

Welcome to the current edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin*.
We hope this will provide you with ideas for your Family History.



We now have 21 speakers booked with more to be announced
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Really Useful Bulletin

Tracing your Scottish Ancestors—II

In last month's Really Useful Bulletin we looked at the basics of Scottish Genealogy research. This month we're going to dig a bit deeper and discover where to find the family stories!



Scottish Indexes



Kirk Session Records

I mentioned Kirk Session Records briefly in last month's issue; these are wonderful records and if they are not online by the time you are reading this, they should be soon. Kirk sessions oversee the local congregation and its parish, and usually consist of elders presided over by a minister. At the district level, the court is called a presbytery. The pre-1855 records are due to be added to scotlandspeople.gov.uk in 'early 2021'.

The records are varied and vast in scope. They can contain baptism, marriage and death records, discipline cases and poor fund disbursements among other gems. These records were kept by the parish along with the baptism, marriage and death registers. The main series of baptism, marriage and death registers were sent to Edinburgh during the 19th century and form the Old Parish Registers, or OPRs for short. The rest of the Kirk Session material was sent in much later and forms the Kirk Session records. In many parishes, however, the volumes that were used to record life events also contain the accounts for the parish or even discipline cases. This means that the delineation between these records is a bit blurry and sometimes we find vital records in the Kirk Session material, or Kirk Session minutes and accounts in the OPRs.

'Accounts' can be rather dull, but sometimes they can contain useful information such as record of 'Mort Cloth Money'. It was traditional to drape a cloth over the coffin at a funeral. Wealthy families may have had their own but most people would pay to borrow or hire the parish 'mortcloth'. In many parishes this record in the accounts is the only record of a person's death or burial.

The church was also concerned with moral discipline within the parish. For example here is an excerpt from Canonbie (Dumfriesshire) Kirk Session minutes dated 1737 (NRS reference CH2/1582/1/2 page 10). Much of the spelling is lifted straight from the original to give you a flavour of these records:

The Session being informed that several people sat drinking in the Alehouse all the afternoon sermon Sabbath last, amongst whom were Francis McIntosh in Boglegill and William Rutlidge in Forge, both in this parish. Appointed these two to be summoned to the Session to sit here Friday first.

Francis McIntosh in Boglegill and William Rutlidge in Iron Forge being summoned, called, compeared and being interrogated if they were in the Alehouse Sabbath was [at] seven [at] night in time of the afternoon sermon. Francis answered he was and was sorry for it, William Rutlidge owned he was there a while but came to sermon a little after it was begun but denied they were drunk. The session considering that it would be scarce possible to prove they were drunk and had quarreled in that day because all the rest of the company lived in England and the people of the house were at Church at the time except one servant maid, resolved that they should be rebuked before them (which was accordingly done) and intimation hereof to be made from the pulpit next Lord's day.

One of the most common reasons for consulting these records is when a person was born to an unmarried mother. In Scotland such a child was referred to historically as illegitimate. The church was very keen to make sure that the father took responsibility and that

the parents 'repented of their sin'. Here is an excerpt from Rerrick Kirk Session (Kirkcudbrightshire) from 17th May 1857 (NRS ref CH2/311/11):

*Rerrick Church 17th May 1857
Post-precassederunt The
Rev. Mr Thomson Mod
[erator] Messrs Bryce,
Ferguson and Edgar, Elders.*





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On which day Ann Kirk voluntarily appeared, having been exhorted to speak the truth and interrogated, declared that she had brought forth a child in uncleanness to Thomas Morrin producing a letter from she said Thomas Morrin in acknowledgement thereof. Whereupon she was rebuked and restored to Church privileges.

Although on the corresponding civil registration birth certificate of Willie Jemima Cowen Kirk in 1857 no father is named, the Kirk Session records give us the vital information—her father was Thomas Morrin.

These records are full of cases like this, some of them exceptionally detailed! Once added to ScotlandsPeople the records will be free to browse and you will only pay for an entry you wish to download; that's the good news. The bad news is that there will be no index. We'll all need to sharpen our traditional genealogy skills, reading through the records to find the hidden gems.



Scotland's Criminal Database

Most of us are descended not from wealthy landowners with long obituaries but from 'Ag Labs' and labourers. Despite their humble origins we want to discover more about their lives and those of their families. Ironically, perhaps it's when our ancestors were 'down and out' that we discover the most detailed records.



Prison Registers

Prison registers, for example, record not just the crime but a person's height and any identifying marks. During my research, I have found many prisoners described as 'marked with small pox'. Details such as these give an insight into their lives and the experiences they survived.

The most common crime was assault, followed by theft. Children as young as six years of age were committed to prison. If we take Jedburgh Prison in the Scottish Borders as an example, between 1843 and 1869 21.9% of the committals were for assault, 16.9% were for theft and 14.5% were for poaching. Discovering a criminal record doesn't mean your ancestor was a hardened criminal, but it could lead to some fascinating records.

High Court Records



As well as prison records we are indexing High Court and Sheriff Court records. You can now search over 175,000 Scottish criminal records on Scotland's Criminal Database and this data-set is growing rapidly right now. [<https://www.scottishindexes.com/ScotlandsCriminalDatabase.aspx>]

Some of the most detailed records are those of the High Court. The High Court of Justiciary (or the High Court as it is usually referred to) heard a great variety of cases. These cases were often for the more serious crimes. The Court also heard cases of repeat offenders as well as appeals from lower courts, such as the Sheriff Court. The High Court had the authority to impose harsher punishments, such as execution and transportation, but this did not always happen.

The records of High Court cases are very extensive and can be interesting and informative. If you are researching your Scottish family tree and your ancestor was brought before the High Court we would definitely recommend looking at the original paperwork.

The High Court building is in Edinburgh and that's what we may think of as the High Court. The Court, however, also travelled around Scotland and heard cases nearer to where the crimes were committed. This is known as the High Court on Circuit. If your ancestor committed a crime which was to be heard by the High Court, they may have had to wait until the court visited and the case would be heard then. This can mean a delay between the crime being committed and the case being heard.



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Precognition

A precognition was created before the trial.

Precognitions are made up of written evidence from witnesses and are very interesting as each person gives their perspective on the crime. The witnesses might be eyewitnesses of the crime, or may take the form of a statement from a doctor, police officer, or other person who is called to give evidence.



Minute books

Minute books, or the more detailed Books of Adjournal, when available, contain the record of the sittings of the High Court, telling us what actually happened on the day(s) in court. These are useful as they give us the timeline of the case and its outcome. Many of these records have been digitally imaged and are available through the Virtual Volumes system in the National Records of Scotland.



Trial Papers

Trial papers are likely to include the 'Criminal Libel' or 'Indictment' (a precise statement of the crime), evidence (sometimes physical), the declarations of the accused, as well as a list of jurors and other documents.



Poor Law Records

From 1579 to 1845 the Kirk Sessions and the heritors of each parish were responsible for assisting the poor in the parish. We most often find these records within the Kirk Session records which are held by the National Records of Scotland. [These are expected to be added to ScotlandsPeople in early 2021] Some are also found within the Heritors records, again most of these are held by the National Records of Scotland.

The Poor Law (Scotland) Act 1845 established parochial boards in rural parishes and in the towns, and a central Board of Supervision in Edinburgh. This system was in place until 1930 and the records are generally held by local authorities around Scotland. A few are held by the National Records of Scotland. It should be noted that although the Poor Law (Scotland) Act was passed in 1845 not all areas switched to the new system right away.

The term 'Poorhouse', rather than 'Workhouse' was generally used in Scotland to refer to a place of accommodation for the destitute poor. The reason for this is that unlike in England and Wales residents were not usually required to 'work'.

Poorhouses (or almshouses) have existed in Scotland for centuries, but it wasn't until the Poor Law (Scotland) Act 1845 that they began to spring up all over Scotland with over 70 being constructed throughout Scotland between 1845 and 1930. Following the Poor Law Act in 1845, the poorhouses that were built served a number of parishes ('poor law unions') and were called 'combination' poorhouses.

A person sent to a poorhouse was said to be receiving 'Indoor Relief'. A person who remained at home but was given money, food or clothing etc. was said to be receiving 'Outdoor relief'.

Surviving Records

Most post-1845 Poor Relief Registers are held in local council archives. There are some notable indexes which can be very useful:

Paisley Poor Law indexes: <https://libcat.renfrewshire.gov.uk/iguana/www.main.cls?url=PoorLaw>

East Lothian Poor Law records: www.johngraycentre.org/collections/archive-collections-2/poor-law-records/

North Lanarkshire, Scotland, Poor Law Applications and Registers, 1849-1917: www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/61702/

Wigtownshire Poor Law Index: Coming soon to www.scottishindexes.com

Glasgow Poor Law applications: Coming soon to www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/city-archives



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Scottish Archives

The primary archive we use as genealogists in Scotland is the National Records of Scotland (NRS). As well as being the home of ScotlandsPeople, they also care for most civil and criminal court records, church records, property records and a great variety of other records. The NRS has an excellent catalogue

<http://catalogue.nrscotland.gov.uk/nrsonlinecatalogue/search.aspx> and some very useful research guides www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides

The Scottish Archive Network catalogue (SCAN) is often my second port of call after the NRS catalogue. Although this catalogue is not as detailed it does catalogue records from throughout Scotland held in a variety of archives. www.scan.org.uk/aboutus/indexonline.htm

The National Register of Archives for Scotland (NRAS) also has an online catalogue. This catalogue was created following surveys of records held in private hands. The Register now contains over 4,200 surveys of private papers including the records of landed estates, private individuals, businesses, law firms and societies. <http://catalogue.nrscotland.gov.uk/nrasregister/search.aspx>

The Discovery catalogue from The National Archives can also be very useful: <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Some archives have their own online catalogue, most recently the Highland Archive Service online catalogue launched their online catalogue <https://archives.hIGHLIFEHIGHLAND.COM/calmview/default.aspx>

Sometimes, however, there is not a catalogue online and it is therefore necessary to send the archive a friendly email to ask what records they may have to assist with your research. When you do this, try to keep your email concise, this will be of great help to the archive who may receive hundreds of emails a week!



There are some real treasures to be found. For example in the Scottish Borders Archive in Hawick, there are volumes concerning accidents and unexplained deaths in Roxburghshire, created by Roxburghshire County Police in the late 19th century. This entry touched me, and without this volume we may never have learnt about:

"August 1886

Cart Accident - Not Fatal

Charles Blyth

This boy aged 5 years son of and residing with Alice Blyth a Hawker Kirk Yetholm got his left leg broken in two places above the knee and sustained other bruises by hanging on to the hind board of a cart which was being driven through Kirk Yetholm by James Martin son of James Martin Farmer residing there and throwing up his leg trying to get into the cart, in so doing his leg was caught in the wheel & he was carried twice round before the cart stopped.

Dr Forbes Yetholm attended this boy and set his leg & states that it is impossible at present to estimate the extent of injury sustained but says that he seems to be very badly hurt. Robert Service Pig dealer and William Stenhouse Farmer both residing in Kirk Yetholm saw the accident."

Although you will not find police records surviving for every county, you will find fascinating records in all archives, you just have to search for them!



Discover more

Throughout the COVID pandemic, we have been hosting a series of free conferences. Our **9th Conference** will be held on 20 March 2021. See www.scottishindexes.com to register.

We are also delighted to be hosting a conference for the **Scottish Association of Family History Societies (SAFHS)** which will be held on Saturday 17 April 2021 www.safhs.org.uk.

The Scottish Association of Family History Societies

Free event
Six presentations
Genealogy Q&A

safhs.org.uk

SAFHS Virtual Conference 17 April 2021

Scottish Charity Number: SC029006



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Help needed with Transcriptions



The Coram, the UK's oldest children's charity, is needing the help of family historians.

The Coram has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to digitise a major portion of their archive dating back to before 1739. This project is called [Voices Through Time: The Story of Care](https://coramstory.org.uk).

<https://coramstory.org.uk>

This is their request...

How can you help?

We are on the hunt for people passionate about the past and the story of care to volunteer to help us transcribe these precious records. We are digitising over 100,000 pages of these from Coram's Foundling Hospital, covering the years 1741-1908. These include letters from mothers appealing for their children to be admitted to the Hospital, fabric tokens that they left as a symbol of their connection to their children, and the details of the everyday lives of children cared for there.

This is a remote volunteering opportunity and the time commitment is completely flexible. We are using the online crowd-sourcing research platform Zooniverse.

We would love you to share this voluntary opportunity with your network, be that on your social channels, email communications or newsletters. We have more information and a number of social assets we can share if these would be of use to you. The volunteering opportunity can be found here: <https://coramstory.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-with-us/become-a-transcriber>

This is a great opportunity to help bring history to life and broaden access to this unique collection.

Because of the current fragile and vulnerable condition of some of the records, it's not easy for people to access them. With volunteers' transcriptions, the records can be brought to life for new audiences who will be able to view them online for free on our website: <https://coramstory.org.uk>

This will offer new and exciting opportunities for people to discover more about the Foundling Hospital and the lives of children in care in the past.





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A LEGACY OF LANTERN SLIDES, TICKETS, BUTTONS AND MUCH MORE

To most who read this, the name of **Wilfred Edwin Hayward** will mean nothing. However, as the story unfolds you will see that he left a wonderful legacy for anyone interested in railways be it those researching an ancestor who worked on the system or for those who hold a childhood passion for steam railways. His legacy is known as the W E Hayward Collection held in part at the National Archives, Kew and part at the National Railway Museum, York.



Wilfred was born in Stoke Newington London in 1889 to George & Emily Beatrice Hayward. He was baptised on 20 October 1889 in the parish of West Hackney. His father was a civil servant - a school inspector. Wilfred married Jessie Dawe in 1934 and followed a career as an engineer. He died in Weston-super-Mare on 22 May 1968. But this is not where the story ends: in fact it is perhaps where it really begins.

By 1900 his father's work required the family move to the West Country, settling in Weston-super-Mare, and at the age of ten, Wilfred was photographed standing in front of a railway carriage at Bideford quay prior to the opening of the Bideford, Westward Ho and Appledore Railway.

Wilfred's father died in 1902. In 1906 his mother tried, unsuccessfully, to secure an engineering apprenticeship for him with the locomotive departments of various major railway companies. His applications were rejected by the Chief Mechanical Engineers of the Great Western, London and South Western, Great Eastern and Great Northern Railways.

Official form from Locomotive Carriage and Wagon Department, Doncaster Works, Great Northern Railway, dated 6 February...

W E Hayward Collection. File of magazine cuttings, booklets, photographs, maps etc. relating to Great Northern Railway and London... Official form from Locomotive Carriage and Wagon Department, Doncaster Works, Great Northern Railway, dated 6 February 1906 to Mrs E B Hayward detailing the terms for apprentices. With typed note on

Held by: The National Archives, Kew - British Transport Historical Records Office library: publications
Date: February 1906
Reference: ZSPC 11/533/11
Subjects: Labour | Maps and plans | Personal and family papers | Railways

He did, however, serve an engineering apprenticeship with Avonside Engine Company in Bristol, after which he was involved with research and development of the locomotives produced by Avonside. Avonside were established manufacturers developing the early broad gauge GWR engines (before Wilfred's time) later producing the Fairlie engines used on the Ffestiniog railway and the 4-6-0 tender locomotives and the saddle tanks used on GWR branch lines and for industrial and dock shunting purposes and later the whole network.

Little is known about his subsequent working life but in 1931 he lost his left eye in a metal piercing accident which led to his early retirement. From this point on he devoted himself to further building his already growing collection of railway memorabilia and ephemera. An article in the *Weston-super-Mare Mercury* says that Wilfred did not begin to organise the collection in its present form until 1941 although he hoped to do so as early as 1925.

Avonside Engine Company, two blueprints (see ZSPC 11/447 page 9 and ZSPC 11/446B/106); 1) Full...

W E Hayward Collection. File containing photographs, magazine cuttings, etc. relating to the Avonside Engine Company and its successor... Avonside Engine Company, two blueprints (see ZSPC 11/447 page 9 and ZSPC 11/446B/106); 1) Full size drawing of worksplate for works No 1741 [0-6-0 saddle tank locomotive No 24, built 1916 for Mersey

Held by: The National Archives, Kew - British Transport Historical Records Office library: publications
Date: 1916
Reference: ZSPC 11/448/54
Subjects: Canals and river transport | Personal and family papers



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It is this vast collection which will be of importance to any railway enthusiast or researcher. Wilfred spent over sixty years of his life collating the material. Interestingly, a large part of the collection is held by the National Archives at Kew, which is considered unusual. TNA is normally recognised as the repository for government, military and court records rather than for a private collection so one wonders why they have it. Although TNA hold masses of records for private railway companies they do so because of the evolution of the organisations becoming part of the nationalised railways under Government jurisdiction of 1948. Not so for the Hayward material which does supplement and enhance the TNA holdings. Some elements of the vast collection are today deposited with the National Railway Museum at York, so I ask the question why was it split and why is it not all at York?

Wilfred appears to have been proud of his unique collection and after approaches to various institutions, it was agreed, in 1957, that he would deposit it with the British Transport Historical Record Office.

This collection is an extensive series of books, magazines, cuttings, photographs, timetables, maps, letters and tickets etc. The main subject is railway history but there are also books concerning the mines in Cornwall, canals and steamers.

The deposit, known as the **W E Hayward Collection** when deposited with the British Transport Historical Records Office, was subsequently allocated the reference SPC 11. The prefix Z was added by TNA and implies that the contents consist of published, or 'library', material but in the case of the Hayward collection, that isn't completely true. Some artefacts in the collection including clothing, buttons, cutlery and crockery were transferred initially to the Transport Museum at Clapham and when the railways were privatised in the mid-90s the collection was subsequently transferred to the National Railway Museum, York (part of the Science Museum). Wilfred also had his own somewhat complex system of referencing (perhaps indicative of someone with an engineering background!) which can also be used to pin point information.

Some of the paper documents are original records; letters from railway companies, filled out railway forms and returns, and letters between Hayward and the

railways and other collectors which also provide a further insight about Hayward himself and the world in which he lived.

The TNA referencing system does not apply to the deposits held by the National Railway Museum.

The TNA hold in series ZSPC11 Hayward's railway library of 289 books and more than 420 binders and albums of collected material consisting of 40,000 documents, 30,000 cuttings, 15,000 tickets and 19,000 photographs and postcards. Cataloguing of the collection is nearing completion but this process has taken a small team of volunteer enthusiasts a few years to reach this stage.



Hayward collated and mounted material in binders. He cut articles and illustrations from newspapers and magazines which were relevant to the railways he encountered and assembled them separately for each railway company, at the same time adding photographs, tickets and other memorabilia. With few exceptions there is for each railway a section of general history articles, sections describing the route (s), locomotives and rolling stock.

There are three binders containing the correspondence about the deposit including the codicil to his will by which he made the bequest. Correspondence also indicates that he was a generous collector frequently offering payment for material



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supplied to him. He formed relationships with many railwaymen, who would pass him items no longer used by the railway. He donated to various railway benevolent institutions.

He also had contacts with many other avid railway collectors. Amongst them was T R Perkins, a pharmacist of Henley-in-Arden, who during his life had ridden every railway line in the British Isles. He gave Wilfred artefacts from his own collection, including many photographs.

The W E Hayward Collection Arrangement at TNA

For minor and small railways in England

Details about locomotives and general railway techniques, construction and administration

Industrial railways (collieries, iron works etc), overseas railways and locomotive building companies

For major railways in England; Scotland; Ireland and Wales

Underground, and unusual railways, three of the 'Big Four' grouped railways 1923–1948, Nationalised British Railways.

The approximate dates of material cover the period from c1831 to time of his death (and sometimes a little later).

The collection is arranged by case (CASE) which presumably relates to the way in which Wilfred originally sorted his files. Case would probably relate to a book case or shelf in a cupboard containing a series of files or binders in different colours identified by various letters. Full details exist in the Discovery catalogue under series ZSPC11.

Hayward's 'Weh-Lyn' Collection at the National Railway Museum

The National Railway Museum, York, holds a collection of Hayward's 2,265 lantern slides dating from around 1920 to 1950s featuring scenic publicity photographs of places served by the railways. There are images of Yorkshire, East Anglia, Lincolnshire, Scotland, Northumberland, Durham and the Isle of Man. Some are formed into lantern slide lectures including one about the original Queen Street Railway Museum, York, founded by the North Eastern Railway. There are also images of Horwich Railway Works. The lantern slides are accompanied by scripts used in lectures. The collection is available for consultation by special request.

The Hayward Button Collection

The Collection of railway uniform buttons, collected by W E Hayward during the 1950s, representing minor and major pre and post grouping companies, electric - London Transport, British Railways and miscellaneous items. This collection could be used to identify the uniforms of ancestors and determine which company they would have been employed by.

Family History Societies



An active, friendly Society that normally holds meetings at five group centres in Suffolk plus a group in West London.

We can dispense local knowledge and research advice.

We transcribe and sell baptism, marriage and burial (3rd Edition just released) CDs and digital downloads. The Society publishes the quarterly *Suffolk Roots* journal to members. We also offer various search services.

Visit our updated website for details, and information on our Zoom talks.

How to join: Go via our website <http://suffolkfhs.org.uk>,

FaceBook <https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkFamilyHistorySociety/>

Contact membership@suffolkfhs.org.uk to join the Society.

Go to a Group meeting (when they resume!)



Family History Societies



Dorset FHS research centre, Treetops, has remained closed while we continue to live under Covid restrictions, but we are pleased to announce the opportunity for you to discuss your research and seek some assistance from one of our research volunteers by either Zoom or telephone. Our volunteers, working from home, will be able to discuss your research with you and use our digital resources to help you move forward.

Zoom or telephone sessions lasting up to a maximum of one hour are offered on a one-to-one basis.

To take part:

Book your zoom chat or telephone call in advance by using the Email form on **Contact Us** and choosing Enquiries from the dropdown list

A fee of £3 per session is payable via our online shop.

Please note that this is not a replacement for our research service.

Dorset FHS now has gift vouchers available on its website, so why not buy one to share the joys of researching family history with a friend or relative. They can be used to purchase anything in our online shop, like books, maps, CDs, membership or research. The voucher can be used as part payment for more expensive items but no change will be given from the voucher.

Full details of how to redeem the voucher will be provided upon purchase.

www.dorsetfhs.org.uk



We are very excited to share our latest news! Hampshire Genealogical Society (HGS) has launched a new group for our international members. Our membership stretches across the globe and, since our group meetings became 'virtual', we noticed we were being joined by members from Australasia and the Americas who have attended the talks regardless of the time where they live! We therefore thought it was time that our international associates were offered their own meetings. We realise that time zones will have an effect on these meetings so, to alleviate this situation, we are going to alternate the timings of when we meet: a Saturday morning for our Australasia affiliates and, for Stateside, an evening meeting. Where meetings can be recorded we will make these available to the other members at a suitable time.

The programme for this group primarily will comprise talks about the history, geography and cultures of Hampshire with reference to past events that have occurred in our county. We will also have talks that reflect the records available generally in England and Wales.

Having emailed our members abroad and invited them to register their interest in these meetings, we have received a very enthusiastic response. Details of speakers and dates can be found on our website <https://www.hgs-familyhistory.com/> and our first meeting was on Saturday 6th February 2021 and the next one is on Saturday 7th April 2021

**Come and chat to Dorset FHS and Hampshire GS at
the FHF REALLY USEFUL Family History Show**

**For more exhibitors see the website
www.fhf-reallyuseful.com**



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GREAT OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW...

A VIRTUAL BRANCH

By Pam Chambers. LWMFHS Virtual Branch Host

The inaugural meeting of the **London Westminster & Middlesex Family History Society's** Virtual Branch took place on Zoom on Thursday 22nd October 2020 at 8pm. We were delighted to attract 80+ members from all corners of the United Kingdom, not to mention the world! Our speaker, Rob Kayne, informed, entertained and educated us with an excellent talk about 'Old London Bridge: The One With The Houses On Top'.

At our Executive Committee meeting held at the end of August we concluded that, in the current situation, the chances of our physical branch meetings resuming soon were minimal. It was suggested the possibility of holding a Zoom meeting be investigated. Within a week we had set up a 'Zoom team' of four people. An intense few weeks followed as they grappled with the complexities - or so it seemed - of this new medium. The unknowns of scheduling a meeting, inviting people to attend, sharing the screen with the speaker, controlling the event so that everyone enjoyed it, and much more began to make sense. We held practice sessions with the remaining members of the committee as the audience. Each member of the 'Zoom team' took on a specific role: hosting the session, admitting the audience, recording the meeting; and on the evening we had a 'running schedule' to keep everything to time.

Our reward? The very positive response we had from members when they received their invitation to "register their interest". Clearly, this was something they wanted. New members joined the Society in order to attend, and in these days when much we do is now online, they could do so right up to the start of the meeting at 8pm. As the meeting opened many unfamiliar, smiling, faces appeared rapidly on the screen. We tried to welcome each individual just as we would at our branches. "I've been a member for 12 years and this is the first time I've been able to attend a meeting," commented one lady. For participants in the USA and Canada the meeting occurred earlier in the day; for those in Australia and New Zealand, it was nearly the next day. Recognising the problems that these time differences create, we held a scheduled meeting the following morning at 10am to show the recording of Rob's talk.

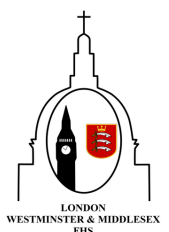
The Virtual Branch is now part of our Society. Meetings will take place on the second Thursday of each month with talks starting at 20.00 (GMT/BST). The only requirement for attending is that you are a member of the Society and have registered your interest in the meetings. A few days before each meeting members receive an invitation containing the Zoom link – they just need to click on the link to join in!

We aim to offer a varied programme. If you would like to offer a talk or suggest future speakers, please contact the Virtual Branch by email at: virtualbranch@lwmfhs.org.uk. Over time, we hope that our 'little acorn' will become a 'great oak'!

The next meetings planned for our Virtual Branch are as follows

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Thursday 11 March | <i>From Lunatic Asylum to the Old Bailey: what did your ancestor really get up to?</i> by Hilary Blanford |
| Thursday 8th April | <i>Introduction to DNA for Family Historians</i> —Mia Bennett |

**Come and chat to London Westminster & Middlesex FHS at
the FHF REALLY USEFUL Family History Show**





Really Useful Bulletin



It is estimated that three million Britons lived and served in India during the time of British presence on the sub-continent, and it is not surprising that many family historians have discovered that they have ancestors who spent some, or all, of their lives in the British Empire's 'Jewel in the Crown'.

The **Families in British India Society**, or FIBIS for short, is the leading family history organisation focusing on assisting genealogists to research ancestors who lived in India. FIBIS was established as a charity in 1998 and membership has grown to well over 1400 people worldwide.

FIBIS has a Board of Trustees that normally meets at regular intervals at the British Library and holds two open meetings every year in London, with speakers on a range of interesting subjects.

Recently, all meetings have been held on Zoom, and, when normality resumes, we will continue to make all our meetings available in this way, in response to the interest of members in other parts of the UK and overseas who have been able to participate.

FIBIS also attends events such as *Family Tree Live* and *The Genealogy Show* as well as smaller family history shows around the UK.

In addition, we hold weekend conferences – the last one was in Oxford in 2019 when our speakers included not only a variety of experts but also two guest speakers whose ancestors lived in India – newsreader Jan Leeming and actress Diana Quick. The conference was so successful that we are planning another at the same venue in October 2021, details of which will be shortly available.

Our website at www.fibis.org is of primary importance and includes a database of nearly 2 million names, a collection of well over 3000 photographs, the Fibiwiki - an encyclopaedia about life in British India - and a shop where you can buy our publications.

HOW TO JOIN

FIBIS has four types of membership – For UK members the annual cost is £15, European £16, Overseas £17 and Paperless £12 (a PDF of the Journal rather than a paper copy). For further information visit <https://www.fibis.org/fibis-membership/>



Why not visit the FHF REALLY USEFUL Family History Show and talk to FIBIS about your research as they are one of the many family history societies who will be there.

**For more exhibitors see the website
www.fhf-reallyuseful.com**



Really Useful Bulletin



FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

www.familyhistorybooksonline.co.uk



Order *Introducing Family History 2nd Edition* and *War Memorials (a guide for Family Historians)* plus receive *The Family Bible: A priceless heirloom* **FREE**.

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There are more organisations than ever featuring on Parish Chest. The content of Parish Chest already has a good base upon which to increase quantity, quality and type of information on offer and includes some of the following and much more:

- *Parish Registers Transcriptions of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and much 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*

So head on over to www.parishchest.com to see what is new to help you add to your family tree.

Paid Post: Online Social Media and Publicity Officer

The Federation is looking for an Online Social Media and Publicity Officer.

The role is to promote the Family History Federation and our member organisations via social and printed media. The candidate must have computer literacy and technical skills associated with media campaigns and will ideally have some family history experience. Experience of organising international marketing campaigns is desirable.

Attention to detail is a vital aspect of the position. An hourly consultancy fee will be paid.

The work is expected to take around 40 hours a month.

Interested? Email chairman@familyhistoryfederation.com with your CV



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