bankruptcy examination can be read in the *Sun* dated 2 October 1839 and adds even more to the story from the *London Courier*. It is too much to detail here but I have learned for instance that Henry borrowed £300 from a Mrs Ovington in March 1838 and had set up a bank account. The commissioner EVANS said that undoubtedly the case was presented to

the court under very “suspicious” circumstances and the possibility of fraud had been considered, but clearly, with no real proof of misdemeanour and deciding that the statement of expenditure was accurately made out, he decided to pass the accounts. He commented that for Henry GRAVES to leave London at all when he had been carrying on so profitable a business could not easily or satisfactorily be accounted for.

The final piece of published information I have on the matter is a *London Gazette* notice of 26 November 1839 asking creditors of the bankrupt to meet the assignees of Henry’s estate to agree to the assignees contesting legal action brought against them by “a certain person” for the sum of £136 17s 2d as the balance due in respect of a journey to Canada in search of the bankrupt. Was this action by KEY, the Bow Street Runner? I can find nothing further on this.

The story doesn’t end there. I have so far failed to find Henry, Susan or their children, Henry James and Robert on the 1841 census. Henry James GRAVES is on the 1851 census at 116 St John’s Street Road, Islington, with George PAINTER and his wife and is listed as a servant. George PAINTER was a grocer. Henry James spends many years at this address and at 161 in the same road from 1871. George PAINTER dies in 1880 leaving Henry James various items. I think that my great-grandfather was an apprentice to George and subsequently took over his business.

The other son, Robert, turns up on the 1851 census at the Strand Union Children’s Establishment in Edmonton. He also appears on the Strand Union register of apprentices in 1843 with an indenture date of 1852. Under the column headed parents’ names is written “deceased”. Robert became a coach joiner and in 1864 married Emma WILKES, who was a housekeeper for George PAINTER after his wife died.

Certainly something drastic must have happened for the two young boys to end up where they did. It seems likely that both parents died but how and where? I have failed to come across any death records. As for Henry’s bankruptcies and business dealings, was he just unlucky and a victim of circumstance? Was he bad at business, or was there something just a little bit dodgy going on? One day I hope to find the truth. Whatever happened, at least my great-grandfather and his brother overcame their difficult and probably traumatic early years and had successful, happy lives.

JOTTINGS

Finchley Memorial Hospital War Memorial

Finchley Memorial Hospital has its origins in a Cottage Hospital which opened in 1908 at Bow Lane, North Finchley. Following the First World War, local people raised money for a war memorial but it was decided instead to use this money to extend the hospital, which had moved to Granville Road in 1922. It was subsequently renamed Finchley Memorial Hospital in commemoration.



However, Barnet War Memorials Association believed that those who lost their lives should be individually named and remembered on a memorial at the hospital and have worked hard to identify these people and to raise funds. Catherine Loveday, who has already been instrumental in having names added to municipal memorials in East Barnet, New Barnet and Hendon, discovered the names of about 750 Finchley residents who were killed in the First World War and another 550 who died in the second World War.

Permission for a new memorial in the grounds of the hospital (which was rebuilt in 2013) was granted by the NHS and the London Borough of Barnet, a design was commissioned from Robertson Memorials, monumental masons of East Finchley and funding was secured by donations and the memorial has now been built. A dedication ceremony has been planned for Sunday 26 September at 3pm with a service being led by the Bishop of London assisted by representatives of other faiths.

Misplaced marriages and other records

If you are looking for records online, you need to be aware that some are being mis-attributed to totally different places from where the event being recorded actually took place, so do not discount records that seem geographically unlikely. This is, perhaps, an inevitable problem with online digitised records but it makes searching difficult and can lead to errors in your records. Here are a couple of instances of this. If you know of any others, please could you let the Editors know so that we can let everyone know?

The marriage registers of St Thomas's church, Wrotham Road, Agar Town (which was in the Ancient Parish of St Pancras) date from 1863-1947 and are at LMA, Ref: P90/TMS and online at Ancestry. However, on Ancestry the marriages between 1920 and 1938 have been mislocated and the marriages are said to have happened in Addlestone in Surrey.

Another example is found in the marriages which took place at Hinde Street Methodist Church in St Marylebone. The original Methodist chapel on this site (which is actually in Thayer Street) was built in 1810 and there is a large archive from the church at Westminster Archives Centre, Ref: HSMC, including marriage registers from 1864-1963. However, on Findmypast many of the marriages from this chapel seem to have been mistranscribed as being at Aeon Baptist Chapel and on Ancestry, a volume of marriages dated 1864-1903 are incorrectly down as being from Horseferry Road Wesleyan Chapel.

There is no easy way to report these problems and it does mean that any original images you find online really need to be checked to ensure that they are what they say. With marriage records this is fairly easy as each record names which church was used.

St James Hampstead Road Burial Ground and HS2 Update

As I have strong family connections (1850s to WW2) to the Euston, St. Pancras, Somers Town area, I took up a query with HS2 regarding the cataloguing and recording aspects whilst they exhumed the old churchyard near Euston. Here is their reply:

HS2 keep detailed records of all those removed from burial grounds on HS2, both to meet our legal requirements and to provide information for the programme of historical and archaeological research that is part of the project. Those individuals without name plates surviving (the majority) are given a unique identifier so that they can be linked in future to their grave space or associated graves. These records are submitted annually to the

General Register Office at the Home Office, and will eventually make their way to the National Archive.

All individuals with associated name plates (and any associated buried artefacts) are kept and buried together with those items. The individual graves are not marked at the reburial site (for St James's this is the London Cemetery at Brookwood in Surrey) but a memorial commemorating the entire buried population will be erected there, in accordance with our legal agreement with the Church of England.

If you have any further enquiries on this matter you can contact a member of the HS2 Helpdesk Team by calling the 24/7 freephone telephone service on 08081 434 434 or by sending an email to HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk.

Raymond Sweetman, Member No. 8241

Catholic Burial Records Database

During the period of over 200 years from the middle of the sixteenth century until the late eighteenth century, when the practice of the Roman Catholic faith was illegal in what is now the United Kingdom, Catholics had no churches and no official burial grounds. Even well into the nineteenth century this was the case. Many Catholics were buried in the local Anglican churchyard as there was frequently nowhere else. This can make finding burials difficult for family historians looking for the graves of Catholics or even just a record of their deaths.

It was quite common for parish incumbents who were thorough in their work to indicate the religious affiliation of the deceased in their burial registers. The Catholic Family History Society (<https://catholicfhs.online/>) has now launched a database of such burials. This can be accessed from the website <https://catholicburials.weebly.com/>. It uses Google Sheets and so the data can be manipulated and searched or downloaded for that purpose.

The society hopes that family historians who notice Catholic, Papist or Recusant burials in the course of their research will be able to submit their findings in one of the several ways explained on the 'Contribute' tab on the website.

Really Useful Family History Fair

The Family History Show took place on 19th June 2021 as an online event. Our team Alan, Barbara, Clare, Elaine, Elizabeth, Karen and Sylv, took it in turns to man the stand. We answered several queries via the chat and sold two parish guides.

Karen de Bruyne, Events Co-ordinator

‘IN GOD’S IMAGE’ - THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF IGNATIUS SANCHO

by Sheila Clarke, Member No. 7900

I discovered Ignatius SANCHO while researching the Gordon Riots. His letters to artist and banker John SPINK contain a valuable report of the 1780 uprising, and details of everyday life for a man of colour living alongside our ancestors in Georgian London. I have no connection to Sancho but the correspondence brings to life this formative period in the Capital’s history and puts a very human face on one of its most remarkable citizens. Sancho was born on a slave ship in the Atlantic Ocean in 1729 and orphaned when

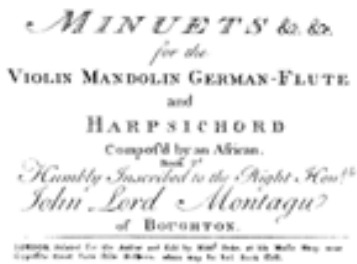


Portrait of Ignatius Sancho c1768 by
Thomas Gainsborough.

his mother died and his father committed suicide rather than be sold into slavery. Baptized by the Bishop of Cartagena (now Colombia) he was transported to the colony of New Grenada where he began a series of events that would see the boy destined for a life of servitude become a respected figure in British society, welcome in the most exclusive circles, and friend to some of the greatest minds of the day.

Ignatius was just two years old when his owner brought him to London and the household of three unmarried sisters, believed to be from the LEGGE family, in Greenwich. It was not a happy experience: ‘they judged ignorance the best and only security for obedience’ he later wrote, but while walking on Blackheath he met their neighbour, the Duke of Montague. A fervent abolitionist, the Duke had previously helped other freed slaves including Francis WILLIAMS, a promising young Jamaican writer who went on to study at Cambridge. (His Grace also appears to have had a well-developed, if somewhat juvenile, sense of humour. According to the Duchess of Marlborough guests might find ‘things in beds to make them itch’ or be ‘wet with squirts’ in his garden. ‘All his talents lie in things only natural in boys of fifteen years old, and he is about two and fifty,’ she observed

witheringly, but then she was his mother-in-law, so perhaps not the best judge.) Impressed by Ignatius's lively intelligence the Duke allowed him to borrow books from his library but when the Duke died in 1749 Ignatius could no longer tolerate life with the sisters and fled, seeking refuge with the Duchess. At first she refused but soon relented and agreed to employ him as butler. She evidently felt this was the right decision, for on her death two years later Ignatius received £70 and a £30 annuity. He next came under the wing of another member of the Montague family, the late Duke's son-in-law George BRUDENELL. Again acting as butler, Ignatius stayed with the family for the next twenty-five years until the gout that would trouble him for the rest of his life made his work impossible. In 1774 he left and with Brudenell's help opened a grocery store in Mayfair ' - I verily think the happiest time of my life is to come. I will cut a respectable figure as a shopkeeper,' - by which time he had been married for sixteen years to West Indian Ann OSBORNE and was the father of six: Frances (1761); Ann (1763); Elizabeth (1766); Jonathan (1768); Lydia (1771); and Katherine (1773.) Another son, William, was born 1775, and turned out to be very much a chip of the old block.



Cover sheet of some of
Sancho's music.

Ignatius soon became more than a purveyor of everyday essentials: prominent government figures, artists, musicians and actors would all seek out the grocer of Charles Street. Politician Charles James FOX was a frequent

visitor, as was leading actor David GARRICK. (Ignatius loved the theatre, once spending his last shilling on seeing Garrick play Richard III.) Others in his circle included artist John Hamilton MORTIMER, and John Thomas 'Antiquary' SMITH, later keeper of prints at the British Museum. Ignatius's plan for self-improvement had been a resounding success and by the late 1760s he was seen as a figure of refinement, admired for his learning, and able to mix easily with the elite. The former servant could more than hold his own in such illustrious company: while working for the Montagues he had found fame as a composer, publishing dance music complete with instructions on how it should be performed, an innovation that proved extremely popular. But it is for his later correspondence that he remains best known.

Ignatius first wrote to Laurence STERNE in the summer of 1776. *Tristram Shandy* had been received to great acclaim and Sterne was now working on a further volume. The letter contained a plea for help with the anti-slavery movement, which the novelist and cleric was known to support. Perhaps he might include it in the storyline of his latest novel, Ignatius suggested. Sterne, no doubt intrigued by the writer who described himself as ‘one of those whom the vulgar and illiberal call “Negurs” ’ promised to do all that he could, and true to his word in the final volume of *Shandy* (1767) the subject was addressed. A friendship developed and it was largely his association with Sterne that led to a collection of Ignatius’s letters being published shortly after his death. *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* (1782) collected, edited and published by society hostess Lady Frances CREWE to show ‘that an untutored African may possess abilities equal to a European’ see him corresponding with a wide circle on topics such as politics, religion, the arts and current affairs. There is family gossip - ‘Billy has suffered much in getting his teeth’ ‘Your son Jacob is the delight of my girls - whenever he calls on us, the work is flung by’ and advice to younger men - ‘As you are not to be a boy all your life use your every endeavour to be a good man’ ‘Vice is a coward to be truly brave a man must be truly good.’ Particular criticism is reserved for fellow freed slave Julius SOUBISIE, a flamboyant ‘womanizer and squanderer’ who had become riding/fencing master (and it was rumoured much more) to the Duchess of Queensbury. Ignatius chided him for not appreciating the privilege of his position and urging him to lead a more seemly life - ‘Happy, happy lad! What fortune is thine! Look round upon the miserable fate of almost all of our unfortunate colour’

Ignatius clearly relished the role of husband and father: (‘I am not ashamed to own that I love my wife... had I the power I would cast her in gold’) and while doting on his children - ‘the Sanchonets’ and Sanchonettas’ - recognized the need for restraint ‘Self love bewitches parents to give too much indulgence to infantile foibles’ Family outings are affectionately recalled - ‘last night - three great girls - a boy - and a fat old fellow - were as happy and pleas’d as could be.’ And who could resist this invitation to such an evidently happy home? ‘Come and scamper in the meadows with three ragged wild girls Come, do come, and come soon...’

Despite an evident love of the domestic, Ignatius also appreciated the good things in life, and more than once plunged into serious debt. Ever supportive,

Ann suggested they install a printing machine in the back of the shop to cut down the cost of publishing his work. While remaining staunchly loyal to his adoptive country and a Royal Family ‘who possess every virtue,’ he nevertheless considered himself only ‘only a lodger.’ On the rare occasion he did voice criticism he was careful to stress gratitude for the many opportunities he had been given - ‘I am sorry to observe that the practice of your country (which as a resident I love and for the many blessings I enjoy in it shall ever have my warmest wishes, prayers and blessings) has been uniformly wicked in the EastWest Indies ...’ Spiritually ‘Half a Methodist,’ he believed ‘heaven was ‘big enough for all race of man’ and advised others to read the Bible, good secular works such as Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, to shun temptation, and achieve respect and prosperity through honesty and hard work - ‘Make human nature thy study whatever the religion or complexion - study their hearts simplicity, kindness, and charity be thy guide’

There was advice too on matters of the heart - ‘cupid - lurks - in the pupil of an eye - in the hollow of a dimple - in the cherry-ripe plumpness of a pair of lips - in the artfully timid pressure of a fair hand - in the complimentary squeeze of a farewell - in short, watch, watch’ Other guidance was more practical ‘...wise economy – without avaricious meanness, or dirty rapacity, will in a few years render you decently independent’ and anyone wishing to emulate his love of books should ‘.... preserve about 20l. a year for two or three seasons - by which means you may gradually form a useful, elegant, little library.’ But a place in London intelligentsia could not protect Ignatius from the realities of everyday life. On the Vauxhall Gardens trip the family had been ‘gazed at - followed, - but not much abused,’ while on another occasion he describes being ‘generously insulted. William STEVENSON’s account of walking with Sancho in the Charing Cross area includes his reaction to one such incident.... ‘a small distance before us, a young fashionable called out ‘Smoke Othello!’ Sancho, blocking the narrow passage, legs astride, hands on hips, shrivelled the young buck’s ego, thundering sonorously, “Aye, Sir, such Othellos you meet with but once in a century! Such Iagos as you, we meet with in every dirty passage.’

Ignatius died in 1780 and was buried in St Margaret’s, Westminster. No gravestone has been identified and there is no memorial but two plaques commemorate his life, one near the Charles Street shop and the other close to the Duke’s house in Greenwich Park. Friends rallied to help the family

financially - Sancho's letters show he was frequently short of money - and eventually William, who was just five at the time of his father's death, would take over the shop and run it as a bookselling and printing business with his sister Elizabeth. William had inherited many of his father's characteristics - a love of literature and learning, but also 'ardent attachment to pursuits of a more mischievous nature,' which unlike Ignatius, he saw no reason to give up. 'A strange compound of thoughtlessness, good humour, and book-ardour who 'thought his pursuits could only be substantially enjoyed with a glass of

champagne and Madeira, and with cherries at a guinea a pound,' William died in 1810 of a 'brain fever' aged thirty-five and was declared bankrupt, all possessions going to his creditors. Letters written by his sister are rare examples of a literate woman of colour in 19th century Britain - Elizabeth had clearly received an education, so it is reasonable to assume that her siblings did too. Some express surprise that so few of Ignatius's letters mention the



Plaque near where Sancho's Charles Street shop stood.

slave trade, but while others may have been more vociferous, I believe he preferred to let his achievements speak for themselves. The prevailing attitude of the day was one of doubt over the mental capacity of non-Europeans. Even politician Joseph JEKYLL who provided the *Letters* preface while condemning the 'wild opinion that restrains the operations of the mind to a particular region' writes of how 'freedom, riches, and leisure, naturally led a disposition of African texture into indulgences.' Society clearly had some way to go in its attitude to race.

Ignatius Sancho is remarkable in many ways. The first man of colour to vote in a British election and the first to be granted an obituary, he was entirely self-educated, a composer, author of a book on music theory (since lost) and two plays. He was painted by Gainsborough, and encouraged by Garrick appeared on the London stage in Aphra BEHN's *Oroonoko* but an attempt at *Othello* would fail due to an 'incurable articulation' (speech defect.) Ignatius determined to make the most of every opportunity, but also to live life to the full. Family meant everything, but then so did his love of fancy waistcoats, good food and fine wine. He was a wise and loyal friend, though not above the odd waspish aside - 'My friend L is in Town, and he

intends trying his fortune among us as a teacher of murder and neck-breaking, alias, fencing and riding.’ Another friend is warned not to lend money - ‘tis not in the power of friendship to serve a man who will in no one instance care for himself.’ (This refers to Soubisie, who Sancho had come to see as a lost cause.) A proud man, as the 1768 Gainsborough portrait commissioned by Duke George clearly shows, Ignatius also had an endearing line in self-deprecation, frequently pointing up his own weaknesses and mocking himself for strutting ‘like the fabled bird in his borrow’d plumage’ when quoting Shakespeare.

This was the man living alongside our London ancestors: some may have visited his shop to stock up on essentials such as sugar, soap and snuff, or the exotic-sounding ‘Sancho’s Best Trinidado’ tobacco. Others may even have been admitted to the back room where they would have found the cream of society, politics and the arts engaged in debate with their genial host. I’m sure he would have been excellent company, as RSC actor Paterson JOSEPH demonstrated when he debuted his single hander *Sancho; An Act of Remembrance* in 2015. After an international tour it opened in London, but a restaging scheduled for earlier this year at the Lyric, Hammersmith, was cancelled due to lockdown. There will no doubt be other revivals - interest in Ignatius remains high, and today he is probably more relevant than ever, which seems entirely fitting for a man who described himself as being ‘in God’s image though cut in ebony.’

Sources:

Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African Ignatius Sancho, Joseph Jekyll: <https://books.google.com>

Tyne O’Connell: <https://tyneoconnell.co.uk>>ignatius-sancho

Ignatius Sancho: African Composer and Man of Letters

Brycchan Carey: <https://brycchancarey.com> >[sancho](https://brycchancarey.com)

Exeter Working Papers in Book History: London 1775

<https://bookhistory.blogspot.com>



FATAL ACCIDENT AT ST GEORGE'S BATHS

By: Peter Todd, Member No. 7686

In 2019 I wrote about a tragic accident that happened to a second great aunt of mine, Emma CLEMENTS, (1852-1880) formerly COLLINGWOOD. Little did I think back then that I would come across another dreadful misadventure and certainly not within the same family.

It was the 1 September 1882 in the south coast resort of Herne Bay in Kent. In those days on the east side of the pier along the sea front there was a stretch of esplanade known as St George's Baths; it was here during the 19th century that those intent on bathing congregated for their dip in the sea during the summer months.



However, Victorian modesty meant that ladies couldn't simply wade into the water to partake of their swim but had to utilise a bathing machine. These changing rooms on wheels would be towed, with their

female inhabitants, some way into the briny so that they could disembark decorously directly into the sea at a convenient place and depth for their swim.

On that particular morning a local governess and her female charge hired one of the bathing machines, which happened to be in the charge of my second great grandfather on my mother's side, Robert COLLINGWOOD. The beach at this particular bathing spot shelved quite steeply and care had to be taken when swimming away from the machine not to stray out of one's depth. The governess and her companion, although experienced swimmers (as quoted in the press) never the less panicked and cried out for help and assistance so that they could regain the relative safety of being closer to dry land.

Robert, without a thought for his own well-being, went immediately to the aid of his charges. The couple of women were so agitated and distraught however, that Robert, who was 62 years old, couldn't contain their struggles and was pushed under the water and drowned. The females were brought to shore by other helpers, who had followed Robert into the sea. The two women apparently suffered no lasting ill effects from their distressing ordeal.

Robert's body was later recovered by a local fisherman using a grappling hook. Robert was a Royal Navy pensioner (I have heard it said that nautical men aren't by nature good swimmers – their fatalistic view being that if you go overboard at sea and aren't rescued then it is better to drown quickly). He was also said to have had a bullet lodged in his body and suffered from a hernia.

After the Coroner's inquest in the town's Brunswick Hotel, Robert was transferred to Faversham, Kent his home town. His widow, Mary Ann MILLER (1820-1896) was left 'in poor circumstances' and it was reported that an 'active subscription' was being raised for her. Mary must have been devastated. Her first husband, George HADDEN (1819-?) was a mariner, whom, I believe, died at sea shortly after their marriage in 1839. She married Robert in 1846 in her home village of Dovercourt, Tendring, near Harwich, Essex. But this latest body blow, coming as it did within two years of the couple losing their daughter, Emma in the tragic accident that I wrote about previously is inconceivable.

Sources:

Peter Todd 'A Tragic Accident on Beacon Hill' *Metropolitan* Vol. 6 No. 1 p. 8
Whitstable Times & Herne Bay Herald. Saturday, September 9, 1882



We have landed on Twitter!
Find and follow us at: <https://twitter.com/LWMFHS>

FOCUS ON FACEBOOK

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

In August 2020 Gina joined our Help and Discussion Group wanting some 'hive-mind' knowledge of St Pancras Cemetery, which is at East Finchley. She had written to them some 15 years previously enquiring about her 2x great grandfather George W DENHAM (1835-1914).

Although he was born in Grantham, Lincolnshire, he went to America in 1856 and joined the US Navy, where he served until 1859. In researching him, Gina found he was court martialled on Friday 13 February 1857 at 7.45am for striking a US Marine, calling him a "Damn son of a bitch!" whilst on the USS *St Lawrence*. Fortunately the US Marine, Neil MCNULTY, was found to have acted inappropriately and George's conviction of 'a month in double irons, on bread and water and three months loss of pay' was remitted!

He enlisted in the 111th Pennsylvania volunteers in 1863 and was at the Battle of Wauhatchie in Tennessee on 28-29 October that year. During this battle, a Union force seized Brown's Ferry on the Tennessee River which opened a supply line to the Union army in Chattanooga. The American Battlefield Trust describes this as 'a brief fight [which was] a bloody repulse for the Confederates, who were forced to withdraw' – there were an estimated 13,800 casualties. Then he transferred back to US Navy where he served on the *Choctaw* until 1865. Following this he returned to Barren Hill in Pennsylvania (with probable post-traumatic stress disorder). His family doctor advised him to return home to England. He went to live in Kentish Town, where he was a member of the London Branch of the US Civil War Veterans. He died in 1914 and his funeral was paid for by the US Embassy as he was a union veteran of the civil war. Although Gina believed he was buried at St Pancras Cemetery, they advised there was no record of him.

However, in 2020 Gina discovered via DeceasedOnline that he was actually there, in location Q10. There was even a small picture of a headstone. Gina visited the cemetery to try and locate the grave but even with a map of the cemetery this proved impossible. She was wondering whether the cemetery had individual plot maps (like other cemeteries) to make the search easier, where DeceasedOnline got their photos and information from and if the Q10 number would appear on the headstone. Jackie was one of those who replied and she said she had been into the office at the cemetery and the staff had

found the position of a grave she was looking for and even marked it on a map for her. They were really helpful. Maureen knew that DeceasedOnline use a generic picture of a gravestone, so although it is of a George, it is not the George that Gina was looking for – useful information if you did not know this!

Gina managed to find the burial plot in an overgrown part of the cemetery and was able to apply for an American headstone. This duly arrived in December and on 30 July a dedication ceremony was held at St Pancras cemetery to give this unmarked grave its headstone. The stone was installed in front of twenty people many of whom had not met before but all sharing lineage with a man who died in Kentish Town.

If you have not been following this story on our Facebook group, you can read more about George's story online on the website of the American Civil War Round Table (UK) here: <https://www.acwrt.org.uk/post/civil-war-veteran-george-denham-usn-and-usa-remembered>



Nancy posted a snippet of some words she could not read in Help and Discussion Group. They were the occupation of her 2x great grandfather, who she knew was a painter.

The words turned out to say 'painter and glazier' and these two trades usually seemed to go together in times past, often with plumbers being added too. The reason for this is that they all worked with lead.

The word 'plumber' comes from the Latin word for lead and lead was used for all plumbing in those days. Lead was also used to fix together all of the small panes of glass in a window before it was possible to manufacture large panes. The cylinder sheet process of 1834 allowed for bigger sheets but it was not really until the 1903 laminated glass system that large panes became common. One of the prime ingredients of paint was lead, which was added as a pigment, because it speeds drying, improves the protection the paint gives and also looks better. Unfortunately, of course, in the human body it is quite damaging, causing nervous system damage, hearing loss, stunted growth, reduced IQ and delayed development, kidney damage and more so it has been banned in the UK since 1978.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

A long-standing member recently emailed me to say that she could not find her Members' Interest names on our website.

The reason for this is that the website was re-designed in 2011 and the decision was made to start the website list of research names from that date. This means that if you submitted your names to the Society before this, then they will not be shown on our website.

If this could apply to you, then do check the website for your names. If they are not listed and you want them to be, then please re-send them to me at: membersinterests@lwmfhs.org.uk

A form is available in the Members' Area of our website, which can be either filled in online or downloaded, printed and sent to me by post or email. My name and address can be found on the inside of the front cover of our journal.

The Family History Federation now has a section for Surname Interests on their Home Page. Your interest names from the last two years have been uploaded onto this and will be updated every year. This gives all names much greater exposure. Our members' names and addresses have not been given to the Federation and are not shown on their website.

Barbara Haswell, *Members Interests*

THE FAMILY HISTORY SHOW ONLINE 2021

The next event will be held on Saturday 25 September 2021
from 10.00-16.30.

Tickets are £10 on the day but can be bought in advance for £8

These online events have all the features of the physical shows but from the comfort of your own home! There will be a series of talks (each available for 72 hours), Ask the Experts and an Exhibition Hall full of family history societies and other historical groups, including us!

For more information visit: <https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/online/>

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The research interests listed here were submitted by members between June and mid August 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: 116; 8189; 8193; 8271; 8278; 8279

Name	Period	County	Parish / Area	Mem.No.
AGER	1750-1900	ESS	Any	8193
ALCORN	1770-1850	MDX	Any	8189
BALLARD	1750-1850	MDX	Chelsea	116
BRADLEY	1750-1850	MDX	Westminster	8193
CANDISH	1820-1832	MDX	Westminster St Margaret	8189
CHEEK	1700-1850	HRT	Any	116
COX	1830-1850	MDX	Any	8271
COX	1800-1900	ESS	Walthamstow	116
DAILEY	1790-1802	MDX	Westminster, St Marylebone	8189
DAILEY	1802-1810	MDX	Camden	8189
DAILEY	1812-1840	MDX	Hampstead	8189
ENGLAND	1700-1850	MDX	St Marylebone	8279
ENGLAND	1700-1850	LND	Any	8279
ENGLAND	1700-1850	All	All	8279
ENGLAND	1750-1800	KEN	Canterbury	8279
ENGLAND	1750-1900	KEN	Sheerness	8279
ENGLAND	1800-1900	MDX	St George Hanover Square	8279
EYRES	1820-1850	MDX	Westminster, St Martin in the Fields	8189
FONBLANQUE	All	All	All	8271
GANTER	1800-1920	MDX	Paddington	8193
HAGGETT	1770-1840	LND	St Botolph, Aldersgate	8189
HAGGETT	1830-1900	LND	Any	8189
HALSEY	1750-1900	ESS	Stratford	116
HARRISON	1840-1860	MDX	Hackney	116
HARROD	1800-1900	ESS	Any	116
LEGGETT	1800-1850	MDX	Bethnal Green	116
MALYON	1700-1850	MDX	St Marylebone	8279
MALYON	1700-1850	LND	Any	8279

NIPPARD	1750-1900	DOR	Blandford	8193
PHILLIPS	1750-1900	LND	Any	116
POOLE	1750-1850	MDX	Westminster, St Martin in the Fields	8189
POWELL	1850-1900	MDX	Mile End	116
POWNEY	1750-1850	MDX	Holborn	116
SCHOLL	1800-1900	MDX	Any	116
SMITH	1770-1840	MDX	Westminster, St James Piccadilly	8189
STANHOPE	1750-1900	MDX	Holborn	116
SWENDELL	1750-1880	MDX	St Pancras, St Clement Danes, St Sepulchre	8278
WHITE	1750-1850	MDX	Westminster	8193

SPECIAL INTERESTS

8271 **One-name study - FONBLANQUE**

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the new members, numbers 8268-8280 who have joined the Society over the past few months and wish them well with their research.



Memorial to the Royal Fusiliers
on High Holborn.
Our Parish Guide to Holborn came
out on 1 September.

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: South Mimms and Ruislip.

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 these 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 world
Parish Guides			
Clerkenwell	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Edmonton	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
East Barnet	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Enfield	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Finchley	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Greenford and Perivale	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Harefield	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Hampstead	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Hendon	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Holborn	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
Islington	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
Kingsbury	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Paddington	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Pinner	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
St Anne Soho	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
St Clement Danes	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
St George Hanover Square	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
St James Piccadilly	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
St Margaret & St John	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
St Martin-in-the-Fields	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
St Marylebone	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
St Pancras	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
Stanmore	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Tottenham	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Willesden	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65
Monumental Inscriptions			
Chipping Barnet St John the Baptist	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
East Barnet St Mary the Virgin	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
Hornsey St Mary	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
Monken Hadley St Mary the Virgin	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
St James Hampstead Road	£8.33	£10.75	£13.30
Census Guides			
The Streets of Westminster	£7.69	£9.65	£10.65

THE ANIMALS IN WAR MEMORIAL

By Barbara Haswell, Member No. 4224

Many Record Offices, Archives and Museums are now providing a wide range of free talks which are available to watch online. Do look at their websites or www.eventbrite.co.uk for details and how to register.

A few weeks ago, I logged in to the National Army Museum, London for one of their talks: *British Army Horse Power in the Great War*. A fascinating talk giving a brief history about the types of horse and their use in warfare and then concentrating on the horses, mules and donkeys of the First World War.

Listening to this talk reminded me of the Animals in War Memorial that is near Hyde Park, at Brook Gate, Park Lane, London, which honours animals that served and died alongside the British and Commonwealth Forces in 20th century wars.



The memorial, built of Portland stone and cast bronze, is about 18m wide and 17m deep and on two levels. The lower level showing two heavily laden mules struggling towards a gap in a huge wall. This wall has bronze bas-relief images of the many animals used in wars of the last century. Designed by the sculptor David Backhouse, the memorial was unveiled by HRH The Princess Royal in November 2004.

There are many animals shown on the memorial: donkeys, horses and mules, cats and dogs, canaries and pigeons, camels, elephants, oxen and even glow worms. (WW1 soldiers would read their maps by their soft light). Dolphins and sea lions were used to detect mines.

This memorial is a tribute to them all. There are two inscriptions on the front of the wall:

“This monument is dedicated to all the animals that served and died alongside British and Allied Forces in wars and campaigns throughout time.”

“They had no choice.”



On the face of the left wing when viewed from the rear is another inscription:

“Many
and various
animals were employed
to support British and Allied Forces
in wars and campaigns over the centuries
and as a result millions died · From the pigeon to the
elephant they all played a vital role in every region of the world
in the cause of human freedom · Their contribution must never be forgotten”

Listed here are a few that we remember by name:

Jimson the Mule was the mascot of the 2nd Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment. He began his life in India, carrying ammunition boxes. He then served in South Africa during the Boer War. Jimson was ‘awarded’ three medals and eventually came back to England with the Regiment.

Copenhagen was the Duke of Wellington’s horse. Bought during the Peninsular War, 1808-1814, he carried the Duke into a number of battles, including the Battle of Waterloo.

The Dickin Medal

The PDSA Dickin Medal is seen as the animals’ Victoria Cross. Named after Maria DICKIN, the founder of the People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals. 54 animals received this award between 1943 and 1949.

Simon the Cat-Simon was the ship’s cat on HMS Amethyst at the time of the Yangtze incident of 1949 when the ship was held captive for 101 days.

GI Joe, a pigeon-awarded the medal for a 20mile flight from British 10th Army HQ with a message and saving the lives of about 100 Allied soldiers.

Upstart, a police horse; awarded the medal in 1947. He quietly remained on duty after he and his rider were covered in broken glass and debris after a flying bomb exploded 23m away.

Warrior: awarded Honorary Dickin Medal. He was the warhorse of General Jack Seely during 1914-1918 on the Western Front. Warrior survived the war and died in 1941 aged 33.

Sasha: (2004-2008) was a Labrador Retriever who served as a bomb detection dog with the British Army in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Reckless: a US Marine Corps horse who was trained as an ammunition carrier and served in the Korean War.

A GUIDE TO BIRTH RECORDS

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

As a family historian, one of the key dates you need to find for people on your tree is when each person was born. There are two main types of record which can help you here: birth certificates and baptism records.

Birth certificate

We will begin by looking at the more recent birth certificates, as when you start researching your family tree it is really good practice to work backwards in time from yourself. By doing this you should be able to confirm each relationship before moving on to the next one, as birth certificates record both parents' names including the mother's maiden name (although where the father is not known, just the mother's name will appear). Of course, they also state the child's name, date of birth and address.

Registering a birth

Birth certificates were first issued on 1 July 1837, following the 1836 Births and Deaths Registration Act. This Act created a system of civil registration, (so not connected to the churches) which was administered by the General Register Office (GRO) for England and Wales under the leadership of the Registrar General. As the GRO started operating on 1 July 1837, this is the earliest date at which it is possible to obtain a birth certificate. Births had to be registered within 42 days, with the onus firmly on the parents to do this so it is possible that any person you cannot find was not actually registered. It is worth noting that registration of births only became compulsory in 1875 with the registrars then taking a more active role in chasing up and tracing births, resulting in a higher proportion of births being registered. Parents could be liable for a fine 'not exceeding ten pounds' if they had still not registered a birth, despite reminders from the local registrar, after twelve months. It has been estimated that in some parts of England up to 15% of births were not registered between 1837 and 1875.

Illegitimate children

For children whose parents were not married, the original 1836 legislation stated that 'it shall not be necessary to register the name of any father of a bastard child.' From 1850, instructions to registrars were clarified to state that, 'No putative father is allowed to sign an entry in the character of 'Father', so the father was actually forbidden to sign the register.' However,

the law was changed again 1875 to allow a father of an illegitimate child to record his name on his child's birth certificate if he attended the register office in person with the mother. From 1953 a child's father who was not married to the child's mother could also be recorded on the birth certificate, even if he was not physically present to sign the register. The births of still born children were not registered until 1926.

The GRO Index

The official GRO registers are not directly accessible by the general public. Instead, an index is available which can be used to find the relevant register entry. Back in the Old Days of family history, we actually had to go and look through the massive index books, the early ones all hand-written in a large copper-plate script. There was one set of red books for births, one of green books for marriages and one of black books for deaths, corresponding with the colours of the certificates themselves. Each book contained the records for one quarter of a particular year. Births which took place in January, February and March were grouped together as 'March'; April, May and June as 'June'; July, August and September as 'September' and October, November and December as 'December', so don't get worried if a birth you know happened in a certain month looks like it has a different one on the GRO index. This arrangement is the same with the records now that they are online but the connection is perhaps less obvious now we don't have to lug the books about. Inside each quarter, the births are arranged alphabetically by surname and then by first name (although some tiny babies are just boy or girl). Next to the name is the GRO reference information of district, volume and page. The district refers to the Registration District where the event occurred. With this information it is possible to order from the GRO the complete registration information in the form of a certified copy of the register (commonly known as a certificate).

The big Index books stopped in 1984 and GRO indexes from then on are all computerised. Copies can be consulted free of charge at seven libraries: Birmingham Central Library, Bridgend Reference and Information Library, City of Westminster Archives Centre, London Metropolitan Archives, Manchester City Library, Plymouth Central Library and The British Library. Birth Indexes up to 2005 can be searched on BMDIndex.co.uk, FamilyRelatives.org and [The Genealogist](http://TheGenealogist), up to 2006 on Findmypast, up to 2007 on Ancestry and up to 2008 on FamilySearch. Later records cannot be found online.

Nowadays the GRO Index books have been digitised and it is so much easier to search in them - the main pay-per-view sites all have a copy of it. The images produced are the same pages from the huge Index books that we used to use. And whilst it is essential to buy some birth certificates, much useful information can be obtained for free by scrutinising the GRO indexes.

FreeBMD

One fabulous resource for doing this is FreeBMD, which is online here: <https://www.freebmd.org.uk/>. FreeBMD stands for Free Births, Marriages, and Deaths and the objective of this website is to provide free online access to the GRO index. The early years were transcribed first and work is progressing through to 1983 at the moment, using the microfiche indexes supplied by the GRO. The database was last updated on 29 July 2021 and currently contains 284,491,082 distinct records (372,435,179 total records). Here you can easily confirm which year great-uncle Fred was born in, get some idea of how families moved around and more – especially with less common surnames.

To search, check that you want a birth, not a marriage or death, put the surname and first name into the appropriate boxes, give yourself a bit of leeway with the year (at least a couple of years either side of the date you want) and ignore the district or county, at least to start with. Wildcards and multiple selections can also be used later on if you have no luck initially so, for instance, you can select several registration districts to be searched simultaneously. Press find.

The search facility will return all results which match the criteria you put in, although if there are a huge number of results, a limited number will be shown. The information shown in the results is: event, quarter and year, surname, first name(s), registration district, volume number and page number. From the third quarter of 1911, the mother's surname is also shown which can help identify siblings.

GRO website

Less easy to search in, but essential for purchasing certificates, is the GRO site itself, which is at: <https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/> You have to register with this site but it is the cheapest way to obtain certificates – an emailed pdf of a birth certificate dating from 1 July 1837 to 1918 (currently) is £7. The GRO started digitising its records to create its

own online indexes but births had only been done up to 1934 when the money ran out. There does not seem to be any funding available to finish the task at present. Also, births need to have happened over 100 years ago, hence the fact that the full range up to 1934 is not yet available. Paper copies of certificates sent by post are £11 each.

On the GRO site searching is restricted to a particular year, plus one or two years on either side, so a 5-year period maximum, and you also have to specify if you are looking for a male or female birth. However, as this index has been created from the original records and not from the microfiche, there is the possibility that they are different from the FreeBMD entries, so it might be worth searching both.

Mother's maiden name

A very useful feature of the index entries (the GRO site from 1837 and FreeBMD from 1911) is that the mother's maiden name is shown. This means that you can find out all of the children of a couple by specifying the parents' surnames in the search box, and for free!

Adopted children

Legal adoption was introduced in 1926 and original birth records can be obtained from the GRO but only by the adoptee. To do this, if you were adopted, you must be over 18 and may be required to go to a counselling session first. For those wishing to find the birth of a family member who was adopted, all you can do is add yourself to the Adoption Contact Register, which will enable the person adopted to find you, should they wish to. There is a fee for both parties.

Stillbirths

The GRO has a register of stillbirths dating from 1 July 1927, which includes any baby born dead after 24 weeks of pregnancy. These records include features of both birth and death registration. Before this date there are no centralised records of stillbirths.

Baptisms

Until civil registration started in 1837, the only record of any birth was the church service of baptism. People tended to be baptised at their local church and there was a very good reason for this. In order to benefit from parish help in times of need, everybody had to be 'settled' in a parish and this was

defined according to a person's place of birth, at least since the 1662 Act of Settlement. The easiest way to prove your place of birth was to appear in the Baptism Register for that place.

The registers of ancient parishes may date from as far back as 1538 but only a very few parishes have them surviving from this date. An ancient parish had at its centre a single church, the parish church, with a single set of registers. However, these parishes were sub-divided from the early 17th century as the rapidly increasing population in London meant that the original churches became too small to cope with the number of people living locally. By the end of the 19th century some ancient parishes had been sub-divided 30 or 40 times, each part having its own parish church and own registers.

Of course, people could be baptised at any age but most baptisms were of infants. In the 16th century, the Church required parents to baptise their children as soon after birth as possible – preferably within a week, although mothers and babies were allowed a slightly longer period to recover in later centuries.

If you cannot find a baptism when you expect it to have happened, it does not necessarily mean that the child was not baptised. I'm sure many of us have found siblings being baptised on the same day and often when this happens, the birth dates of the children are also mentioned. There could be all sorts of reasons why this may have happened.

The introduction of civil registration did not mean that people stopped baptising their children and even today it is estimated that some 10% of children are still baptised.

London Metropolitan Archives holds parish registers from over 800 churches within the City of London and the former counties of London and Middlesex and details of which churches were open at which dates can be seen by searching in the LMA catalogue. They also appear on our website and in our Parish Guides. Churches from parishes in the ancient City of Westminster are held by the City of Westminster Archives Centre. Registers which have been digitised are online at Ancestry but be aware that it is most unlikely that all dates are covered.



Online Event

Greenwich Mean Time

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CAMBRIDGE MILITARY HOSPITAL – Part 2

By Alan Baldwin, Member No. 4425

I was very interested to see the article by Dennis Galvin (Member No.1046), about the Cambridge Military Hospital in the June Journal, which brought back many memories. I was also there in 1952 fulfilling my National Service in the Royal Army Medical Corps, as a Medical Laboratory Technician in the Leishman Laboratory. As Dennis was in a fever ward, it is highly likely that during his stay, I would have been involved with some of his tests! I was there until June 1953 when I was posted to Kenya, at the time of the Mau-Mau troubles.

I enjoyed my time there, it had a rather ‘homely’ feel, and daily life not greatly different from working in the NHS. However, this relaxed routine was rudely interrupted by the monthly C.O.’s parade, which necessitated the ritualistic ‘spit and polishing’ of boots and uniform pressing. Regrettably, on one occasion, I was found to have a speck of chocolate on my uniform. “Fry’s or Cadbury’s soldier?” The Sergeant Major bellowed in my face. It was spud peeling for me that night!

“The Cambridge” was a rather splendid building, situated on the top of Gun Hill, and with its (almost!) mile long main corridor and large airy wards. It was opened on Friday the 18th July 1879, and served both the military and civilian population of the area. It was here, during the First World War, that Captain Howard Gilles set up his famed Surgical Facial Reconstruction Department, in very cramped conditions. Demand rapidly exceeded capacity, and it later moved into a new dedicated unit at Queen Mary Hospital, Sidcup.

“The Cambridge” sent its staff to the Boer War, and virtually every military conflict since. Then in 1990 during the Gulf War 400 out of the 536 staff were sent to the Gulf, which was the beginning of its demise. With its failing infrastructure, and its cramped site, it was deemed too expensive to renovate or develop, and ironically was also hampered by its Grade II listing. It finally closed in February 1995. It is so sad to see images now of its deterioration into such a sorry state. However, it’s also good to know that its Class II listing has saved it, and is to be converted into flats as part of a wider development of the site. However, perhaps its ghost, the ‘Grey Lady’, will also remain? She is reputed to be a military nurse who threw herself from the upper floors after accidentally administering a lethal overdose to a patient during World

War I. There are many reported sightings by patients and staff, accompanied by a whiff of lavender. I was not one of them.

I am not sure of the hospital's connection to Isambard Kingdom Brunel, as I don't remember seeing the particular TV programme that Dennis watched. However, Brunel was responsible for the design of the famous and brilliantly successful pre-fabricated hospital sent to Renkioi in the Crimea in 1855. Perhaps the design of the Cambridge Military Hospital was influenced by this? Sir Benjamin Hawes, Under Secretary at the War Office, was under severe pressure from Florence Nightingale over the conditions at Scutari Military Hospital. He offered the job to Brunel, his brother-in-law (Things don't change in government!), in February 1855. Brunel responded to the urgency and completed his design within three weeks. It was for an original 'flat pack', each section requiring no more than two men to carry it. Designed on a modular basis, each unit being for 50 patients divided between two wards, and incorporating the needs of hygiene, sanitation, ventilation and even some degree of temperature controls. Sixty units were constructed at the site in Turkey, along a central walkway. Within four months, 300 beds were ready, and by Christmas, the whole 1,000 bed hospital was complete. Renkioi was built as a civil hospital for military patients and staffed by civilian medical staff, thus avoiding the disastrous incompetence of the Army which was exposed at the Scutari Military Hospital, and so heavily criticised by Florence Nightingale.

The hospital was an unqualified success, treating over 1,500 patients with a loss of only 50, a fatality rate of 4%, compared to the 42% fatalities at the Scutari hospital. Although outside her sphere of control, Florence Nightingale referred to it as "those magnificent huts".

References

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- 'Renkioi – Brunel's Forgotten Crimean War Hospital', by Christopher Silver, Valonia Press 2007
- 'Brunel – The Man who Built the World', by Steven Brindle, Wiedenfeld & Nicolson 2005



IDENTIFYING OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

By Dennis Galvin, Member No. 1046

Many family history researchers have old photos they can't quite identify, I have a few myself. Sometimes you can narrow down to perhaps one or two people. In the 1980s I was having a chat with a local Chingford lady who showed me quite an interesting family file which included old photographs and ephemera which had been handed down by her father.



Edwin and Harriet GOULT
in about 1913.

up for the merchant navy for a spell where he went on the P&O ship *Malwa* to Suez, Colombo and Australia.

Upon return to the UK Arthur once again applied to join the Met Police and this time he was accepted at Stoke Newington on 17 October 1910, being given warrant number 99177. Arthur was stationed at Whitechapel for about 10 years where he was present at the famous 'Siege of Sydney Street' in Stepney in 1911. During this period he married Francis Mary STAGG (born 1887) on 4 August 1912 at St

Arthur Edwin GOULT had been born on 2 August 1889 at 145 Camden Street, Kentish Town, London. His parents were George Ellis GOULT (Railway Train Examiner) and Harriet (they may have been from Suffolk or Norfolk). Arthur's first job was at the White Heather Laundry until he decided to join the Metropolitan Police. His height was satisfactory but his chest measurement was not acceptable so he was advised to go to the *Arethusa* training ship

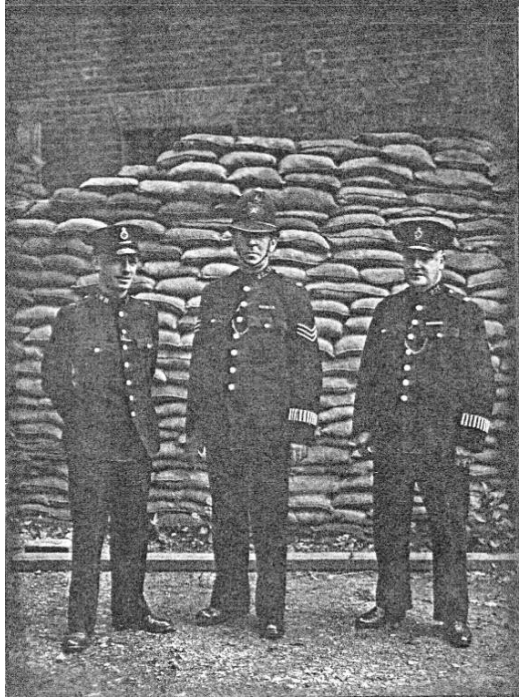
for a course to build him up. He then signed



Mrs GOULT in early
1913.

Paul's Church (parish of Christchurch) Gipsy Hill, SE19. They had just one daughter, Doris Eleanor GOULT, who was born 13 July 1917: this is the lady I knew.

Arthur moved around to other police stations and was at Somerstown for a year before moving on to Muswell Hill for the next 5 years. He had been a Detective Sergeant but in 1926-7 at Hornsey Police Station he was promoted to 1st Class Detective Sergeant. I have seen many newspaper cuttings where he is giving evidence and, indeed, one where he was sent to Porlock in Somerset on a special investigation.



Well retired Sergeant Arthur GOULT back in uniform for WW2 service at St Ann's Road or Tottenham Police Station, both in South Tottenham, North London.

He retired on 20 October 1935 (1st Class Detective Sergeant. Conduct exemplary, 36 commendations) but like many others came back during the Second World War, where

he served at St Ann's and Tottenham Police Stations. He died on 4 August 1967 at West Green Road aged 78 and was cremated at Enfield.

I have to say I probably would not have done this article if it wasn't for the most identifiable photographs!



HOLBORN'S EXTRA PAROCHIAL AREAS

By Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

The ancient parish of Holborn has its origins in a settlement that developed just outside the walls of the City of London on the Roman road which ran to Silchester. This road left the City through Newgate and travelled along what is now High Holborn and Oxford Street before heading on to the west. A document at Westminster Abbey shows that land south of this road, including 'the old log church of St Andrew's at Holeburne' was granted to the Abbey by King Edgar in about 970.

The parish was split into two parts: St Andrew below the Bars lay in the City ward of Farrington Without and St Andrew above the Bars in the Ossulstone Hundred division of the county of Middlesex. The Bars stood on Holborn a little to the west of Brooke Street and marked the end of the control of the City of London. The spot is now marked by two granite obelisks surmounted by dragons holding a shield bearing the City arms. Non-freemen of the City



The entrance to Ely Court from Hatton Garden.

of London formerly had to pay a toll to pass the Bars and enter the City, the money going to the Corporation of London. The Corporation was responsible for the governance of the part of the parish below the Bars and the parish vestry of St Andrew, Holborn Circus, responsible for the part above the Bars.

In 1290 the Bishop of Ely, John de Kirkby, built a palace surrounded by a garden at Holborn to use as his London seat. The estate was administered from Cambridgeshire as an extra-parochial part of Holborn. Its 13th century chapel dedicated to St Etheldreda can still be seen at Ely Place but is all that survives of the palace nowadays. The pub built for the Bishop's servants, *Ye Olde Mitre*, was built in 1546 in Ely Court, off Ely Place and can still be visited today for a pint of Fuller's beer. It contains the stump of a cherry tree around which Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Christopher Hatton, her Lord Chancellor, once danced. In 1581 the Queen took Ely Place from the Bishop of Ely and gave

it with its beautiful grounds to Sir Christopher. His name is remembered in the parish as Hatton Garden, which became the centre of the London

jewellery trade after craftsmen moved to the area from Clerkenwell. Shakespeare refers to the Bishop's garden in *Richard III* (which he wrote in 1592) when the Duke of Gloucester says: 'My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn, I saw good strawberries in your garden there; I do beseech you, send for some of them'. By 1720 the garden had been entirely built over but the street names of Field Lane, Saffron Hill and Vine Street indicate what used to be there.

The Bishop's former estate became known as the Liberty of Saffron Hill, Hatton Garden, Ely Rents and Ely Place. Extra-parochial places such as this, although they are physically located in a parish, are not administered by the local parochial authorities and therefore residents did not usually have to pay parish rates and also could not benefit from parish services such as policing or poor relief. Perhaps because of this, the Saffron Hill area became a notorious slum, with poor immigrants (first Irish and then Italians) moving in in large numbers, and crime and vice flourished. *Oliver Twist, or the Parish Boy's Progress* (to give the book its full title) was published in 1838 and is set in Saffron Hill, which author Charles Dickens describes in gruesome detail. When we meet Bill Sikes, Dickens writes: 'In the obscure parlour of a low public house, situate in the filthiest part of Little Saffron Hill, a dark and gloomy den, where a flaring gas-light burnt all day in the winter-time, and where no ray of sun ever shone in the summer, there sat, brooding over a little pewter measure and a small glass, strongly impregnated with the smell of liquor, a man in a velveteen coat, drab shorts, half-boots, and stockings, whom, even by that dim light, no experienced agent of police would have hesitated for one instant to recognise as Mr William Sikes.' Peter Cunningham, in his *Handbook of London* (1850) describes Holborn as a squalid neighbourhood densely inhabited by poor people and thieves where clergymen of St Andrew's have to be accompanied by policemen in plain clothes when visiting it.



Charles Dickens worked as a clerk for Ellis and Blackmore, who were based at Raymond's Buildings here in the 1840s.

Dickens describes how many of the inhabitants of the Liberty made their living from crime – with no Poor Law to support them, perhaps this was the only way to make ends meet. ‘Near to the spot on which Snow Hill and Holborn Hill meet, there opens, upon the right hand as you come out of the city, a narrow and dismal alley leading to Saffron Hill. In its filthy shops are exposed for sale huge bunches of second-hand silk handkerchiefs of all sizes and patterns, for here reside the traders who purchase them from pickpockets. Hundreds of these handkerchiefs hang dangling from pegs outside the windows, or flaunting from the door-posts; and the shelves within are piled with them. Confined as the limits of Field Lane are, it has its barber, its coffee-shop, its beer shop, and its fried fish warehouse. It is a commercial colony of itself, the emporium of petty larceny, visited at early morning and setting-in of dusk by silent merchants, who traffic in dark back parlours, and go as strangely as they came. Here the clothesman, the shoe-vamper, and the rag-merchant display their goods as signboards to the petty thief; and stores of old iron and bones, and heaps of mildewy woollen-stuff and linen, rust and rot in the grimy cellars.’ This dreadful state of affairs ended when the Extra-Parochial Places Act of 1857 effectively turned these places into civil parishes.

Other extra-parochial areas in the parish, however, were rather different from the rookeries of Saffron Hill. Barnard’s Inn, Furnival’s Inn, Staple Inn and Thavie’s Inn were all Inns of Chancery whilst Gray’s Inn and Lincoln’s Inn were Inns of Court. The Inns of Chancery are believed to have started as places which housed (hence they are called ‘Inns’) and trained medieval chancery clerks, whose job it was to record the proceedings of the Court of Chancery. By the 15th century the Inns of Chancery had been taken over by attorneys, solicitors and their students who were waiting to be called to the Bar by the Inns of Court, which housed the barristers and their students.

Gray’s Inn has stood on its site since at least the 13th century. Its chapel was previously one serving the manor of Portpool, the property of John de Grey. John was the son of Reginald, second Baron Grey of Wilton, whose seat was on the Welsh borders. The gardens at Gray’s Inn, known as ‘The Walks’, were originally designed by Francis Bacon in 1606 and planted using species brought to England by Sir Walter Raleigh. Lincoln’s Inn has been on its current site since at least 1422 and the adjoining Lincoln’s Inn Fields is probably one of the oldest public gardens in London, with its square of houses being built by Inigo Jones in the 17th century.

Dickens also mentions the Inns of Court in many of his novels, especially in *Bleak House*, which is about the extended inheritance dispute of Jarndyce v Jarndyce. In this book, Esther Summerson enters Old Square, Lincoln's Inn, through the gatehouse on Chancery Lane and says: 'We passed into sudden quietude under an old gateway, and drove on through a silent square until we came to an odd nook in a corner, where there was an entrance up a steep, broad flight of stairs, like an entrance to a church. And there really was a churchyard, outside under some cloisters, for I saw the gravestones from the staircase window. She is referring to the arcaded undercroft of the raised chapel, which is paved with gravestones. Burials here date from 1695-1852 and can be seen in the digitised Lincoln's Inn archives online here: <https://www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/library-archives/digitised-records/>



The arcaded undercroft of the chapel at Lincoln's Inn.

Dickens was writing partly from personal experience here, as he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn as a student in 1839 and worked as a solicitor's clerk before becoming a member of Middle Temple. He left in 1855 to concentrate on his writing.

In 1855 the newly created Metropolitan Board of Works, Holborn District, was formed from the Liberty of Saffron Hill, Hatton Garden, Ely Rents and Ely Place, St Andrew Holborn Above the Bars with St George the Martyr civil parish (which was created in 1767), together with the Liberty of Glasshouse Yard (which was in the area of the Ancient Parish of Clerkenwell) and St Sepulchre (which was in itself an Ancient Parish). This new local government body was governed by the Holborn District Board of Works, based at Holborn Town Hall in Gray's Inn Road. Holborn District Board of Works subsequently became a local council as part of the London County Council in 1889.

Then, in 1900, the Metropolitan Borough of Holborn was created, forming part of the County of London. It comprised part of Furnival's Inn, Gray's Inn, the Liberty of Saffron Hill, Hatton Garden, Ely Rents and Ely Place, St

Andrew Holborn Above the Bars with St George the Martyr, St Giles in the Fields and St George Bloomsbury, and Staple Inn. These became a single civil parish called Holborn in 1930. In 1965 the Metropolitan Borough of Holborn amalgamated with the Metropolitan Boroughs of Hampstead and St Pancras to form the London Borough of Camden.



COULD YOU BE OUR NEW SECRETARY?

Our Secretary is stepping down at the end of the Society's year and we need someone to take her place. Could you help us?

Our Secretary is the first point of call for the Society and as such replies to emails and letters sent to the Society. Many of these can be forwarded to other members of the Executive Committee as appropriate, for example membership queries to the Membership Secretary, people offering talks to the Branch Chairs and research enquiries can be signposted to a relevant Record Office or Archive or be advised to contact our Editorial Team with a view to publishing the query in the *Help!* column of *Metropolitan*. Information received from the Family History Federation, Record Offices and other family history groups is passed on to the Committee as necessary.

An agenda needs to be arranged for meetings of the Executive Committee and minutes then need to be taken at the meeting, which are circulated to the Executive Committee by email.

Arranging the AGM is one of the biggest tasks but it is only once a year. The date, venue and any speakers must be booked and a notice put in *Metropolitan*. An agenda needs to be produced but this follows a standard pattern, year on year. The rest of the Executive Committee are very supportive and will of course help a new Secretary get used to the job.

Please contact any member of the Executive Committee
to express an interest.

Email addresses can be found on the inside front cover of *Metropolitan*

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.



My great-great grandmother was brought up by her aunt (after her mother died) in Gillingham Street in the parish of St George Hanover Square. For some time the family lived in Robert Street. Does this still exist and is it far from Gillingham Street?

Also, Charles ENDRIE became insolvent in 1838. He had to appear at court 'unopposed'. What does 'unopposed' mean in this sense?

Elisabeth Roller, Member No: 7822

Note: Our Parish Guide to St George Hanover Square shows the streets of the parish in 1851. Gillingham Street is in piece 1478, Belgrave. There is a Robert Street in piece 1475, St George Hanover Square, and another in piece 1477, Belgrave. Looking at free online resource, the *Map of London 1868*, by Edward Weller, FRGS and John Dower, FRGS, at: <http://london1868.com/weller17.htm> the Robert Street in piece 1475 is just south of Oxford Street and seems to be the road now named Weighhouse Street. The one in 1477 is one of the turnings off Commercial Road, just to the west of the Grosvenor Canal quite near the Thames. This Robert Street also no longer exists but on a modern map it was between where the Lister Hospital and the Grosvenor Canal are now. Neither Robert Street is that far from Gillingham Street, which still exists to the east of Victoria Station.

With regard to the insolvency, if you agreed to being made bankrupt this would mean that it was unopposed. Alternatively you could oppose it but would definitely have to appear in court to challenge the bankruptcy. Perhaps he had to appear to answer questions but had decided not to oppose the order?



WEBSITE NEWS

British Library Newspapers and Findmypast

Findmypast and the British Library have recently announced an extension of their long-term partnership; the British Newspaper Archive. Over its first ten years, this project has digitised a significant number of newspapers from the Britain and Ireland. So far over 44 million pages have been published and a further 14 million are due to be uploaded by 2023. Pages from newspapers in our area which have been added recently include: the *Evening Star (London)* from 1842, *London and China Express* 1858-1861, 1863-1905, 1907-1919 and 1923-1931, *London Packet and New Lloyd's Evening Post* 1809, 1815, 1821-1829 and 1833, *Morning Herald (London)* 1818 and 1832, *New Times (London)* 1819-1820, 1826 and 1829, *Sun (London)* from 1843 and the *Weekly Chronicle (London)* 1856.

Stop Press Some 3.7 million pages are being made free to view, more on this in December's *Metropolitan*.

Westminster Cemetery Registers

This collection includes registers from four public cemeteries which were established after the 1853 Burial Act and others closed the central London burial grounds which were attached to churches. These managed by the City of Westminster between 1855 and 1990. These cemeteries are Hanwell Cemetery (formerly the City of Westminster Cemetery), Mill Hill Cemetery (previously Paddington New Cemetery), East Finchley Cemetery (formerly St Marylebone Cemetery) and Willesden Lane Cemetery.

The first three of these were the subject of a political scandal in 1987 when Westminster City Council (WCC) under the leadership of Dame Shirley Porter sold them for 5p each in order to save the annual maintenance costs. The new owner resold them that same day for £1.25 million but due to the incompetence of WCC, the maintenance contract was not required to be kept by subsequent owners. This resulted in the cemeteries becoming overgrown and the headstones vandalised and following a public outcry WCC was forced to buy them back in 1992 for £4.25 million. The burial registers are online at Ancestry.

Harrow Baptisms

Transcriptions of baptisms from Harrow dated 1841-1876 have been added to the Middlesex Baptisms database at Findmypast.

FORTHCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS

We are delighted to announce the return of two of our branch meetings, where we will be able to meet in person once again. Social distancing and masks are welcome if they make people feel safer.

Virtual Branch – Talks are on the second Thursday of the month. ‘Doors’ open at 7.45 for an 8pm start. To attend, you have to initially register an interest by emailing: virtualbranch@lwmfhs.org.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 a few days prior to the event as well as being announced in *Metropolitan*, on our website and Facebook page.

The talk will be recorded (with the speaker’s permission) and reshown the following morning at 10am so that members who live abroad or those who can’t make the live event can watch it at a hopefully more convenient time.

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

- 9 September *Life and Death in the Workhouse* by Mark Carroll
The New Poor Law Act of the 1830s meant that workhouses were built to care for the vulnerable. However, entering the workhouse tended to be avoided, even by the poorest in society, for it carried a social stigma and conditions inside were invariably harsh. But what was life really like for those admitted to the workhouse?
- 14 October *Victorian Crime, Police and Criminals* by Antony Marr
A look at the records of your criminal (or police) ancestors in Victorian times. How to use these fantastic records to add depth and colour to your family research.
- 11 November *Dating Family Photographs 1850-1925* by Ann Wise
If you have photographs that you can’t date this is the talk for you! Ann will talk through the clues and hints that will help you – have a notebook and pen ready. If you have a photo you would like dated at this talk, send a scan of it to the Virtual Branch for forwarding to Ann.
- 9 December *Piccadilly in London’s West End* by Rob Kayne
A miscellany of stories depicting this symbol of fashion, luxury, wealth and also key moments in London’s musical history.

Barnet Branch – Talks are on the third Thursday of the month’ Doors open at 7.30pm to 9pm start at Lyonsdown Hall, Lyonsdown Road, New Barnet, Hertfordshire EN5 1JB.

Branch Contact: Clare Pollitt, Email: barnet@lwmfhs.org.uk

- 16 September Members’ meeting – a chance for a catch up and help with your family research. Barnet Branch have pencilled in the next two dates but will see what local response and feedback are before definitely booking speakers – so do come along if you are local. Check the website of Facebook page for updates.
- 21 October Pending, see above
- 18 November Pending, see above
- 16 December No meeting

Rayners Lane Branch – Talks are on the first Monday of the month. Doors open at 1pm for a 1.30pm start at Roxeth Community Church, Coles Crescent, South Harrow, Middlesex HA2 0TN.

Branch Contact: Tricia Sutton, Email: rayners_lane@lwmfhs.org.uk

- 6 September *A Post-War Childhood* by Tricia Sutton
A personal memory of life as a child (1945-1951), remembering rationing; schools; accidents - we seemed to be constantly on the move! All pieced together with help from a National Identity Card.
- 4 October *Codebreaking Outstations in WW2* by Ronald Koorm
This talk explores the development of codebreaking outstations which supported Bletchley Park during the Second World War, including those at Stanmore and Eastcote. Women made an enormous contribution to cracking the Nazi Enigma code as some 75% of personnel at Bletchley Park were women.
- 1 November *Mrs Marshall: Pinner’s Other Domestic Goddess* by Pat Clarke
Agnes Marshall could be called the ‘domestic goddess’ of the 1890s. She lived in Pinner during her heyday, when she was well known for her books, magazines and demonstrations. This talk, given by Pinner local

historian Pat Clarke, will highlight Agnes's successes and her life in Pinner.

6 December

Members' Christmas Special

HAVE YOU RENEWED?

The Society's year ends on 30 September 2021 and it is now time to renew your subscription.

Thank you to all those members who have already done so. This is much appreciated as it helps to spread the workload for Sylv, our Membership Secretary.

The renewal form was in the centre of the June issue of *Metropolitan* and it is also available to download from the website, as are links to paying by bank transfer or via Parish Chest. These can be found here:

<https://www.lwmfhs.org.uk/membership>

FHF BEGINNERS' FAMILY HISTORY COURSE

The Family History Federation is holding an online four-week course for those new to family history or wanting to improve their skills.

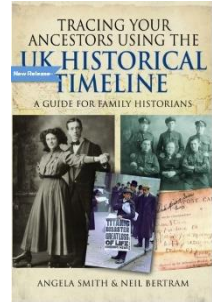
This interactive course will be held via Zoom on Thursday evenings from 7.00 pm to 8.30 pm on October: 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th. The cost is just £10 per person. Don't forget you can attend the Friday repeat of our Virtual Branch talk on 14 October if you wish to do this course.

Pre-booking is essential via <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/beginning-your-family-history-research-course-tickets-153944557315>

BOOK REVIEW

Tracing Your Ancestors Using the UK Historical Timeline: a Guide for Family Historians by Angela Smith & Neil Bertram (Pan & Sword, 2021), £12.99.

I have always found that the historical context to a family event makes it so much more interesting. Whilst I'm pleased to have found that my great grandma was born in 1861 in Pimlico, knowing that this was the year that the Great Northern Cemetery opened (her grandma would be buried there 20 years later from the Westminster Union Workhouse in Poland Street), the year that Prince Albert died of typhoid at Windsor Castle, the first year a street tram operated in London, the first year a Thomas Cook package tour set off (it went from London Bridge to Paris) and daily weather forecasting began, helps me place her in her society.



I've kept a large file of family and historical events but if you have done something similar, this 154-page indexed book will definitely help you. It is a guide for family historians of genealogical resources which it places in context with historical events. In the introduction, the authors state that in the main column on each page they have included items of particular importance to family historians, for example taxes, which may have left a paper trail that can be examined for mentions of ancestors. A brief location of records is often noted but the reader is encouraged to search the internet for further information. Other items, shown in italics, are of interest but may not yield records. Two other columns list the English monarch with the prime minister and socio-economic information such as extreme weather, founding of Societies and scientific advances. Rather optimistically, this book starts at 1066 but it continues right up to the 2021 census.

Looking at 1861, this book includes facts that the death penalty was abolished for all crimes except murder, high treason, piracy with violence and arson in the royal dockyards; that the American civil war started and led to a blockade of cotton exports with devastating effects on the English textile industry (leading to riots in 1863); the 1861 census, which showed that the population was 29 million as well as the death of Prince Albert.

I would heartily recommend this useful book to help construct a timeline for your family and to point out further resources to investigate.

Elizabeth Burling, Member No. 4992

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

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

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

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

£12 UK & Overseas: to receive *Metropolitan* electronically by download

£15 UK: to receive *Metropolitan* by post

£20 Overseas: to receive *Metropolitan* by airmail post

CHEQUE PAYMENT BY UK OR OVERSEAS MEMBERS

UK cheques are payable to LONDON WESTMINSTER & MIDDLESEX FHS.

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

All cheques should be sent to the Membership Secretary, address on the inside front cover.

CANADA: Canadian Postal Money Orders cannot be accepted.

AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND: Most banks will provide sterling cheques.

OTHER WAYS TO PAY

- Set up a standing order payable on 1 October annually (bank details below);
- Make a payment directly into our bank account (details below);
- Pay through Parish Chest directly from our website lwmfhs.org.uk, or our stall on the Parish Chest
- Post a cheque to the Membership Secretary (details inside the front cover) giving your name and, if possible, membership number (which on the email notifying you of your electronic version of *Metropolitan*, or on the address sheet sent with your paper copy).

BANKERS: HSBC Bank plc, Angel Branch, 25 Islington High St, London N1 9LJ

Sort Code: 40-03-33; Account Number: 81157760

MEMBERS' DATA

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

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

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

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

PARISH CHURCHES

Here are photos of two new churches in our Parish Church collection – both in the parish of St Pancras. With thanks to member number 1265.

Holy Trinity, Haverstock Hill



St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town

