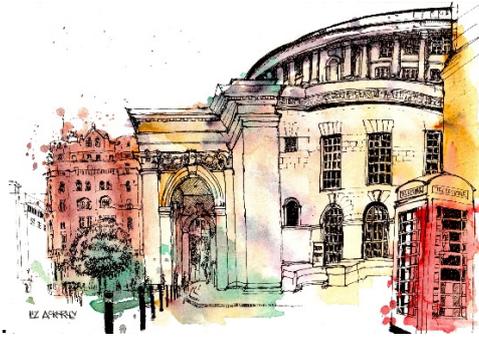


# M&LFHS Newsletter

The monthly newsletter of the  
Manchester & Lancashire Family  
History Society



## February 2024 Issue 46

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## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

### David Hartley



I am very sorry to have to give you the very sad news that David passed away after a sudden illness. The Monday team are very shocked to learn of David's death. I know some of you will have worked with him over the years or perhaps knew him from the Anglo Scots branch. Dave was a very helpful and knowledgeable volunteer and an integral member of the Monday Help Desk team.

Leslie

Deeply saddened to hear of the death of Dave Hartley. As Leslie says, Dave was a long-time member of the help desk team. He was also a member, supporter and contributor of the Anglo Scots Branch that we valued and we shall miss his involvement. Dave has been ill for some time and bore this quietly, bravely and with dignity. A real shock. RIP.

Mark

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Looking out of my study window the sun is shining and the temperature is a balmy 6°C. I know that our members in warmer climates will shudder at this but at least we are not being battered by high winds and continuous rain.

What has this to do with family history? I have been thinking for some time about the living conditions in which our ancestors lived. Not just about wind and rain but also drought, famine, diseases such as small pox, typhoid etc. housing and living conditions in general. It is all part and parcel of our ancestor's lives and, in my mind, brings more meaning to our research. There is a wealth of information available so why not spend a little time discovering more about our ancestors and the way they lived.

There are a number of talks planned for this month both in person and via ZOOM. We start with the Anglo-Scots branch with a ZOOM meeting 'Caledonian Asylum Petitions' followed by Bolton Branch 'Northerners: A History from the Ice Age to the Present Day' again via ZOOM. Oldham branch follow with 'DNA and Ethnicity: What do your Results Prove' again via ZOOM. Finally Manchester with an in-person talk 'Getting it Right - Starting your Family Tree' at Manchester Central Library. This is the first of our Explore talks for 2024. All talks must be booked via Eventbrite.

As mentioned last month the bookshop are offering books at half price and there is a list of titles later in this newsletter. The Horwich Locomotive Works Staff Record Card project has been completed with 11,189 staff records indexed.

I have continued to list the UKBMD updates but I wonder how useful these are to our members. Perhaps you would like to let me know your feelings.

For those members who are within travelling distance of the library our partners Archives+ have a small exhibition highlighting nurses and nursing in the area.

Barry Henshall

# Important News: Catholic Records

We are privileged to have become the custodians of the records and documents of the Catholic Record Society.

Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society has for many years been active in association with the Salford Diocesan Archive and the Catholic Family History Society in the transcription of the baptism, marriage and burial registers of churches in the Salford Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford, particularly those for churches in Manchester and Salford. This work continues, but to our great regret, the Catholic Family History Society found it necessary to cease its activities and dissolve at the end of 2023.

During its many years, the Catholic FHS built up a considerable body of research material relevant not just to the Salford diocese but to many other areas of England. The loss of this material would have been a significant loss to family historians throughout the world. We are pleased to report that during the dissolution of the society, agreement was reached for the intellectual assets of the Catholic FHS to be transferred to Manchester and Lancashire FHS. Material which was previously available to the public will remain so and material which was available to members of the Catholic FHS will become available to MLFHS members.

More information can be found on our website. [Please follow this link.](#)

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Our passion for heritage research can have a positive impact on our community. So maintains Dr Erin Beeston, researcher with the University of Manchester, who is creating a heritage and wellbeing toolkit for older people for use in community and care settings for Manchester Histories.

As a partner in the Archives+ heritage hub at Manchester Central Library, it was natural for Erin to seek a contribution from MLFHS when arranging a day-time event to launch her project. This event, at the library, offers an informal lunch and a discussion with a knowledgeable panel about how we, along with our partner colleagues, can help.

And so, I invite researchers curious to explore this interesting linking of historical research with the aims of a heritage and wellbeing toolkit, to attend the Creative Café event in Manchester Central Library at 12.30 until 14.00 hours on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

If you are intrigued, as I am, to see what emerges from the discussion, and are available to attend, it will be necessary to register your interest. You can do this by clicking this link: [Creative Café - Heritage and Wellbeing Tickets, Mon 4 Mar 2024 at 12:30 | Eventbrite](#) where you will be able to learn more about the event.

I suspect that the keen researcher will very soon see the mutual benefits which can result from engaging with the project.

I hope to see you there,

David

## EVENTS/TALKS

### Manchester Branch



#### Getting It Right - Starting Your Family Tree, by Hilary Hartigan

Date: 17 February 2024

Day: Saturday, 10.30am

Venue: Manchester Central Library

Booking: will be on [Eventbrite](#)

Cost: members - free of charge

Cost: non-members - £5

Getting it right - an essential event for anyone just starting to build their family tree, and also for anyone who just likes to "get it right" - with time at the end for new and more experienced members to share their experiences and learn from each other.

Why is this so important? The success of DNA testing has resulted in a new phenomenon - family trees that are simply wrong. Because online trees can be copied easily it only takes one tree to be wrong and, before you know it, that error has been copied, unwittingly, by perhaps hundreds of people. If your computer tells you that Mr X in America is your 3x great grandfather, or that Miss X in Sunderland is your second cousin, what should you do next?

Further Explore talks for 2024:

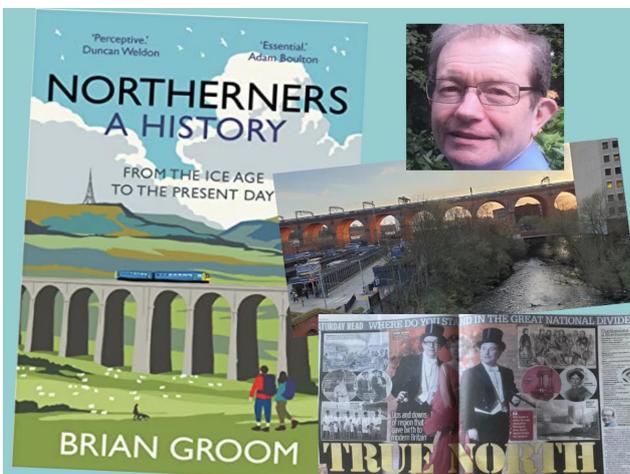
25<sup>th</sup> May - The 1921 Census

28<sup>th</sup> September - 1939 Register or 'Deep Dive'

23<sup>rd</sup> November - Validating your Research Records

Full details of Manchester meetings <https://mlfhs.uk/manchester/events>

### Bolton Branch



#### Northernners: A History, from the Ice Age to the Present Day

Wednesday, 7th February 2024, 7.30pm

Meeting Room Bolton Golf Club - no ticket required

On-line via ZOOM - [Eventbrite](#) ticket required

Members of MLFHS - free

Non-members of MLFHS - £3

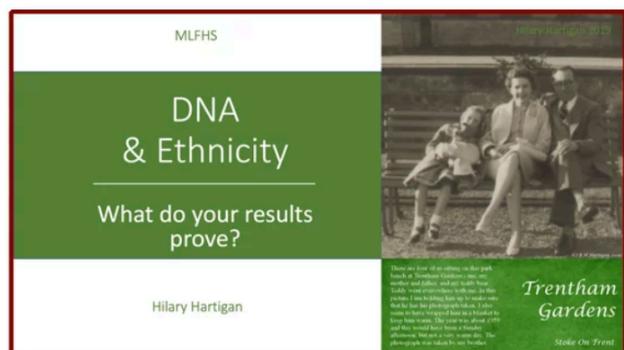
Brian Groom is a journalist and one of the foremost experts on British regional and national history. He has a lifelong interest in history and was a regular reader of History Today by age 12. His career was spent mainly in the

newspaper industry as a writer and editor. Originally from Stretford, Lancashire, he returned to live in the north – Saddleworth - in 2015.

The talk is based on a book that was published in paperback by Harper North, and is the first general history of northern England to be published for more than 30 years. The northwest, including Bolton and Bury, naturally forms an important part of the story. We are promised an entertaining event with wide appeal and plenty of local interest, a 45-minute romp through 180 million years of northern history.

Full details of Bolton Branch meetings <https://mlfhs.uk/bolton/events>

## Oldham Branch



**'DNA and Ethnicity : What do your results prove?'**  
**This illustrated presentation, will be given by Hilary Hartigan.**

Date: 10 February 2024  
Day: Saturday, 2.00pm (UK time)  
Venue: Online via Zoom  
Booking: will be via [Eventbrite](#)  
Cost: members - free of charge  
Cost: non-members - free of charge

Every time Hilary talks about DNA testing she updates her presentation. This talk will still have the essential information you need to get the most out of your results, but it will also look at how - and if - your DNA results can tell you anything about your ethnicity. Typically your ethnicity will relate back many generations, perhaps centuries, so how relevant is it to our family history research?

Full details of Oldham Branch meetings <https://www.mlfhs.uk/oldham/events/meetings>

## Anglo-Scots



**Caledonian Asylum Petitions**  
**by Lorna Kinnaird**

Date: 3 February 2024  
Day: Saturday, 2.00pm (UK time)  
Venue: Online via Zoom  
Booking: will be via [Eventbrite](#)  
Cost: members - free of charge  
Cost: non-members - £5

The Highland Society of London launched an appeal in 1808 to raise funds for an Asylum to house and educate the many young Scots who were roaming the streets of London, many having been orphaned or left fatherless following the Napoleonic wars.

Full details for the Anglo-Scots Branch meetings <https://mlfhs.uk/anglo-scots/events>.

## The National Archives

Our exciting programme of online talks is for everyone and delivered by experts, specialists and special guest speakers. When you book an event, you are invited to pay what you can – this is optional and entirely at the discretion of attendees. Some of our events remain completely free.

The National Archives also hosts a range of onsite events. To browse these, please see [Events at Kew](#) page.

Get priority booking to all events every month when you subscribe to the weekly newsletter. Get priority booking – sign up to the [mailing list](#) now.

[On the Record](#) is our podcast featuring specialists from The National Archives and guests. Each episode unearths the real life stories found in our vast collections.

Discover tales of propoganda, protest, and the everyday people of the past.

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## Rootstech 2024

If you are thinking of being part of the Rootstock event 2024, whether in person or online, then pop over to <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/registration/> . The event is being held between the 29<sup>th</sup> February to the 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

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## BOOKSHOP

As promised below are a number of hardback books from Pen & Sword all at half price. There is only 1 copy of each so when they are gone they really are gone. Just go to our bookshop and search using the code.

Code	Title	RRP (£)	Sale price (£)
8055	Exploring the Lives of Women 1558- 1837	19.99	10.00
8065	A History of the Royal Hospital Chelsea 1682-2017	25.00	10.00
8091	The Second World War Explained	19.99	10.00
8501	The Hunt for Moore's Gold	25.00	12.50
8503	The Legitimacy of Bastards: The Place of Illegitimate Children in Later Medieval England	25.00	12.00
8508	The Holy Boys: A History of the Royal Norfolk Regiment and the Royal Anglian Regiment 1685–2010	19.99	10.00
8509	Disaster Before D-Day	19.99	10.00
8510	The Great Escape from Stalag Luft III: The Memoir of Jens Müller By Jens Müller	19.99	10.00

8511	The 6th Battalion the Cheshire Regiment in the Great War: A Territorial Battalion on the Western Front 1914 - 1918	12.50	25.00
8513	Elizabeth Widville, Lady Grey	25.00	12.50
8514	After the Lost Franklin Expedition	25.00	12.50
8515	The Scandal of George III's Court	19.99	10.00
8518	A Date with the Hangman A History of Capital Punishment in Britain	19.99	10.00
8521	Memorable Encounters	20.00	10.00
8579	Britain 1940 the Decisive on the Home Front	19.99	10.00
8581	First World War Trials & Executions	19.99	10.00
8585	Crusoes, Castaways and Shipwrecks	19.99	10.00
8588	Marie Antoinette's Confidante	25.00	12.50
8589	Holding the Home Front	19.99	10.00
8592	Brutus of Troy	8.00	15.99
8593	Battlefield Yorkshire	19.00	9.50
8594	Famous Last Words	14.99	7.50
5896	We Also Served	19.99	10.00
8603	Captain John Smith, Adventurer: Piracy, Pocahontas and Jamestown	25.00	12.50
8610	At the Fifth Attempt	13.95	7.00
8625	Air power Supremo	25.00	12.50
8530	British Warship Losses in the Modern Era 1920-1982	30.00	15.00
8634	Jack the Ripper The Policeman	20.00	10.00
8640	Kidnappers, Gangsters, and, Grasses On the Frontline with the Metropolitan Police	20.00	10.00
9010	British Rail Designed 1948 - 1997	40.00	20.00

## PROJECTS UPDATE

The eagle-eyed may have spotted a subtle change to the society web site home page. We now boast a total of over 3.4 million records in our Census, MI, Catholic Records and Great Databases (up by another 100,000). A big thank you to all volunteers who have contributed to this total.

We have a lot to come in 2024 with completion expected of the staff records for Horwich Loco Works and Manchester City Transport, plus a new project to index the pupils admitted to Chetham's School. There will also be a substantial collection of admissions and discharges for Bolton's Fletcher Street Workhouse in the very near future. Other projects are under consideration

## Miscellaneous Small Projects

First new data for 2024.

This consists of details of 101 burials and cremations undertaken in 2022 and 2023 by Blackpool Council in line with provisions of the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984.

These are funerals conducted by the Council where there is no family member prepared to arrange and/or pay for a funeral.

Also added details 4,156 inquests conducted by various Lancashire Coroners in 2023. In view of the sensitive nature of some of the verdicts, a three year closure has been applied to these records.

Both are thanks to Linda Bailey.

### Manchester Catholic Registers

Published a downloadable file to the MLFHS shop consisting of baptisms for Holy Infant, Astley Bridge, Baptisms 1879-1924

### Horwich Locomotive Works Staff Record Cards

526 records added to the Great Database for surnames ABBOTT to QUINN. Records relating to L&YR staff employed at stations.

Scanning is now complete. Uploaded 724 records covering surnames PHELAN to STUBBS

470 records added to the Great Database for surnames ADAMS to CATON and MACKINWORTH to YOUNG. Records relating to L&YR staff employed at stations. The project is now completed with a total of 11,189 staff records indexed.

## HELPDESK

### MLFHS Helpdesk Update:

"The Society's Family History Help Desk continues to be a firm favourite with visitors to Manchester Central Library. We continue to offer FREE assistance to members and non members Monday - Friday 10:30-3:30. The queries are wide ranging and the visitor feedback is always great: "Informative, helpful, personable", "super helpful", "a great facility", "very helpful volunteers". We are located behind the café on the ground floor of Manchester Central Library. No booking is necessary - just drop in. We look forward to seeing you".

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## WEBSITE NEWS

### Who Do You Think You Are

**MyHeritage:** The MyHeritage Blog will keep you up-to-date. Why not drop by using this [link](#). There are 14 categories to search through and I am sure that you will find something of interest.

**MyHeritage has announced the release of MyHeritage Wiki, its community-led online encyclopaedia for all things genealogy.**

Covering all family history topics and, of course, DNA too, the [MyHeritage Wiki](#) is aiming to become the 'ultimate online encyclopaedia' for family history – and in order to achieve this aim, welcomes contributions from family historians around the world.

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**Family Tree:** Keep up to date with the latest happenings in the world of family history with Family Tree News & Views by following this [link](#).

You can also get the latest advice, opinion and updates from the Family Tree team and a range of genealogy experts, from in-depth guides to research and archives to the latest goings on at the Family Tree magazine HQ by following this [link](#).

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**Find my Past:** There is a wealth of information on the Find my Past website. Just follow these links

[Getting Started](#)

[Build Your Family Tree](#)

[Family Records](#)

[What's New?](#)

[Help Hub](#)

[Discoveries](#)

[History Hub](#)

[The Findmypast Community](#)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Ancestry:** An Ancestry Blog can be found [here](#)

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**The Genealogist:** The new Society of Genealogists library and archive, at 40 Wharf Road in north London, opens to members on 13 December, with access for members of the public from 3 January.

Further news and articles can be found [here](#)

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**FamilySearch:**

Finally why not try the FamilySearch [blog page](#).

## ORPHAN BMDs

If you have any BMDs you no longer want then why not consider dropping them off at our Helpdesk or you can send them to:

M&LFHS

61 Queens Road, Urmston, M41 9HF

If you wish to keep your certificates then you can send scans, preferably as a PDF to [office@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:office@mlfhs.org.uk) and they will be passed on to me. If you have problems sending scans to this address then please contact me at [newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@mlfhs.org.uk) and I will suggest an alternative means of forwarding the PDF files.

## UKBMD UPDATES

The **Kingston-upon-Thames** BMD website has been updated to add:

Marriages:

1,002 for Christ Church, New Malden, registers at Kingston (1867-1919)

1,429 for St John the Baptist, Worcester Park, registers at Kingston (1934-1969)

Many thanks to the Register Office and their volunteers for these.

Message from Bill Harrison, Staffordshire.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Staffs** BMD has been updated with the following .....

Marriages:

18 for Aldergate, Congregational Church, registers at Lichfield (1955-1972)

Births:

1,199 for Stoke, registers at Stoke-On-Trent (1983-1992)

Births - corrections and adding mothers' maiden names:

500 for Ipstones, registers at Newcastle-Under-Lyme (1908-1912)

502 for Leek, registers at Newcastle-Under-Lyme (1852-1853)

Births - miscellaneous corrections and additions:

32,231 for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough, registers at Newcastle-Under-Lyme (1906-1974)

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**The West Midlands** BMD has been updated with the following .....

Marriages replaced and updated to fill previous gaps:

13,504 for West Bromwich, All Saints, registers at Sandwell Register Office (1837-1970)

4,216 for Wednesbury, St Paul, registers at Sandwell Register Office (1876-1970)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Bath BMD** website has been updated to add:

Marriages:

200 for Combe Hay, registers at Bath (1837-2020)

4 for Compton Dando, St Mary, registers at Bath (2017-2019)

500 for Corston, All Saints, registers at Bath (1837-2017)

17 for Dunkerton, All Saints, registers at Bath (2009-2018)

14 for Englishcombe Church, registers at Bath (2006-2018)

52 for Freshford, St Peter, registers at Bath (1996-2019)

12 for Hinton Charterhouse, St John the Baptist, registers at Bath (2017-2019)

21 for Kelston, St Nicolas, registers at Bath (1994-2017)

194 for Keynsham, St John the Baptist, registers at Bath (2008-2021)

26 for Keynsham, St Francis, registers at Bath (1977-2019)

1 for Langridge, St Mary Magdalene, registers at Bath (2014-2014)

102 for Marksbury, St Peter, registers at Bath (1840-1929)

Many thanks to the Register Office and their volunteers for these.

For access to all the UK's major BMD and Census sites visit <https://www.UKBMD.org.uk/>

For access to all the UK's major Family History sites visit <https://www.UKGD.org.uk/>

For access to all the UK's major Military Family History sites visit <https://www.UKMFH.org.uk/>

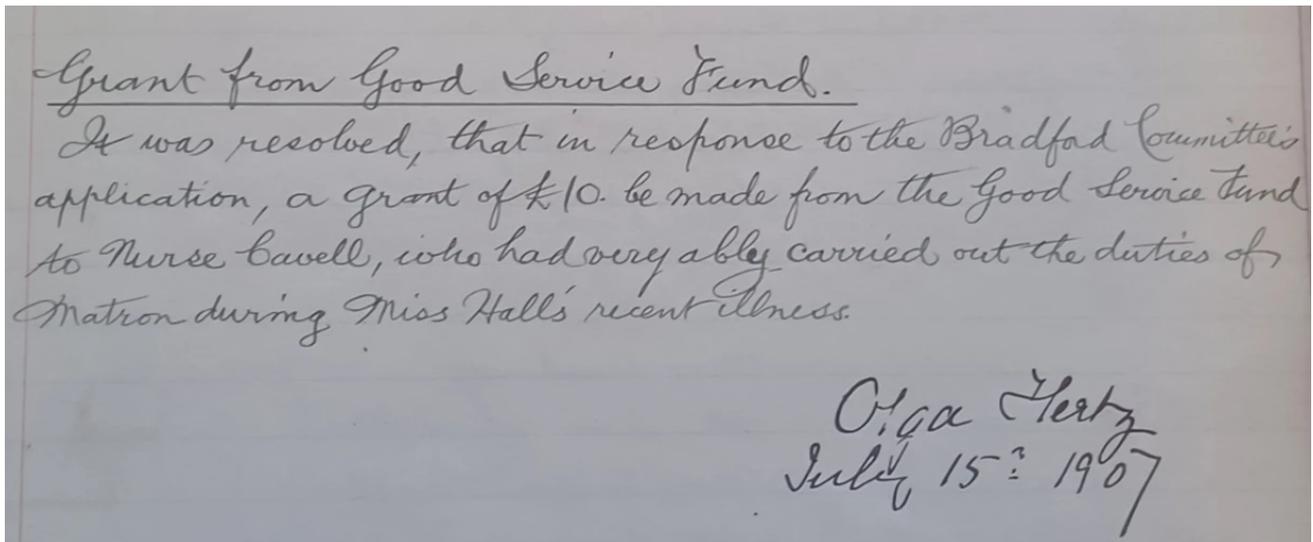
## **Shropshire BMD** has been updated to add:

### Marriages:

154 for Belle Vue Methodists, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1959-2009)  
5 for Pontesbury Hill , Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2006-2011)  
48 for Bomere Heath, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1942-2012)  
306 for Greenfields Church, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-2012)  
64 for Unitarian Church, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-2013)  
71 for Minsterley Horsebridge Methodists, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1938-2009)  
190 for St David's Presbyterian, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1997)  
1 for Pontesbury Baptist Church, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2008-2008)  
74 for St Winifrides RC, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1971-2013)  
122 for Our Lady of Pity(HRL), Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1970-2010)  
19 for Meeting Room, Cadogan Gardens, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1972-1986)  
20 for Bayston Hill Methodist, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1972-1982)  
41 for Crowmoor Baptist Church, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1983-2002)  
6 for Kingdom Hall, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2006-2013)  
6 for Barnabas Church Centre, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1994-2011)  
717 for Our Lady of Help & St Peter (RC Cathedral), Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1970-2013)  
35 for Methodist Chapel, New Park Road, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1961)  
11 for Frankwell Methodists, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1985)  
16 for Great Hanwood Methodists, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1967)  
45 for Moston Road Mission, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1962-1993)  
14 for St Nicholas Presbyterian, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-1942)  
19 for Forton Heath, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-1987)  
2 for Ebenezer Chapel, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1937)  
10 for Meeting Hall Bicton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2005-2013)  
684 for United Reformed Church(Abbey Foregate Congregationalists), Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
91 for Claremont St Baptists, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1956-2007)  
370 for St John's Hill Methodist, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2005)  
67 for Acton Burnell, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1981)  
93 for Buildwas, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2012)  
41 for Cardeston, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-2010)  
149 for Cardington, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
13 for Church Preen, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1939-1977)  
99 for Church Pulverbach, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1985)  
21 for Condover, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2012)  
97 for Cound, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1981)  
143 for Cressage, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1989)  
2 for Dorrington, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2011-2011)  
14 for Eaton Constantine, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2001-2013)  
1 for Alberbury, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1936)  
80 for Fitz, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
181 for Ford, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1990)  
30 for Frodesley, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1973)  
125 for Great Hanwood, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1977)  
39 for Great Wollaston, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1998)  
210 for Great Ness, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
10 for Holy Spirit (HRL), Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1961-2012)

41 for Harley, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1989)  
24 for Hughley, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1974)  
13 for Albrighton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-1963)  
32 for Kenley, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2011)  
256 for Leaton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
40 for Leebotwood, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1972)  
82 for Leighton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
104 for Little Ness, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
25 for Longnor, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-2012)  
49 for Longden, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1954)  
100 for Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
43 for Schools Chapel, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2011)  
31 for Minsterley, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2010)  
76 for Annscroft, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2000)  
17 for Montford, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1941)  
161 for Oxon & Shelton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
30 for Pitchford, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1937-1980)  
119 for Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
19 for Sheinton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1938-1989)  
15 for Shrawardine, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1951)  
46 for All Saints, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
168 for Holy Cross(Abbey), Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
71 for St Alkmunds, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1986)  
198 for St Chad, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2004)  
105 for Astley, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2009)  
221 for St George, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2010)  
79 for St Giles, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1942)  
9 for Holy Trinity, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1941-2013)  
2 for St Peters (MNKMR), Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2012-2012)  
100 for Uffington, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2000)  
72 for Uppington, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1991)  
136 for Upton Magna, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2001)  
44 for Westbury, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2012)  
37 for Atcham, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2006)  
18 for Withington, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1950)  
7 for Woolstaston, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1940-1955)  
132 for Yockleton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2010)  
1 for Greenfields United, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2006-2006)  
2 for Emmanuel, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (2012-2012)  
1 for Battlefield, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1936)  
3 for Cruckton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1936)  
12 for Preston Gubbolds, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1939)  
59 for Wroxeter, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1977)  
268 for Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1988)  
127 for St Mary, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1941)  
35 for St Julian, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1939)  
32 for St Michael, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1967)  
47 for Berrington, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2013)  
55 for Bicton, Shrewsbury, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-2010)  
3 for Shrewsbury Register Office or Registrar Attended, registers at Shrewsbury (1936-1937)

Many thanks to the Register Office and their volunteers for these.



There is currently have a small exhibition on the ground floor of [Central Library](#) highlighting items from our collections relating to nurses/nursing and the stories they tell. We have included the well known and the ordinary nurse.

[Edith Cavell](#) is famous for being executed by the Germans in World War 1 in Belgium. Perhaps less well known is her time in Manchester 1906/7 working for the Manchester and Salford Sick Poor and Private Nursing Institution , an organisation that provided nursing services to the community – a type of early District Nursing. Nurses would live in one of the organisation's 5 Nurses' Homes and go out from there to see patients. Edith Cavell was at Bradford House, on Ashton Old Road. Significantly she temporarily took over as Matron and an entry in the organisation's Executive Committee Minutes (1907) mentions her by name.

The exhibition is scheduled until the middle of February. Further information can be found [HERE](#).

Archives+ will offer a wonderful, purpose-built showcase and repository for the region's archive and family history. The Archives+ partnership will build on the appetite and demand for accessible community history and personal heritage. This one-stop-shop will make it easier than ever before to find what you're looking for.

The main partners in Archives+ are:

- Greater Manchester County Record Office (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities)
- Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives (Manchester City Council)
- North West Film Archive (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre & Education Trust (University of Manchester)
- Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society
- BFI Mediatheque • Manchester Registration Service (Historic Registers)

Displays and exhibitions will explore the rich collections to tell the stories of Manchester's people and communities. You'll find all the local and family history resources you're used to, from books, maps and original materials to self-service digitised items and online resources like ancestry.com.

Archives+ will bring history to life using interactive exhibits, sound and vision. Its focus will be on telling stories and helping us to identify with our past. Our history isn't just about the great and the good, it's about personal testimony from ordinary people: a child in the cotton mill, the navy, the land girl.

## **NORTH WEST SOUND HERITAGE**

Unlocking our Sound Heritage

Thousands of cassettes, open reels, CDs and MiniDiscs are sitting in archives, museums, libraries and in people's homes all over the UK. All kinds of unique live music, radio and conversation are recorded on these tapes and discs. We've already lost many of the people captured on them. And the British Library estimates that we have fifteen years to preserve the sounds themselves.

That's why the British Library has received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to establish Unlocking Our Sound Heritage, an exciting new national project to save thousands sounds which are at risk of being lost forever.

Archives+ is the hub partner for the North West region, which covers Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside. We'll be digitising around 15,000 recordings on 5,000 cassettes, reels and optical discs held all over the region here at Manchester Central Library.

This is a fascinating site providing a flavour of times gone by. If you are a sword swallower then discover what not to eat and drink before a performance!

Follow on Twitter - [@archivesplus](#).

Find more information [here](#). Enter your email address to follow this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

## **NORTH WEST FILM ARCHIVE**

Welcome to the [North West Film Archive](#), the professionally recognised public home for the moving image heritage of the North West of England.

### **WHO WE ARE**

From historical footage and home movies to newsreels and adverts, we find, preserve and share over 50,000 items of film and video, for public, educational and professional use.

We love film and how it can open a window into the past and the present in ways that can be powerful, moving and unexpected.

Part of Manchester Met, and based within Manchester Central Library's Archives+ partnership, we are a specialist resource dedicated to saving and growing our region's rich filmed history.

### **WHAT WE DO**

Do you need some footage for teaching, broadcasting or an artistic or community project?

Do you have film of our region's people or places that needs looking after?

Whoever you are, if you need a professional and friendly service, we're here to help.

We offer:

- research support and loan or licence of footage (including for professional broadcast)
- bespoke learning and teaching support
- opportunities to hire or watch unusual and interesting films, with a local and historical theme

- opportunities for community engagement and collaboration
- a home for the region's film and video, where moving images are professionally preserved, stored and made available, for now and for the future

This is a site well worth visiting The NWFA was set up in 1977 and preserves moving images made in or about Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside and Cumbria and offers a variety of access services to users in the public, academic and commercial sectors.

## SOCIETY CONTACTS

Website: - <https://www.mlfhs.uk>

Newsletter editor: - [newseditor@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:newseditor@mlfhs.org.uk)

Bookshop: - [bookshop@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:bookshop@mlfhs.org.uk)

MLFHS Office: - [office@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:office@mlfhs.org.uk)

The Manchester Genealogist: - [office@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:office@mlfhs.org.uk) or [editor@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:editor@mlfhs.org.uk)

MLFHS mailing address: Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Manchester Central Library, St. Peters Square, Manchester, M2 5PD.

## SOCIETY BRANCHES

Oldham Branch of MLFHS - <https://www.mlfhs.uk/oldham>

Bolton Branch of MLFHS - <http://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton>

Anglo-Scottish Branch of MLFHS – <http://www.mlfhs.uk/anglo-scots>

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL SECRETARY

The best and quickest way to contact the society is by emailing [office@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:office@mlfhs.org.uk) we will then direct you to the relevant person to help you. Our phone is very rarely used.

If possible please use the on-line option on our new website to join or renew your subscription. We use Stripe but you can pay as a guest with your card if you wish.

Have you considered taking out a Bank Standing Order? It means you don't have to think about renewing and you can stop it at any time. Always include your membership number. We can always find it for you should you forget.

There is so much you can learn from our website it seems a shame that members don't make the most of it. From the members area on the website you can make changes to your address and email just log in. It is so easy.

We recently held a talk on how to get the best from the website which was very well received. We are looking at ways to bring this to everyone. Most people were amazed at just what was available on the site and I'm sure went home to try it all out.

If you must pay by cheque please send to:

MLFHS, 17 Fortyacre Drive, Bredbury, SK6 2EZ

**DO NOT** send it to the office and we no longer take cash at the Helpdesk.

The Click and Collect is now available from our shop.

Best wishes

Elsie



<https://www.facebook.com/MandLFamilyHistory>



and Twitter

M&L Family History@MLFH



**FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION**  
Supporting the Family History Community for Fifty Years

# REALLY USEFUL Bulletin No 41

January 2024

Welcome to the first edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin* for 2024

*inside find...*

Lead articles this month are *Quaker Genealogy*

also *Proposed Destruction of Wills* plus news from local FHS and from the Federation

## DNA TESTS

BIG SAVINGS on current list price  
- with FHB whilst stocks last -

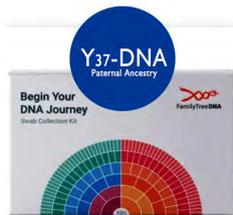


Web Prices at  
22nd Jan 2024



Family Finder (Autosomal) DNA Kit

Current List Price: \$ 79 (£62) **FHB Price: £49**



Y-37 (Paternal) DNA Kit

Current List Price: \$119 (£93) **FHB Price: £79**



Family Finder + Y-37 DNA Kit

Current List Price: \$181 (£142) **FHB Price: £109**



mtDNA (maternal) DNA Kit

Current List Price: \$159 (£125) **FHB Price: £119**

[www.familyhistorybooksonline.com/dna-kits-376](http://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com/dna-kits-376)



# Really Useful Bulletin

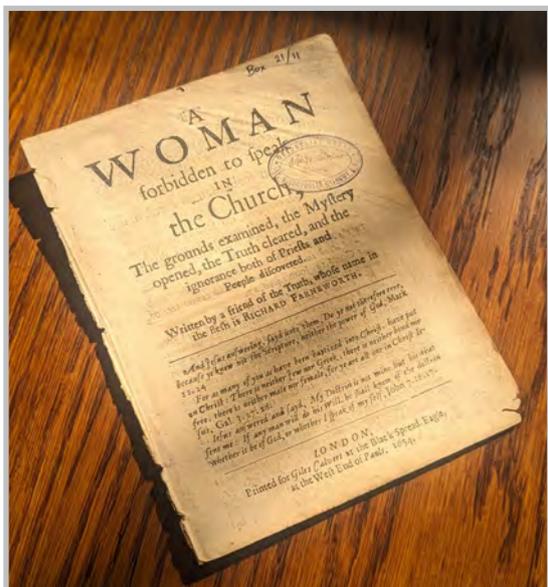
## Quaker Genealogy

by Lucy Saint-Smith

### Who are Quakers?

The Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, is a faith group who believe that there is something of God in everyone. They don't have a fixed creed, but generally adhere to the values of simplicity, truth, equality and peace.

Quakerism began in the 1650s in Britain as a radical Christian movement. They allowed women to speak on religious matters and refused to swear oaths, use titles or pay tithes (mandatory taxes levied by the Church of England). These subversive ideals led to Quakers suffering persecution under both Cromwell and the returning King Charles II. As a result of this, they kept detailed records to use as evidence of their actions, and as a witness to how they were treated. This record-keeping became ingrained in Quaker culture and has left behind many useful documents for historians and genealogists.



*Left: A Woman Forbidden to Speak in the Church was published in 1654. It was the first of many pamphlets Quakers wrote using biblical arguments to defend the right of women to preach.*

Courtesy of the Library of the Society of Friends  
© Britain Yearly Meeting

The term Quaker was actually coined as a slur, used by the judges and guards who were oppressing the Society of Friends. It's generally suggested that the term refers to Quakers trembling as they worshipped. Members of the Society use the word Friends to describe one another, but they have also adopted the word Quaker and it is fine to use either.

Later generations of Quakers became involved in the abolition of slavery, war relief work and the support of conscientious objectors. Many Friends became successful in business. Several companies that are well-known on the British high street, including Cadbury's chocolate, Barclay's bank and Clark's shoes, were started by Quaker families.

There are around 23,000 Quakers in Britain today. As well as being a faith community, they do peace work and campaign for climate and economic justice. You can find out more about this here:

[www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk).

This article is about British Quakers, but there are also communities of Quakers all around the world. To find out more about this see: <https://fwcc.world>

### Meeting structure

Quakers use the single term 'meeting' to mean church, congregation and service. During a meeting, Friends will sit in silence unless they feel themselves called upon to speak by God.

It is useful to have a basic understanding of the administrative structure of Quakers in Britain in order to find any relevant records. You can find a complete guide to the terminology here: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/subject-guide-meetings-glossary-2020](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/subject-guide-meetings-glossary-2020).

The most important thing for a genealogist to know is that local meetings in a region send representatives to a monthly meeting (since 2007 monthly meetings have been known as area meetings, but as we are advising on historical research, we will use the term 'monthly' meeting throughout). This is where issues of membership are dealt with, so Quakers are considered members of their monthly meeting rather than their local worshipping group. It is the monthly meeting records that are most likely to be useful to genealogists.

You will also see references to quarterly meetings. These are no longer part of the organisational structure, but they used to be comprised of representatives from the monthly meetings across one or two counties. Some records, such as the membership lists, are grouped by quarterly meeting.



# Really Useful Bulletin

## How do I know if my ancestors were Quakers?

### Birth, marriage and death records

From the mid-seventeenth century, nearly all monthly meetings, some local meetings and some quarterly meetings kept register books of births, marriages and burials (Quakers do not practise baptism). These records are the first place to look if you believe one of your ancestors was a Quaker.

Between 1840 and 1842, under the Non-Parochial Registers Act, the Society surrendered these original registers to the Registrar General. The registers are now all kept at the National Archives in Kew, and the contents are available on most of the big genealogy websites.

Scottish Quaker BMD records are held at the National Records of Scotland, and they can be searched online using Scottish Indexes: [www.scottishindexes.com](http://www.scottishindexes.com)

There are often multiple records for the same event, one in the Quarterly Meeting register and one in the Monthly Meeting register for example. It is worth looking at both as they may contain slightly differing information. The information recorded was not standardized until the late eighteenth century, so can vary from area to area.

Birth records often include the name of the midwife and any other people who were present at the birth. Depending on the location they might also contain the occupation of the father. Quakers who were not born into the faith sometimes added a back-dated birth record, particularly in the earlier years of the movement.

As early Quaker marriages were not recognized by the state, Friends had every person who had witnessed a marriage sign the wedding certificate to give the marriage more validity. These names are mostly transferred into the registers, so most Quaker marriage records have a list of who attended the wedding. Many wedding records, particularly later when they were standardised, include the names of the bride and groom's mothers as well as their fathers.

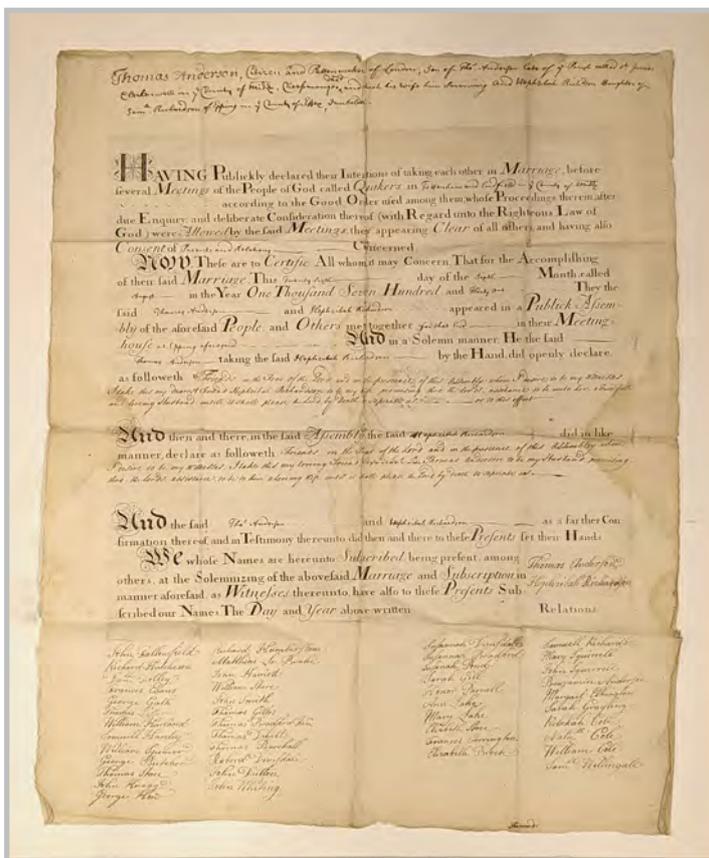
*Below left: The wedding certificate of Thomas Anderson and Hepzibah Richardson who were married in 1731. This is the file copy of the certificate, demonstrated by the names of the witnesses all copied in the same hand. Each person would have signed the original themselves. Courtesy of the Library of the Society of Friends © Britain Yearly Meeting*

Although Quaker records are generally substantial, Friends sometimes failed to make entries in the registers, and some of the earlier registers were lost prior to the handover to the Registrar General. Additionally, after the original registers were surrendered, most Quaker meetings continued to keep their own birth, marriage and burial records but these are not available online, so these are not as useful for identifying later Quakers.

An indication that a person was not a Quaker is the existence of a Church of England baptism, marriage or burial record. Having any of these services performed in the established Church was a disownable offense (see below), so, at the time they were performed, the person was either not a Friend or was willing to forfeit their membership.

## Meeting Records

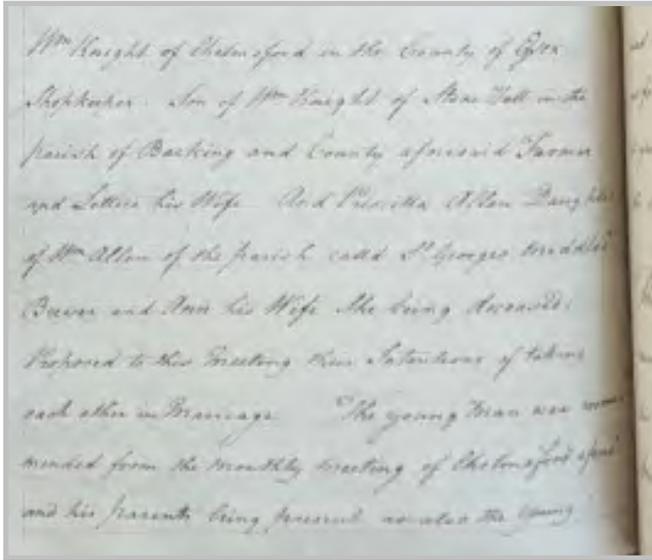
Meeting records are the next most useful place to search for details of individual Quakers. They are kept in the local area, deposited in the appropriate local archive or library. The majority are not available online. To find meeting records, visit <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> and search for the county of the location of the meeting you're looking for + 'society of friends' e.g. 'Lancashire society of friends'. If you are still unsure of where the records



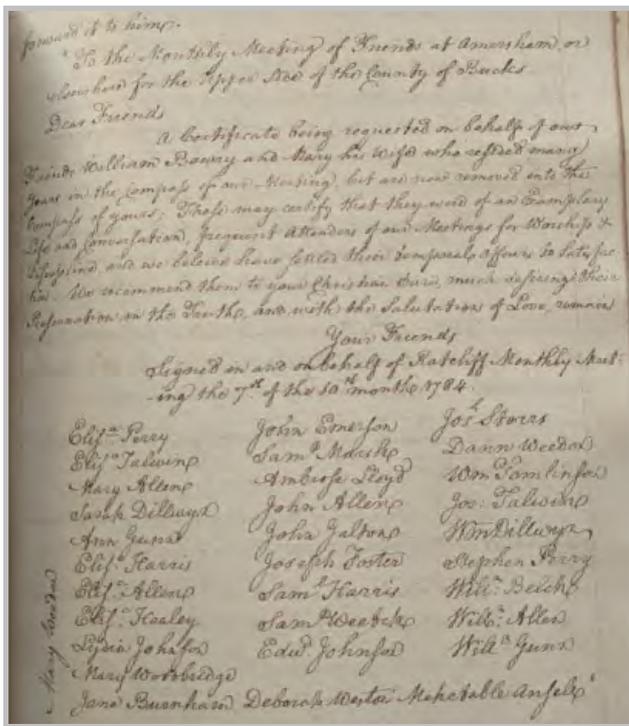


# Really Useful Bulletin

are, you can contact the Library of the Society of Friends for further help.



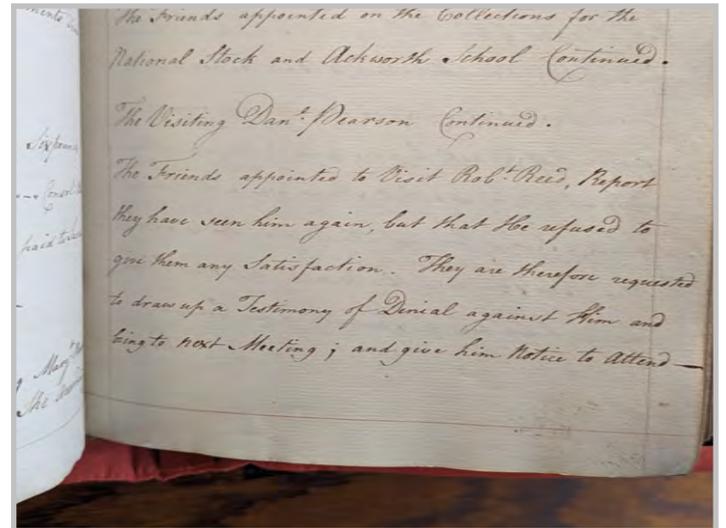
Above: William Knight and Priscilla Allen propose their intention to get married to Ratcliff Monthly Meeting. The meeting would have assigned members to meet with the couple to ensure that they were ready for marriage and a suitable match for each other before giving them permission to go ahead with the wedding. Courtesy of the Library of the Society of Friends © Britain Yearly Meeting



Above: A copy of the removal certificate for William Bowry and his wife of Ratcliff Meeting. The certificate itself would have been given to the Bowrys to present to their new meeting, proving them to be members in good standing. Courtesy of the Library of the Society of Friends © Britain Yearly Meeting

The meeting records will generally be in the form of minute books and some supporting documents. The monthly meeting minute books record the activities of the meetings in the area and matters of membership. You may find applications for membership, declarations of intent to marry, transfer of membership from one meeting to another and disownments, or the termination of memberships.

Disownments were the formal recognition that a member's behaviour was contrary to the beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends and/or brought it into disrepute. Reasons for disownment included drunkenness, arms manufacturing and not attending meetings. The most popular reason was marrying in a church, or "before a priest". This happened when a Friend wanted to marry a non-Quaker or when, as getting permission from the meeting to marry could take a long time, two Friends didn't want to wait. Those who were disowned could continue to attend meetings and could have their membership reinstated at a later date.



Above: The disownment of Robert Reed from Ratcliff Meeting. The disownment process involved nominated Friends meeting with the offending party to discover the truth behind whatever accusation had been thrown at them. If sufficient cause for disownment was found then a testimony of denial was drawn up and circulated to meetings in the area. Courtesy of the Library of the Society of Friends © Britain Yearly Meeting

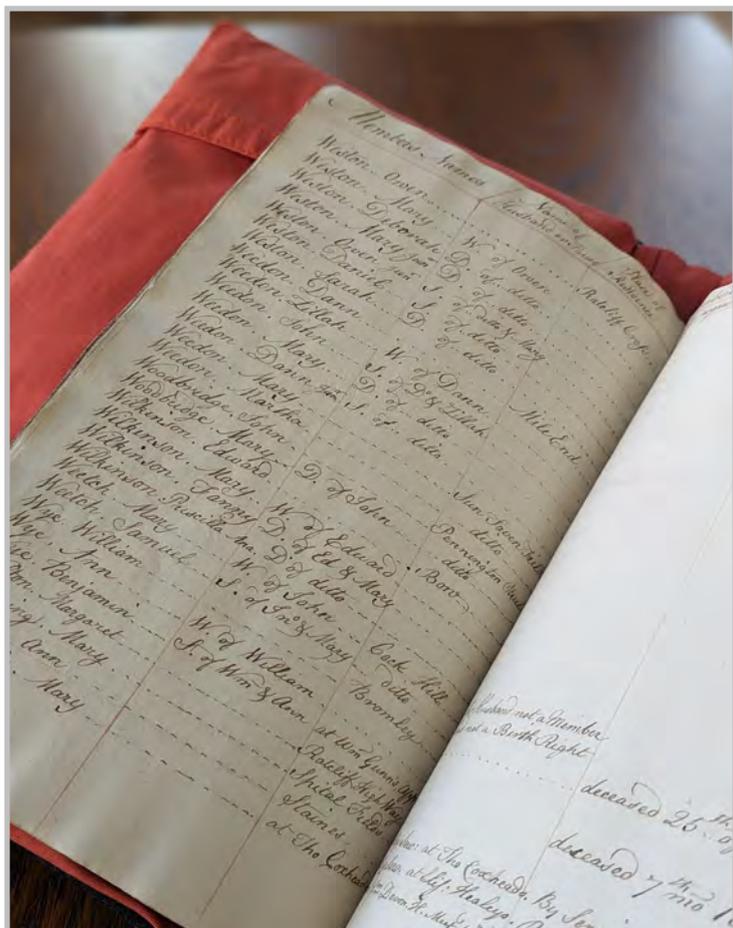
## Membership Lists

Handwritten lists of members were started by some meetings in the eighteenth century and were in general use by 1837. Printed lists were produced annually by many meetings from the 1870s. Some list



# Really Useful Bulletin

only members, whilst others list those who attended meetings without joining as well. These are usually available alongside the meeting records, and the Library of the Society of Friends holds a collection of the printed lists from around Britain, organised by quarterly meeting, then year. For the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this is the easiest way to see if someone was a Friend or not.



Above: An early membership list from Ratcliff Monthly meeting, 1784-1788. Courtesy of the Library of the Society of Friends © Britain Yearly Meeting

## Are there any other resources?

The Library of the Society of Friends holds the records of Britain Yearly Meeting, the body that represents Quakers in the UK and carries out work on their behalf. This includes work Quakers organised at a national level such as war relief and overseas missionary work. It also includes national level church governance such as the minutes of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings (the two highest level governance meetings for the national church). In addition, the library holds the meeting records for London and Middlesex, the world's biggest collection of Quaker publications and a

number of family and personal archives from British Quakers. The library also has large collections relating to British conscientious objectors of all religions.

It is often worth contacting them to see if they have any material relating to your Quaker ancestors, particularly if they were involved with national work. The library cannot carry out extensive research on behalf of enquirers, but they can let you know what they have got and point you in the right direction. You Find out more here: [www.quaker.org.uk/library](http://www.quaker.org.uk/library) You can also find their genealogy guide here: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/subject-guide-genealogy-2019](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/subject-guide-genealogy-2019)

The Quaker Family History Society offers a responsive mailing list, a useful journal and a website with several fantastic and freely available resources, including database of Quaker will transcriptions and spreadsheet digests of the birth, marriage and death records for Durham, Essex, London, Norfolk and Suffolk. They are an indispensable resource if you are researching Quaker ancestors. You can find out more about them here: <https://newtrial.qfhs.co.uk>



**About the author:** Lucy Saint-Smith is a Library and Archives Assistant at the Library of the Society of Friends. Her work includes supporting researchers in navigating the Library and talking about the collections to groups of all ages. Lucy is pictured alongside a bronze bust of George Fox in the Library of the Society of Friends.

You can find out more about the Library of the Society of Friends at [www.quaker.org.uk/library](http://www.quaker.org.uk/library)

Ed: There is a chapter devoted to Quaker research in *Introducing Nonconformist Records—Explaining Nonconformist Records for Family Historians* by Ian H Waller FSG FGRA, which is available from Family History Books [click here](#) for details.



# Family History Societies



**FHF REALLY USEFUL  
Family History Show**

**LIVE  
in 2024**

**Saturday 15 June 2024**

University of Nottingham, King's Meadow Campus,  
Lenton Lane, Nottingham NG7 2NR

Open 10am—4pm

## **Calling all societies...**

If you would like to book a stall at this event, please email:

[shopmanager2@notts fhs.org](mailto:shopmanager2@notts fhs.org)

Not for profit groups—free for one or two tables

Commercial exhibitors—£25 for two tables

*Join us in*

*Celebrating fifty years of the Family History Federation*

Stalls — Talks — Local advice

Free admission

Free on-site parking

On-site café

[www.fhf-reallyuseful.com](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com)

East Anglia **LIVE** Really Useful Show will be held on Saturday 20 April 2024

Full details last month—and on [www.fhf-reallyuseful.com](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com)

The Really Useful Bulletin welcomes contributions from all Federation member organisations.

It is opportunity to promote *your* society to the extensive Bulletin readership.



# Family History Societies



**East Surrey Family History Society**

## **THE FABULOUS VIRTUAL FAMILY HISTORY FAIR Saturday 27 January**

East Surrey FHS is proud to announce that it will again be hosting The Fabulous Virtual Family History Fair, using Zoom, on Saturday 27 January. Find further information and the links to register on our website at [www.eastsurreyfh.org.uk/](http://www.eastsurreyfh.org.uk/)

If you've not visited us before, we host 2 sessions on Zoom, morning and afternoon. We invite lots of other family history societies to join us and put each society into its own breakout room. This is a method of holding lots of little simultaneous meetings using Zoom.

We set up the meeting so you can take yourself around the different societies, just as if you were at a real fair. We even have a virtual pub where you can meet like-minded people to put the family history world to rights as well as a temperance café and the workhouse if you want to park yourself somewhere quiet to consider your next move. We have a designated room for the hard of hearing where we bring helpers to you so you don't have to keep explaining your needs and you are in a one-to-one situation with no noisy background.

And for the first time we will be joined by staff from the Surrey History Centre as well as representatives from the Guild of One-Name Studies.

We run training sessions beforehand so you can practise moving yourself around and we also teach you to screen share so you can produce your own documents for advice or maybe look at a map – in fact we try to do anything that can help you to get the best experience from your visit to our fair.

At our last fair we had societies from Scotland, East Anglia, the south west, home counties, the north west and others. Our most successful customer visited 6 different societies in one session and obtained answers to all her questions. Why not try to beat her record?

If your society has not signed up, it is not too late to book a room – the sooner the better to publicise your presence!



*Some of our dedicated band of researchers dealing with enquiries.*



**Dorset Family History Society**

## **OPEN WEEKEND AT DORSET FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY'S RESEARCH CENTRE**

**Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th February**

It's a new year and time for many to take up new pursuits or to resume old ones. For experienced family history researchers, anyone just thinking of researching their family tree or those who have started but need some helpful advice to continue their research, Dorset Family History Society is here to help at their Treetops Research Centre in Fleets Lane, Poole.

To give everyone the chance to see what the society has to offer they are holding an Open Weekend at

**Treetops Research Centre,  
Suite 5 Stanley House,  
Fleets Lane, Poole,  
BH15 3AJ**

**10am to 3pm**



*Inside the research centre*

The centre has access to all the major family history websites, parish register transcriptions for Dorset and miscellaneous information from other counties, monumental inscriptions, an extensive library and a sales area.

Experienced volunteers are available to give one-to-one help and guidance to everyone, not only those with Dorset ancestors but for wherever your ancestors came from. Both members of the society and non-members are welcome to call in.

Find Dorset FHS, a Registered Charity No 801504, on [www.dorsetfhs.org.uk](http://www.dorsetfhs.org.uk), FaceBook, X (formerly Twitter), phone us on 01202 785623 or email [contact@dorsetfhs.org.uk](mailto:contact@dorsetfhs.org.uk)



# Really Useful Bulletin

## The Proposed Destruction of Original Wills

by Richard Holt

### Bonkers, Barmy, Bananas

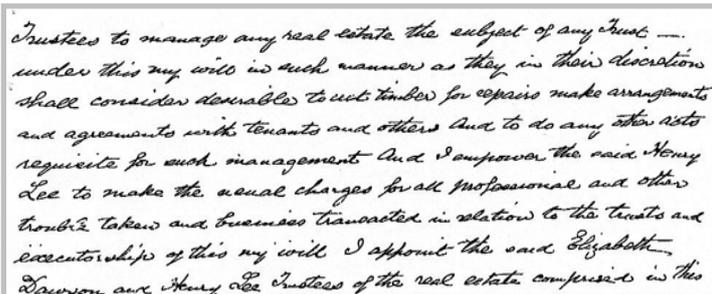
On 15 December 2023, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) published a consultation <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/storage-and-retention-of-original-will-documents> seeking views on the proposed destruction of post-1858 original wills and other documents. The MoJ also published a press release <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/easier-access-to-historic-wills-under-new-government-plans> on the same day, as well as sharing a video <https://x.com/MoJGovUK/status/1735642204809351595?s=20> on their social media accounts. The published information suggests that the estimated cost of ~£4.5m for the probate contract with Iron Mountain cannot be justified. As a result the MoJ is looking to digitise and then destroy millions of documents. This has been labelled as 'bonkers', 'barmy' and 'bananas', not to mention 'insane'.

Read on to find out what you can do to try and prevent the destruction of these documents.

### Does Digitisation = Preservation?

While I, for one, welcome digitisation as a means of access to original wills, it is **\*not\*** a method of preservation. Digital preservation is an entirely different matter and involves attempts to enable digital files to be available for as long as possible. The original documents cannot be preserved unless they are kept. Many of us have experienced the issues with the British Library following the cyber attack that occurred in October 2023. What would happen to probate documents should there be similar issues?

Those of us who use digital images of documents on a daily basis, for example via *Ancestry* or *FindMyPast*, know that digitisation projects are not infallible. Issues that we come across daily include pages or entire documents that have been missed, poor quality images and images that are incorrectly catalogued. This list is by no means exhaustive!



Extract from 1900 will in editor's personal collection.

### Digitisation: an infallible process?

In August 2023, I ordered a copy of a will that had been proved in 2022, so had been digitised under the current scheme for original wills that has been running since 2021. It is this same scheme that the MoJ is looking to extend to all wills. The original will I received was missing a page and the document had to be retrieved and rescanned. What would have happened had I not ordered the will until twenty-five years after it has been proved? The current proposals suggest that the original will would have been destroyed and thus the information that the page contained would have been lost forever.

Genealogist Jane Roberts ordered a soldier's will, but received the wrong document. Soldier's wills have all been digitised, but Jane uncovered what seemed to be an issue with the digitisation of a whole batch of soldier's wills. Iron Mountain responded to her by saying:

*... we are looking at rescanning the affected soldiers' wills and will correct yours in due time...*

### So how expensive is it to preserve the physical documents?

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the MoJ, Mike Freer, explained that

*genealogists, historians and amateur family archivists will be better able to access historic wills under [the] proposals...*

Unfortunately, some of the information provided does not seem to line up with other published information.

For example the costs of the probate contract are not in the region of ~£4.5m. Figures released by the MoJ in response to my Freedom of Information request show the following:

2022/23 = £3,692,899  
2021/22 = £3,435,533  
2020/21 = £3,627,597  
2019/20 = £3,191,070

These figures are, according to the MoJ, *annual spends for the contract as it stands*.

It's inaccurate to say that the costs rise each year, when this was not the case in 2021/22. Information released to another member of the public via Freedom of Information shows that the MoJ holds no information relating to *the annual costs... that will be required for the digitised system*.



# Really Useful Bulletin

It's very difficult to respond to the issue raised by the MoJ in relation to costs, or indeed the possible savings that will be made by keeping digital-only copies of documents. The MoJ is placing the responsibility for seeking alternatives to destruction of the documents on the public when it asks: *Are there any alternatives, involving the public or private sector, you can suggest to their being destroyed?*

## Who is currently responsible for the documents?

The responsibility for these records, in law, lies with the High Court. This law was formally expressed under the Public Records Act 1958, but was replaced by the Supreme Court Act 1981, Section 124. HMCTS, an executive agency of the MoJ, is responsible for probate documents which are housed by Iron Mountain at the Probate Records Centre in Birmingham.

I am no legal expert, but I believe the law would need to be changed or amended in order for these records to

- a) have responsibility for them passed to another organisation or
- b) destroyed.

Changing the law is definitely something that is being suggested by the MoJ consultation.

I am not certain how the Electronic Communications Act 2000 (ECA) provides the basis for digitising and then destroying documents that were originally created on paper or parchment. It was my belief that the ECA provided the legislative basis for creating a digital version of a communication or document that had only been previously made in physical form. I may have misunderstood this and welcome comments from others who may be more informed. I am aware that the MoJ is also looking into testators creating a will in digital format only. The *Law Society Gazette* reported in October 2023 that "electronic wills could become an immediate reality if parliament wishes."

## What can I do about the proposals?

There is much more that could be said on this issue, but here is what you can do make your views known. I would encourage you to do one or all of the following:

### 1. Respond to the consultation by 23rd February

Anyone, anywhere in the world can respond to the consultation. This is a worldwide issue! The proposals may affect people anywhere in the world with English and Welsh ancestry, as well as historical researchers in other countries. You can view the consultation documentation here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/storage-and-retention-of-original-will-documents> and respond to the address or email below:

### Write to:

Will Storage Consultation, Ministry of Justice,  
Postpoint 5.25,  
102 Petty France,  
London SW1H 9AJ

**Email:** [civil\\_justice\\_poli@justice.gov.uk](mailto:civil_justice_poli@justice.gov.uk)

### 2. Sign the petition

I created the petition as a way to let the Government know that original wills should be preserved. Not the digital files, the actual original documents! British citizens anywhere in the world can sign the petition, as well as UK residents. The Government will respond at 10,000 signatures and will consider the petition for debate in Parliament at 100,000 signatures. <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/654081>

### 3. Write to your MP

Write to your MP and share your views on the MoJ proposals.

### 4. Invite others to do the above

You could help raise awareness by inviting others to do the steps above by sharing via social media, email, text message and so on and so forth. Think of people you could personally send an invitation to, be they family members, friends or associates.

Please help us to #SaveOurWills.



**About the author:** Richard Holt is a professional genealogist who runs [Holt's Family History Research](https://www.familyhistoryresearch.co.uk). Prior to becoming a professional researcher, he worked in a number of schools as an early years teacher and senior leader. He has a deep-rooted belief that learning is a lifelong endeavour. Richard also tutors for Pharos Tutors, teaching their *Apprenticeship Records* and *Victorian Crime and Punishment* courses. He presents talks to family history societies, the Society of Genealogists and Legacy Family Tree webinars. Richard is an Associate of AGRA (Association of Genealogist and Researchers in Archives) and currently serves on their council as the associate representative. He is also the co-chair of AGRA's East of England network group, and chair of the marketing committee.

**The above article is by independent author Richard Holt.**

**The executive committee of the Family History Federation (FHF) supports the stance that there is no case for destruction of original wills.**

**Every FHF member society has been invited to comment to FHF to enable FHF to make a formal response.**

**Each individual family historian should take action.**

**Sign the petition now and respond to the Ministry of Justice by 23 February.**

**SAVE OUR WILLS!**



# Really Useful Bulletin

## News from the Federation

### Fiftieth Anniversary of the Federation



The celebrations include the Annual Meeting on 11 May which will be held at **Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission**, City Road, London with a special format.

There is to be a guided tour of the famous **Bunhill Fields Burial Ground** in the afternoon.

Each member society has been sent full details and invited to send representatives. Please ensure your society responds promptly to:

[admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com)

Also this year there are LIVE REALLY USEFUL Family History Shows, two are already confirmed.

**Come and join the celebrations!**

### Editorial Comment

It is sad to report closure of friendly and helpful family history societies (overleaf). Why are they closing? Because they cannot get people to take on roles!

This problem is not restricted to family history. We hear of other groups struggling to find volunteers for their committees, yet they have plenty of members.

Do you belong to a family history society? If so, get volunteering! If not, you should join either that near to where you live, or that in the area from which your forebears came.

Do please volunteer to support and help run your family history society. **You** could be key to it both continuing and flourishing.

### Calling Speakers

The Federation is updating the list of available speakers which is included on its website. This is a key link for groups to locate speakers on particular subjects—and equally for speakers to promote themselves! If you are a speaker and would like to be included, please email [admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com)

### Check the Date!

It is such a pity when key family history activities clash! We encourage all groups to put their dates onto GENEVA. It stands for genealogical events! Also, do check what is on GENEVA *before* fixing your local key meetings or events. GENEVA is part of GenUKI.

<http://geneva.weald.org.uk/>

### Join the Family History Federation

All groups concerned with family history, whether directly or indirectly, are welcome to join the Federation. Groups should have existed for at least twelve months, have a governing document, have at least ten members, and publish a journal or newsletter and/or run a website.

There are various membership types to suit groups in Britain or overseas, and also those which are within other umbrella organisations.

Full details of who can join, and how to apply, are on the website: <https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com/join> or email [admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com) to discuss what would suit your group best.



We look forward welcoming new members to the Family History Federation family.

**The door is always open!**

### Out and about

Here we are at the beginning of 2024 and planning to attend events to promote the Federation and its member groups, and also attend those local family history fairs when the bookshop will be included.

Confirmed for March are:



 7-9 March Creative Craft Show, Glasgow

14-17 March Creative Craft Show, Birmingham

 16 March The Family History Show, Malvern + bookshop

Book the dates—drop by our stand to say hello to our friendly volunteers. They love talking to family historians!



# Really Useful Bulletin

## News from the Federation

### Christmas Giveaways—the Results

Win both volumes of *Dating by Design*.  
Two chances to win!  
Simply send an email to above address.  
Put into the subject line: **By Design**

Win a copy of *How to Discover Your Family History using Free Resources*.  
Two chances to win!  
Simply send an email to above address.  
Put into the subject line: **Discover**

A collection of research aids. These titles plus a little extra added by the elves helping in the stockroom!  
Two collections to be won!  
Simply send an email to above address.  
Put into the subject line: **Collection**

Father Christmas himself will select books from the collection at Family History Books to make up your mystery parcel.  
Two to be won!  
Simply send an email to above address.  
Put into the subject line: **Mystery Parcel**

There was an amazing response to our Christmas Giveaways with over seven hundred entries from *Bulletin* subscribers. Those drawn at random have all been contacted. They are:

- Sally, West Sussex
- David, Hampshire
- David, Wales
- Anne, Derbyshire
- Dave, Gloucestershire
- Marion, Kent
- Kerry, Australia
- Sharon, Northern Ireland

Well done, everyone! Enjoy your winnings.



**CATHOLIC FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

Sadly this society has been dissolved due to lack of volunteers to run it. It was founded in 1983 and since that time has brought to light a large amount of material for family history research.

The Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society will now add the Catholic FHS material to its already substantial Catholic collection.

Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society—  
<https://mlfhs.uk/>

Sylvia Dibbs

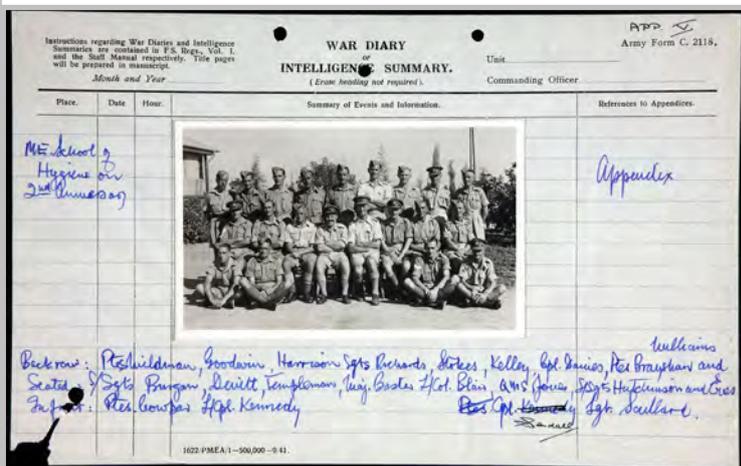


### FREE WEBINARS

The National Archives are running online family history webinars focusing on researching the military history of family members. They are free and include a live Q&A with the speaker at the end of the talk so attendees can ask any questions they would like relevant to the subject. The final two webinars in the series are below.

#### Family History: Using Prisoner of War Records Saturday 27 January 2024, 10:30

Discover all you need to get started researching ancestors who were taken as prisoners of war during the Second World War. You'll be introduced to POWs from across different theatres of war and some of the key records held by The National Archives. We'll cover records which relate to individuals as well as records about the administration of individual camps. Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/family-history-using-prisoner-of-war-records-tickets-753883153807?aff=oddtcreator>



*Middle East School of Hygiene second anniversary group photo, war diary 1941-45*

#### Family History: Using Second World War Army Records Saturday 3 February 2024, 10:30

Learn about records relating to army service including personnel records and operational records such as war diaries. Much of this material is available for the first time following the recent transfer of historic service personnel files from the Ministry of Defence to The National Archives. Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/family-history-using-second-world-war-army-records-tickets-753889522857?aff=oddtcreator>



# Really Useful Back Page

## Family History Research Aids from the Experts



Parish Chest, a service from the Family History Federation, has over sixty family history societies and some twenty-plus traders, at a one-stop online shop, offering a wide range of family history materials in some sixteen categories including:

- Parish register transcriptions and more from local FHS
- Memorial inscriptions information from gravestones across the country, compiled by local FHS
- Nonconformists: Baptists, Wesleyans, Independents, Quakers and many more nonconformist lists
- Wills and Probate Indexes of wills and administrations
- Folders, printing facilities, giftware
- ..and more!

Societies and suppliers regularly add new lines, so visit to see what is there to help you add to your family tree.

[www.parishchest.com](http://www.parishchest.com)

Societies and others interested in joining Parish Chest should initially contact:

[admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com)



# FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

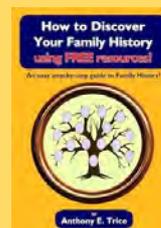
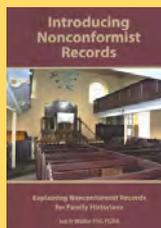
[www.familyhistorybooksonline.com](http://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com)

Family History Books (FHB) is an online bookshop and publisher; it is owned by the Family History Federation and the aim is to provide a service to the genealogical community. Family History Books offers a range of relevant titles relating to family history research.

FHB welcomes contact from authors! Works of general and specific interest to family historians with wider social history topics are of interest. FHB does not publish individual family histories or fiction. If you have a book in the making, then do contact FHB via

[admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com)

Recent publications include:



Please explore the range, and place your orders, at [www.familyhistorybooksonline.com](http://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com)

In addition to its [online shop](#) FHB can also be found at major live family history events around the country. Come and visit us and see all the latest titles available. The stall is always very popular!

Enjoy browsing whether online or at a live event!

## The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

Live shows 20 April and 15 June

Online 15 and 16 November

Please view [www.fhf-reallyuseful.com](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com) for full details



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