



FAMILY HISTORY Federation

Supporting Family Historians since 1974

REALLY USEFUL Bulletin No 54

February 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin*
inside find...

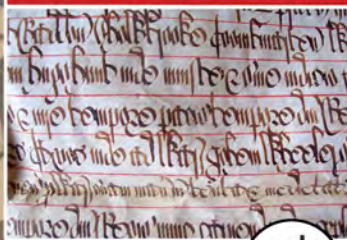
Lead article is **BOATMEN ANCESTORS**
plus DNA and news from local FHS and from the Federation

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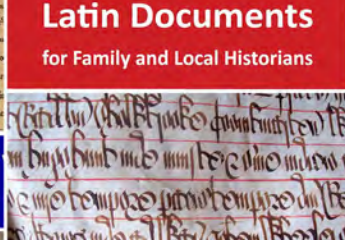
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Boatmen Ancestors

by Dr Wendy Freer

If you have found boatmen in your family history research, the chances are that they came to light through an entry in the census of England and Wales. The census is a good starting place for tracking down ancestors, but in the case of boatmen it does have certain drawbacks and there are other sources of information which may help you to fill in some of the gaps. This article aims to let you know about them, where they can be found and also give you a flavour of the lives lived by these people.

Types of boatmen and boats

Firstly, the term boatman as an occupation can mean a number of things. It might be a man (and there were also women but we will come to them shortly) working on a horse-drawn canal boat, delivering coal or other heavy bulk cargoes. He might be travelling the length and breadth of the country or just working locally. It might mean a man working on a large river or estuary, sometimes referred to as flatmen, watermen, keelmen or lightermen.

The Royal Commission on Labour of 1892 devoted a whole section to inland waterways and showed what a variety of boats could be found on them, especially on larger rivers and estuaries. On the river Trent for example, working boats ranged from large steam-powered and sailing vessels in the lower stretches, through various types of barge and lighter to the smaller narrow boats that would have made short appearances on the upper reaches of the river. Old photographs show that three-masted schooners could reach Gainsborough under tow by steam tug. Humber keels and sloops, sailing barges, lighters and short trains of barges towed by steam tug were all to be seen on the river in the second half of the nineteenth century. Unlike canals, towpaths on rivers did not allow horses at first and it was common for vessels to be "bow-hauled" by men, and sometimes women.

Lightermen

Strictly speaking, a lighterman operated an open flat-bottomed boat and was employed loading and unloading



ships anchored in harbours. Their boats had no cabins or proper shelter so they did not live on board. Their working conditions were harsh and the need to fit their work around tides and shipping schedules meant that they often worked very long hours and even slept on the dockside. The Royal Commission on Labour of 1892 interviewed several lightermen working in the Humber and Mersey estuaries and they gave vivid accounts

of their working practices and conditions.

Many lightermen were employed on a casual basis. This meant that they were not guaranteed work from one day to another and before 1890 could be laid off at a moment's notice. They often had to wait long hours, unpaid, to catch the tide or wait for ships. The hours of work were nominally twelve, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., but after finishing their shift they were obliged to go back to the office in order to receive orders for the following day. Sometimes the lighter would be some distance from the office at the end of the work period and quite often, even when they did get back, they would be kept waiting for several hours before being told whether or not there would be any work for them the next day. This sometimes extended the time on duty to fifteen hours or more.

In addition to this, the lightermen were required to undertake something called "tide work". This might start at 9 pm or midnight and go on until the early hours of the next day. When the work was finished there would be insufficient time to go home and get back to the depot in time to start work at 6 am. The men would therefore hang about on the quay until the start of the shift.

River boatmen

On large rivers such as the Thames, Trent, Humber, Mersey and Severn, larger boats of various types could be found. These were crewed mainly by men, but in 1892, Thomas Fawcett, a keelman on the Trent, said that it was becoming more common for a captain to take his wife and children on board as crew. Other boatmen said that men sometimes took their families with them during the summer but that they did not form part of the crew.



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Larger vessels could obviously offer better accommodation to the boatman, and his family if present. On Trent barges, there was a cabin at the stern where the captain slept and a smaller one in the bow for the mate. The Newark Heritage Barge, a floating museum inside a real Trent barge moored at Newark, shows exactly what life was like on these vessels.

Canal boatmen

Even on canals there were different types of boats and boatmen with different ways of working. Some canals had broad locks, 14ft wide or occasionally wider than that. These could obviously accommodate wider boats, or two narrow boats side by side. On many canals, especially in the Midlands, locks were quite narrow, about 7ft wide, built to conserve water. This was not in any way a consideration for the planet, but the only way in hillier districts that a canal could keep enough water in its pounds to allow boats to pass.

Narrowboats were the most commonly found boat on the canal system. In the nineteenth century they were towed by horses, although experiments with steam-driven vessels were beginning by the end of the nineteenth century and diesel driven motor boats began to appear in the early twentieth century.

Flyboats were the “express service” of the canals. They carried perishable and valuable goods, anything that needed to be got to its destination relatively quickly. Flyboats were towed by horses but frequent changes of horse were the key to faster speeds along with an all-man crew that could work around the clock. This was achieved by having four men on board; two to operate the boat while two slept, although for much of the time all four were probably required to work the boat, especially through a long flight of locks. Although these men slept on board, they did not live there permanently. They would have had homes “on the bank” where their families lived and to which they too returned at the end of a set of trips. They were mostly better paid than men on the slow boats and so could afford a slightly better standard of living.

The so-called slow boats made up the main carrier force of the canals. They carried coal, stone, timber, cheese, pottery and many other heavy bulk goods. Some of the

men working on these boats also had homes “on the bank” where at least some of their family members lived. In some cases, this was because the boats were carrying local traffic and so were never far from home, allowing men to return most nights. On long-distance boats men were required to sleep on board in the tiny cabins at the rear. Even then, in some districts it was the practice for a man to

work a boat with a mate, often his son, and leave the rest of the family at home. But in many cases men did live permanently on board with their families. The reason for this was that, even where a man was employed by a carrying company, he was required to find and pay a crew. He would be paid at a rate which took this into consideration, but if he took his wife and children aboard and used them as the crew, all the money

stayed in the family. The captain, also known as the steerer, was usually a man but could sometimes be a woman, especially during the time of both World Wars. When narrow boats with engines began to be used, they would often tow a boat without an engine, known as a butty. It was common for the man of the family to operate the motor boat and his wife to steer the butty.

A narrowboat cabin was tiny – about 8ft long by 6ft wide. It would contain a small double bed for the man and wife, a single bed for a crew member or for children, a cupboard with a dropdown door which formed a folding table, and a stove for cooking and heating. Other cupboards were fitted in around the cabin. There were no other facilities on board. For a toilet, use a bucket or the hedge. Water came from wells along the way, or the canal itself, although in the late nineteenth century standpipes began to appear. No washing or laundry facilities were provided by the canal companies, even on the bank, until the 1960s.

For those families who lived permanently on board, children were usually born in the cabin. Keeping a baby or toddler safe on a moving canal boat wasn't easy and small toddlers were usually tied to the roof where mother could keep a hand on them whilst steering. The cabin wasn't safe for small children when the boat was moving as the stove was always alight and a kettle of hot water would usually be sitting on the hob. This and other hazards of canal life led to plenty of accidents and a high death rate, especially among children.



1923 blockade by striking employees of Fellows, Morton and Clayton – photographer unknown



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One of the biggest problems with bringing up children on boats was their schooling because the boats were constantly moving from place to place. The Board of Education began to address this problem in the later part of the nineteenth century but made no provisions. Canal boat children were supposed to attend the nearest elementary school whenever the boat tied up and you can imagine how ineffective that was. From the 1820s canal missionaries began to appear. They provided mission rooms for the itinerant boating population who were felt to be in particular need of spiritual help because they worked on Sundays and so could not usually attend church. Some of these missions also provided welfare facilities and even schools, although the children could still attend only for short periods when the boats were tied up nearby.

Time and space do not permit me to go into great detail about the lives of the floating canal population here, but there are plenty of books which can tell you more, including my own. I will give more details at the end of this article.

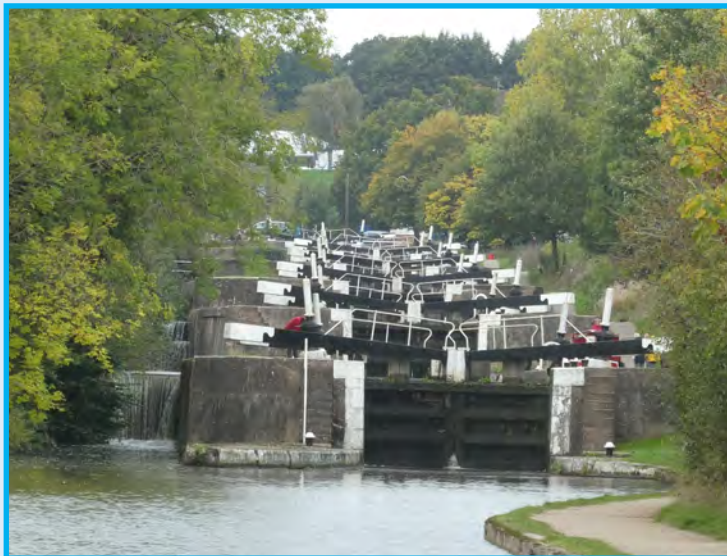
Tracing boat families

Families who lived aboard can be particularly difficult to track down. Census enumerators were not required to collect details of people sleeping on inland boats, sheds and hedges until 1861, although they were supposed to be counted in the totals. A few enumerators did take note of people on boats at the end of their books even before 1861, despite it not being a requirement, but boat families could also be missed even after that date.

Canal Boat Register of 1795

To assist with tracking down boatmen, two other main sources can be helpful although they can be hard to find and incomplete. The earliest is the Register of Boats created as a result of an Act of Parliament passed in 1795. This Act required *“all Boats, Barges, and other Vessels, of certain Descriptions, used on Navigable Rivers, and on Inland Navigations, in Great Britain, to be registered”*. It specified that all inland vessels capable of carrying more than thirteen tons, excluding pleasure craft, should be registered with the local authority in which the vessel usually worked or in which the master lived. As well as the register itself, kept by the local authority, a certificate was issued to the owner of the boat or his agent. The purpose of the Act was to allow the government to assess how many boats and boat crew might be available to assist in the war with France. For this reason, the local authority was required to extract details from the register and send them to the Commissioners of the Admiralty.

The registers cover only a limited period as it was not



Hatton Locks, Warwickshire © Rob Farrow CC-BY-SA-2.0

envisaged that the need to have such an assessment would continue indefinitely. It covered all boats in existence during 1795 and those appearing afterwards up to 5th April 1798, *“and from thence until the End of the then next Session of Parliament, and no longer”*. This gave an effective expiry date of 27th August 1799. However, it has been found that in a few cases, registration did continue for longer.

The registers contain the following information:

- ◆ type of vessel and its tonnage
- ◆ name of the master(s) and their “place or places of abode”
- ◆ number of men employed on the vessel and in what capacity (e.g. assistant to master, horse driver)
- ◆ waterway upon which the vessel normally operated
- ◆ the places navigated from and to, and the distance between them.

The certificate issued to the individual also contained a unique identifier for the vessel, i.e. a name or number, the county or place of registration and was signed and dated by the local issuing officer.

Unfortunately, not all registers have survived and the certificates, because they were issued to individuals, are even less likely to still exist. The Admiralty records also seem not to have survived.

Surviving registers are now preserved in local record offices, usually in the Quarter Sessions section. Here is a list of those I have found, through online searches, to hold such registers. Where available I have also given the catalogue reference but it is also worth doing a search in the “match any of the words” field, where there is one, for *boats barges*.



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- ◆ Bristol Record Office: 05077
- ◆ Cheshire Archives and Local Studies: QDN 4
- ◆ Derbyshire Record Office: Q/RM/3/1
- ◆ Devon Archives, South West Heritage Trust: QS/70/1
- ◆ Gloucestershire Heritage Hub: Q/RR/1 The online entry for this record gives the names of the masters whose boats are listed.
- ◆ Hull History Centre: C BRE/3/1
- ◆ Lancashire Record Office: QDV/16
- ◆ Record Office for Leicestershire Leicester & Rutland: QS49
- ◆ Middlesex: <http://www.bargemen.co.uk/pdf/MiddlesexBargeBook1795.pdf> This is a list of barges registered which gives the names of the masters.
- ◆ Norfolk Register Office: Y/C 38/3
- ◆ North Yorkshire County Record Office: QDR
- ◆ Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Gateway to the Past: Q/Rub
- ◆ Surrey History Centre (Surrey County Council): QS6/2/2
- ◆ Warwickshire County Record Office: QS0095/4-8

This is not an exhaustive list and it is worth looking at other county record offices for copies of the boat and barge registers.

Canal Boat Acts 1877 and 1884

The purpose of the Canal Boat Acts was to cut down on overcrowding in cabins used as dwellings and to try to ensure a basic standard of cleanliness and repair. The first Canal Boat Act was passed in August 1877 and became law the following year. It required all inland boats used as dwellings to be registered at one of around 100 registration authorities set up under the Act. Regulations drawn up under the Act laid down a minimum standard of accommodation on board and regulated the number, age and sex of persons permitted to inhabit the cabin. This would be recorded on the registration certificate issued at the time. This certificate would also contain the name and address of the owner and captain or steerer, details about the boat itself such as the intended cargo and route, but all of these details could change over time. Boats were usually registered when they were built but this did not necessarily mean that the boat would be working in that registration district.

At first, no dedicated inspectorate was created and no penalties fixed for violation of the Act's provisions. Implementation was left to local authorities and they did so with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

In Birmingham, the Chief Constable of Police was given the responsibility of registering boats. In other districts it was the local surveyor or sanitary inspector. Some were paid nothing for these extra duties whilst others received from a

flat rate of £2, £10 or £25 to a rate per boat ranging from one guinea to 21s 6d per boat. In some areas the nuisance or sanitary inspectors were appointed to inspect the boats after registration, usually for no extra pay, but in many places, there was no one to perform this duty at all.

The second Act, passed in August 1884, provided for inspection of canal boats by sanitary authorities under a centrally appointed Chief Canal Boat Inspector. It allowed for penalties to be imposed for violations of the Act and the regulations drawn up under it defined the class of boats to come under its jurisdiction more precisely. It also gave regulation-making powers to the Education Department. Not all authorities with powers to inspect boats were also boat registration authorities.

The Local Government Board accepted responsibility for the Canal Boat Acts only with extreme reluctance. However, they did draw up regulations which laid down, among other things, the minimum amount of free air space to be allowed to each person in the cabins. Sixty cubic feet of air space was allowed for anyone over the age of twelve years and forty cubic feet for children of twelve years and younger.

Responsibility for the enforcement of these Acts passed to the Ministry of Health in 1919 and their provisions were absorbed into the Public Health Act of 1936, Section X. By this time, inspections had become fairly infrequent. The requirement for canal boats to be registered and inspected was ended by the Public Health Act of 1961.

The findings of the inspectors were recorded in registers, and, where these survive, they can be useful sources of information for family historians. The details recorded could vary between one authority and another, but would always include the name of the boat, the name of the owner and the name of the master or steerer. The number and ages of children were also recorded but not their names, nor the names of other members of the crew which would be frustrating for family historians.

Not all registers have survived, but those that have are normally kept in the relevant local record offices or county archives. In a few cases there may be other documents such as individual boat certificates, complaints books, inspectors' journals, annual reports and correspondence.

Canal Company Records sometimes include useful collections of records such as Toll Permits. The Friends of the Cromford Canal have collected over 90,000 entries from books of toll permits that record the passage of boats onto or off the Cromford Canal at Langley Mill in the nineteenth century. From records in the Derbyshire Record Office, other repositories in the UK and even Harvard Business School's Baker Library, they have



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compiled a huge database which can be viewed online at <https://www.cromfordcanal.org/canal-toll-permits/>. The permits give the name of the boat owner and steerer, details of the cargo carried and the route taken. It covers the period from 1813 to 1878 but with many gaps.

As well as looking at your local record office or archive, you may also find it useful to look at the archive of the Canal and River Trust which holds a huge amount of historical material relating to boats and boatmen. Their online search facility will allow you to locate lists of canal boat registers, toll permit books and much more. However, in order to view the documents, it is necessary to make an appointment to visit the archive which is at Ellesmere Port. To make an appointment you will need to email archives@canalrivertrust.org.uk and let them know:

- ♦ the reference numbers of the items you would like to see (get this from the online catalogue)
- ♦ your research interests.

Two of my books, *Women and Children of the Cut* and *Canal Boatmen's Missions*, give much more detail about the everyday lives of families on narrow boats. Both books are widely available online. *Women and Children of the Cut* is out of print but there are plenty of second-hand copies.

About the author

Dr Wendy Freer has a PhD from the University of Nottingham on the subject of Canal Boat People. She is mainly an industrial historian and has taught history and IT in schools and at the University and has also worked for the Leicestershire Museum Service. Her final years before retirement were spent as a trainer and consultant in IT for schools. This led her to specialise in film-making and she now runs a community heritage group which makes historical films, mainly dramas. Their films can be seen through their website puddingbagproductions.co.uk. As well as writing books, she has appeared in several TV programmes about canals, the latest being an episode of *Canal Boat Diaries*.



Ed: Ormskirk and District FHS has created <http://www.boatfamilies.website/> currently listing over 65,000 individuals from Lancashire and contiguous counties.

As of 22 February, <https://rchs.org.uk/product/canal-boatmens-missions/> was listing Canal Boatmen's Missions on special offer at just £2.



Joe Skinner and his mule, Dolly, alongside his boat Friendship—the last mule-drawn narrowboat on the Oxford Canal.

Joe retired in 1958.

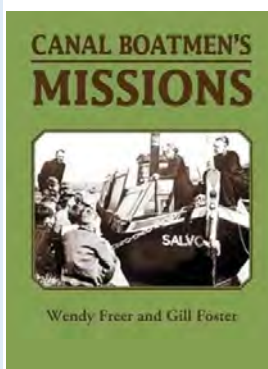
The SKINNER family had a long tradition of working the canals. As independent boat owner/operators they were part of the small band of "No 1s" — renowned for their beautifully decorated and cared-for craft.

The narrowboat Friendship is believed to be on display at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port.

Harriett Skinner's	Mission	60	1871	545
John	son	32		Canal Boatwoman
Joseph	son	14		Canal Boatman
Percy Grantham		15		Canal Boat

1911 census extract: Harriett Skinner "master", aged 60, "Canal Boatwoman". Two vessels were named Sarah-Ann and Polly.

The above is from a 2018 PowerPoint presentation courtesy of Nuneaton and North Warwickshire FHS



Decorated water can typical of those used on canal boats.
Photo
© Graham Booth

From:
[//nurser.co.uk/index.html](http://nurser.co.uk/index.html)





Really Useful Bulletin



Discovering the Unknown

Martin McDowell



Often people do a DNA test just to see what turns up. However, on occasion there is a specific question that they hope DNA can answer ... questions may be like these.

- ◆ My father was adopted so who are my grandparents?
- ◆ My grandfather was born out of wedlock – who was his father?
- ◆ Are there any Italian ancestors in my family?
- ◆ Are there any millionaires related to me?

Whilst DNA may struggle to answer the final question, the others should be answerable with time and a little work.

It is vital to not jump to conclusions where DNA is concerned. I met a person who decided their parent was not their parent based on the 'fact' that none of their DNA matches had that same surname. Another 'found' a half-sibling when the relationship wasn't that at all. And the individual who sent off an inappropriate email ruined any chance of making any connection with their parent. Remember that the person you match with has feelings. Treading carefully and respectfully is crucial.

But before you get to the contact stage you must get your facts right. And this is where DNA is your friend – if you correctly interpret what it is telling you.

My father was adopted so who are my grandparents?

If you are male and looking to identify someone on your father's father's line then a Y-DNA test is essential. Y-DNA is passed from father to son to grandson down the generations, it can provide a match list revealing the surname of your forebears. Matches can be recent or distant but even distant ones can provide a surname to follow. This surname may match a theory you have or confirm something you suspect, but in other scenarios can lead your research in a new direction.

Once you have this name you can use autosomal DNA for matches within more recent generations. Start to build a tree, knowing there is a strong possibility that the identified surname could be your patrilineal line ancestors. Y-DNA can identify the family name and the line it is on and autosomal DNA can provide the names of the ancestors closest to you. Whilst results are not always immediate, Y testing gives real opportunity to find information you can't get any other way. DNA can point you towards the right documentary evidence to prove the connections you have identified.

If you are seeking the surname of an ancestor somewhere else in your family then review your family tree to see if you can use Y-DNA to gain the information. The male tester has to be a direct male descendant of the person you are looking for. For females this could be a brother, a father or more distant male relation such as a second or third cousin.

My grandfather was born out of wedlock – who was his father?

You will have inherited about a quarter, or thereabouts, of your total DNA from each grandparent. The clue to identifying your grandfather's identity is contained in your autosomal matches. Y-DNA may also help but in some situations it may not be an option.

Identify what you know. The [Leeds Method](#) is a way of dividing matches into grandparental groups and helps categorise your matches. If you end up with four groups (the ideal) then three should be for the grandparents you know and the other column should be matches through that unknown grandparent. If you end up with a different number of groupings then test in other databases. You may have to await more matches to use this methodology to give the clarity of which matches represent which grandparent.

This method should work for all your siblings. As your siblings inherit some DNA that you didn't, their matches can be different, so you might benefit from doing a *Leeds Method* on your siblings' DNA results too.

Are there any Italian ancestors in my family?

Autosomal DNA tests provide information on ethnicity. All the five major DNA companies work out ethnicity differently and so it can be useful to obtain this information from more than one company and compare the results – the 'truth' probably lies somewhere in the middle.

DNA companies use a control group of people who they consider representative of specific ethnicities. If they add more people to this group, or change its composition in other ways, then your comparison can change. If you have tested with one company, such as Ancestry, then you can upload your DNA to other companies to get both matches and ethnicity information. Sometimes there is a charge for additional features but matches are usually provided free. See www.nifhs.org/dna/uploading-your-dna/ for clear instructions on how to upload.

Your ancestry is full of unknowns, surprises and stories, some of which can only be revealed with DNA which can point you to paper records to prove – and explore – the unknown. Different types of DNA test can help in different ways to provide information you wouldn't otherwise have.

If you are interested in finding out what your DNA may reveal then autosomal, Y and mitochondrial DNA tests can be purchased here: www.familyhistorybooksonline.com/dna-kits-376

What are you waiting for?

Martin McDowell is the Federation's DNA Officer





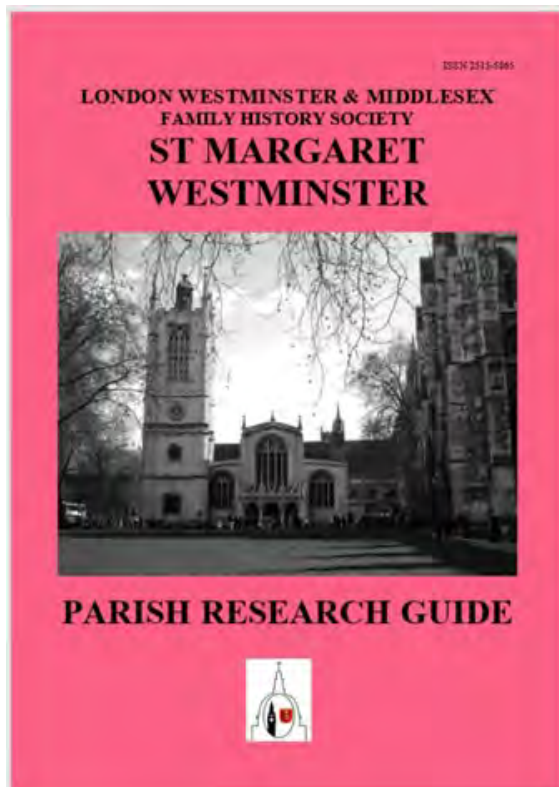
Family History Societies



London, Westminster and Middlesex Family History Society

You might be thinking that it's easy to do your family history now as everything is online; certainly the GRO birth marriage and death indexes are online as are the census returns from 1840-1921 and the 1939 Register. You can get quite a way with these and other digitised record sets and while over 80 million documents from The National Archives can be seen online, this is only a tiny seven per cent of their collections. To fully find out about your family, you need to also look at the other ninety-three per cent of archives.

Here at London Westminster and Middlesex Family History Society we have been creating a series of booklets to help family historians researching in our part of north London.



Out now is our revised, updated and expanded list of the main records of interest to the genealogical researcher for the area based on the ancient parish of St Margaret's, Westminster, which includes Downing Street, St John Smith Square, Westminster Abbey, Whitehall and a large detached area around Knightsbridge. This parish was known as St

Margaret and St John from 1728-1922 and this was the name of our previous booklet.

This new edition has an extra twenty-eight pages and we feel the new name shows better the area covered, which was in the county of Middlesex but is now in the City of Westminster London Borough.

We have much expanded the sections on the parochial burial grounds, schools, court and prison records, and included new ones about fire insurance and civil registration. Apart from the vital records of the various religious denominations, examples of subjects covered in this booklet are military matters, Parliamentary archives and the streets in the area in 1851. Details include where these records can be found, whether they are original hard-copy records, transcriptions in books, or on the internet. This 100-page A5 illustrated booklet is part of our ongoing series of *Parish Research Guides*.

We would like to blow our own trumpet here and suggest that our little *Parish Research Guide* booklets can help you find these other records and where they are located. By the way, our booklets are called 'parish' research guides because this was the way that areas were organised before local councils took over. The purpose of our small guides is to assemble in one publication a list of the main records of each of the ancient parishes in our area and where these can be found, whether they be original hard-copy records or on the internet, in order to inspire family historians and help locate mentions of ancestors.

Our booklets only cost £6 each and can be bought from our Parish Chest stall. The link takes you to the full list of *Parish Research Guides*



www.parishchest.com/reference-research-3523.php

You can contact our Society via our website <https://lwmfhs.org/> at: info@lwmfhs.org



Area covered by the society



Family History Societies



Huddersfield and District Family History Society

Our Growing Database of Cemetery and Graveyard Records

There is a wealth of information to help the family historian that can be found from gravestones and their inscriptions. Unfortunately, many of the sites linked to churches and chapels have disappeared due to the decline in congregations and many gravestones have been removed or damaged, so it is essential that the ones remaining are recorded for future family historians.

A team of volunteers from the Huddersfield and District Family History Society have been busy photographing and transcribing the monumental inscriptions at some of the cemeteries and graveyards in the Kirklees area.

One of our earlier projects was the recording of monumental inscriptions at Lockwood Municipal Cemetery. This cemetery covers a wide range of districts in the Huddersfield area. Both consecrated and general areas of the cemetery contain graves for residents who originated from Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth, particularly the West Indies.

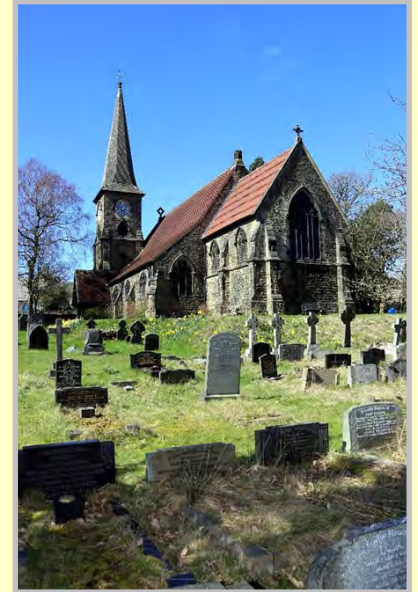
These often depict a country flag or map, a reminder of the birth or origins of the deceased. Gravestones at Lockwood vary in type from the ornate Victorian style of columns and crosses, with fancy lettering, often in gold or engraved, or with lead lettering, to the present modern styles of shiny granite and marble.

However, often there is no gravestone as is the case in all graveyards, just a bare piece of grass. Usually municipal graveyards keep a grave register as well as a burial register, and this provides valuable information of the person buried, their address and occupation. These registers are in the process of being transcribed by a team of volunteers from the society.

Lockwood Cemetery, also known as Woodfield Cemetery, is situated south-west of Huddersfield town centre between Lockwood and Netherton on the B6108 road.

Our team has, since that project, been involved in recording graves at various locations in the area. A detailed list of our projects is available online (<https://hdfhs.org.uk/cemetery-reports/>) detailing the documents in pdf format that are available for each graveyard.

We would be delighted to welcome new volunteers to assist with this valuable research. Please use the contact button on our website – www.hdfhs.org.uk to request further details. You need not live locally, we have volunteers from



Helme Church and Graveyard, Meltham

around the globe who help with checking work done by our local, on the ground, team.

All the records will soon be available for purchase from our website shop, which will complement our wide range of parish transcription downloads available for sale.

Our volunteers at our research room in Meltham are also happy to assist in researching our records.

Please contact the research team via the website to discuss and maybe arrange to visit.

The team is currently working on the graveyard at St John the Evangelist Church, Newsome, Huddersfield and also the Hinchliffe Mill Methodist Chapel, Holmfirth site.

We look forward to furthering your research through our growing cemetery and graveyard database. If you don't have ancestors in our area, remember to contact your local family history society, this type of record will be available throughout the country. Not everything can be found on commercial websites.

secretary@hdfhs.org.uk



Lockwood Cemetery, Huddersfield



Family History Societies



The Goddard Association of Europe

The Goddard Association of Europe is a vibrant and dedicated organization that brings together people connected by the Goddard name. While the association itself was founded in 1985, it could be argued that the roots of Goddard associations stretch back much further. A fascinating piece of history involves an extraordinary seventeenth-century invitation for “a friendly meeting of those whose surnames be Goddard” to meet each month for “society and acquaintance”. This early gathering underscores the enduring curiosity about a name and a long-standing desire to connect with others who share it.

While the fate of that early association remains unclear, the modern Goddard Association of Europe offers genealogical resources, historical insights, and opportunities for personal connection, becoming a cornerstone for anyone interested in the Goddard story.

In May 1985, the American Goddards' Association organised a members' trip around Goddard sites in the UK. Howard Goddard-Jones, a private PR executive with US ties, publicised the tour widely, generating immense interest among UK Goddards. A meeting was held in the Goddard Arms in Swindon, drawing nearly 100 attendees from across the country. Howard recognized the potential for a dedicated organization to explore the surname's rich history and provide a platform for collaboration and The Goddard Association of Europe was established in 1985.

Tragically, Howard died of a heart attack in 1986 while en route to a US convocation. Determined to continue his

vision, two other founder members, Richard and John Goddard, took over, establishing the structure that remains largely unchanged today. Although the American association folded in 2012, the European group continues to welcome members worldwide.

The association's mission extends beyond genealogy to document the cultural significance of the Goddard name, preserve family records, and connect individuals with shared heritage. Whether tracing direct lineage or holding a general interest, members find a welcoming space for research and discovery.

The Goddard name has deep historical roots and became well-established in regions such as Wiltshire, Berkshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Suffolk, Kent and London with Wiltshire standing out for its prominence.

Membership is £7.50 annually and is open to all who share a connection with the name, whether it be through ancestry or marriage, or simply as a matter of interest. Benefits include access to resources and a supportive community passionate about genealogy.

Key activities include:

1. **Quarterly newsletters** The association publishes a newsletter with historical articles, member contributions, and updates on projects.
2. **Genealogical assistance** Members can access archives of Goddard family monographs, historical records, and research coordinators' expertise.
3. **Events and gatherings** Annual meetings often feature talks on topics like DNA research, regional Goddard histories, or document preservation. Recently, online video formats have allowed global participation.

As genealogy evolves, the association embraces innovations such as digitizing records, DNA testing and sponsoring archival work on Goddard-related documents. These advancements ensure continued growth and relevance.

For more information, visit the official website of the Goddard Association of Europe at

<http://www.goddard-association.org.uk/>

and start your journey into the fascinating world of Goddard genealogy today!



*Upper Upham Manor House, Wiltshire
Image from Goddard Association website*



Family History Societies



Family and Community Historical Research Society

Annual Conference 2025 – all welcome

On 10 May 2025 (9.15am – 4.50pm), FACHRS will be hosting their annual conference in Leicester. This year the theme is asylums and has a varied programme exploring some of the key issues in the interpretation and analysis of asylums, and the impact they had on Victorian and Edwardian society. This year's programme includes:

- ♦ *The patient experience in British lunatic asylums 1861-1901* drawing on current project findings – Dr Joan Reid
- ♦ *The patient experience in a Warwickshire asylum* – Anne Langley
- ♦ *Death and disease in the Glamorgan and Warwickshire asylums* – David Hullin
- ♦ *Royal Albert asylum for children* – Emma Cochrane
- ♦ *Poster session on reasons for admission to asylums* – managed by Jean Fitzgerald and Sharon Ryan
- ♦ *Asylum staff records – interesting findings from project* – Susan Pearson
- ♦ *Plenary session – Q & A*
- ♦ *Migration: major project update* – Anne Milton-Worsell

Members have been exploring the topic of asylums over the last couple of years as part of a major project. These long-term projects are a key part of the ethos of FACHRS and are always presented at conference and usually result in a publication outlining the key findings. All members are invited to join in research at the beginning of a new topic and often explore very different pathways in their analysis, although there is always an overarching set of parameters to be followed. Many researchers use family history and community history as the key ingredient for their angle of study. The fact that members come from a range of locations enables the research to be broad and geographically wide-ranging. Examples of past projects have included:

Communities of Dissent
The British Almshouse
The Swing Riots
School Logbooks
The Home Front

The publications from these studies are all available on the society website as well as the many family history events attended by representatives of the society.

The society is now in its twenty-seventh year and continues to offer members a great deal. In addition to conference and major projects there is a wealth of material available on the website, regular online and print newsletters, and all members are also invited to participate in annual projects. Near the start of the calendar year everyone is sent the name of someone to research from the 1881 census. The



Northamptonshire Family History Society

HERITAGE FAIR 2025

Following the success of last year's Heritage Fair at Wicksteed Park when over forty-five history societies, heritage groups and visitor attractions attended, plans are well under way for this year's event to be held at the Chester House Estate <https://chesterhouseestate.org/>.

The event is being organised by Angela Malin and Janet Lawrence from [Northamptonshire Family History Society](https://discover-northamptonshire.co.uk/) in conjunction with Chester House Estate and with support from Discover Northamptonshire <https://discover-northamptonshire.co.uk/>

Alongside stalls, both inside the marquee and outside, we are planning a number of heritage-related talks, a film show by Northamptonshire Film Archive Trust, tours of the Archaeological Resource Centre, site tours, children's activities and more!

More details will soon be available so keep an eye on our social media feed and other publicity.



person will have been identified as having a specific occupation (railway engine drivers was the occupation from 2024) and this person will form the root of the research. How the research progresses is very much the prerogative of the researching member.

You don't have to be a member of FACHRS to attend the conference and all are welcome. Full details and entry tickets are available on the website at www.fachrs.com



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

A Busy Month for Dataset Submissions with FindMyPast

All member groups of the Family History Federation are entitled to make their transcriptions available to the public using the facilities provided by the Federation through Find My Past (FMP). All material added to the FMP datasets brings income for the society involved.



During January, several societies have kept the Federation's Data Manager very busy with new datasets for publication.



Bedfordshire FHS submitted nearly one million baptism, marriage and burial records covering the period 1538-1853.



Calderdale FHS added some workhouse register record sets with 65,000 new records for Halifax (Gibbet Street & Ovenden and Todmorden (Gauxholme)) workhouses covering the period 1756-1924.

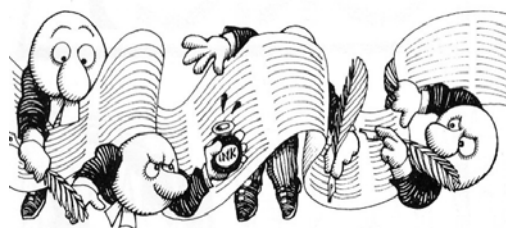


Nottinghamshire FHS added over 88,000 burial records for the period 1546-1955.



Wiltshire FHS added 120,000 baptism and burial records for 1559-1837.

February and March look like they will also be bumper months for dataset publications with some unusual records nearing publication. These include: the Great Western Railway Hospital admission records, St James' Trowbridge bell book records, police officer constabulary records, early census returns and settlement examination records (all from **Wiltshire FHS**), more workhouse guardians minutes (from **Lincolnshire FHS**) and baptism records (from **Nottinghamshire FHS**). So watch this space for updates when these are all published on FindMyPast.



The project with FMP makes societies' hard work available to a wider audience, offers linkage back to the society as well as earns valuable royalty fees for the society.

If your society has transcriptions that are available for publication with FindMyPast then please get in contact with the Federation's data manager at data.manager@familyhistoryfederation.com.

Kevin Todman

FHF Data Manager





Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

YOUR FUTURE, OUR FUTURE

Thanks are due to those members of family history societies who attended in person on 15 February and participated in our workshops on *Surviving the Twenty-first Century*. We were very pleased with the level of participation and the positive ideas which came from the discussions. I hope that all found it beneficial and know that many went away with “new” ideas to enhance society performance.

If your society was not represented then you missed out.

The topics discussed were:

- ◆ *data and projects*
- ◆ *improving relationships*
- ◆ *running societies*
- ◆ *social media.*

At the end of the sessions each society was asked to do three things:

- ⇒ Identify two or three topics which would benefit your society and help move it forward.
- ⇒ More importantly to go away and DISCUSS WITH YOUR COMMITTEE how you will move those aspects forward and MAKE AN ACTION PLAN.
- ⇒ Report back to the Federation on your progress in time for the General Meeting following our AGM on 11 May 2025. We would like a short written report by the beginning of May so we can report progress at the GM.

This is so important that we will give other societies the opportunity to participate.

Whilst we cannot enforce society participation we would expect all societies to take positive action to move forward in today's fast-changing world. We don't have all the answers but if you want to know more, please email

admin@familyhistoryfederation.com for the discussion document giving many ideas to take forward in your society or family history group.

Ian Waller, FHF Education Officer

REALLY USEFUL SHOW—SOUTH WEST

Saturday 29 March

**Kinson Community Centre
near Bournemouth**

See [Bulletin No 53](#) for full details

Dorset FHS, hosts of the show, have advised of changes to provide better access to the live talks

The talks are on a first-come first-served basis—**doors to the talks will open 15 minutes before each presentation is due to take place**

A nominal £2 is charged per talk

The talks take place twice during the day

Archive Liaison Newsletter

The very first *Archive Liaison Newsletter* goes out this month. It provides information on archives, projects, how volunteers can get involved and more. This month there are major features from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and National Library of Wales' provision for family history research, and much more.

When launched you can view it

here www.exploreyourgenealogy.co.uk/resources



Irish Jewry

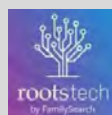
The twenty-second volume of *The Compendium of Irish Jewry* with 75,270 individual entries is now printed.

If anyone has an Irish Jewish connection please feel free to contact Stuart

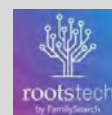
Rosenblatt at the Irish Jewish Genealogical Society, (a division of the Irish Jewish Museum), 3 Walworth Road, South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

Email: srosenblatt@irishjewishroots.com

www.irishjewishroots.com



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www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/



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

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

admin@familyhistoryfederation.com



FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

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

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—not just publication from Family History Books, but from a range of other publishers, too. The stall is always very popular!

The bookstall will be at **The Family History Show at Three Counties Showground, Malvern on 15 March** and also at the **Really Useful Family History Show—Live at Kinson, near Bournemouth on Saturday 29 March.**

Happy browsing!

Please explore the range, and place your orders, at

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com



The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show Live show 29 March near Bournemouth Online 14 and 15 November 2025

Please view www.fhf-reallyuseful.com for full details



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