



East Surrey

Family History Society

Society Study Day

See further
information
on page 11

Journal

Volume 46
number 4
December 2023



Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief

Saturday 23 March 2024

10.30 – 10.40 Welcome

10.40 – 11.40 The Poor and Insanity
Kathy Chater

11.40 – 12.00 Break

12.00 – 1.00 East Surrey Family History Society AGM

1.00 – 2.00 Lunch

2.00 – 3.00 Paupers, Beggars, Criminals and Aspiring Gentlemen
Julian Pooley

3.00 – 3.30 Break

3.30 – 4.30 Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century
Dave Annal



Tea / coffee & biscuits available
throughout the day

Free of charge but donations very
welcome

www.eastsurreyfh.org.uk



Research material and Help Desk available

Venue details: North Cheam Baptist Church, Ridge Road, Sutton, SM3 9LY, off
Stonecot Hill (A24) with buses from Morden, Epsom and Sutton. Parking for 24 cars

East Surrey Family History Society

Founded 1977

Registered Charity No. 286659

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Members must quote their Membership Number in all correspondence

The Society **Research & Advice centre** is at Lingfield & Dormansland Community Centre, High Street, Lingfield. It is open every month (except August and December) on the second Saturday from 10.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., and on the fourth Wednesday from 10.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Journal of the

East Surrey

Family History Society

www.eastsurreyflhs.org.uk

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The deadline for the March 2024 Journal is 10.00 a.m. on 1 February

All contributions should be sent to the Editor, whose contact details appear opposite

From the chairman

Hilary Blanford

I wonder how many of you have yet to finalise your Christmas shopping. If you are interested in testing your DNA, Ancestry usually has a special offer over Christmas so why not put a test kit on your Christmas list? We have several members who can help you to analyse your results.

Otherwise, why not join us to play 'Just a family history minute' on 12 or 13 December? The rules were published in the September Journal.

Next year looks as though it will be busy, and the next Society event will be our virtual family history show on 27 January. Details are on page 13. We have a lot of fun at this event, so do join us.

The talks on Zoom will continue. Members requested a talk about 'Women on the Railways' from Richard Marks and maps on the National Library of Scotland website, and these have been arranged. The third requested topic was another talk from Andrew Marr, this time on marriage registration. Unfortunately, Andrew has decided to retire from speaking and I have been unable to find another registrar to give this talk. If any member can recommend a good speaker, I would be pleased to hear from them.

Planning is well in hand for the Society's AGM and Study Day. Our new membership secretary has analysed our membership by postcode to see where we had the greatest concentration of members. Many of you will not be surprised that Croydon postcodes topped her list, but we have chosen a venue in Sutton because it is close to public transport and it is available all day on a Saturday. The timetable for the day is on page 10 and a description of the topics is on page 11. We are continuing with the *Tinker, Tailor* theme of last year so please do join us. Your attendance at our AGM is important and if you would like to join the committee, or have marketing or other skills, we would be pleased to hear from you.

After that we will be holding another Talk with Tea at Surrey History Centre. The recent one was sold out and SHC has agreed to market future teas as 'East Surrey FHS invites you to join them for a talk with tea'. This will be excellent publicity for us and hopefully we will be able to recruit some more members. The next one will be held on 25 April and the topic will be 'Stepping Stones through the archives'.

From the chairman

Looking further ahead in the year, Len Reilly will be leading a walk around Camberwell as part of the Southwark group programme; all members will be invited to join the walk. I also wondered about a Society visit to Rochester in the summer. Those of you who enjoyed Jeremy Clarke's talk on the Medway hulks might like to visit Rochester Guildhall to see the replica accommodation, have lunch nearby and then visit the Huguenot Museum or Rochester Cathedral close by. Other possibilities in next

door Chatham are the Royal Engineers Museum or Fort Amherst or the Naval Dockyard. More energetic members might like to walk up the hill to view one of the nation's three naval war memorials. If you are interested in any of these ideas, please email me and I will try to find a common date for visits. The Dockyard grounds, Guildhall Museum and the Cathedral are free but there is a charge for the other attractions.

I wish you all a happy Christmas and a healthy new year.



Netherne Burial Registers

Netherne Hospital was one of several large psychiatric hospitals in the Epsom cluster. It had its own burial ground and members of East Surrey FHS volunteered to transcribe the hospital's burial registers, which are held by Surrey History Centre. We will be doing this using breakout rooms in Zoom.

We have had two practice sessions for the transcription event

when I hope we will be able to complete transcribing the burial register for Netherne. Both practice sessions went well and we all learned together. The intention was to learn how to use breakout rooms and to screen-share but one group added freeze panes to their skills and we all played with date formats in Excel. Users of Excel know that dates can be a minefield!



STOP PRESS: We transcribed 488 entries in the first session.

Sutton Archives and Heritage Service

Abby Matthews

Sutton STEAMS Ahead

During 2023 Sutton's Cultural Services have been involved in *Sutton STEAMS Ahead*. This is a cultural programme that aims to uniquely blend the arts and sciences through S.T.E.A.M. themes (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths).

With programmes focusing on the lavender-growing and herb-growing industries, cancer research, and photographic formats and

techniques, the programme has been diverse and engaging and has resulted in the production of a number of films including *Living Histories*, a community led oral history project, and *We Dance for Life*, a multi-award-winning exploration and powerful creative interpretation of the pioneering research into cancer treatment taking place at the London Cancer Hub in Sutton.

Light & Dark Festival

This runs from October to January. It connects and elevates Sutton's diverse community by exploring the winter festivities celebrated across the borough. The theme of this

festival is light and dark, the triumph of light over darkness, and the hope for renewal and warmth during the coldest and darkest time of the year.

Sutton Historians

Sutton Historians is a free monthly informal talk, which takes place on the last Friday of each month at one of our heritage venues or libraries. Speakers on all subjects, including

family history research, are welcome. Please get in touch if you'd like to discuss. Our next talk will take place on 24 November.

Sutton Archives and Heritage Service

Sutton Historians: London's Screen Archives

Friday 24 November, 12 noon—1.00 p.m., Sutton Central Library Gallery (level 2A)

Join archivist Abby Matthews and London's Screen Archives (LSA) for an overview of film and moving image collections held by Sutton Archive and digitised and hosted by London's Screen Archives (LSA).

This talk will offer a glimpse of the breadth of film footage held at Sutton, and shine a particular focus on materials relating to Ivan Bawtree, a local resident, photographer and filmmaker. The event is free, but booking is necessary. All are welcome.

LSA is a unique network, funded by Film London, of over 70 organisations with a collective vision – to preserve and share London's history on film. It includes local and borough archives, museums, galleries, public sector bodies, community groups, and national charities. This event is partly funded by *Sutton Steams Ahead*, as part of a Cultural Impact Award from the Mayor of London, by an NLHF grant, and by Film Hub London.

The Wandle Mills: changing industry and technology 1650-1850

19 October to 13 January, Honeywood Museum, Carshalton Ponds

An exhibition looking at how the Wandle mills were adapted in response to shifting markets and increasing demands for power during the Industrial Revolution.

This is a collaborative exhibition with the Friends of Honeywood Museum.

Sutton Archives and Heritage Service

From Oranges to Watercress Exhibition

Extended until Saturday 27 January, Honeywood Museum, Carshalton Ponds

A look at specialist plant growing in the local area from 1500 to 1950, including the innovative plants in two major Elizabethan gardens (one with oranges), and the later farming of lavender, mint and watercress.

This exhibition is part of the *Sutton Steams Ahead* Lavender Fields Forever project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Sutton's Blueprint

Friday 1 December, 4.00-6.00 p.m., Whitehall Museum, Cheam Village

This one-off event will showcase a unique animated artwork, made up of over 900 cyanotype images, to be projected on the white weatherboarded rear facade of Whitehall Historic House.

The artist, Pia Jaime, draws on archive and new imagery to create a living, breathing, constantly changing representation of the London Borough of Sutton, which makes connections between the

past and the present day, through the layering of light and imagery. Following this event, the animation will be shown in Whitehall throughout the month of December and showcased at other venues around the borough.

This is part of *Sutton STEAMs Ahead* Light & Dark Festival 2023 (*Then, Now, Next* strand). Sign up to our newsletter for the latest on where to see this unique work.



Disclaimers apply: for full details see

https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200436/customer_services/1550/london_borough_of_sutton

Richmond Group

Hilary Blanford

We were very sorry to say. 'Goodbye' to Veronica McConnell as secretary and leader of the Richmond Group this autumn.

Veronica has been a member of the Society for many years and was persuaded to take over the running of the Richmond group some while ago. She has managed the group in difficult circumstances, as the Vestry Hall where the group used to meet was deemed unsafe, so she migrated to the café area at the National Archives. Now she feels that the group needs a new leader. Could you be that person?

Members living within the catchment area of the National Archives are being contacted via email and surveyed to see how many people are interested in participating

in activities at the Archives. Maybe you have some fresh ideas of how a group could utilise and enjoy the wonderful facilities and resources offered here.

If you don't receive a copy of the survey but would like to have your say please contact me. If you have access to emails then use the contact address at the front of the journal; if you are not able to use emails, please send an SAE to me at 13 Larchcroft, Chatham, ME5 0NL and I will send you a paper version.

It remains to say a big thank you to Veronica for her contribution to East Surrey FHS over the years, and we wish her well with her own family research. We are very grateful to her.



Zoom meetings

Links for live talks and recordings will be emailed to members.
Links for live talks *only* will be found on the Society's website.

December: Tuesday 12, 8.00 p.m. and Wednesday 13, 10.00 a.m.

Just a Family History Minute

hosted by Hilary Blanford

Your moment of fame. Write a few words about one of your family, read the rules in the September journal and join us for some pre-Christmas fun.

January: Monday 8, 10.00 a.m. (recording played Monday 8, 8.00 p.m.)

Using the map collection at the National library of Scotland

Laragh Quinney

If you have never used this online collection, you are in for a treat. In this session you will learn how to search for places, how to choose which map to use, how to layer maps and how to get the best from this site.

February: Tuesday 13, 8.00 p.m. (recording played Wednesday 14, 10.00 a.m.)

Identifying your Army Ancestors from Photographs

Paul Nixon

*Paul is an enthusiastic connoisseur of military photographs. In this talk he will show you how to look at photographs, what to look for and where to go for additional help. He is willing to help members with their own photographs, which might be shared in this talk. **

March: Monday 11, 10.00 a.m. (recording played Monday 11, 8.00 p.m.)

A Genealogist's Nightmare: tracing the Smith family of London

Janet Few

This talk uses the Smith family of London as a case study to introduce sources and techniques that will help with the challenge of researching a common surname in a densely populated area. A wide range of resources will be covered, many of which will also be applicable to those researching outside London.

April: Tuesday 9, 8.00 p.m. and Wednesday 10, 10.00 am

Women on the Railways

Richard Marks

In the past we have enjoyed Richard's passionate interest in railways and his entertaining and knowledgeable presentations. Both talks will be live and shared with members of Kent Family History Society.

*Paul Nixon's Talk on Military Photographs: if you would like help identifying your pictures, please send a high-resolution scan (min 600 ppi preferred) to me at chairman@eastsurreyfhhs.org.uk by February 1.

Group meetings

Lingfield Group

Dec no meeting

Jan 24 Place Names

Tony Painter

How did our village or town name come about? What can the name tell us about the history of the place?

Feb 28 tba

Mar 27 tba

Southwark Group

Dec 11 Lunch in Southwark

Please book with the Southwark Secretary {secretary@eastsurreyfhs.org.uk}

Feb 12 Back at the John Harvard Meeting Room, Borough High Street, Southwark

Group details

Lingfield: Secretary: Rita Russell 01342 834648 {lingfield@eastsurreyfhs.org.uk}
Lingfield & Dormansland Community Centre, High Street, Lingfield RH7 6AB

Southwark: Secretary: Hilary Blanford 01634 685219 {southwark@eastsurreyfhs.org.uk}

Please check the Society website www.eastsurreyfhs.org.uk for future meetings and last-minute alterations.



Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar Man, Thief

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Stonecot Hill (A24) with buses from Morden, Epsom and Sutton. Parking for 24 cars

ESFHS Study Day: 23 March 2024

At the Study Day next year the theme will be 'Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief' and we have a stunning team of speakers for the day.

We will start the day with Kathy Chater speaking on 'Poor lunatics' and she says, 'The rich have always been able to buy care for the mentally ill or those who through disability were unable to look after themselves, but what happened to the poor? How were they treated, both therapeutically and in institutions over the centuries?'

Kathy Chater is a family historian and professional genealogist who has been tracing her forebears for some 40 years. She has written a number of articles and books, including *My Ancestor was a Lunatic* (Society of Genealogists, 2014).

After lunch we will have Julian Pooley's talk entitled 'Paupers, Beggars, Criminals and Aspiring Gentlemen: Georgian Society Preserved in Print, 1731-1820' and he is planning to speak on poor men, beggars and thieves as well as the

rich: bankrupts are listed every month, giving a good insight into trades across Surrey and even dynasties of failing businesses; beggars (especially those posthumously found to have accumulated considerable riches!) are frequently noticed in the news and death columns; and plenty of thieves are listed in the crime and punishment reports. He writes, 'I can also say something about wealthy Londoners moving into Surrey and also how the births, marriages and death listings take especial note of privilege, dowries and the accumulated wealth of a successful tradesman.'

The day will end with Dave Annal speaking on 'Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century: the records, the people, the stories . . .'

You can find more information about this on the talks page of Dave's website: <https://lifelinesresearch.co.uk/talks/>

As usual, we will be inviting other family history and historical groups to join us.

See further details on the previous page

Visit to the Wellcome Library

Our tour guide, Danny, began by explaining that the Wellcome Library holds a number of collections but does not hold many medical records. He told us that the Hospital Records database is no longer being updated and suggested that we search the National Archives Discovery Catalogue instead.

The main library is open to anybody. A day card can be issued with no formal procedure. However, formal registration is required if one wishes to use the computers, or to order material. Most items may be viewed unless they are very fragile or restricted for some reason.

Danny then took us on a tour of the four main open sections of the library. The first area was devoted to

lists, reports, and directories. Then we moved to the journals area where we might find obituaries of our medical ancestors. The sex and drugs section had some interesting titles and there were also books on food. Lastly, we were shown the shelves containing books about medicine up to the 19th century. The library also houses an impressive collection of paintings related to medicine.

It was a fascinating hour, and we also learned that all images on their website can be downloaded, free of charge, and used without infringing any copyright. Do try using their catalogue online

<https://wellcomecollection.org/search/works>



Photograph © Alan Essex 2023

East Surrey FHS Virtual Fair 27 January 2024

East Surrey FHS will again be hosting the fabulous Virtual Family History Fair, using Zoom, on Saturday 27 January 2024. Find more information and the links to register on our website at <https://www.eastsurreyfhs.org.uk/>

If you've not visited us before, you may like to know that we host two 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.

For the first time we will be joined by staff from the Surrey History Centre.

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 southwest, Home Counties, the northwest and others. Our most successful customer visited six different societies in one session and obtained answers to all her questions. Why not try to beat her record?



Meeting report

report by Christine Peel

Free antiquarian resources on the internet

Phil Isherwood

October

Phil Isherwood has previously presented talks on methodology and recording, but the subject of this talk had been specifically requested by ESFHS and this was the first presentation to any audience. Phil provided a useful handout with the web addresses of the six resources referenced and which areas of research his four favourite resources covered.

He undertook considerable research in the preparation of this talk but limited himself to the antiquarian books available, rather than including periodicals or other media. The six resources covered are:

- ◆ Google Books, which has 25 million entries
- ◆ Hathai Trust with 17 million
- ◆ JSTOR (a mainly academic site) with 12 million
- ◆ Internet Archive with 5.2 million
- ◆ Family Search Digital Library with half a million
- ◆ Project Gutenberg with 70 thousand

The rules for full access are those current in the US: that material

ceases to be copyright 70 years after the author's death or 95 years after publication. Thus, material fully available is usually pre-1928.

Phil demonstrated each resource in turn, showing how to make a search and the result of a specific search, Surrey history. Taking Google Books first, the search initially returned 3.68 million finds, but this number included those with either or both "Surrey" and "history" in the title. The cohort also contained books (mostly US), maps and newspapers, chiefly from US university libraries. Limiting the search to include only those permitting "full view" and "books" reduced the number to 924,000 and on accessing one of the finds one can use the "Advanced search" feature to specify the exact term required (Surrey + history), which gave 846,000 finds. Once one has selected a book, for instance *A history of the county of Surrey* by Thomas Allen (1831), the content is shown with the words requested highlighted. One can zoom in and out and select other words within

Meeting report: Free Antiquarian sources on the internet

the text in the bar at the bottom of the screen. The example used was “Reigate”, from which one could learn that the name for Reigate on the Domesday book was Chirchfelde. Many name-rich sources are available, with placenames being well represented, although families have to be well-to-do to be included. One quibble is that on making another selection, the global filters applied are lost.

The second resource, the Hathi Trust, provided the best search experience so far as Phil judged. It specialises in academic and research titles and returned 435,266 books for “Surrey history”, although only 1/3 of these were available in full view. It is a particularly good source for antiquarian books and can show 100 results per page, so scrolling down is easy. The viewing experience is also good in that one can see two pages at a time, rotate pages to see maps, for example, and see thumbnails of the whole book. The example book searched was the first volume of *A Topographical history of Surrey* by Edw. Wedlake

Brayley (1850), containing a description of the “Battle of Red-hill” in 1648, although curiously enough a map of 1673 facing page 121 does not include the name. A book written under the pseudonym of Robert Phillips, *A geological, historical and topographical description of the borough or Reigate and surrounding district* (1885), does contain many references to Redhill. From this site one can download a whole book or a single page as a pdf file. If the book is digitised by Google Books, one must follow the appropriate link, however, which is a little frustrating.

The third resource, JSTOR, has only 100,000 books and is not a free site, costing \$19.50 per month or \$199 p.a. for all but its open access material and has not very much Surrey content. It can thus largely be ignored, unless one has an academic interest in subscribing.

On the other hand the fourth resource, the Internet Archive, has the best reading experience of the six that Phil investigated. Searching for Surrey history gave about 1,900

Meeting report: Free Antiquarian sources on the internet

finds. The introductory screen is messy, but if one simply puts a search term in at the top one is taken to the list of books, presented like a display case of the covers, which is inviting. Refining the selection to “always available” texts reduces the list to 126. Other items are available in the “lending library” or to “borrow” for 14 days. This might be the result of a lawsuit that was pending in the US regarding copyright material and one possibly still must be careful that the material one is accessing is not copyright. One can see the book chosen full-screen and turn the pages as one would a book, seeing two pages at a time. To access content within the book, the search icon is a magnifying glass at the top left, below that is an icon to take one to other functions such as downloading or changing the contrast of the image. Although Phil found downloading easy, his attempt to download *The Victoria histories of the counties of England* (series editor William Page) *Volume 2 Surrey*, edited by H. E. Malden (1905) failed. I attempted this at first with the same disappointing result, but by scrolling down from the volume’s image to the full catalogue

entry for the volume and selecting “B/W pdf” from the download options on the right-hand side, I was successful.

The fifth resource that Phil discussed was Family Search Digital Library, which gave 304,510 entries for “Surrey history”. This resource has a strong family history (but also US) bias. It contains published family histories and specialises in texts related to genealogy. There are many name-rich sources and the book search is the default. One has to select “Public” from the access level low down on the left-hand side of the screen to limit the search to the available items. By default, one sees the finds in catalogue mode, the grid mode just showing pictures of the covers with no information. One needs a Family Search account to be able to view the volumes, but this is free.

The final resource considered was Project Gutenberg, from which one can download volumes in e-reader format. The site specialises in classic novels but there is also background reading for times and places. It is basically a bookshelf of e-books, all under categories and is a rich resource. The reading experience is not as good as some

Meeting report: Free Antiquarian sources on the internet

others as it spreads the text over the whole screen which makes it hard to read, but this can be adjusted.

Phil summarised the techniques for searching these resources by saying that one can narrow one's search from county to town to parish for history or specify a surname if looking for genealogy, with fewer results being returned the tighter one specifies the search,

of course. All the searches ignore capitalization, but insist on apostrophes when looking for titles.

Phil's talk was very detailed and helpful in introducing sources that might perhaps not have occurred to all of us. The demonstrations of the searches highlighted the best way to approach each site and pointed out how to access features that might not be intuitive.



East Surrey Family History Society AGM 2024

Notice of the 2024 AGM of East Surrey Family History Society

The AGM will be held on March 23 at 12.00 pm in North Cheam Baptist Church, Ridge Road, Sutton, SM3 9LY. Please note this is earlier in the day than in previous years.

The trustees will be proposing a reduction in the required quorum for an AGM from 25 to 20 people.

Meeting report

report by Lorna Thomas

The Medway Prison Hulks

September

Jeremy Clarke

Jeremy is the enthusiastic Education Officer based at Rochester Guildhall. His talk gave us an introduction to the type of information available at the exhibition at Rochester of how life would have been for criminals.

At the beginning of the 19th century the majority of people lived in poor living conditions, and extremely harsh sentences were given for crimes we would regard today as relatively minor offences. For offences such as stealing a watch sentences of seven years' transportation to the colonies were common, mostly to Australia and Van Dieman's Land (now Tasmania), as America ceased as a destination after Independence in 1776.

Prison ships had been used for a very long time. For example, at the time of the Jacobite Rebellion whole families were confined on prison ships in the Thames. However, there was a distinction between prisoners-of-war and those sentenced in civilian courts, and each were managed in distinctive ways. The term 'hulk' is a very general term, most commonly referring to a ship

without sails, semi-permanent and used for accommodation.

Prisoner-of-war hulks were used from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 19th, mainly to accommodate prisoners from the Napoleonic Wars. This coincided with a boom in the shipping industry on the Medway. Chatham, as a naval dockyard, did not have the capacity to do more but many small companies were set up along the banks of the Medway.

For French prisoners of war, much depended on who you were in the French Army. Officers had only to promise to stay on "license" and "within bounds", turning up every so often to check in! Many Medway towns, including Chatham, became 'parole towns'. The rank and file were initially kept in army camps (e.g. Walton's Cross near Peterborough) as the prisons were full. However, the Government soon seized upon the idea of utilising the ships in the area that had outlived their original purpose (e.g. HMS Brunswick) and converted these semi-derelict hulks into prison hulks.

Meeting report: The Medway Prison Hulks

The French prisoners-of-war often made things to sell in local markets. Locals very often brought food for the prisoners to buy. Danish prisoners were also held on hulks, as were American prisoners (from the War of 1812).

Prisoners complained about the overcrowded conditions, and in 1801 a survey was undertaken. Improvements were made, including a party for the American prisoners on Independence Day!

For civilian offenders the situation was bleak. Older and less fit prisoners were less likely to be sent to Australia, and spent their time living on the hulks in the River Medway digging out slips for the Chatham Dockyard. Boys, sometimes as young as 10 years old, would be locked up with older prisoners. Girls were not put on hulks but were, nonetheless, transported.

The most common offence for which people were sentenced to transportation was larceny, which means theft of personal property (in British law, larceny was replaced in 1968 by a more umbrella term, 'theft'). In the 19th century larceny was rife, but the punishment was severe (stealing a handkerchief

could attract a seven-year transportation sentence). Younger prisoners might spend some time on board a hulk before being transported. Sentences for transportation ranged from seven years to fourteen years, or life.

Conditions were equally unhealthy and overcrowded. The usual sleeping arrangement was in a hammock, but if the prisoner had any money they might barter for a better position.

Early 18th century prisoners who died whilst on board were buried in scattered graves in a rudimentary cemetery. Frequently prisoners died from local epidemics and contagious diseases. In 1864 the Medway Gas Works was built on top of the cemetery.

By the mid 19th century the hulks became disused, largely as a result of prison reforms that reduced the use of transportation as a sentence. In 1857 the last remaining hulk was burned down at Woolwich.

Jeremy gave some very touching stories of individual prisoners as case studies for his talk, and those examples and more can be seen at the Rochester Guildhall exhibition.



Meeting report

report by Christine Peel

Out and about in the name of family history

Jackie Depelle

August

Jackie Depelle's Kettlewell ancestors come from West Yorkshire.

Her talk charted a search for information on the Kettlewells, taking journeys by train, coach and car as well as time in 2014 on the British Isles Discovery Cruise, run by the Australian firm *Unlock the Past*. She described only places where she herself investigated her family story; it was a rewarding and fascinating odyssey during which she visited many archives.

Jackie's starting point was the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society. The Wakefield Manorial Court Rolls there, many transcribed and published, form part of UNESCO's *Memory of the World* register, because of their age and their comprising a continuous record. Their condition varies, the one for 1621-1622 being good, although hard to read, whereas that for 1847 is in too poor a state to be usable.

At the Borthwick Institute for Archives, built on land near Heslington Hall (where Jackie's parents met) on the University of

York campus, Jackie found the will of one of her widowed ancestors from 1592, giving opportunity for wider research. The Church Court Presentments hold details of clerical misbehaviour, both amusing and embarrassing for the family concerned. In one case, the priest was so addicted to the bottle that he fell asleep during services and was eventually de-frocked. The Rowntree Foundation has papers in Borthwick and Jacqui intends to make a return visit to study them, since the 1921 census mentions that one of her ancestors worked at the model village, New Earswick.

There is a large film archive in Yorkshire, where they might be able to play film for which you no longer have the equipment, and even give you a digital copy if you donate the film.

York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral both have recent and ancient archives of 2,000 years of history. A wonderful example is Catherine of Aragon's prayer book. Another organization in Canterbury that Jackie visited was the Institute

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of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies, which runs tutorials and courses. It was there that the family naval connection could be reconciled to occasional absence of names from census records. Jackie's great-grandfather was the son of a Greenwich Pensioner. Holding the document carrying his application to enter the prestigious Royal Naval College was a moving experience – every detail of his service had to be recorded.

Subsequently, Jackie visited the Naval Archive at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich: an archive full of deck plans, log books, crew lists, letters, photographs and more. Tracing one sailor leads one to crew lists and log books (some with images) showing where vessels visited. Jackie discovered that her ancestor came neither from Hull, nor Hampshire, but from Cornwall, leading her to the Cornish Family History Society based in Truro. A search through memorial inscriptions and grave records, back to 1750, led to a magical visit to Kenwyn Church and its lovely font.

Searches in the modern buildings of Portsmouth History Centre and Gosport Library led to better transcription details of the

inscription on a family memorial stone than those on the website. Technological innovations, such as the paddle steamer, provide insight into maritime life; Jackie's ancestor served on such a ship, a Royal Navy steam frigate.

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard Archive was another favourite destination, although security to get in was rigorous and the experience initially disappointing. The archivist later sent much helpful material at no charge.

Of course, the main resource is at Kew; things have improved greatly in recent years with much being available to download from home. Nothing can compare with seeing and handling original documents, however, and investigating chancery records still involves several visits.

The Lancashire Record Office, near Preston railway station, is a new building on stilts. They sell CDs of Jeffrey's Maps from 1775, useful for tracing Parish Chest material as place names can change. The maps show topography as well as landowners' estates, helpful in explaining moves and meetings. One gem Jackie found was part of the Manchester Merchants' Petition for

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the abolition of slavery, signed by one of her ancestors, Peter Kaberry, in 1825. It asks for one of the places he owns to be a non-conformist chapel and was located using the NA “Discovery” feature, the actual document being in the Quarter Sessions records.

The Cumbrian Record Office is in five locations, the one in Carlisle being brand new.

Archives held at the Houses of Parliament might move to Kew – perhaps because of the state of the building – but security was very tight when visiting. The 1642 Protestation Returns (of allegiance to the Protestant religion) are now online and easier to search. Some are signed, some just with a mark. Railway Compensation Records are another source of information, listing those whose land was affected and those investing. Six brothers in Jackie’s family were affected by a compulsory purchase, but only the property of one was mentioned. The remaining five had invested and moved away. One item of interest was the Clock Tower foundation trowel, engraved with the date and the name of the one who laid the first stone, a distant relative of Jackie’s.

Council libraries, town halls and civic societies – often neglected possibilities – can yield information. Leeds Town Hall was opened by Queen Victoria in 1858 and Jackie’s ancestors’ firm supplied the carpet, since they were one of the biggest manufacturers in the world, holding property in Suffolk (Somerleyton Hall), where the family still lives. Jackie found a piece of commemorative carpet on eBay.

Jackie found the M&S records, based in Leeds, useful. Their archives cover paper, textiles, video, publicity material, etc. The staff are beginning to realise the positive aspects of family history research – their good treatment of staff and their health initiatives.

There are five Deed Registries: Dublin, which is ongoing, Middlesex (1709-1938) and the three Yorkshire Ridings (North 1736-1970, East 1707-1970, West 1704-1970). Nothing is officially digitised for security, but there are records of churches, houses and factories. A special North Yorkshire Project is researching female investors.

Newspapers and Trade journals are useful sources of information. Amongst the latter are industry dedicated newspapers and journals,

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available via the British Library Catalogue. In the *Warehouseman and Draper's Trade Journal* Jackie found information about an ancestor who had started a business. The *Chemist and Druggist* is available for free digital search on The Wellcome Trust's website. The archive there is well worth a visit.

Workhouses have archives and libraries, but there are other places connected to social history, for example Markenfield Hall. This is a moated medieval property associated with Caroline Norton. She was involved in the Infant Custody Act of 1839, the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1858 and the Married Women's Property Act of 1870, which all still affect us.

Poor Law coroners' cases are apparently, and not helpfully, held in random archives at the decision of the jury.

Madingly Hall in Cambridge holds palaeography courses, for instance of manorial records, and while there one can visit the American War Cemetery. French war cemeteries provide a very emotional experience, especially if the body of an ancestor was never found. The National Memorial Arboretum near Litchfield is also an inspiring place to

visit, both for the memorials and the horticulture.

Churches and churchyards are vital sources of information both for individual memorials and church construction, fittings and local history, often described in displays inside the church. The style of church varies over the country, the wool churches of East Anglia being spectacular.

The Northumberland Archive at Woodhorn is on the site of a colliery and houses the Colliery Museum, where one can see old winding gear and other fittings. Durham Records Office has an online database of indexed compensation records and a project called Mining Durham's Hidden Depths. Information on other mineworkers is held by colliery and workers moved between sites.

Other places to visit are the Imperial War Museum, the Lambeth Palace Archive (preferably with a letter of introduction), and hospital archives.

At Brill, Jackie was impressed by the archive for their research project – everything is catalogued and in acid-free sleeves or envelopes.

For those interested in heraldry, the College of Arms is a possible destination, but for those with

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Surrey ancestors, the place to visit is the Surrey History Centre.

Much is going on in the realm of archives and there is, for instance, a new one for Cornwall. Many archivists will look things up, point you in the right direction or even digitize things for you. It is still good

to get out and about, however, after making contact, and if you do go, you will need several pencils, as well as possibly your laptop and smartphone. Always have a plan.

Jackie provided a most useful crib-sheet for those who attended the meeting.



Subscription renewals are due!

June Hayles (Membership Secretary)

This is a timely reminder that subscriptions renew on 1 January. For those of you who receive the printed journal, if you have a Standing Order set up for renewal this is indicated by SO after your membership number on the envelope. If you have signed up for Gift Aid this will be indicated by GA.

For our Overseas members we suggest renewing online via Parish Chest at <https://www.parishchest.com/east-surrey-family-history-society-4681.php>

Parish Chest is also an option for UK members, or you may prefer to

set up a Standing Order and avoid the stress of renewal time all together! A S/O form is always available on our web site and included with this edition of the journal. However you renew, by offering to sign the declaration to Gift Aid (if you are eligible) you also help us by adding 25p to every pound you give.

If you have any questions on renewal or your subscription in general please let me know.

We look forward to having you with us on our journey through 2024.



Talk with Tea – Sources for House History

Julian Pooley was the speaker at our last Talk with Tea and he suggested that we start with OS maps. He recommended the 1870s series, or the 1860s maps for large towns. His talk was well illustrated with an interesting collection of maps, including tithe maps which are best viewed on the Genealogist website. Earlier maps related to the Enclosure Acts 1760-1820 can also be consulted and might be attached to quarter sessions records. Further enclosures took place in the mid-19th century. The landed gentry were commissioning maps as early as the 16th century and some charities produced maps to record rental income.

Printed histories such as the Victoria County History can be useful, as can the Department of the Environment with its list of buildings of special architectural interest. In Surrey, the Surrey Domestic Research Group might help and the Surrey History Centre has its own collection of paintings, etchings and photographs. Surrey also has its own Photographic Record Society.

Deeds, especially where an inventory is included, can be a good source, as can sales particulars. At this point Julian displayed his personal gem in the talk as he had found that the sale catalogue for his grandparents' house included a photograph of his grandmother in her garden. You never know what you might find!

Electoral rolls (noting that boundaries change), trade directories, census returns, rate books and land tax books might identify your ancestors, although the details included in the returns for the 1909 Finance Act might give a better idea of the location of property.

Lastly, Julian mentioned the use of wills, diaries, letters, account books, bills and pictures as sources to learn more about the lives of our ancestors.

As usual we had the opportunity to view some beautiful artefacts and several members had travelled long distances to use the search facilities in the morning.



If you would like to come to future teas, please do book early to ensure that you have a seat, as we have changed our marketing strategy.

The next *Talk with Tea* will be on 25 April. See page 34 for details.

News from Surrey Heritage

Julian Pooley

In my last report I announced the arrival of our new conservator, Rachel Marsh. Rachel is now hard at work repairing and strengthening a range of documents, including some very fragile maps and plans, and has kindly offered to give an illustrated talk about her work as part of our programme of Zoom events next year. Conservation work underpins our work to preserve and make accessible the amazing records of Surrey's past, so do keep an eye on our Heritage Events page for further details of this event (<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre/events>).

Recruitment has continued over the summer months. I am delighted to report that Rachel Stacey has now joined us as our Foyer Supervisor so will become very familiar to everyone who telephones or visits us in the course of their research. Rachel worked with us on the 'March of the Women' Suffrage Centenary project and was previously at The National Archives. We have also been able to take part in Surrey County Council's apprenticeship scheme, and Gemma Cooles will be taking up her post as our Heritage Apprentice in October. Gemma has already been

volunteering with our colleagues in Surrey Archaeological Unit for several years and has been closely involved with a number of community projects, such as the digs at Woking Palace and currently at Runnymede. This apprenticeship will provide her with an excellent opportunity to learn more about archives, customer service and public engagement while studying for her Level 3 Library, Information and Archive Services Apprenticeship. Gemma will be with us for two years, and will become a familiar face in our searchroom, foyer and at our many talks, workshops and engagement activities.

Also in my last report, I highlighted the importance of Surrey History Trust in supporting our work at Surrey Heritage. If you are not already a member, do please consider joining the Trust because it is through annual membership subscriptions that the Trust is able to purchase archives, rare books, maps and prints for our collections when they appear on ebay or in auction catalogues. Over the summer Jack Dradey, who is reading History at Royal Holloway College, University of London, joined us on an internship to investigate some of the

News from Surrey Heritage

treasures that the Trust has purchased for us over the years and promote them through posts on our Exploring Surrey's Past website and on social media. He has done a superb job, so look out for his acutely observed and very personal descriptions of such gems as the account roll of the Earl of Surrey's Manors of Dorking, Reigate, East

Betchworth and Newdigate and Harrowsley (Horne), 1299 (9311/-), ornate architectural drawings of the Royal Dramatic College, Woking, 1861 (9759/-), the notebooks of William Donaldson of Dorking police force, 1838-1849 (9350/-), and verses on slavery by the Abolitionist, Judge Stephen Lushington of Ockham Park, 1823 (9738/-).

Recent Accessions

Highlights of our recent new accessions include the following:

7481add7

Broadwood, Bray and related families: additional correspondence and papers, chiefly of Audrey Marion Bray (1912-1989), later Audrey Marion Verner-Jeffreys, then Audrey Marion Richardson, 1837-2023

10457add

Cliff Webb, local historian of Crondall, Farnham: collected papers and photographs relating to people, places and properties in Surrey, 19th cent-20th cent

10482add

Jekyll family of Surrey and elsewhere: records. Comprising the following volumes described in depositor's schedule part 1; JJ1-2, JJ2-4, EJ-3, EJ-11, EJ-13, EJ-15 (not on schedule), HJ-1, HJ-3, HJ-4, HJ-5, 18th-19th cent.

10508

Pte F Harrison, 1st Battalion East Surrey Regiment: letter from India, 1897

Recent accessions at Surrey History Centre

10509

Sgt Thomas Elliot, East Surrey Regiment: army papers and other records relating to service during the Second World War, 1939-1946

10512

Mr George Hart, Premises Manager, Cornhill Insurance: papers relating to Cornhill Insurance wartime offices in Shalford and the country head office in Guildford, 1930s-1970s

10513

McDonald's and Trimmer's Almshouses Charity, Farnham: minute books, 1904-2018

10514

Sgt Edwin G B Myall (d.1915), 2nd Battalion, later 9th Battalion, East Surrey Regiment: press cuttings, nd [1915], and official letter to his mother, 1917

10517

St John the Baptist, Loxwood: papers relating to the Loxwood Chapel Endowments charity, 1898-1903

10518

St James, Shere: additional parish records, including file relating to the church, alterations and repairs, 1894-1995; Standing Committee minutes, 1995-1996; papers relating to Shere parish charities, 1888-1996

10519

Dane Court School, Dorset and Pyrford: records including admission registers, school lists, prize-giving speeches and records relating to the Old Dane Court Society, 1869-1922

10520

Surrey Registration Services: duplicate marriage registers relating to: Epsom Congregational Church, later United Reformed Church, 1947-2011; Kingdom Hall, Camberley, 2006-2018; The Hall, West Street, Farnham, 2007-2015

10524

Deeds relating to land in Chiddingfold, 1730; 1739

10525

Band Sergeant Robert James Francis, East Surrey Regiment: army papers and photographs, c. 1903-1935

Recent accessions at Surrey History Centre

10525add

Bandmaster Cecil Yates, East Surrey Regiment: photographs of the South African (Boer) War, as described in a schedule, 1899-1900

10526

Cottage and 5a land in Whitmore Bottom, Frensham, copyhold of the manor of Farnham, later site of Constant Spring, Whitmore Vale Road: title documents, valuation, sale poster and photograph, 1804-c.1976

10527

Michael Robin Broad of Kingston and elsewhere: papers relating to Surbiton Youth Council, Kingston College and Woodland Albion Football Club, 1948-1954

10529

Company Sergeant Major Ernest Elsey (d.1963), Queens Royal West Surrey Regiment: army papers and photographs, 1880s-1949

10531

Holy Trinity, Westcott: additional parish records, including service register, Parochial Church Council minutes and papers, church and school accounts, church log books, files relating to church property, projects and clergy, and parish magazines, 1852-2018

10532

Corporal Leonard Arthur Bodycombe (1911-1972), 1st Battalion, East Surrey Regiment: records including service papers, papers relating to his training as a PT officer and sporting career in the army, regimental sports team group photographs, and photograph albums, 1927-1939

10533

Edward Swain, medical officer, Brookwood Asylum, Woking: letter to Shadrach Skinner concerning his daughter, Mary Ann Skinner, a patient at the Asylum, 18 Nov 1872

10534

St Nicholas Orthopaedic Hospital, Pyrford: operation registers, 1922-1984; St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey: operation registers, 1961-1991

PXadd9

Leith Hill: drawing by H Slack, 1833; Keeper's Cottage, Downside, Cobham: postcard, 1906

Recent accessions at Surrey History Centre

PX/97add

Lingfield street scene: watercolour sketch by 'CH', 1854

SP/4354

High Wykehurst estate, Ewhurst: plan from sale particulars, 1952

Z/756

Banstead Urban District Council: ARP bomb map recording damage during the Second World War, 1940-1945

Z/757

Dave Wilson (b.1935): Second World War reminiscences of Woking

Z/758

Robert Hardiker, 9th Battalion, East Surrey Regiment: photographs, c.1917-1919

Z/760

Jane Allison of Guildford: email correspondence with Lore Segal (née Groszmann), formerly of Vienna, relating to her experiences as a Kindertransport refugee in Guildford during the Second World War, 2020

Z/761

Margaret Lily Head of Lingfield: transcript of her wartime diary, 1939-1945

Good news from the GRO

A limited number of birth and death registrations can be downloaded from the GRO website for £2.50. Just go to gov.uk and enter 'birth certificate' in the search box and that will take you to the page to order. You will have to register to use the site if this is your first time.

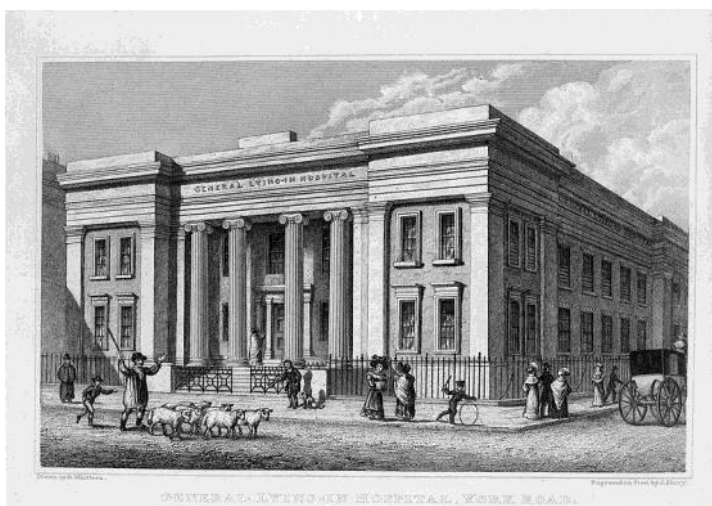
That process is free. You will only receive the 'middle portion' of each certificate, i.e. the piece that appears in the central box. If you want the registration district etc included you will have to pay for a pdf or paper copy.



Westminster Lying-in Hospital

Sylvia Dibbs

This series of documents (ref LMA/H1/GLI/LB11/014-017, WLIH 3-37 1827-1832), which contains the affidavits of married women at the hospital, is held by the London Metropolitan Archives. It was transcribed by hand by Sheila Gallagher – a mammoth task long before computers were used for this kind of task. Rita Russell of the Lingfield Group has been masterminding the indexing of these onto a database, an equally mammoth task. This will make the collection more accessible to more researchers and quick to search, the real bonus of modern computerised databases.



The General Lying-in Hospital, York Road, Waterloo

This hospital was a facility for married women and, in order to prove they were indeed married, they had to provide an affidavit. This gave the name of the husband and the place and date of the couple's marriage. It struck me while helping with this project how many Irish women were recorded. The section I was doing covers 1827-1832, so well before civil registration became law

and so a good starting point if you have been unable to find a marriage in the London area. Of course I do not know how truthful the couples were.

People looking for Irish ancestors often get stuck because the 1841 census in particular simply gives Ireland as the place of birth and that is a large area to search. Not all the people on the affidavits

Westminster Lying-in Hospital

who declared themselves to be Irish were married in Ireland; several were married in the recently established Roman Catholic missions in London.

Winifred McDermott and William Kelly, Irish, were married in the Catholic Chapel, St Mary's, Chelsea in 1828; and so were Margaret Grogan and Rody Moroney in 1830.

Margaret Walker married John Gillie, Irish, in the Catholic Chapel, London Road in 1829. This chapel later became St George's Cathedral, Southwark in 1850, when the hierarchy was restored to the Catholics. Margaret Buckley and Thomas Hogan also married there in 1829.

Other Catholic chapels mentioned were St Mary's Moorfields (Mary Matthews and John Wright in 1828); Dockhead Chapel, now the Most Holy Trinity Church, in Bermondsey (Julia Sarsfield and Michael Scully in 1827).

People may not think of looking for London ancestors, let alone those from Ireland, in the Sardinian Chapel: this was attached to the Sardinian Embassy. During the penal times Catholics in England were not allowed to practise their faith so

there were no places of worship for Catholics. In London there were many foreign diplomats and countries had their embassies in the town. These embassies were effectively outside the normal English laws. The Catholics of these countries were free to worship in their own chapels and as a bonus no one stopped English or Irish Catholics worshipping there too. The Sardinian Chapel is now the Church of St Anselm and St Cecelia. Dennis Gorman and Mary Ryan were married there in 1830.

The marriage locations in Ireland given for the Irish couples are a bit more of a problem, because some of them may not have been literate and the English hospital staff may have misheard the name of the Irish location. I do not know the nature of the original affidavits, though I have seen others in different sources where the actual original bit of paper exists. Some of the locations in Ireland may not readily match modern place-names. It is doubtful that anyone at the time was able to check them. For researchers the given location at least provides a possible starting place.

Westminster Lying-in Hospital

Annadown, Galway, where Catherine Connor married John Broderick in 1824, is an example. This seems to be Annaghdown, out on the west coast of Ireland. In 1822 Mary Shanley married James Henderson in St Organus Chapel, Dublin. I cannot find this or any saint of that name either, though it could be St Orans. Emily Maquay married John Jennings in St James Catholic Church, Dublin, in 1831, which does exist. John is noted as being from Ireland and is of the 3rd Regiment Foot Guards. However, I could not find an entry in the National Archives catalogue for John Jennings in this regiment. According to Free Irish Genealogy Advice, Tools and Resources (irish-genealogy-toolkit.com), by 1830 42% of the British Army was Irish.

London was a draw for anyone seeking work and a new life. At first, trade was the attraction for middle-class traders; then came the service industries, often under sweatshop conditions. This resource, although it concerns a Surrey hospital, has entries for women giving birth who had been married in places all over the country. Some had more than

one child, suggesting the family was settled for a while, and so may be ancestors of Surrey people.

I have tried to find further records of a handful of the Irish couples, but so far I have been unlucky. Were they too vague about their origins, or simply dishonest, in order to have their baby in a relatively civilised establishment?

On the other hand, the first two local marriages I tried I found easily on FindMyPast. Sophia Wagner, who was lying-in in 1827, married Richard Winn in St Martin-in-the Fields in 1818. Susan Gillings married John Spake in St Mary Lambeth on 1 October 1824. She gave birth in 1827.

The couple who married furthest away was Margaret McCarthy and Frederick Stewart on the island of St Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean in 1825. At the time of Margaret's lying-in, Frederick was on HMS Southampton. According to Wikipedia, the ship was built in Deptford Dockyard, and her keel laid down in 1817. Across the ocean, Ann Murphy and John Sutton were married in Cape Town, South Africa in 1826.



Online and In-Person Surrey Heritage talks 2024

At the time of writing (September 2023) we have a busy programme of talks and events planned for the autumn months and are now planning our programme for early 2024. Please keep an eye on the Heritage Events page of our website

for further information. In the meantime, many of our talks are now available for purchase via our online shop and there is a list of them, with a link to the shop on the Heritage Events page.

Friday 8 December 2023

The Historical Association, Reading Branch

Julian Pooley, *The Gentleman's Magazine. A Panorama of Georgian England for Family and Local Historians*

at Reading School, Erleigh Road, Reading RG1 5LR; 7.30 p.m.

Free-of-charge to all HA Members or local Associates. Non-members are charged £3 per lecture. For further details please contact the Branch President Chris Sexton (sexton44@gmail.com).

Saturday 27 January 2024

East Surrey Family History Society Virtual Family History Fair. I'm pleased to report that we will be represented at this exciting event by my colleague, Jill Hyams, archivist and family historian.



Talk with Tea

The next Talk with Tea at Surrey History Centre will be 'Stepping Stones Through the Archives', on Thursday 25 April, 2.00 - 4.00 p.m. Anne Ramon will be explaining the basics of analysing your DNA and the

importance of pairing this with robust paper trails. Then Jane Lewis and Julian Pooley will be discussing how to use their finding aids and a range of different sources to pin down your ancestors.

Help for ESFHS members using TNA records

Anne Ramon [4730]

The National Archives (TNA) is the official archive and publisher for the UK government and for England and Wales. It is the guardian of some of our most iconic national documents, dating back over 1,000 years, and it is home to millions of historical documents, created and collected by UK central government departments and major courts of law. There are 185 kilometres of shelving.

We may find our ancestors, their homes and work places in these documents, but such a vast archive can be daunting, and it isn't always easy to determine how to start. The catalogue can be confusing and the website has many pages.

I have gained some familiarity and insight into the record holdings and I'd like to offer my help to ESFHS members who want to use the National Archives but have questions or feel uncertain about using the catalogue, Discovery. Maybe you'd like help understanding the ordering system,

or which records are or aren't available. If I can help you, please contact me at secretary@eastsurreyfhs.org.uk and we can discuss your research enquiry and if appropriate, arrange to meet at TNA.

The National Archives is located in Kew, near Richmond, in southwest London; it is accessible by bus, train and tube. There is a car park but please check the website for current parking charges and remember you may be liable for Congestion Charge and ULEZ fees.

This is a friendly Start page on the website <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/start-here/what-we-have/>

Opening and document ordering times are here: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/visit-us/opening-times/>

I look forward to helping you with your family history research!



London's answer to the Eiffel Tower

continued from the September issue

In the early days of Tower Bridge the River Thames was a busy highway for ships coming into the Pool of London from faraway places all over the world to unload their different and exotic cargoes at the many wharves that lined the bank of the River Thames: silks and spices from the East, and the not so exotic cargoes of butter, sugar and other comestibles from the Empire. Tower Bridge's construction employed the finest engineering talents. It had to be raised frequently and without delay to let the big ships through. When the great bascules were up, pedestrians wanting to get to the other side of the Thames could walk up one of the towers and cross the river by the overhead walkways. Tower Bridge was so designed that the bascules were raised on a balancing principle (*la bascule* is French for see-saw). Because of the Tay Bridge disaster of 1879, the new bridge was over-engineered: 2,000 rivets were used to keep the new bridge together. It is clad in granite Gothic stone. Today, the public is now permitted access to its mechanical workings at the southern end of the Bridge, available for study by the mechanically-minded.

The new bridge even had its own mortuary, a Victorian morgue, whose way in was called the Dead Man's Hole! The mortuary, now no longer, was situated at the northern end of Tower Bridge.

In the first few days, the new bridge was opened up to 22 times a day. By 1911 its opening had become less frequent. Keeping the bridge in use 24 hours every day called for a crew of 80 under the command of a superintendent engineer and bridgmaster, there were stokers for the boilers, engineers to maintain the machinery, signalmen to carry out the complex routine of passing a ship, and up to World War Two, ostlers to care for the 'rescue team' of carthorses stabled beneath the roadway, all of which made it a costly river crossing to maintain. In the 1950s and 1960s the increasing volume of cars and lorries travelling in both directions made the continuous raising and lowering of the Tower Bridge impractical. Nowadays, the raising of the Tower Bridge is a relatively rare occurrence.

A few years ago it seemed possible that the Tower Bridge might suffer the fate of so many

London's answer to the Eiffel Tower

achievements of Victorian engineers, but in the event, the Corporation put history before a wider bridge. In fact the erection of the Tower Bridge was almost too late, for the tall ships, which had demanded its lofty clearance, were fading from the scene. Year by year, the spectacle of the bascules majestically rising, became ever rarer. Even in my own time, fewer ships were entering the Pool of London due to the unpredictable post WW2 dock strikes and the advent of container lorries. More and more, cargoes were being unloaded at Tilbury in Essex, and the goods were transported by container lorry to London. So ended the greater part of industry in the Pool, for which the wharves were built, thus lessening the frequency of the Tower Bridge going up.

In 1910 the walkways of the Bridge were closed by Parliament. They were not glazed at that time: they had become dangerous and insalubrious, the scene of several suicides and a place where night prostitutes plied their trade.

In 1820 my gt-grandfather Ernest Stevens moved the family from Horselydown, Bermondsey, to Ladywell near Lewisham, but he

continued to stable his horses in Queen Elizabeth Street. When my mother was a young girl, she told me how she would go up to the Tower Bridge to visit Grandfather Stevens and his horses in Queen Elizabeth Street; at that time there were about half-a-million horses in London. Horses were almost the only means of transport at the start of the 20th century and for some years to come; and their presence ruled the road in more ways than one. Beautiful animals though horses are, they had the habit of leaving their mark – literally! My mother told me of the the problem faced by the authorities on the roads of every town and city – but the raising of the Tower Bridge presented them with a unique problem. With wry amusement, my mother related how whenever the bascules were raised the many manure deposits slipped down, necessitating a never-ending clear-up job of some magnitude!

Tower Bridge has been the setting for some hair-raising escapades. On several occasions the Bridge has been the scene of an aeroplane being flown by an audacious pilot through the space between the Bridge and the upper

London's answer to the Eiffel Tower

walkways. The first incident took place in 1912 when Frank McClean flew his biplane through the space. The second incident was of more recent date: a daring suicide attempt was perpetrated on 31 July 1973, when a light aircraft was flown under the high-level walkway, west to east. Even more recently, on 13 July 2009, Robbie Maddison, an Australian, who holds the world record for the longest motorbike jump while performing a backwards somersault, used a ramp to leap a 25ft gap in the Bridge when the bascules were raised!

The mishap that impinged itself on my mind occurred on 30 December 1952, involving a No. 78 red double-decker bus full of passengers, driven by Albert Gunter. As the bascules of the bridge were being raised, the front wheels of the bus got so far, finally got caught and stuck on the apex of one of the bascules, unable to move backwards or forwards. I recall seeing a photo

of the bus with its front wheels of the bus hanging tenuously over the centre edge of one of the bascules, just missing going over the top and plunging into the River Thames below. This hair-raising event led to the installation of improved traffic control prior to the bridge going up. There seems to be some mystery surrounding the event; some misunderstanding as to how the bus got where it did.

The Tower Bridge is an enduring monument to Victorian craftsmanship. It is now a Grade I Listed building and one of the most recognised landmarks in London. In 1982 it was given a major facelift. In 1988 floodlighting was installed. In 1993, in preparation for the celebration of 2000 years of Christianity, the upper walkways were re-opened to the public; these now house a spectacular exhibition with modern computers, model reconstructions and modern media techniques.



Albert Edward Gunter (1906 – 1968)

Alan James Gunter [10668]

A brief moment of history: the day a bus jumped Tower Bridge

The following is an article I have put together to include in my family history for my great-grandparents, Robert Henry Gunter and Emma Keen. They had 12 children. Their eldest was Robert Harry: he married Priscilla Elizabeth Casbard, and these were Albert Edward's parents. He was their fifth child (of eleven). Their second child was William George, my father. Albert Edward was therefore my uncle.

30 December 1952 seemed like an ordinary day for bus driver Albert Gunter. He was a driver on the bus route 78, which passed across Tower Bridge. Tower Bridge had been built between 1886 and 1894, crossing the River Thames in London, and it was designed to split into two sections that would raise when large boats and tall ships needed to pass under.

By the time that Albert was driving his bus on that fateful day, Tower Bridge had been raised around 300,000 times previously. A series of systems was designed to hold traffic back prior to the bridge raising – a gateman would ring a warning bell and close the gates, and when the bridge was clear a watchman would order the bridge to be raised. However, human error meant that as Albert and his bus full

of passengers approached the bridge, the light was green for a safe crossing.

As Albert crossed the bridge, the road suddenly seemed to drop away in front of him, and he realised that the bridge was rising with them on it. With no other option, Albert astutely and bravely moved down two gears, slammed on the accelerator, and jumped the 3-foot



Albert Edward Gunter (1906 – 1968)

gap across the water below, landing on the lower piece of road on the other side which, was slower to rise. Amazingly, out of 20 passengers, no one was seriously injured. The bus conductor broke his leg, and an 11-year-old boy fractured his collarbone, but the other passengers were released after a precautionary hospital visit.

Albert was hailed as a hero for his quick thinking and was heavily rewarded – he was given a gift of £10 from London Transport (and one whole day off work!), and the City of London awarded him £35. Significant amounts for the time! Albert,

though, remained humble about the incident, claiming that he could not understand ‘what the fuss is all about’.

One of the passengers on the bus was a Miss May Walshaw, and after the event she was (understandably) left with a strong fear of travelling on public transport. Seven months after the incident, she decided to tackle her fear and undertook the same bus journey across the bridge – with Albert as the driver. The drive went without a hitch, and two weeks later May got married, with Albert as her best man.



A postcard of the time imagining how 'the jump' might have looked

Wanted – willing volunteers

Volunteers are required to assist the Committee to improve your society.

We have implemented several innovations in the last two years, including introducing our own highly successful virtual fair and organising our online transcription events, but we need more helpers to keep up with the projects. The committee is small, though we are grateful for the regular non-committee helpers that we depend on for our attendance at Family History Fairs that have sprung back to life after Covid.

But we need more – and, in particular, we need someone to co-ordinate that work. That will include booking the fairs, arranging helpers (you do not have to attend yourself),

communicating the information and reporting back on items sold. Full details can be supplied.

If you feel you can help with this (or with any other society jobs) then please do speak with or email any of the current committee (details at the front of the Journal).

We would like to thank Sue Adams for her years of being Fairs' Co-ordinator, and Monica Polley for storing and transporting the bookstall items for us.

Next March, at our AGM, there will also be an opportunity to put yourself forward for the committee if you feel you could be more fully involved.



Felbridge Family History Fair

Marda Dixon

On Saturday 21 October four of us attended the Felbridge & District History Group Fair at Felbridge Village Hall. This was a small event packed with information on the local area, with representatives of ESFHS, the East Surrey Museum, the East Grinstead Museum, the Wealden Iron Research Group, Felbridge Primary School and the Guinea Pigs Club.

I was fascinated to learn the history of this last, which was established at the Queen Victoria Hospital (East Grinstead) in 1941 by Dr McIndoe as a social club and mutual support network for airmen, injured in the Second World War, who received experimental plastic surgery on their facial burns. These men valued the support and

friendship of the people of East Grinstead who learned not to stare at the disfigured men when they were encouraged to walk out in the town as part of their rehabilitation.

For such a small area, the founders of the Felbridge Group – Jeremy and Stephonie Clarke – have produced a plethora of information boards covering every aspect of their area. They also gave demonstrations of rope-making.

We did not sell a lot on our bookstall, but we were able to help a few people. We also established new contacts and gave out several membership forms, as well as enjoying the home-made cakes and gleaning a lot of interesting information ourselves.



Lambeth Heritage Festival September 2023

Alan Essex

This year's festival was led by Lambeth Archives and the Lambeth Local History Forum with numerous talks, exhibitions and local tours throughout the month. It opened with a day-long local history fair at West Norwood Library and

Picturehouse. The place buzzed with people and excitement all day. Anne Ramon and Ann Turner represented us for ESFHS and took many enquiries, not least in explaining that Surrey extended all the way to Southwark in earlier years.



Kempton Park Family History Show

Marda Dixon

Four members attended the Family History Show at Kempton Park in September to showcase our Society. We all agreed that this was a far more successful event than last year with a much greater attendance, and a regular flow of visitors to our table.

Peter and Sue manned the computer to look up queries by visitors, while Monica and I talked with people on a more general level. Some thought we could work miracles if they just had a name and no other details – not even sure if it was Surrey the ancestor hailed from: only if it was a really unusual name, Peter might find it on the computer lists. One lady told me her grandfather had been brought up in a pub called *The George* somewhere in London; could we find out where it might be?! I encouraged her to use Google Search. Another was looking for where her relative was buried in the 1960s. She only knew his name. I pointed her to the GRO indexes to, maybe, find a district and reference number and then to order a death certificate to try to find more specific details such as address or name of informant.

One new member joined on the day, with others showing an interest

and taking away forms. Another society donated us a book on Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, as it was out of their area – and this was subsequently purchased by another visitor for £10 – an easy way to make a profit. Altogether we took £84 in book and map sales; this was encouraging, but it did not cover our costs. However, it is probably important that we are seen at the local fairs within Surrey to advertise our existence.

Another donation came in the form of two birth certificates, which the donor no longer needed. She wondered if anyone in our area could recognise the names and use them in their own research. Both are sons of a Henry Turner, although at different times and places and with different mothers. The first is for Horatio Edwin Turner born on 15 Feb 1837 at 56 Brook Street, Lambeth. The second is for Percy Edgar Turner born on 12 July 1870 at 3 Cardigan Cottages, Stanley Road, Croydon. If you recognise these names and would like the certificates sent to you, please email me at the address at the front of the Journal.



Membership and Members' Interests

New members

10760	Barbara Milne	barbaramilne2@ntworld.com
10761	Nicola Corcoran	nicola.c.corcoran@gmail.com

Changes to email addresses

9125	Ken Read	kenread1939@gmail.com
10654	Stephen Ennis	stephen_ennis@btinternet.com
10746	David Gough	goughdw63@gmail.com
10523	Mary-Anne Burns	mabbie@outlook.com
10330	Gemma Roulston	gemmaroulston@gmail.com
10681	Sarah Pettyfer	sarah@spfhistory.co.uk

Members' Interests in Surrey

HANNA	All	pre 1950	10702
KENNETT	All	All	10759
ROSAM	Fetcham	pre 1950	10702
ROSAM	Thames Ditton	1800-1950	10702
SCOTT	Richmond	All	10759

Members' Interests outside Surrey

HANNA	All	pre 1950	10702
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East Surrey Monumental Inscriptions Collection no. 1

Full monumental inscriptions for 10 churches/chapels in East Surrey

The 6,256 names are indexed by surname and forename. Each entry has a unique reference number and layouts of each churchyard annotated with the MI reference are included, as well as brief details and a picture of each church or chapel. Includes:

Bletchingley, St Mary 1559-1942

Charlwood, Providence Chapel 1832-1974

Horne, St Mary 1618-1961

Leigh, St Bartholomew 1646-1983

Lowfield Heath, St Michael 1846-1874

Newdigate, St Peter 1634-1978

Nutfield, St Peter & St Paul 1631-1979

Outwood, St John 1819-1984

Redhill, St John 1807-1981

Reigate, Friends Meeting House 1802-1982

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