

Peterborough and District Family History Society Newsletter February 2023



From the Chairman

Last month I talked about causes of death among my ancestors. This month I want to share thoughts about the 'death' of the various societies to which we belong whose members are growing older without being replaced by younger folk.

In the church where I worship we no longer have the numbers of children and young people which way back necessitated a separate building for them. Out of a morning congregation of 60 they number less than 10. I belong to a Philatelic Society, and we are all getting older without attracting younger/middle aged persons. I had my stamp album at 8 years and have kept going but it seems to be an older person's thing. Our own Family History Society is composed of mainly older folk. We are not alone in not attracting younger age groups as Federation research shows.

How do we combat this issue? How can we encourage younger people in? I talk to my grandchildren about 'the family' and show them my 'trees' but I am not sure about the long-term effect.

Do you have any ideas?

Please let Sadie know.

Michael Kennelly



From the Editor

Isn't it wonderful to have a lightbulb moment?

A moment when something that you have been looking for, using different lines of enquiry with no success, suddenly becomes clear or appears in the records.

For many years I had tried to find out who built Phorpres House, London Road, Fletton in Peterborough. Known locally as The Coffee Palace, and later the offices for the London Brick Company. After much searching I found the planning consent but still no record of who won the tender.

Recently I was researching a building company in Fletton, George and William Thurley, for a blog. There in an obituary were the details I had been searching for. Confirmation that the brothers had built Phorpres House, with the added bonus of a description of what it looked like internally.

Yes I really did jump up and do a dance of joy!

What has been your lightbulb moment? Please share it with the members. We can all learn from each other's experiences.

Sadie McMullon

Christmas Memories

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas, made some lovely memories and perhaps started, or continued, your Christmas traditions. Brenda Hazel has shared some of hers. As I read these so many seemed familiar and triggered memories of my own.

'a trip to see Father Christmas at Fairways during December, my mother making mince pies and lemon curd tarts before the day while listening to "Carols from King's" on the radio. She would also make her own stuffing mix by first removing the crusts from a whole loaf of bread (from the village baker) and then turning the loaf into bread crumbs by rubbing it through a colander into a basin below and then mixing in the parsley. All our Christmas cards were strung up round the sitting room (we received a lot because of all the people my father met through his work) and on Boxing Day when my cousins visited we would have competitions to see how many of certain things we could count on the cards such as robins or Christmas trees. We would all usually come up with different totals! The various family photographs on the wall or sideboard were covered over with Christmas decorations, some of which I still have today. I guess they must date from the late 1950s or early 1960s if not before.'

Brenda accompanied her memories with images of Christmas decorations, which I am sure will be familiar to you.

I have added another picture, of fairy lights. One of my strongest memories is the annual ritual of getting the fairy lights to work, by changing the bulbs. What annual rituals do you remember, of Christmas or another occasion? Please share your memories with other members.



Meet the Ancestors

Our March meeting is being handed over to you—our members.

Do you have a favourite ancestor? Was an ancestor particularly tricky to research? Do you have an ancestor who you admire? Do you have a famous ancestor? Was your ancestor in the newspapers?

We would like members to talk about their ancestor. This need not be long 5 or 10 minutes is sufficient. If you have photos we can create a PowerPoint presentation for you, or you can send us your own.

If you would like to get involved please contact Sadie, in the first instance, by the end of January.

We would love to hear about your ancestors.



Websites

Catch up with my Fletton parish website. My last three blogs have focused on Fletton during the Great War.

[HOME | Fletton \(flettonparish.co.uk\)](http://flettonparish.co.uk)

This YouTube channel may be of interest to you.

[\(41\) Mortal Faces - YouTube](#)

Did You Know?

If you are researching Scotland then the two websites below may interest you.

The first is The Statistical Accounts of Scotland, 1791-1845. Sir John Sinclair, Member of Parliament for Caithness at Westminster charged the clergy in Scotland to gather information about their parishes. This was published in two sets of volumes in 1791 and 1845. The volumes contain information about agriculture, population, manufacture, housing, attitudes, marriages, weather, all at parish level. In fact you name it and it will probably be covered. A treasure trove for anyone with Scottish ancestors.

[Statistical Accounts of Scotland \(edina.ac.uk\)](http://edina.ac.uk)

The second website is the National Library of Scotland. They hold numerous Scottish Post Office Directories. These can all be downloaded as PDF files to browse at your leisure. Another valuable resource that is completely free.

[Scottish Post Office directories - National Library of Scotland \(nls.uk\)](http://nls.uk)

Have you come across any useful websites? If you have please let other members know, get in touch.

Occupation Quiz

I hope you enjoyed our Christmas occupation quiz? Here are the answers.

1. A badger was a licenced pauper. He would wear a badge as a certificate that he was allowed in that parish. This is where we get the expression, 'to badger someone'.
2. A batman was a military officer's personal assistant.
3. A biddy was a female servant.
4. A linkerboy was a man who carried a 'link' or lantern, for hire at night.
5. A legger was a canal boatman. A barge had to be legged through a tunnel. The boatman would lay on his back and use his legs to move the barge through the tunnel.
6. A gilder applied gold leaf for decoration.
7. A wheel tapper was a railway worker who tapped twheels to detect cracks from the resultant ring.
8. A town husband collected the dues from the fathers of the illegitimate children of the parish for their upkeep.
9. A tucker in was a maid who tucked in the bed clothes.
10. An ankle beater was a young person who hit the ankles of cattle to keep them moving.

Zoom Talks

All meetings are currently being held by zoom. Joining instructions will be sent in the week prior to the meeting.

Wed 1st Feb	7.30pm	'The life of a Country Doctor'	Peter Flower
Wed 1st Mar	7.30pm	'Meet the Ancestors'	Committee and members
Wed 5th Apr	7.30pm	'The Life and Times of Old Scarlett'	Stuart Orme

Communication

Have you changed your e.mail or snail mail address recently?

Please keep us up to date with your current contact details.