

Chairman's Report by Peter Lee

How did our forebears travel?

A subject which has been much on my mind lately, how did our ancestors travel and what was the experience like for them? I have to travel a lot on business and I am happy to know my flights, hotels, trains, and buses, street maps, are a few keyboard strokes away. I find it hard to imagine two hundred years ago your ancestor, faced with travelling to a distant town, no map, no idea how far, no pre-knowledge other than word of mouth, could not read or write, had little money, poor clothing, hardly a change of underwear, set off for some distant place not really knowing whether he or she would reach their destination. True there were stagecoaches, but these were for the rich. The ribbon weaver, agricultural labourer, collier, and general village bumpkin had to walk.

Sometimes we find north Warwickshire people turning up in Bethnal Green in London. Cotswold people trudging through south Warwickshire to reach the north of the county, others set off for the south coast and got a job in the navy, or to Macclesfield or Derby looking for work in the silk trade there. It is hard to imagine what such journeys meant in terms of hardship and deprivation.

I estimate it took five whole days to walk to London, by wandering down the Watling Street. An easy route, but the logistics are amazing. For a start you had to cart your possessions with you. It is hardly likely they had a handcart. Pushing or dragging one with solid wooden wheels over the rutted pot-holed road would have been an ordeal in itself. No doubt they carried money, but had very little of that precious commodity. And if they had it put them at risk of being accosted by some footpad en route. Petty thieves were routinely strung up in those days so better to kill you after they had robbed you than leave you to spill the beans at the next town.

What about food? If you travel down the Watling Street even today there are precious few towns. There would, however, be quite a few inns, and probably a respectable number of beer houses. So you could quench your thirst for a few coppers, but bread and meat was rather more expensive. Pub meals might have been too expensive for the labouring classes. If you took bread and cheese with you, how long did it stay fit to eat? I could imagine what it would be like after four days in the heat of the day, covered with dust from the road and without the benefit of washing in clean soapy water!

Every town had its carrier's cart. They routinely took

goods from place to place but it still cost money to use them, and they did not travel more than walking pace anyway. Better the fit should walk and save his coppers.

Where did they sleep? Inns provided accommodation, again that cost money. I would expect most people slept under the stars risking being attacked at night by thieves, ne'er do-wells, lunatics, dogs, insects, etc.

All very well on a warm summer's day but you just imagine what it was like in the winter. There were no weather warnings to say do not travel tomorrow because there is going to be torrential rain and the dusty roads will be turned into a quagmire. No one knew. A few old soothsayers might have a guess, but it was all down to luck. Even a bright sunny day could change within hours by a sudden storm with lightning crashing around the unsuspecting and under clothed traveller. No sou'westers, no Wellington boots just leaking woollen cloth, clogs, cracked or fraying leather boots. Only a tree to hide under!

London, as a destination, was easy enough. It was in a direct line down the Watling Street, but consider our ancestors walking to Macclesfield, for example, where there were silk mills still working when the local trade had died. Getting there today is easy. In 1840 you had to find your way by walking without a map. You probably knew it was north, but where in the north? If you could not read or write the finger posts were not much good. Lets face it as you approached each town and you asked the natives which way it was they could only point you to the next town, and may not know what was beyond that. Neither would you. I can see our venerable ancestors wandering around in circles from village to village trying to find someone who knew which villages and towns intervened on the way to Macclesfield.

All this presupposed that you knew what to do when you got to your destination. How did you find work, or where your relatives lived? No Street signs, no house numbers, no telephones, no mail. In fact nothing to forewarn them of your planned visit. They could even have moved or be dead for all you knew when you set out.

But travel they did, and along well-worn trails. The thought of it makes me feel tired already!

Therefore, if any of our members have seen any documented details of such journeys I would like to hear from them.

Editorial

Dear Member,

Our editor Ray is – as I write – in the George Eliot Hospital. I am sure you will want to join me in wishing him all the best for a speedy recovery. Can I add a personal plea that he is soon back to do the next journal!

In need of keeping what bit of my sanity remains, you will find this journal is a somewhat different style compared with Ray's. I apologise – especially to Ray – but another learning curve proved too great a challenge.

If you emailed articles to Ray since the later part of May, they will not have found their way through to this edition. Again, my apologies. When Ray is home, he will sort out the pile of material in his email box and hopefully articles will appear in later editions.

While writing, can I get on my soapbox? Members enjoy benefitting from this Society's various projects and we need help to keep the work going. If you can use a computer, think you can organise material (and people!) and have a few hours to spare, contact Pat or me. If you believe you are capable of transcribing parish registers and can use a spreadsheet – also get in touch. And if you can make a good cuppa – and can help at our events, also tell us – please! We don't know who can do what, or is willing to try doing something unless you let us know. To keep our Society alive, we need *you!*

In fact, we don't get together and TALK often enough in our Society, or in family history generally. OK, some places where we may meet up are

"Shush" places, but not all are. So let us all start communicating with each other!

Why not bring your "tree" along on 24th October (see elsewhere) to our event being held at Over Whitacre (up the hill from Furnace End, towards Ansley). All family trees are "a work in progress" so you do not need something posh to put on display – roll of lining paper, taped-together sheets of A4...whatever. Just come along, pop it on a table (well-labelled with your name) and talk to people – you never know just who may link to the same tree!

So, with apologies for the changes in style and format, read on – and I hope you won't be too hard on me!!

Jacqui

Time to Renew Your Subscription, *please*

How quickly time flies! Once again we are coming up to the date on which I ask you to please renew your membership of NNWFHS for another year.

Your renewal form is enclosed with this Journal. It is tailored specifically for you and contains a list of your surname research interests that you have registered with the Society. Please complete the form carefully, updating the record as you find necessary. With regard to your address, telephone number and email, can I remind you that these are published in our annual Members' Interests booklet but we do not publish them on the internet. If you do not wish your details to be shown in the Members' Interests' publication, please make a note on the renewal form.

We will use your email address to send information about our Society to you from time to time. If you do not wish to be contacted in this way, or if you do not want to receive email attachments (perhaps because you have dial-up internet), then please do not give an email address. Those without email will be contacted by post.

Subscription rates for the coming year are:

Individual	£9.50
Family	£12.00
Overseas	£15.00

The renewal date is **1 September** so please renew in good time.

Please make cheques payable to 'Nuneaton & North Warwickshire Family History Society' and post to:

Membership Secretary, NWFHS,
44 Turnberry Drive,
Nuneaton,
Warwickshire CV11 6TT

The committee has taken the decision not to issue membership cards any longer to save the cost of printing and posting them out to you. If you require a receipt for your payment please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your renewal.

Finally, can I thank you all for your continued support of the Society which is much appreciated.

Kate Keens,
Treasurer &
Membership
Officer



Fenny Drayton—The First Quaker

By Alfred Lester Scrivener (1845-1886)

First published in the Nuneaton Observer 1878

Transcribed by Heather Lee

“Sitting in his stall, working on tanned bides, amid pincers, paste-horns, rosin, swine-bristles, and a nameless flood of rubbish, this youth had nevertheless a living spirit belonging to him; also an antique inspired volume, through which, as through a window, it could look upwards and discern its celestial Home.” – Carlyle.

Crossing the Watling Street Road and turning by the Royal Red Gate into a quiet lane with a broad margin of green on either hand, between high straggling hedgerows, where clusters of blackberries deepen into purple, and a profusion of wild flowers coyly open white or pink or blue eyes under the shadow of green bushes, I bend my steps towards Fenny Drayton, or as it was sometimes called, Drayton-in-the-Clay. A few sunny days have brought us to the fullness of the harvest, and on either hand I see the reapers toiling in the fields, and slow wains freighted with golden grain, and the gleaners picking up the scattered ears that have fallen from the gathered sheaves. Far away on either side, flocks and herds are grazing the rich pasture of the Leicestershire meadows, among which the cornfields stand, golden isles in a sea of emerald. A few thatched cottages, old and warped and weather-stained, under whose squared eaves the swallows have built their nests, and whose thick leaded lattices hardly light up the brown depths of the low and heavy rafted rooms; gardens decked with many an old fashioned garish flower and over-shadowed by the russet laden boughs of ancient apple trees; a blacksmith's shop; a pleasant white parsonage; a grey gothic church with low spire, quaint Norman doorway, and tasteful



George Fox: 1624-1691

modern porch, and girdled by a sombre belt of venerable yews that stretch their dark arms above the green mounds of the dead – such is Drayton village, the birthplace of George Fox the first Quaker.

It was in July 1624, the last year of the reign of James I that gossips in Drayton village told how a son was born to Christopher Fox the weaver, “Righteous Christer” as they called him. It was “Righteous Christer” who wove into fine sheets or substantial home-spun, the wool or the flax that was being spun with spindle and distaff in the kitchen of every farmhouse, and at the door of every cottage from year’s end to year’s end, so that he was known to every housewife in the countryside. “Righteous Christer” was an honest, sober man “with a seed of God in him,” seeing or thinking he saw somewhat further into the mystery of Godliness than his spiritual pastor, but yet content to worship in his own parish church. His wife – “of the family of Lago and of the stock of the martyrs,” was an upright woman, accomplished above most of their degree in the place where she lived, though in a rude country village the standard would be

sufficiently low. Not only in the household of “Righteous Christer” but in almost every English home, men were in those days questioning and studying their own hearts and the Inspired Word with a passionate intense earnestness never seen before or since; and the boy who was born on that July day in the weaver’s cottage at Drayton, heard his parents and their friends, in their daily and hourly speech, canvassing the awful problems of life and death and eternity. In such an atmosphere the boy George Fox shewed a gravity and staidness of mind and spirit not usual in children. “When I came to eleven years of age,” he writes in his journal, “I knew pureness and righteousness; for while a child I was taught how to walk and be kept pure. The Lord taught me to be faithful in all things and to act faithfully in two ways, namely, inwardly to God and outwardly to man, and to keep to yea and nay in all things.” “Righteous Christer” and his wife, as they saw the deep, earnest, devout spirit of the lad, had some thought of training him for the ministry, but other counsels prevailing, George was apprenticed to the village shoemaker, who was also a grazier having a right perhaps to run his flocks in the wide unenclosed fields which then surrounded the village. As young George sat stitching in his stall, the spirit of questioning which possessed all England laid hold on him also, and vexed his soul – but alas for the poor cobbler’s lad, none of the ways in which men had solved the Eternal Mystery, none of their church politics or forms of faith, could satisfy the hunger of his spirit. The peace he could not find in his stall he sought in the fields. He loved rather the task of

shepherding his master's flocks, for in the solitude of the wide common, he could wrestle with God, with none near but the timid sheep to witness the travail of his soul, but yet he found not the peace he sought. Could it be that the petty cares of everyday life, the cobbling of shoes, the tendance of sheep, and the talk of his fellows whose souls were of the earth earthy, caused the doubts and fears and questioning that tormented him? He would flee from them though he left also the household loves that were so dear to his heart. He turned his handicraft to an unwonted use. He stitched for himself a long enduring suit of leather, and fled from his home "leaving his relations and breaking off all familiarity with old or young." He was then (1643) nineteen years of age. We hear of him at Lutterworth, at Northampton, at Barnet, "often wandering solitary in the chance to wait upon the Lord." Then he went to London to write his journal, "I was under great misery and trouble there, for I looked upon the great professors of the city and I saw all was dark and under the shadow of darkness." There had been grief and trouble in the weaver's cottage at Drayton for the fugitive whom all "loved for his innocence and honesty"; someone found out George and told him of this, and the strong cords of filial love drew him home again - why not? - He was no nearer to God in London though the great Assembly of Divines was then in full session at Westminster. Home again at Drayton, the well-meaning village worthies proposed their own remedies for the craze which seemed to possess him. One would have had him marry, but George answered not unwisely, "I am yet a lad, I must get wisdom." Another would have had him join the army of the Parliament, but his warfare was not with flesh and blood but with the Prince of Darkness. The parish priest, Nathaniel Stephens by name, came to see him and George went often

to the parsonage, where they talked over high and abstruse points of the doctrine, the priest commending the depth and wisdom of his answers and speaking of him to others. But George writes, "what I said in discourse to him on the week-days, he would preach on the first days, for which I did not like him." The parson seemed to be seeking rather for matter to enrich his own discourses, than to minister to a soul that was perishing of spiritual hunger. It is pitiable to read how the poor sick soul at this time sought physician after physician and found no help. The following are extracts from his journal:

"After this I went to another ancient priest at Mancetter, in Warwickshire, and reasoned with him about the ground of despair and temptations; but he was ignorant of my condition; he bade me take tobacco and sing psalms. Tobacco was a thing I did not love, and psalms I was not in a state to sing; I could not sing. Then I heard of a priest living about Tamworth who was accounted an experienced man, I went seven miles to him; but I found him only like an empty hollow cask.

I heard also of one called Dr. Cradock, of Coventry, I went to him. I asked him the ground of temptation of despair, and how troubles came to be wrought in man? ... Now as we were walking together in his garden, the alley being narrow I chanced in turning to set my foot on the side of a bed, at which the man was in a rage as if his house had been on fire. Thus all our discourse was lost. I went away in sorrow worse than I was when I came."

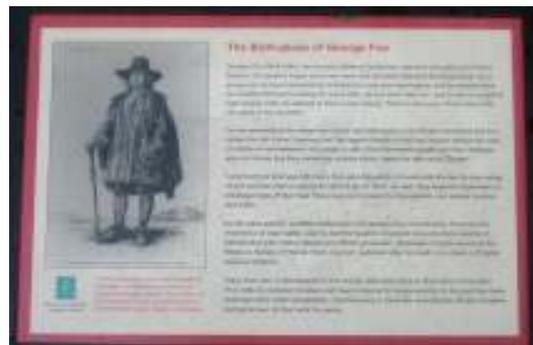
After this I went to another one Macham, a priest in high account. He would needs give me some physic, and I was then to be let blood; but they could not get one drop of blood from me either in arms or head (though they endeavoured to do so) my body being as it were dried up with sorrows, grief and trouble, which

were so great upon me that I could have wished I had never been born, or that I had been born blind that I might never have seen wickedness and vanity, and deaf that I might never have heard vain and wicked words on the Lord's name blasphemed.

After these experiences one is hardly surprised to find a later entry, "as I was walking in a field on a first day morning that the Lord opened unto me that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ." In 1647 he is again travelling up and down as a stranger in the land. He found no more help among the "separate preachers" than among the established priesthood, and groping alone through the darkness of the world, a ray of light from heaven reached his soul; "when all my hopes in them," he writes, "and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me nor could I tell what to do, then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus that can speak to thy condition,' and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the darkness."

In 1652, being then among the mountain solitudes of the Peak, he saw in his rapt dreams "people thick as motes in the sun that should in time be brought home to the Lord." Then began wanderings no longer that he might fly from men, but that he might seek them out and show how they might be saved. From end to end of England, through Wales and Ireland, the West Indies, and the Continent of Europe, he hardly rested from his journeyings and preachings for 40 years, save when he was cast into prison. Neither he nor the "Friends" who followed him would take any oath - to them the simple lie was as awful a sin as the formal perjury; they would not put off their hats to high or low; they addressed all individuals as Thee and Thou, not without exciting

Fenny Drayton—The First Quaker...continued



The Fox monument, with close-up of the inscription, and information board. These are at Fenny Drayton – birthplace of George Fox. Photographs kindly provided by Alan Cook.

anger – “Thou me, thou my dog;” answered one, “if thou thouest me I’ll thou thy teeth down thy throat”; they used but few words and were at a word in dealing; they did not bid good morrow or good evening – was not the morrow always good, and the evening good? – neither would they “bow or scrape with the leg to any one”; and once when George was hauled up before a justice, the prisoner bade his judge *tremble* at the judgments of God, the justice answered that he was no *quaker*, and George Fox and his followers were known as Quakers from that day. It is no part of my purpose to discuss the theological subtleties of their faith of which the fundamental principle said by William Penn to be “The Light of Christ within as God’s gift for man’s salvation.” I am rather concerned in the spectacle of a human soul struggling through darkness and despair to know the will of God and to do it, neither can I trace the first Quaker through all his wanderings, when he would enter the “steeple houses” and follow or interrupt the preacher with a discourse of his own, till it became a dreadful thing when sober formal priests in quiet parishes were told “The man in Leather Breeches is come.” Now and again he returns to his old home at Drayton, and holds hot and angry distributions with Nathaniel Stephens the parson. Once Stephens aware that Fox was

coming gave out at Lecture in Atherstone, that there would be a great disputation on such a day. Crowds of people from Atherstone and the country round flocked into the village where Stephens and seven other priests held a long and heated disputation with George and a few friends, under the yews trees in Drayton Churchyard. But the priests toiled in vain. The enthusiasts refused to be convinced, and the clergymen “went away in a rage to the parsonage to drink.” Then seven lusty fellows seized Fox in their arms and carried him to the church porch and would have carried him in, but the door being locked, they dropped him in the porch and fell over him, thinking it goodly sport to bait this mad fellow in the leathern breeches; and when he was thus mauled, the eight parsons returned and renewed the disputation, which lasted till a “professor” for very weariness cried out “George wilt thou never have done.” I copy the entry recording another visit to Drayton a year after this disputation:

“From thence I went to Drayton my native town, where so many priests and professors had formerly gathered together against me; but now not a priest or professor appeared. I asked some of my relations where all the priests and professors were. They said the priest at Nun-Eaton was dead, and eight or nine of them were seeking

to get his benefice. “They all will let you alone now,” said they “for they are like a company of crows, when a sheep is dead they all gather together to pull out the puddings, so do the priests for a fallen benefice.”

This entry also, dated 1677, possesses a peculiar local interest:

“Went to Nathaniel Newton’s, at Hartshill, where several friends met me with whom I had good service.”

There is also a Friends’ Meeting at Hartshill to this day.

At the entrance to Drayton village an obelisk has been erected which bears the following inscription: -

“To the memory of George Fox, the Founder of the Society of Friends, born near this spot at Fenny Drayton, A.D. 1624, and was interred in Bunhill Fields Burial Ground London A.D. 1690.”

To this I need only add another extract from *Sarter Resartus* - “This man, the first of the Quakers, and by trade a shoemaker, was one of those to whom under ruder or purer form, the Divine Idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself; and across all the halls of Ignorance and earthly degradation, shines through in unspeakable Awfulness, unspeakable Beauty on their souls.”

Use it—or lose it! Family History Centres of the LDS

Do you know about the Family History Centres operated by the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)? Have you used one of their centres? If not, you really should! The Centres are well equipped for family history research and are open to everyone, free of charge.

The LDS church has, over many years, gathered a vast collection of filmed historical data that is held in its vaults in Utah. Part of their religious belief is that church members should research their family histories, and have their forebears welcomed to the LDS church. The boon for the rest of us is that the Mormon Church makes the material freely available to all researchers.

Helpful teams of volunteers man the Family History Centres. The Centres have computers with online access to resources such as the IGI, but the exceptional facility for family historians is the library of films of parish registers from all over the world, which individuals can hire. These films are original resources, albeit as scanned images, for you to use to further your research - regardless of where your ancestors lived. You need to order in advance, the films can be reserved for one month, or for three months; you can then visit as frequently as you need to use the film you have on hire. There is a modest fee for hiring which varies on the length of the hire (£2.70 for one month; £3.80 for three months), but use of the Centres is free of charge. Rest assured, nobody will try to change your religious beliefs.

There are two local Family History Centres - both on the edge of the north Warwickshire area.

Sutton Coldfield (187 Penns Lane, Sutton Coldfield - Tel: 0121 386 4902. Opening hours are Tu-Th 10am-4pm; Tu-Fri 7pm-9pm; Sat 9.30am-1.30pm): I have used this FHC regularly of late and would recommend it to everyone. The research rooms are in the new church building, which is situated in Penns Lane - just a few yards from the entrance to the Ramada Penns Hall Hotel. There is plenty of car parking alongside the building and all is easily accessible for the disabled. You enter by the main door (there is a lack of signs); follow the corridor to the right and the office is facing you. Some days all machines are busy, on others less so - but you book in advance. You are left to your own devices, but if you need assistance, the volunteers are ready to help. There are no cafés close by, but take a packed lunch - if it is nice, you can sit on the grass!

I have not used the centre at **Coventry** (Riverside Close, Whitley. Phone: 0247-630 3316. Opening hours: Mon 10am-12pm; Tu-Fri 10am-2pm; Tu-Th 7pm-9pm). This Centre has been closed for refurbishment but is due to reopen shortly. I have no reason to believe it will be any different to Sutton Coldfield - do try it if it is nearer for you.

To prepare for a visit, you can search their catalogue online at: www.familysearch.org/eng/Library/FHLC/frameset_fhlc.asp [type it without

spaces at the line breaks] just click on "place search"; type your parish into the box and then work through the entries. The entries show the dates covered on each film. A word of warning - the dates will be earliest and last for any event - not necessarily all events on the film.

It is probably easier and more cost-effective for members living in north Warwickshire to visit a local FHC to use microfilm for registers of Warwickshire parishes, than it is to travel to Warwick Record Office (where you will also use filmed registers). Given that our county record office is now closed for the first full week of every month and also on every Monday, and that it has somewhat limited free car parking, researchers really should make use of the Mormon Family History Centres! There are rumours afoot that Centres deemed insufficiently used may be closed. That will be a huge blow for those who rely on them for access to parish registers for their far-flung ancestors. Should Sutton Coldfield be closed, I would have something like a 70-mile round trip to get to Warwick Record Office - not a pleasant prospect on a regular basis.

So please visit and use your local FHC - even if you live away from Warwickshire you can find the centre nearest to you online: www.familysearch.org/eng/library/FHC/frameset_fhc.asp [again, with line breaks]. Without the work of the Mormon church, our research would be harder!

Use it, or lose it!

Eighteen Years that Changed This Land Forever

by Alan F Cook

Equal challengers might be:

- 43 A.D. Roman Invasion
- 1066
- 1348 Black Death
- 1914-18 WWI
- 1939-45 WWII

1533 Elena Pot (Pott) was ordered to mend her manners towards her neighbours or remove herself from Nuneaton. She was also warned for not showing her pigs to the town herdsman.

1534 Act of Supremacy: The king shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the church. Hence the Church of England severed from Rome. Act of Succession: Required an oath to be taken by all acknowledging that Henry VIII marriage with Catherine of Aragon was invalid.

1535 Etone Priory survey made no reference to issues from coal mines.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus recorded some of the following possessions of Etone Priory. The parish Churches appropriated to the Priory

Burton Hastings	£2	13	4
Stretton Baskerville annual pension		10	0

Land, Tenements, Meadows, Pastures and Mills

Nuneaton Land, Messuages and burgages	£52	7	9
Attilburgh "	£21	13	6
Arbury "	£3	5	8
Burton Hastings "	£5	17	8
Monks Kirby "		4	0
Stretton Baskerville "		8	0
Stockingford "	£9	1	6
Horeston: Land, tenements, meadow and pasture	£15	9	8

1536 The Parliamentary Act of Dissolution of the Smaller Monasteries. In this period Wales was effectively united with England. There was a dramatic change in land ownerships. The Augustinian Canons' Priory at Arbury was dissolved, it had 5 canons, a novice, a Prior and 26 dependants; Sir Edmund Anderson acquired it, (because it was valued at less than £200). The Crown was patron of Chilvers Coton church until 1557.

1537 Some of the church's land was sold; wealthy men bought this land and built their stately homes. Weddington Hall was probably of this type. Most churches and land were legally transferred to the Church of England.

1538 Many local churches ceased being Catholic and became Anglican. Churches were sometimes bought

by local parishes or usually legally transferred. Etone Priory income was £227 per annum. Many local churches finally closed or fell into ruin. A document stated that "corn to the value of twelve shillings was given every week to the poor and aged, at the gate of The Nunnery while on Easter Day bread, beer (or 'ale') and herrings, to the value of forty shillings were distributed. On Easter day a donation of money to the value of five shillings and four pence, bread, beer and herrings was also made to the poor and sick in the Nunnery".

1539 William Fyndern was the last Master and Receiver General at Etone Priory; Dr. John London, clerk and king's commissioner attended Nuneaton to receive from the Prioress and the Convent the surrender of the house and all its possessions from Agnes Olton the last Prioress.

There were 27 crosses (no signatures). Deed of surrender valued at £253 14s 5.5d.

The long process of suppressing St. Mary's, Nuneaton began. The central part of the conventual complex became the site of the Manor house.

The following Nuns received pensions as follows:

Agnes Olton £40.

Agnes Wilsey, Isabel Purfrey, Joan Whalleye, Elizabeth Milwarde, Mary Worseley, Joan Wetnall, £3 Isabel Babington and Joyse Fitzherbert, 53s 4d each.

Anne Everatte, Lucy Hasilbrige, Joan Bate, Joan Haseley, Margaret Dyxwell, Rose Ceton, 46s 8d each.

Joan Copstone, Mary Barington, Elyne Townesende, Dorothy Riddell, Joyse Clarke, 40s each.

Elizabeth Berdemore, Isabel Bannister, Joan More and Agnes Kingstone, 26s 8d each.

Joan Palmer, 33s 4d.

The Priest for the Nunnery received a pension of £6. The total pensions amounted to £100 6s 8d.

Agnes Olton spent the remaining 11 months of her life at Astley Collegiate Church of St. Mary. Attleborough retained a separate Manorial constitution until 1815. Everything of value in the church was removed, the lead stripped from the roof thus causing the building's ruin.

1540 May: Sir Marmaduke Constable received transfer of monastic land and properties (later known as Horeston Manor).

1543 Constable survey showed 'Proffys of collpitts there every year'. Also 180 houses in Nuneaton.

The survey recorded the following tenancies:

Freeholders; Tenant at will (annual tenancy from the Lord of the Manor); Tenant of a named freeholder; Copyholder (held by a copy of court roll for lives or

term); Leaseholder (held by indenture for term of years); Co-tenant (joint occupation by tenants)

John Ambros	118 Abbey Street tenant of Sir Anthony Cooke
Thomas Ambros	67 Market Place tenant of Marquis of Dorset
William Astell	76 Swans Yeat freeholder/occupier
Thomas Barnwell	189 Barr Green tenant at will
Eton Chantry	146a Bakhouse Lane freeholder/tenant J.Wattes jr.
William Coggreve	89 Precinct; co-tenant at will of Wyshawe Close
Marmaduke Constable	Countisclose; freeholder/demesne Newmylmedowe; freeholder/demesne
Randall Warbarton	132 Wykey End tenant of Eton Chantry

The Precinct was within Etone Priory precinct. Wykey End was the north end of Croft Road and

Bakhouse Lane was Newdegate Street.

1544 Sir Marmaduke Constable's Rental recorded in the western half of the former priory precinct: - several houses - barns - tile makers - workshops - Etone Abbey Mill driven by water from the Bar Pool.

1547 The Constable Rental survey recorded an Iron Furnace in Weddington on the River Anker in Blackwater Field. Monastic estate survey recorded Nuneaton Priory as owning a farm at Marton (Marston), rectories at Wibtoft and Claybrooke. Oldbury manor with appurtenances granted to most noble Charles, Duke of Suffolk and his heirs. (part of Polesworth) Merevale Abbey owned 2 tenements and 2 cottages at Oldbury in tenure of Richard Robinson, Richard Barfotts, John Scott and John Goodie.

1548 Sir Ambrose Cave appointed Sheriff for Warwickshire. Sir Marmaduke Constable made a settlement of 'the manor of Horestone'.

1551 The Little Ice Age began - over 200 years of severe winters.

My Farming Life

Members and friends of the Society may be interested and are invited to take part in a Heritage Lottery funded project being delivered by Warwickshire Rural Community Council. The project, "My Farming Life" has been set up to record the living memories of North Warwickshire farming families, and to create an oral history collection of 50 interviews.

Increasingly, we are aware of our disconnection with the source of the food that we eat, and with those who produce it and work the land. At the same time, agricultural practice has changed immensely and in the course of the last century has moved from dependence on horse power to the use of computer and satellite technology. Recognising this, it is important that we should make a

record of a way of life that is forever changed and capture the memories of those who experienced it.

The oral history collection will comprise individual interviews with farmers, their families and those connected with farms in North Warwickshire. Project Manager/Researcher, Fiona Henderson, will be working with volunteer interviewers to record and transcribe the interviews. By the end of the project next spring, these will be available in libraries and on the project web site. There will be an exhibition to promote the launch of the collection and the project is looking for photographs that mark the changes in agriculture during the last century.

You can get involved in the project by becoming a volunteer

interviewer. There will be training sessions to try out the recording equipment and interviews will take place in the interviewees' homes throughout this summer. Or you can help by locating photographs from family and friends that can be copied and used for the exhibition. If you know of any North Warwickshire people whose reminiscences should be included in the oral history collection, or if you would like to get involved, get in touch with Fiona at the address below.

Fiona Henderson,
Project Manager/
Researcher,
25 Stoneleigh
Deer Park
Business Centre,
Abbey Park,
Stareton,
Kenilworth,
CV8 2LY.
Tel: 02476 217 346
E: fionah@wrccrural.org.uk



Useful Website

www.london-gazette.co.uk When an ancestor was given an award or honour, made bankrupt, mentioned in despatches, promoted, wounded or killed at war, etc., it would have been mentioned in the newspaper of record, the London (or Edinburgh or Belfast) Gazette. The site allows you to access transcripts or pdfs free online or to purchase a copy of the relevant issue. (From IHGS, June 2009)



NNWFHS Bookshelf

Baptism, Marriage & Burial Records

What is where for the
North Warwickshire
Church of England Parishes

This new booklet, published by NNWFHS, clearly sets out all you need to know about the whereabouts of baptism, marriage and burial records for the parishes of north Warwickshire. Not only does it list what is held by each of the various libraries and archives in and around the county, but it explains how the parishes of the Church of England have divided, subdivided, and in some cases, amalgamated, over time. There is a useful, if small, map showing the ecclesiastical parish boundaries.

The booklet includes an article about parish registers in general including the key dates that affect what you find – or do not find – recorded. It covers the parish registers and the bishops' transcripts for the parishes in the Society's working area: Newton Regis in the north to Gt Packington in the south, and from Middleton to Monks Kirby and all in between.

The parishes of North Warwickshire have seen plenty of changes over the years. Prior to the first half of the mid-1800s, most parishes had remained largely unchanged for centuries. The coming of the industrial revolution, coupled with a growing number of non-conformist religious groups who built new chapels and churches, showed the "Established" church that it needed to provide for growing urban populations.

While rural parishes such as Arley have changed little, others – like Nuneaton St Nicholas – have seen a raft of chunks hacked off and put into new parishes. Some of these new parishes also then changed. Tamworth St Editha is another difficult area to grapple with – the Ancient Parish included a huge swathe of north Warwickshire and while Wilnecote parish was created from Tamworth around 1770 initially, places like Glascote did not become separated for a further two hundred years.

You really need to know the details of the parishes if you are not to search endlessly in the wrong places. You need to know the area where your forebears lived as well as they knew it. This booklet will help you.

This new booklet is must for your bookshelf – though it likely will remain closer to hand than that!!

A5 format with 28pp plus covers; £3 at events.

Remember all publications are available from NNWFHS Publications via Bob Butler – see website for current list and prices for all NNWFHS publications.

Discounts for members!

Spotlight on...Chilvers Coton

We have a number of resources for Chilvers Coton. Already available is:

Censuses of 1684 & 1781 – Surname Indexes

This is a rare find – such early censuses are few and far between so – Chilvers Coton researchers are fortunate! (£3 at events, etc).

Coming soon is the new, revised and updated **Burials** booklet which will cover the previously available 1813-1837 period (now out of print), but now extended to 1851. A real boon to everyone with folks in the parish.

For marriages in Chilvers Coton, we will be producing the 1754-1854 marriages (yes, 100 years and over 1,800 marriages) as a CD. This is the only cost-effective method of getting the data produced – so many marriages would fill many booklets. The data will be produced in fully searchable PDF files – one will be in date order, one in surname order by grooms, and one in surname order for brides. Each of the PDFs will show the abstracted full data for each marriage – names, parishes, any information about age, marital state, father (post-1837 entries), occupation and notes such as "with consent of parents" – though the latter should be treated warily as we think the officiating ministers just felt a need to write *something!* The marriages have all been transcribed and are currently being checked by a member. Once the checking is completed, we can proceed and hope to have the CD available in the autumn.

Marriages

We have available transcribed marriages for **Witherley St Peter** from 1754-1837. Although outside our working area, this parish had many involved in marriage who were in north Warwickshire. (£3 at events, etc)

Also available are the marriages for **Shustoke St Cuthbert**, also for 1754-1837. (£3 at events, etc)

The marriages indexing project continues. Tamworth is underway, but will take some considerable time due to the sheer number of marriages. Other rural parishes are well on the way to completion, so during the rest of 2009 keep an eye on the announcements. All transcription, indexing and preparation is done free of charge by volunteers. Remember, all the proceeds from publications' sales helps to support the work of NNWFHS and nobody else.

Finding Great Granny Jane

by Jacqui Simkins

Communication does work!

Some years ago, my plea in this journal regarded my gt-grandmother Jane. She started life as the illegitimate daughter of Mary DULSON, born in Shropshire on 23 August 1853, and died at Gt Packington where she was buried in January 1924. In between she had children with three surnames, and led me around Shropshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire and Warwickshire—above all else, Jane was a survivor.

The first result of “communication” was when I was contacted by a young lady, Sam, who descended from a William DULSON, illegitimate son of Mary. Yes, brother of Jane. As Jane remains inconclusively found in 1861 and 1871 censuses, I had no notion of her having a sibling. Also, Jane’s named father on her three marriage certificates was Thomas DULSON. Jane had married once in Staffordshire and twice in Cheshire where perhaps her accent was not clearly understood. William, on the other hand, married close to his Shropshire birthplace and recorded his father as Thomas DAWSON. Sam had the will of Thomas



DAWSON who named Mary DULSON as living with him, and his “natural children”, Jane and William. It is not often that you can prove who claimed to be father of an illegitimate forebear; Thomas’s will enable Sam and me to do just that.

Move forward a couple of years and Ian was Googling and found our website with the journal article about Jane. He descends also from Jane—and from the brother of my grandfather. Gt-uncle William CHALLONER never figured in my research; I knew he’d been born, I thought he had moved south with the rest of the family, but his absence from my mother’s recollections left me assuming—erroneously as it now appears—that he had gone to WW1 with his half-sibling Tom RIGBY. Tom came home, injured; I assumed William hadn’t survived. But another joy is that Ian had a photo of Jane—my

first sight of gt-granny—and her dog: wonderful.

Through communicating, a brick wall came crashing down, and two blood relatives found me. So, communicate while you can!! You too might make a fantastic discovery!!

Microfiche Hire Service for Members

NNWFHS offers a microfiche loan service to its members. We have several microfiche readers which are available for hire at £2 per month, and several sets of microfiche at 50p per set, per month. The fiche readers must be reserved in advance, either at the meetings (reserved for collection at the following meeting), or by telephoning Carol Hughes. Fiche may be used at the regular monthly meetings without charge but by prior arrangement with Carol. Fiche have to be collected either from a meeting or from Carol’s home - by prior appointment only. Fiche sets are not sent through the post.

If you would like to place an order, or need more information about the fiche available, or about the hire service, please contact our microfiche hire co-ordinator: Mrs Carol Hughes, Millstone, Mill Lane, Wolvey, Nr Hinckley LE10 3HR. Tel: 01455 220408. Email: microfiche@nnwfhs.org.uk

Do you have ancestors in Wolverhampton? In the last decade of the 19th century many miners left Staffordshire to come to work in the North Warwickshire coal mines. If your ancestors were amongst them you might be interested in a FREE internet resource. www.wolverhamptonhistory.org.uk/resources/familyhistory The site appears to be only in the early stages of construction and many pages are yet to have detail added, however, scroll down to ‘Parish Registers’ and you will find links to pages and pages of transcribed parish registers and cemetery records for Wolverhampton, Bilston and Willenhall.

Useful Website

North Warwickshire Pages

by Celia Parton

ATHERSTONE'S YARDS

Earlier this year, an information board was erected in the car park of *Aldi* supermarket in Station Street, Atherstone. The board, sponsored by *Aldi*, gives information about the buildings that had formerly occupied that site.

In medieval times this whole area was gardens and workshops behind the houses fronting Long Street. In the 18th century the town's prosperity increased due mainly to the hatting industry and so the population also increased. Therefore more housing was needed to accommodate the people coming in to work at these factories. At the time, Atherstone was bound by common land and so the only land available on which to build new houses was the gardens or back yards behind the buildings fronting on to Long Street.

The yards were mostly named after their owners, shops, businesses or factories. About a quarter were known by the name of the pub at the entrance.

When *Aldi* demolished the 20th century factory on their site they found that it had been built directly onto the old yards. The size and shape of the houses were clear to see with fireplaces, doorsteps and even floor covering still intact! Each house was no bigger than 4 metres x 4 metres (12' x 12' (slightly bigger than the single car parking place marked out in the car park!). There were 2 rooms, one up and one down, and they were built back-to-back so they only had windows on one side, the front. There could be up to 100 people living in a yard sharing a pump, a dust hole and two 2-seater 'privies' - earth closets cleaned out by the night soil men.



Cordingley's Yard (aka Collins' or Woodroffe's) c. 1910, looking towards Long Street. Most dwellings had a small railed area at the front, as shown, making it one of the pleasanter yards in which to live.

Between the cash desks and the back wall in the present *Aldi* store there were 22 houses built back-to-back in two yards. Before the store was built it was possible to see the exact outline of these houses and a reconstruction was made of 8 Cordingley's Yard. The other yard was Bingham's Row.



Vero's Terrace, c. 1910 looking towards Long Street. An earlier map shows the land divided up into individual gardens, and there is a tree at the far end (behind the sheet hanging on the washing line). On the right is the rear range of the Wheatsheaf Inn, little changed until today.

The house at 8 Cordingley's Yard was barely 3 metres by 5 metres (12' x 17') with no water, electricity or gas. In 1911 there were 13 houses in this yard and 67 inhabitants, an average of 5 people to each house.

Bingham's Row, on the other hand, was an unrelieved yard with houses 3 storeys high which, by 1851, comprised 22 dwellings, occupied by a total of 115 people. Ten of the 22 heads of household were hatters, mostly working for WILLDAY. By 1911, there were still 22 dwellings, accommodating 123 people. This was the most over-crowded yard in the town with a population density greater than the most crowded of Birmingham's slum dwellings. In 1935 an order was made to demolish both of these yards. The rent of each house at that time was approximately 6 shillings per week (30p).

The *Wheatsheaf Inn* is the only surviving hostelry of several serving this small area. In 1825 John BOSS was listed as a "beer retailer" in what is now the Indian restaurant, no.21. By 1851 the premises next door, no. 23, were known as the 'Hatters Arms' and it was probably a place where hatters coming to the town to look for work ('on the tramp' as it was known), could find an employer. It was kept by John SIMONDS, a hatter.

The buildings on Station Street, at the end of Wheatsheaf Yard, were converted into a beerhouse known as *The Woodman*, which survived until 1974 when it was purchased by Denham Knitwear Ltd and demolished to make way for an extension to their factory. At the far end of the site, the unusually named Swan with Two Necks (or Nicks) Yard was named after the pub on Long Street of that name.



Bingham's Row (aka Willday's Terrace), c. 1910 looking towards Long Street. 18 of the 21 houses are on the left hand side. On the right was a short block of 3 houses, the gable end of which is on the right of the photo.

Fortunately, a series of photographs still exists of the yards taken c1910, from which our illustrations are taken. Nobody knows exactly when they were taken or by whom. One likely theory is that they were taken by or on behalf of Dr HERRING who, in 1909, was appointed Medical Officer of Health for Atherstone Rural District Council. He became increasingly concerned about the overcrowded and unhealthy conditions in which his patients lived. He campaigned for the building of new houses and for the old and overcrowded yards to be demolished. Unfortunately this was a slow process that came to a full stop with the advent of the First World War. Eventually demolition of the yards began in the 1920s and continued in the 1930s when the Second World War intervened. However, Dr HERRING died in 1918 and so did not live to see it. The last yard to be demolished was Garden Row in the 1960s, which made way for the building of the Memorial Hall, swimming baths and library.

For more photographs of the yards see the society's website at www.nnwfhs.org.uk

With thanks to Lorna Dirveiks of the **Friends of Atherstone Heritage** for allowing me to use the text from the *Aldi* information board.

Other sources used

The History of Atherstone by Brenda Watts & Eleanor Winyard
Hats Coal and Bloodshed by John Austin.

[see page 14 for more about the Yards]

FAMILY HISTORY – NEW FRIENDS

One of the most surprising results of doing my family history has been finding and meeting living relatives. This was something I hadn't expected, I just wanted to find out more about my ancestors, but it has really been exciting meeting relatives and sharing interests in our common ancestors.

I have recently met two of my CLAY relatives, both of whom I had been in touch with via the internet for some years but had never actually met. The first was Geoff STOKES, who now lives in America but came back to England at Easter to visit old friends and relatives. Geoff and I are second cousins; his grandmother and my grandfather were sister and brother. I remember his mother quite well from when I was a child but I did not know Geoff nor he me, possibly due to the age difference (Geoff is 13 years older than me). We spent a happy couple of hours talking family history and about people and places we remembered from childhood.

Then at the next bank holiday, May Day, I had a visit from Rob BOWYER. His great grandmother was another sister of my grandfather Clay. My brother joined us and was able to tell Rob stories about when his great grandmother made visits to her Baddesley relatives. He particularly remembered the presents she bought with her, especially the miniature cricket bat with Easter eggs attached.

Rob then told us an interesting story, which his father had told him. When he (Rob's father) was a young boy he was often taken to stay with his grandmother during the summer holidays. At that time she worked as a housekeeper to H A L FISHER who was a famous historian. He had also been an MP in LLOYD GEORGE's government and the two men were still friends. They both lived in Surrey only a few miles from each other. One day, Rob's father was taken by his grandmother and Mrs Fisher to visit the LLOYD GEORGES. He was taken to an outhouse where a large train set was laid out on the floor. He was allowed to play with it and a white-haired old man came to join him. That "white-haired old man" was of course LLOYD GEORGE himself.

If you have met any relatives through your research or have any interesting stories to tell why not share them with us? Ray would love to hear from you.

Book the date in your diary:
Saturday 24th October at Over Whitacre
**The North Warwickshire
Family & Local History Day**



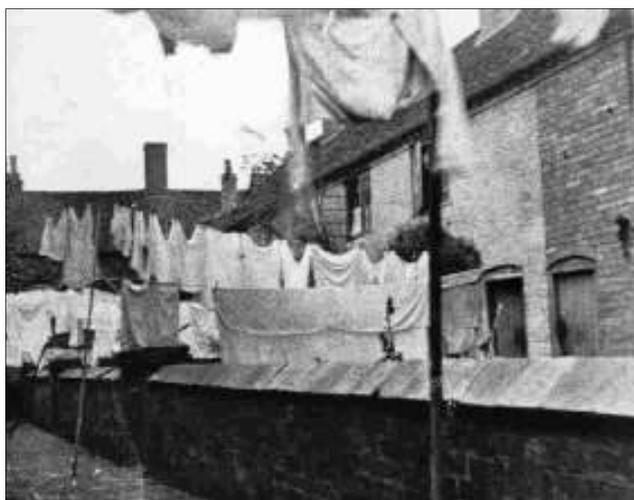
More North Warwickshire Pages

In the 1911 census the figures for the yards in Atherstone were given as follows:

No.	Name of Yard	Ho	Ad	Chil	Tot
1	Bingham's Row	22	84	39	123
2	Avin's Yard	18	34	29	63
3	Cotton Mill	18	43	27	70
4	Hand and Bottle	14	31	14	45
5	Collin's	13	35	32	67
6	Garden Row	13	31	11	42
7	Phoenix	13	35	23	58
8	Cross Keys	12	35	19	54
9	Druids Arms	12	30	32	62
10	Innage Terrace	12	49	27	76
11	Nelson	12	32	27	59
12	Allen's	11	32	21	53
13	Coach and Horses	11	33	26	59
14	King's Arms	11	27	26	53
15	Hinck's	11	28	13	41
16	Lagoes	10	20	13	33
17	Lodging House	10	30	18	48
18	Black Horse	9	22	19	41
19	Clarke's	9	20	18	38
20	Ram	9	24	18	42
21	Vinrace's Row	9	25	11	36
22	Vero's Terrace	8	25	19	44
23	Wharf	8	22	25	47
24	Partridges	7	16	18	34
25	Sale's Buildings	7	14	4	18
26	Stevenson's	7	17	5	22
27	Angel	6	22	8	30
28	Hallam's Yard	6	17	8	25
29	Mount Pleasant	6	13	6	19
30	Vero's	6	20	17	37
31	Barsby's Yard	5	11	9	20
32	Kitchen's Buildings	5	17	6	23
33	Old Plough	5	8	16	24
34	Orton's	5	13	10	23
35	Rumsey's	5	10	6	16
36	Simmond's Buildings	5	17	10	27
37	Swan and Two Necks	5	15	16	32
38	White Lion	5	12	8	20
39	Clibbery's Yard	4	8	2	10
40	Wood's	4	8	3	11
41	Wool Pack Yard	4	14	2	16
42	Bond's	3	8	7	15
43	Brown Bear	3	6	7	13
44	Cope's Buildings	3	7	1	8
45	Dolphin	3	5	3	8
46	Hand and Bottle	3	8	3	11
47	Hudson's	3	7	9	16
48	Johnson's	3	6	3	9
49	Spencer's Buildings	3	7	2	9
50	Taylor's	3	6	2	8
51	Winter's	3	6	6	12
52	Gisburn's Buildings	2	7	8	15
53	May's	2	4	6	10
54	Roger's	2	8	10	18
55	Wimbury's	2	8	0	8
56	Woodman	2	5	5	10
57	Blue Bell	1	2	0	2
58	Crown	1	2	2	4
59	Hogg's	1	3	0	3
60	Black Boy	0	0	0	0
Total		415	1104	735	1840

Ho = Houses; Ad = Adults; Chil = Children; Tot = Total

Atherstone's Yards were densely populated places and it is not infrequent that researchers cannot track a family through the 19th century censuses. Sometimes shared houses were not fully enumerated, sometimes you have to accept that the enumerator missed a household or even managed to mis-transcribe surnames. These problems are reduced in the 1911 census where we have the actual householders' schedules preserved and now being made available for our use.



*Vero's Terrace – behind 27-29 Long St (Happy Gathering)
Originally belonging to the Drayton family, by 1851 this was known as Roadknight's Yard and occupied by Catherine Hargrave, a widow of 62 and her grand-daughter, Kitty Banks, 10.
Later 9 houses were built and the name was changed to Vero's Terrace. This is one of Long Street's most spacious yards and has a large archway from Long Street, enabling the passage of horses and carts.—though they may have become entangled with the washing!*

In 1911, Vero's Terrace had a household average density of 6.16 – not the most densely populated yard by any means.

To complete Celia's North Warwickshire round-up:

NEW FAMILY HISTORY CD

Polesworth Abbey has recently launched a CD which contains a record of all the inscriptions from the churchyard and inside the Abbey, together with plans of the churchyard and a photo gallery. The CD can be obtained directly from the Abbey or from the website at www.polesworthabbey.co.uk

NEW LOCAL HISTORY BOOK

Chris Brett and Simon Hayfield who produced the Baxterley Village website at www.baxterley.com are currently working on a new book. This is a history of Baxterley through old photographs, some never previously published. It is due to be published later in the summer.

A Search for a Black Sheep

by Patricia Storer Sondermeyer

Patricia Storer Sondermeyer, using her own research information along with that from her relative, Myrtle MacCulla Clarke plus additional material gathered by a research consultant at Ancestor Seekers in 2007/8, devised the following article. NNWFHS member, Sheila Dunn, is related to the family through the BRUNT connection and kindly arranged for the article to be made available for our Journal.

JOSEPH STORER 1807- 1894

In Chilvers Coton the family name of STORER was recorded as STORO until after 1850 - not uncommon in small parishes where names tended to be written down phonetically as many could not write. At his wedding in 1828 to Eliza BRUNT, Joseph signed his surname as Storo, yet his son William Charles who was born in 1852 is definitely registered under the surname Storer!



Chilvers Coton Church where Joseph & Eliza were married

At the christening of his son, Frederick William in 1849 Joseph was listed as a weaver. In the 1861 census he was listed as a ribbon manufacturer.

In 1841 the family (recorded as "Storo") was living on Coventry Road in Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire. John BRUNT (Eliza's father) and his family was also living on Coventry Road during this same census.

In 1851 the STORER family was living on Coton Road in Chilvers Coton. Their son, Frederick William (b 1849) was listed for the first time and also a set of twins, Edward and Elizabeth.

The 1861 Census incorrectly lists the family name as "Stour". They were still living on Coton Road. In this census they have added another son, William C., and the twins are now 16 years old.

Joseph and Eliza continue to be listed as living on Coton Road in Chilvers Coton, Warwickshire, England, in both the 1871 and 1881 Census. Daughters, Ann and Maria, were still living at home in 1871, but in 1881 the parents (now in their 70s) were shown living alone.

We know of twelve children born to Joseph STORER and Eliza BRUNT:

Ann (b 1829) married late in life (at the age of 47) to Joseph Osborne, a man nearly 20 years older than herself and a widower with two grown children. On various early census records Ann was recorded as living at home with her parents. She was at times a hand loom weaver or unemployed and listed as "ribbon manufacturer's daughter".

John (b 1830) died in infancy.

Eliza (b 1831) was only listed in the 1841 census (age 10). She possibly died as a young child.

Joseph (b 1834) never married and was listed as a bank clerk with the Bank of England on census records. In 1891 his unmarried sister, Maria, and niece Adelaide (daughter of his brother, Frederick William) were both living with him.

David (b 1836) married Arabella S. GEDDES and had at least one child. His occupation was noted as a Railway Goods Agent and Superintendent of G W Railway.

Maria (b 1839) never married. She was shown living with her sister Elizabeth KILLINGWORTH in the 1881 census. The 1891 census indicates she was living with her unmarried brother, Joseph. Living with them at that time was their brother Frederick's daughter, Adelaide.

John Brunt (b 1841) was married to Caroline Sophia FUREY and working as a Railway Clerk and eventually a Railway Store Superintendent. John and Caroline had at least 9 children.

Edward (b 1844) was listed as a "Traveller" on the 1881 census and married to Martha (last name not known). They had at least two children.

Elizabeth (b 1844 Edward's twin sister) was married to Joseph KILLINGWORTH a Drapery Warehouse-man. They had two children.

Frederick William (b 1846) died in infancy.

Frederick William (b 1849) ** see below.

William Charles (b 1852) married Elizabeth

MCKNIGHT with whom he had four children. His occupation was listed as Commercial or Railway Clerk.

FREDERICK WILLIAM STORER 1849-1935

This is the puzzling story of Frederick William STORER, b 1849 (as above). Pat and Myrtle are both descendants of Fred's son, also Frederick William, born 1885 in Canada; and daughter Lucy Martha Ann born 1886, also in Canada.



*A rather faded photo of
Frederick Wm Storer*

In a letter to Pat in 1977, Myrtle wrote: "It was nice to hear from you although I am a little uncertain about answering questions about the STORERS. It is a story that is not a nice one and really is better forgotten.

"My mother (Lucy Martha Ann) knew very little of her

mother and father as she was taken from them at a very young age and the family was split up all over the place. She thinks her mother and father were divorced. I am truly sorry I couldn't tell you anything nice about FW STORER, but there just isn't anything nice to tell except that he was well educated and came from a good family, and every family has a black sheep. I went to see my mother to see what she remembered. Unfortunately, many of the entries in the bible had been destroyed. I have asked her to let me know if she can think of anything I could tell you, but it was such a bitter time for her that I don't think she wants to remember. Her memory is quite good, better than mine, and she will be 91 this September. [Myrtle's mother, Lucy, died two years later in October 1979]

"However, since you seem determined to find out more, I will tell you as much as I know although I don't feel quite right about it.

"If Frederick W STORER was ever a minister of the church [some of our family stories say this], he certainly would have been an unfrocked one. He was well educated at Oxford [proven untrue by a genealogy search] and my mother believes he came from Memeton [actually Nuneaton], England. Unfortunately, he was the marrying kind and your great-grandmother [Lucy Wright DesBrisay KESWICK, who lived in Ramsey, New Jersey with her son and his family] was his third or fourth wife. He didn't

worry about divorces or anything like that. It was an arranged marriage, although why her mother and father would not have checked more carefully the background of the man they chose to marry their only daughter, God only knows. He was a man with a silver tongue and a drunkard. She was a young girl convent raised, and the horrors she went through have always sounded unbelievable to me. You can probably imagine the scandal and disgrace in those days of finding out that the man you had married was a bigamist, and your children, through no fault of your own, illegitimate.

"I believe FW STORER died in Boston in 1934 or 35. The clipping was sent to my mother's Uncle Harry KESWICK by your grandfather, but as he had had a death notice inserted several times during the years, no one was too sure whether it was true or not."

In my search for my gt-grandfather, Frederick William STORER, I have found that he was married at least once before marrying Lucy Wright DesBrisay KESWICK. That marriage, in 1868, was to Ann Kay TALLENTIRE, with whom he had two daughters, Isabel Annie and Adelaide.

With the help of a research consultant, I learned that Frederick William was born in 1849 in Chilvers Coton, a village immediately adjacent to Nuneaton – a market town in Warwickshire. In the later census records of 1871 and 1881, when he had moved to Lancashire, Frederick gave Nuneaton as his birthplace. According to the 1851 census, his father's name was Joseph, and not Charles Edward as we had always heard. Interestingly, there was an earlier son named Frederick William born in 1846 and baptized in 1847 who must have died in infancy. It would appear that in Chilvers Coton the family name was recorded as STORO until after 1850 because wherever it appears after that date it is STORER – not uncommon in small parishes where names tended to be written phonetically as many could not write. However, Frederick's father, Joseph, signed his surname as STORO when he married Eliza (nee BRUNT) in 1828, yet their son William Charles who was born in 1852 is definitely registered as STORER!

In the 1861 census of Chilvers Coton, the family is listed at STOUR rather than STORER.

By 1871, Frederick had married and gone to Lancashire – an industrial centre. The 1871 census for Manchester lists him as married (Ann KAY) with one daughter, Isabel Annie aged two months, and a step-son, William TALLENTIRE aged 6. His wife's unmarried sister, Margaret KAY, 23, is living with them. His occupation is "commercial clerk". His wife Ann was at least ten years his senior – he lists himself as 24, which is two years older than he actually was.

The next record of Frederick is in the census of 1881 by which time he had moved to Liverpool. This time he is aged 38, and his occupation is "publican". His wife's age is listed as 41. Daughter Isabel Annie is 10, and younger daughter, Adelaide, is 5 years old.

Frederick does not appear in the 1891 census in England, which would seem to confirm that he left for Canada by that time. However, there is an entry for his wife, Ann, whom he has obviously abandoned. She is in the Liverpool Workhouse. Her age is listed as 52. His daughter Adelaide appears in the 1891 census in Islington, London, where she has been taken in by Frederick's brother, Joseph and his sister, Maria. Adelaide's age is given as 16 years.

Of particular value was the marriage information [to Lucy WD KESWICK] taken from the newspaper in New Brunswick, Canada which definitely states: 'Frederick William STORER, BA, Ox.' Unfortunately, as family stories have said, not only was that not true (he definitely does NOT appear in the Oxford Alumni books) but he was not a "man of the cloth" either as there is a very good database for Anglican clergymen and the only STORERS in that collection are in 1540, 1598, 1622 and 1708; also there is no Frederick, and in order to become an Anglican minister a man would require a degree from either Oxford or Cambridge. However, research verifies quite well the rest of his story.

Tracking Frederick after his marriage in Montreal, Quebec and children born there, he was found in the 1910 US census of Boston, which confirms the story that he went to New England, and here it shows he has ended up in the penitentiary. The census records the year of his immigration in the US as 1897, which

conforms to the family information that he immigrated between 1895-1900. And there was a further change in his occupation, this time he is a lawyer! He lists his age as 61 and records 11 of his 18 children as living.

During my search for genealogical information over the years I have come across many listings for the name Frederick William STORER. I have a feeling that he named many of his sons after himself. Not sure how many wives he actually had, but I can account for two wives and six children - not the eleven let alone eighteen claimed on the census.

Two daughters were born to him and Ann KAY/TALLENTIRE

Isabel Annie, 1871 and Adelaide, 1876, both in England.

Five children were born to Frederick and Lucy Wright DesBrisay KESWICK:

Frederick William 1885. He married Elizabeth Ellen MCKETRICK and they had five children all born in New Jersey, USA - Frederick William 1908, Alwayn J 1911, Felicia E 1916, Cyril V 1918 and Adelaide DeR 1921.

Lucy Martha Ann, b 1886 in Canada. She married Henry David (Reginald) MACCULLA and they had one daughter, Myrtle.

Joseph Keswick, b 1889 in Canada who married Alice NAYLOR. They had a foster child named Laura, and an adopted son, William R.

Charles, b 1892, Canada who married Ina. They had one child - an adopted daughter named Eleanor.

Letters to the Editor

Dear editor,

Never, ever, give up hope!

How often have we written to distant relatives, always of course enclosing the obligatory, stamped, self-addressed envelope, and waited in vain for the postman to bring a reply? How frustrating is it to spend hard-earned money on stamps for them to disappear into that void?

But, I must now say 'nil desperandum' - patience will have its own reward, as I have found to my utter delight. A letter written to an elderly relative in 1985 has survived, been retrieved by the relative's daughter and a reply has winged its way to me...nearly a quarter of a century later.

Now, at the click of an e-mail button I am gathering so much information and also sharing my findings too. The housework loses out, yet again, but family history is so engrossing.

If you have relatives with whom you or your parents lost contact, find them, write to them and wait. It could be well worth the wait!

Carole Eales



Help Wanted—or Offered



Corley Open Air School

Group photograph 1932

My Grandmother was born in Coventry on the 13 December 1920 and named Florence Amy Ward WAGSTAFF. She was the only child of Rose Amy WAGSTAFF but her father was not named on the birth certificate; however the name Thomas WARD has been mentioned in regard to this and it is thought that he died before she was born. I'm not sure how long she attended Corley Open Air School or exactly why, other than poor health, but she was there around 1932 aged 11 or 12 years old.

Unfortunately I have very little information about her as she sadly passed away in 1979. She is centre front on the photo in a check dress next to the girl in a spotted dress.

I wonder if any NNWFHS members also had family who attended the school and can shed light on why children were at this school at that time, or who perhaps remember my grandmother, or can put names to other faces in the photo.

Amanda Hubbard
vhemma@talktalk.net



Workshops

Would you be interested in any workshops dealing with specific topics encountered in family history research? GRO, censuses, old parish records, etc.

If so, please let Jacqui know. We can arrange a Saturday morning or afternoon session periodically at somewhere like Chilvers Coton Heritage Centre where we can all focus on aspects of research or techniques that will help us discover the wider picture of the lives of our forebears.

See page 1 for contact details.



Calling Online Subscribers

We have received a report - at this stage unverified - of a subscriber to a mainstream genealogical website receiving an unsolicited CD of a family tree programme and their credit card then being charged. This may be an isolated and accidental occurrence, but we suggest that to be on the safe side, and you happen to receive such a CD or other item with no explanation, that you should check if your credit card account has been charged. The legal position in England and Wales on unsolicited goods is that you are under no obligation to return them. All you need to do is keep them in the original condition, for collection by the person who sent them to you.

If affected, you should contact your card issuer and explain the charge was made without your authority, because the continuous authority you have issued is limited to your regular subscription only. Ask them to reverse the charge. You should contact your local authority Trading Standards department, and make a formal complaint. They may wish to take the matter up and should give you authoritative advice.

Somebody Famous Dangling from the Tree

Long have I campaigned against embarking on family history for the purpose of incorporating into the tree some illustrious person in the dim and distant past who just happens to bear the same surname. I could have attempted this with Robert Louis STEVENSON – my grandfather frequently quipped that my childhood obsession with books must be inherited from RL!! And before you ask, there is no known connection other than surname.

All our forebears are important – they are our ancestors from whom we inherit our genes. Their lives may seem mundane to us, but some would have had many ups and downs in their lives. It is for us to put their life-stories together and herald them.

My family is largely “tied to the land” back to the 1700s, with the occasional blip when agriculture hit the doldrums. So it came as a bit of a shock to discover some “notables” in the ever-expanding tree. Yes, they are distant, or are twiglets on the tree, but people of substance, importance...



There is a christening cup in the family and nobody really knew its origins as the girl's third name was

thought to be her surname. One winter, needing something to occupy the long evenings, the cup was retrieved, cleaned and the assay mark read. That produced a year and then it was fingers crossed that the cup was engraved soon after manufacture. It transpired – after many hours delving into FreeBMD, GRO and censuses – that the “surname” was a given name. The family was very well connected in the

1800s, and I may just need a trip to South America to tie up one strand! It seems a gt aunt had married the son of a distant descendant of Simon HARCOURT, knighted in 1627.

Another encounter was with one John LLOYD (1763-1835) – millwright and civil engineer. Had it not been for an idle input of names into A2A, I wouldn't have known about him. Heaven knows how he made such a fortune (some have suggested government contracts during the Napoleonic Wars!) but his will was a delight as he named so many nieces and nephews – and he was philanthropic in his giving, too, leaving considerable funds to several charitable causes. John LLOYD's sister was my gt-gt-gt-gt grandmother – distant, but critical to my tree!

The LLOYD name was continued for several generations in the JEFFERIES family – no doubt in honour of John. The JEFFERIES married into a number of families, and one line involves independent ministers, Anglican clerics, mining engineers, dental surgeons...in fact some households on census night must have been places of great debate on the developments of the times. It is through this line that I link with fellow NNWFHS member, Hilary Hodgkins and we frequently share findings.



*Memorial at
Brewood to Minister David Absolom
OWEN 1808-1884 and his wife Sophia, nee
JEFFERIES – their daughter married into
the KURTZ family.
Photo by Hilary Hodgkins.*

I found a married in line connected to the KURTZ family of industrial chemical manufacturers of south Lancashire and northern Cheshire. The KURTZ family descend from soap-makers in Odessa and Reutlingen; I've not proved two lines are connected, but the trades, and father's name of two key ones seem to mesh together. If only I had a bottomless pocket and a guide/interpreter, I could make a trip! Much further research is needed on this “lot” requiring trips to a number of UK archives. On the “one-day” list!



One of the KURTZ girls married a Douglas HYDE in 1893. I hadn't found them in 1901 so had assumed that, as the KURTZ were quite well off and had foreign connections, that they were off jolly somewhere. But Lucy Cometina (*above*) was such an unusual combination of names that an idle Google had me agog. My Irish history is lacking so I was unaware of the importance of Douglas HYDE. He is 'major' in Irish history!

The moral of the tale is that we should never set out to attach known important people to our tree. However, we should proceed with our research slowly, taking each step back in time only when we have sufficient proof from original sources to be as sure as we can be of the connections. You may well then find that some of the twigs on the tree include people important in their time.

**Check out your twigs –
and do please write about
them for future journals.**