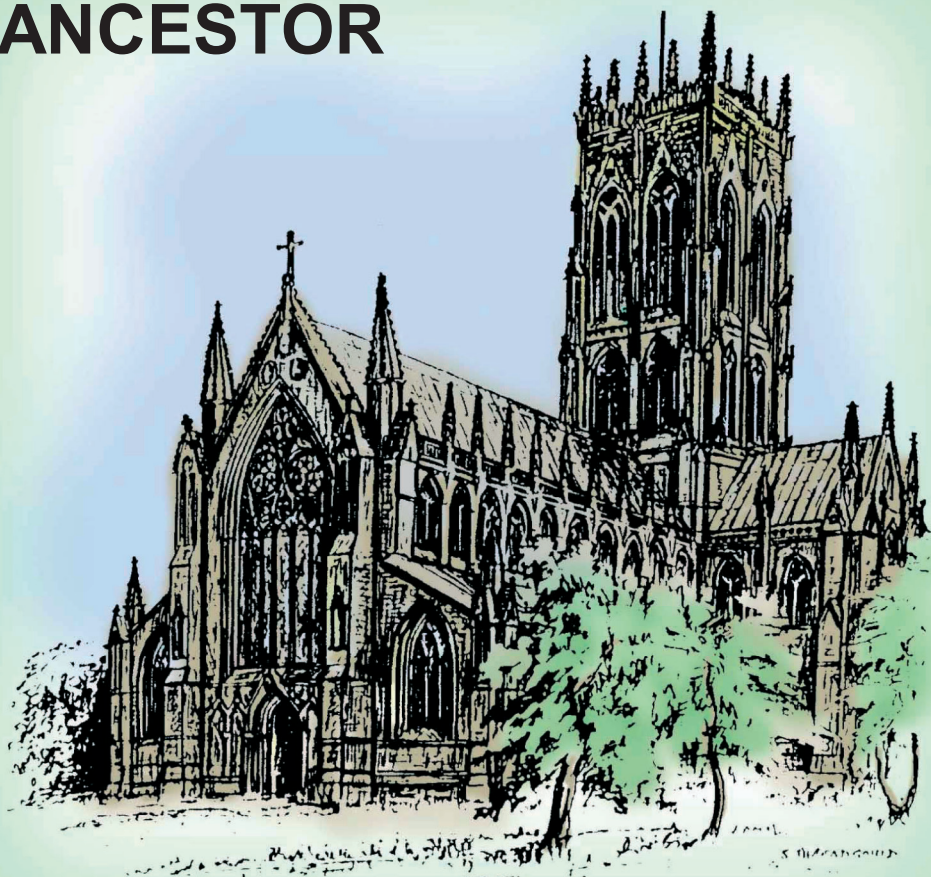


THE DONCASTER ANCESTOR

ISSN 0144-459X print

ISSN 2633-8440 online



Doncaster Minster

S Threadgould

**The Journal of the Doncaster and District
Family History Society 1980 - 2021**

Volume 31 No 3 Autumn 2021

DONCASTER AND DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

www.doncasterfhs.co.uk

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continued on the inside back cover

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THE DONCASTER ANCESTOR

Journal of the Doncaster and District Family History Society

Free to Members

Volume 31 No 3

ISSN 0144-459X

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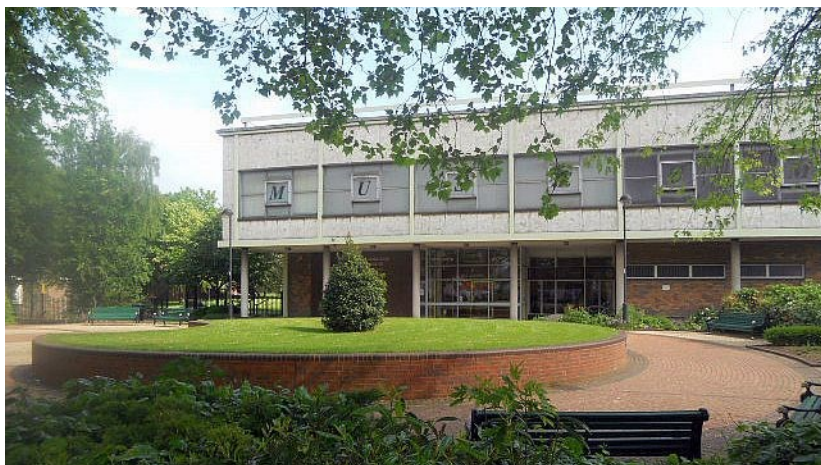
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The Society's New Research Facility

The Doncaster Council's Cabinet on 23 June 2021 approved a new home for the Doncaster Archives and Local Studies. It is to be the former Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery building on Chequer Road.

The Society have accepted a proposal, which was put to the Society on 18 March 2019, to share a 'Reading Room' alongside the Doncaster Archives and Local Studies.



The former Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery building on Chequer Road

Extracts from the Cabinet Draft Minutes:

"The proposals detailed within the report identify 3 phases:-

Phase 1 – Ensuring Compliance

- the first and immediate priority for Doncaster Archives was to achieve compliance with The National Archives requirements
- The suitability of the former museum site on Chequer Road has been reviewed and with costs identified for repairs, compliant storage, public access and maintenance works to be costed, prioritised and planned. In addition to the existing current service budget of £565k, a further investment of £1.5m was required to complete this work.

Continued on page 34

From the Editor

Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of Doncaster Ancestor.

Well, Wimbledon has been played this year after no play in 2020 due to Coronavirus; the 2020 World Cup Football suffered the same fate and has now finished; and England did really well to get so far, although I know many fans will be disappointed. We also can't forget the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, which had a very dramatic start with a win for Lewis Hamilton.

Thank you to everyone that has sent in articles this time. We have a Covid 19 Diary that was started at the beginning of the Pandemic in 2020, which I am sure you will find interesting. Also DNA surprises, of which I think there must be quite a few of these surprises that we may not know about.

So now lets get straight down to business! I am really struggling with articles this time and as you will see we have a railway theme which wasn't really my intention. The next Ancestor will be closest to Remembrance Day, so we could have a military theme. The decision is yours, and only you, the members, can make that happen. No doubt there will still be some railway articles, as at present several members of the Society are working through lots of railway memorabilia that was kept in the Doncaster Grammar School. It is all part of the Doncaster Heritage. Please let me know if there is any subjects that you would like to see featured.

If you have any books that are a good read, then do let us know.

Jenny Ellis

Deadline for the next edition is 8th Oct 2021 at the latest.

Please send in any articles, preferably as a Word Document.

The journal is published in February, May, August and November.

Vol 31 No 4 Edition will be published in Nov 2021.

Disclaimer

The Editor reserves the right to edit and defer items sent for inclusion in this journal. It is the contributor's responsibility to ensure that items submitted do not breach copyright laws. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of their author and not necessarily those of the Society.

Monthly Meetings via ZOOM

August 25th 2021 Letters From a Faraway Laddie by Sue McGeever

In 1899 Harry Gill travelled from his home in Summerbridge to visit the Holy Land on board the Steam Yacht Argonaut. His letters to his fiancée and the photographs he took were amongst family papers. This lecture follows in his footsteps from the Nidd to the Nile. This couple are the 2x Grandparents of Sue our speaker.

September 29th DNA What do you learn? Are you really a Viking by Karen Evans

Adverts for DNA testing are constantly on TV – but what do you actually get? The talk covers understanding how the test works in very general terms, getting the most from the test (what the results mean) & how to validate paper research or illegitimacy. It also highlights the range and pitfalls of using DNA testing, particularly finding out where your family came from – Do You Think You Are a Viking.

October 27th WDYTIA and it's Impact on Family History Today by Dr Nick Barrett

Dr Nick Barratt is an author, broadcaster and historian best known for his work on BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are*. He is an honorary associate professor of public history at the University of Nottingham, the Director of Learner and Discovery Services at the Open University, a teaching fellow at the University of Dundee and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He is currently the President of the Family History Federation, 'Nick's lecture takes us back to when *Who Do You Think You Are* was first commissioned, and he explores how the show was made, illustrated with case studies and anecdotes – as well as considers the impact it has had on the way we see family history today.'

November 24th From the Mill to Monte Carlo by Anne Fletcher Joseph Hobson Jagger: Yorkshire's Man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo

Anne is his great, great niece and she will talk about her search for her ancestor's story and how newly discovered sources and the assistance of local history societies helped her prevent his extraordinary life from being lost to history.

All meetings will start at 7.30pm, although you will be able to use the link that you will be sent via email from 7.15pm

Any queries please contact June Staniforth on 07901 523529

From the postbag / via e-mail

Below are just a few of the comments that we have received about the monthly ZOOM Meetings.

"Thank you so much for the talk last night. We really did appreciate it. It brought back many memories. I started at the Grammar School in 1949 and so recognised many of those involved in the story of the collection. I wasn't a member of the Railway Society, but friends of mine were. Two at least were in last night's meeting - **Grahame Boyes** and **Richard Carter**, both were in my class throughout the whole time I was there. I was best man in Belfast for the boy who was holding the Windward Island nameplate.

I am sure that one method of adding to the collection was that on their visits to railway establishments the boys came back with what they called 'trophies'!

Thanks again" **Donald Reasbeck**

"Thank you for last night's meeting. Chris' talk brought back many happy memories - even a photo of me as a raw adolescent member of the Railway Society committee. I was fascinated to hear of the plans for the future of the collection and will certainly, once the virus situation has settled down (we hope!) come to see it in its new home." **Richard Carter**

Last night I enjoyed a very interesting and informative Zoom meeting of the Doncaster & District Family History Society which outlined the history of the Doncaster Grammar School Railway Society's collection of rail memorabilia. Part of the collection is to go on show in the new Railway Museum in the new Danum Gallery, Library and Museum on Waterdale. Many of the meetings have very interesting speakers on historical aspects of Doncaster. If you want help to research into your family history or If you want to learn about Doncaster's diverse past and are interested in joining D&DFHS, please contact Membership Secretary ddfhsmemberships@doncasterfhs.co.uk

Take care, **Jan Threadgold**

Jan put the above on her Facebook page

If you have any comments about anything please feel free to get in touch.

Recent Publications by D&DFHS

Society publications can be purchased by post (see inside back cover or our website for full details) or through GenFair at www.genfair.com
Please allow 21 days for delivery.

Goods can be returned within 14 days of receipt of order only if found to be faulty, or if you have been sent a different item from that requested.

Our latest updated Mexborough Parish Download now contains:
St John The Baptist marriages to 1940, also the Primitive Methodist Church marriages, United Methodist Church marriages and the Free Christian Church births, marriages & burials.

MEXBOROUGH **St John the Baptist**

Baptisms 1562 to 1931
Burials 1559 to 1927
Marriages 1592 to 1940
Monumental Inscriptions,
War Memorial

Primitive Methodists Marriages 1907 to 1940

United Methodists **Church** Marriages 1910 to 1940

Free Christian Church Baptisms 1915 to 1922 Burials 1919 to 1940 Marriages 1916 to 1940

Parish Baines Directory 1822, Kelly's Directory 1857 & 1893 Mixed & Junior School Admissions 1904 to 1933



Our Snaith download now has Snaith St Laurence burials up to the year 2000.

SNAITH

St Laurence

Baptisms 1559 to 1935

Burials 1537 to 2000

Marriages 1538 to 1939

Monumental Inscriptions, War Memorials

Snaith & Goole Non-conformist Chapels

History

Baptisms



Snaith

History, Early Census, Militia Lists, Directory extracts, Universal Directory 1791

Baines' Directory 1822, White's Directory 1837/38, Kelly's Directory 1857,

Kelly's Directory 1893, Kelly's Directory 1927

Our Wentworth download now contains Wentworth and Harley school admission register & Thorpe Hesley Holy Trinity Burials & Monumental Inscriptions.

WENTWORTH

Holy Trinity Church

Baptisms 1654 to 1937

Burials 1654 to 1951

Marriages 1654 to 1940

War Memorial, Monumental Inscriptions &
Wall Plaques (by Rotherham FHS)

Parish

Universal Directory 1791, Baines Directory 1822,

White's Directory 1838

Kelly's Directory 1838, 1857, 1867, 1893 and 1927

Wentworth Woodhouse

Common cash book 1790 to 1792

Wentworth & Harley Schools (by Rotherham FHS)

Wentworth Admissions 1884 to 1919, Harley Infants 1875 to 1916

Thorpe Hesley Holy Trinity (by Rotherham FHS)

Burials 1847 to 1915, Monumental Inscriptions



We have added **Beechfield Junior School** to the Schools information.

SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS REGISTERS

Schools Download

Over 50,000 transcriptions have been combined and arranged in last name order for the following schools:

Armthorpe C of E Mixed	1907 to 1920	Frickley & Clayton	1872 to 1936
Askern Moss Road	1928 to 1939	Hatfield Levels	1879 to 1938
Balby Oswin Avenue	1912 to 1933	Hickleton	1872 to 1932
Beechfield Infants	1911 to 1939	Mexborough Adwick Rd	1912 to 1928
Beechfield Junior	1865 to 1931	Mexborough Docliffe Rd	1910 to 1933
Bentley Cook Street	1904 to 1920	Mexborough Girls	1877 to 1878
Braithwell Council	1928 to 1938	Mexborough Junior	1933 to 1938
Braithwell National Mixed	1893 to 1928	Rossington	1897 to 1939
Brodsworth	1907 to 1933	Stainton C of E	1883 to 1937
Conisbrough Morley Boys	1882 to 1936	Sykehouse	1907 to 1941
Conisbrough Morley Girls	1925 to 1936	Thorne Travis	1909 to 1935
Conisbrough Rowena	1902 to 1931	Tickhill C of E	1908 to 1939
Denaby (Old)	1888 to 1934	Tickhill National	1884 to 1907
Doncaster National C of E	1900 to 1932	Warmsworth St Peter	1911 to 1938
Fenwick & Moss	1907 to 1937		

Our updated Goole Download now contains Marriages from 1848-1940.

GOOLE

St John The Evangelist

Baptisms 1848-1917
Marriages 1848-1940
Burials 1848-1923
Monumental Inscriptions



Goole Cemetery

Burials 1876 to 1907

Non-conformist Chapels – Baptisms

Goole History notes

Trade Directory Extracts:

Pigot's 1828/1829
White's 1837/1838
Kelly's 1893
Kelly's 1927

Members of our transcription team have also transcribed and organised transcriptions for the Darfield & Wath Methodist Circuit onto Darfield download and Wombwell Download.

DARFIELD

Baptisms 1598 to 1939
Marriage Index 1598 to 1940
Burials 1598 to 1921
Cemetery Map, Monumental Inscriptions,
War Memorials, Doncaster Archdeaconry Map,
Historical Notes, 7 Directories extracts

Darfield & Wath Primitive Methodist Circuit

Baptisms 1861 to 1910



WOMBWELL

Wombwell St Mary

Baptisms 1864 to 1926
Marriages 1864 to 1940
War Memorial, Wombwell Historical notes

Jump notes

Wombwell St George (Jump)

Baptisms 1880 to 1919

Marriages 1884 to 1940

War Memorial

Wombwell United Methodist Free Chapel

Baptisms 1888 to 1899

Wombwell Primitive Methodists Chapel (Barnsley Road)

Marriages 1907 to 1940

Wombwell Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (Park Street)

Marriages 1917 to 1940

Trade Directory extracts.

Keep watching our website or our advertisements on Genfair for new and updated publications.

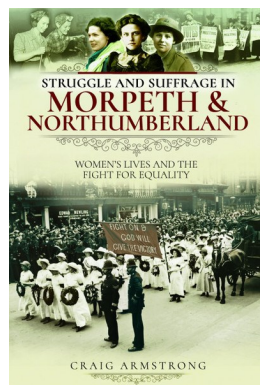
Thank you to all those who have supported the Society by purchasing our publications. We hope they have been useful and have helped with your research.

Book Reviews

Struggle & Suffrage in Morpeth & Northumberland Women's Lives & The Fight for Equality by Craig Armstrong

This book starts in Victorian Britain with information about the census and the type of working conditions the women had to endure. Centering on the harsh farming jobs and conditions they put up with. As Northumberland was sparsely populated it was the ideal farming area.

It isn't until we move into the Edwardian age that Suffrage & the Suffragettes movement is mentioned. What did surprise me was that quite a number of men gave their support and help to the movement. The book gives a good amount of detail about Emily Davison, the lady who later went on to throw herself in front of the King's horse. (Taking things into her own hands, though



now there seems to be some doubt as to what was supposed to happen). This lady seems to have been rather a maverick, taking matters into her own hands without the permission of the WSPU. The horse incident really seems to have been the turning point in 1913, and then of course came the First World War when it was estimated that 2 million women replaced men in employment & proved invaluable in the war effort.

This book also contains an index which can often prove useful for family historians.

ISBN: 9781526719652 Pen & Sword £12.99

Voices of The Second World War: A Child's Perspective by Sheila A. Renshaw

This is a collection of children's recollections of their memories in the Second World War. The ages of the children varying from the youngest aged 2 years old, through to 15 years of age, and coming from a number of countries. Ranging from the UK to Europe, and of course including Jewish children. It makes interesting reading with both humorous and serious stories of how each one reacted at the time. I did wonder if the memories from the younger children were because it had been written down at the time, or if it was the many deprivations they had put up with that made them remember it so vividly.

Perhaps they naturally remembered, unlike me, my earliest memory was being packed off to my friend's house who only lived in the same street. I was to sleep the night, and I remember my dad coming at night to say there would be a lovely surprise at our house in the morning. I went home in the morning to find my mum sat up in bed with a new baby. No one asked me did I want a sister; at the time I was just 6 years old.

ISBN: 9781526700599 Pen & Sword £12.99

June Staniforth, Member 750



Doncaster Grammar School and The Railway Collection

Further to the article which appeared in Volume 30 No3 Autumn Ancestor 2020.

The two locomotives duly arrived from the National Railway Museum which were out based at Shildon. These locomotives are on loan to the Museum for the time being and will be changed after a period. The first to arrive was Great Northern Railway 'Atlantic' locomotive No 251, built at Doncaster Works in 1902. The second locomotive was 'Green Arrow' No 4471, the first of the V2 class, built in 1936. Both locomotives were delivered by road vehicles.

A virtual tour of the new building took place during March, showing the locomotives and other donated items from the Grammar School. All future opening plans are subject to the current pandemic.

During the last week in March I was contacted by a former Grammar School pupil, Derrick Parker, who stated that he has one of the plaques affixed to Mallard to celebrate the world speed record on 3rd July 1938. His father (Rowland Frederick Parker) was an apprentice die sinker at the Plant Works in 1938 and he helped with the making of the plaques for fitting to the A4 Pacific, Mallard, to celebrate the World Steam Record of 3rd July that year.

Three were cast in the Brass Foundry using the pattern made by Jack Wright (Pattern Maker) and one was rejected. The other two were fettled and cleaned by Rowland Parker and finally finished in "D Shop" under supervision of Foreman Leggett.

When Mallard next arrived he at the Works for overhaul, the original 1938 plaques 'went missing' and Rowland Parker was tasked with finding the original pattern and then manufacturing new ones. Three further plaques were cast to guarantee at least two good ones for the loco. All three were acceptable and were cleaned up and polished by Rowland Parker.

Two plaques were fitted to Mallard and the third spare was retained in the office of Rowland Parker, then Machine Shop Superintendent. Upon his retirement in February 1983, he was able to purchase the plaque from BREL which is now in Derrick Parker's possession.

Mr Parker began work at The Plant as a fitter's apprentice in 1935 (Aged 15); A Die Sinker Apprentice in 1938; Die Sinker Chargehand in 1942; A Relief Foreman Hot Shop in 1951; Assistant Foreman Hot

shop in 1954; Foreman Hot Shop in 1956; Foreman Machine Shop 1960 and Chief Foreman Machine Shop in 1965. Mr Parker later became Production Group and retired from that post 24th February 1983. Derrick has retained the sale document of the Plaque for provenance.

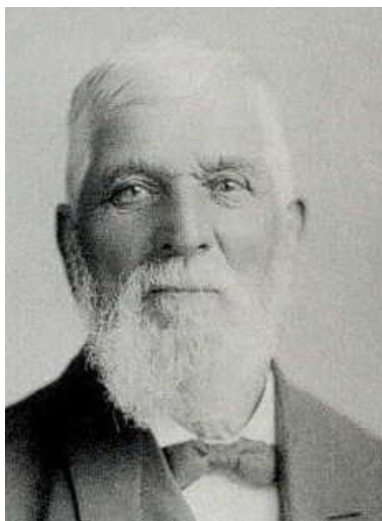
The plaque was featured on B.B.C.'s 'Antique Roadshow' in October 2019, together with the photograph of Mallard, which shows Rowland Parker on the front row right hand side.

Derrick has been in conversation with Chris Barron and the Grammar School Trustees regarding a possible permanent loan. Having also discussed it with his sons (who would have inherited the plaque) Derrick has decided that the plaque which he owns will be donated on condition it is put on long-term public display in the Danum Gallery Library and Museum. He made his donation as a former pupil of the Grammar School in the 1950s/60s.

The plaque has now been formally presented to the Doncaster Grammar School Railway Society and this donation should also overcome concerns previously expressed about a 'loan on-loan'.

Keith Crouter, Member 1623

From Doncaster to Salt Lake City



Joseph Thompson

My 5th great grandparents were **Samuel Hirst** and **Martha Taylor**, born in the mid-1700s in Denaby and Bolton on Dearne. Through DNA matches with distant cousins on Ancestry, I have confirmed a line of this family that emigrated to Salt Lake City in the USA.

Samuel and Martha's daughter **Agnes Hirst**, born in Denaby in 1794, married **Joseph Thompson** in Rotherham in 1818. Their son, also called **Joseph Thompson**, was born in 1826 in Doncaster. In 1851 he was a lodger at 16 Coalpit Lane, Ecclesall Bierlow, Sheffield, his occupation given as stonemason. In January 1852 he married **Ann Grayson** in Sheffield and on 5 April they arrived in the USA. Their first child was born in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Joseph was baptised into the church of Latter-Day Saints while still in Yorkshire, and in America he used his stonemason skills in helping to build the Mormon temple in Salt Lake City. He was very active in the church, and an extract from the Latter-Day Saints Biographical Encyclopaedia gives the following information.

“Thompson, Joseph, an active Elder in the South Cottonwood Ward, Salt Lake county, Utah, was born in Doncaster, England, August 16, 1826, the son of Joseph Thompson and Agnes Hirst. He was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by Joseph Westwood, in November, 1848, at Croule, Yorkshire, England, and was ordained a Priest there. In February 1852 he married Ann Grayson (daughter of John and Hannah Grayson), who was born June 27, 1827 in Sheffield, England. With his young wife he emigrated to America in the same year, arriving in Salt Lake City Sept 5, 1852. He lived in Salt Lake City five years, working on the Temple Block at his trade as a stone cutter. In 1857 he moved to South Cottonwood on a farm and, with his family, endured many hardships of pioneer days. The issue of his marriage was nine children, namely John G, Joseph Jr, Agnes, Hannah, Ann E, Lucy E, Martha, and Mary. His wife died July 20, 1867, and on August 8, 1868, he married Annie M Kershaw (daughter of George F Kershaw and Eliza Byard), who was born June 16, 1853, in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Her father was one of the first converts to the Church in South Africa in 1854, where he filled an honourable mission and died on the sea while emigrating to Utah, June 6, 1865. His wife Annie bore Brother Thompson fourteen children, namely Annie E, Joseph F, Alvin, Henry, Lydia, William A, Sarah L, James H, Ada P, Orson D, Wilford W, Cleo C, Marvin C. and Louis B. Brother Thompson was ordained a Seventy in 1858 by Charles Lambert in Salt Lake City, and ordained a High Priest Nov 23, 1891, by John Cook in the Granite Stake. He acted as ward teacher for many years, belonged to the South Cottonwood choir for fifty-four years, and was a faithful member in the discharge of his church duties. Besides farming, he followed his trade of mason and bricklayer until nearly 80 years old, and died Sept 10, 1911.”

Joseph's second wife was very, very young and married him when she was only 15



and he was nearly 40! Nowadays we wouldn't think this was acceptable. He was obviously a hard worker until old age, long past today's retirement age. On his death certificate the cause of death is hard to read, but could be debility or diabetes. The photos of the family are from other people's online public trees. I have a distant cousin confirmed by DNA who is a direct descendant of Brother Joseph Thompson. It's always good when genetics shows your paper trail research is correct. In another article I'll write about when DNA gave me a shock!

Linda Gamston, Member 4452

Recollections of the Open-Air School

It was interesting to read about the Open-Air School in a previous edition of the Ancestor. I have noticed recently how our lives seem to move in circles, returning to previous haunts, sometimes after many years. The Open-Air School was situated just down the road from where we have now lived for thirty years.

When I started going there I must have been about two and a half because we had recently moved from my Grandma's house on Samuel Street to Craithie Road. My little brother was a few months old.



I remember that the single deck bus would come in the morning to pick me up. It was the same one that later in my hockey playing days took the High School teams to matches and was known ironically as the, "Green Flyer". The bus would park opposite the house, outside the shop, and Mum would take me to the gate and Mrs Rocket came to help me aboard. She was known as "Mrs 'Ocket" as I had trouble pronouncing, "R". She was a lovely person and we used to see her and her daughter in town for years afterwards.

I probably started at the Open-Air School in September, 1950 because I remember I had a little woven basket which had a handle wrapped with green plastic and Mum had put some fruit in it for the Harvest

Festival. I insisted on having the basket back and I still have it. Unfortunately, the handle has parted company from the basket, so if anyone knows where I can get some flat plastic strip with which to repair it I would be very grateful.

Apparently “they” were concerned that I had, “knock knees” I think, so I was sent to the Open-Air School to have some exercises to straighten my legs. I had to go to what must have been a treatment room and sat on a chair while someone sat opposite me and took each foot in turn and pushing it said repeatedly, “Bend.... stretch, bend.... stretch.” There were some other children in the room who seemed to be draped over a sort of vaulting horse. I think they must have had breathing problems as they were encouraged to cough and spit.

I don’t remember much about anything else we did except for the, “rest” we were supposed to have after dinner. There were lines of camp beds brought out and each of us had a grey blanket. We were supposed to lie down for a set length of time but I had other ideas. That was wasting time; there were so many things to do. Once the staff stood me up beside my bed and wrapped me in my blanket like a rolled-up carpet and laid me on the bed so I couldn’t move. Imagine the outcry there would have been nowadays!

A story I do not remember personally, but my mother was told and repeated it to various people, was that one day the school had some visitors and apparently “Janet took charge of them and showed them round what she considered they ought to see and then politely but firmly told them to leave.”!

I went on to attend Intake Infants and Junior Schools. There are some interesting anecdotes about those as well. Perhaps for another time!

Janet McCulloch, Member 4063

Covid 19 Lockdown Diary 2020

I don’t think anyone thought the Coronavirus Lockdown would last for long so in the beginning I was quite laid back about it and thought I’d just catch up on a few of those jobs I’d ‘put off for too long’ around the house and garden until things got back to normal but nearly one year later there’s not too much ‘back to normal’ around. As time went on, I knew I’d got to really knuckle down and keep occupied. I live alone so it’s been really hard not being able to hug my family and friends and only seeing them at a distance so I hatched a few plans to keep my mind and body focussed and occupied...

Number one was to do something I'd always promised myself to do and the advice was to learn a new skill so I decided to learn basic British Sign Language. I went online and signed up to a free course (courtesy of our local Deaf Trust in Doncaster) and boy did it keep the old grey matter active! It was a challenge and something to look forward to every day and I feel proud I did it. First goal achieved, yes!

Goal number two was to help me and my God-daughter and her 2 little girls who live miles away to keep in touch by giving them something to look forward to and for me to relearn an old skill, playing my 'vintage' recorder again so every day I learnt a new Nursery Rhyme, recorded it and sent the video to my God-daughter with a challenge of 'Name That Nursery Rhyme'! It was so much fun doing it and getting their reaction, they would record their answer and send it back to me so I could see their faces. They got so excited and would ask everyday "When is Auntie Tina sending another nursery rhyme"? They managed to get nearly all the rhymes right too. I sadly ran out of rhymes by the end of May but had so much pleasure from doing it and know they did too. I didn't want them to forget about their family as we couldn't visit each other, family is important which made me think...I should do some more **Family History research**.

Luckily, DDFHS arranged for members to access Ancestry online via the Library website and so I got signed up and over the weeks managed to trace my father's family **Pyle** back to 1692 (hopefully the right ones this time) and found the birth of a Johannes recorded in Latin in 1713! I'm really glad I revisited my family history as I found out that some earlier research had taken me down the wrong path. I'd previously thought that a relation, Thomas, born 1802, had been convicted of larceny, sentenced to life and deported from Portsmouth to Australia on the Leviathan but thankfully it was a different Thomas so our family name was saved!

I was really interested in some of the information I'd learned along the way this time like finding out where some family members had lived from the census records, mainly in the Kings Lynn area and so I looked at the streets and houses on Google Earth, the ones that were still standing anyway. It was really cool to see them and 'another job jobbed' as dad used to say. I think he would have been interested to have known some of this information too. The old Norfolk Gazetteers also proved a mine of unexpected and fascinating information like the old job titles and how many businesses were in each village. We had an Edward who was a cordwainer! (I had to look it up, it's a maker of new shoes from new leather, as opposed to a cobbler who mends

shoes). Reading some of those passed some time I can tell you! I also found out that births were not always registered in the same year as they took place having found two children who were baptised at the same time but a couple of years after they were born. No wonder I was confused.

There was more confusion which arose from children being given the same Christian names as their fathers so trying to single out the right Thomas and the right Henry had me scratching my head for hours on end, having to make reams of notes on several scraps of paper and all culminating in a scruffy flow chart! One very interesting thing I found out was that sometimes a son would be given his mother's maiden name as a middle name as happened with our **Robert FLOOD Pyle**. At first, I thought it must have been a spelling mistake but then realised that Roberts mother's maiden name was **FLOOD**. Actually, it's a useful thing when it comes to research as you can spot the link immediately although I don't think I'd be very happy with a name like **FLOOD**, unless my first name was Noah perhaps?



Edward Flood Pyle 1825-1909 married Mary Ann Russell 1838-1902

On 8th May 2020 it was the 75th anniversary of VE Day and as I'm a bit of an organiser and like to be creative I had an idea to bring all my lovely neighbours together by organising a VE Day Pavement Party, socially distanced of course. I wanted to have something for us all to look forward to and promote a sense of community so I put out an A board in front of my house with all the details on, inviting everyone to make bunting, wear red and blue and come out for a cream tea and a glass of wine at 2.30pm and hoped for the best... The response was amazing and it all came together beautifully. Most of the neighbours made their own bunting, I made scones from



a new recipe which were actually edible for once and a neighbour baked scrummy butterfly buns, another piped Glen Miller music outside and I put a WWII Quiz together for everyone to scratch their heads over with a prize for the winner and delivered it in the form of a paper Vulcan Bomber, flown into everyone's garden! There was singing, lots of laughter and a Conga round the Close on a gorgeous sunny day and the best bit of all, a comment from Dave at no 16 saying he'd never spoken to anyone from the other end of our Close before and he's lived here for more than 20 years! So, it made it all worthwhile, a great time was had by all and people talked who had never spoken before. It's brought us all closer together as a community and I'm sure the community feeling will continue. Another Lockdown success, yeah!

In times like these we all need to stay in touch especially when we live alone so I set up a video chat group for me and my single girlfriends to stay connected and every week we would make a cuppa, grab a biscuit and catch up with each other in lieu of our normal lunch meet ups. I think we all would have all gone stir crazy if we couldn't chat to each other and swap our news. It's so important to keep in touch and not get depressed with all the bad news, I've had a couple of bad days along the way but the video chats keep me going. Thank goodness for modern technology and knowing how to use it too, lol. If I had a pound for every time we've said "We can see you but can't hear you" I'd be a millionaire!

Speaking of technology, in general, I'm not a great fan of Facebook for personal use BUT it's been a lifesaver recently for keeping in touch especially with the volunteers of our local Community Group and a Charity I administer for. Sadly, our normal volunteering and charity fundraising activities like Coffee Mornings, Pre-Loved Jewellery Sales, Pizza, Popcorn & Film Nights, Work Parties and organised Litter Picks have had to be cancelled but the need for Litter Picks does not disappear so to get my usual exercise I've done smaller, socially distanced Litter Picks every month and kept our local Quarry Park clean and tidy, a win win for me personally and for the environment plus as the weather has been mostly warm and sunny I've never walked so much on Quarry Park and noticed more of the lovely things that nature provides for free. Oh and I've lost a bit of weight too with all that walking so there's always a silver lining. Also, my garden is looking fabulous as I've had more time to spend in it which is another good thing and good for the soul; my runner beans and tomatoes are coming on a treat.

I've also made a few transformations on my Lockdown Journey which I'm proud of – I created a dress pattern from scratch and made a new blue satin

dress for my 60-year-old doll Elizabeth which I'd promised to do for the last ?? years and made her new pair of shoes from left over black felt, so now she's all scrubbed clean, dressed up but nowhere to go, aw. I wanted to do my bit for the NHS so I responded to the call to make facemasks for the local hospital staff and made 10 plus some for family and friends.

Finally, I re-painted my grubby outside porch which is now gleaming white and decorated my lounge so it's cheered me up and almost made up for all my cancelled holidays. So, all this has helped me through this pandemic. However, there's still my mother's side of the family history to finish. Sadly I never knew any of my grandparents, so finding out that my maternal grandmother had been married twice and that my mum had another (step) brother, Percy, was a complete surprise. So who knows who else is out there, waiting in the wings...

As Ancestry.co.uk was offering free Easter Weekend access to their records & they mentioned Wills & Probate I thought I'd check our family name out in case there was something lurking & indeed there was! I'd never looked at Wills before so it was something new to me & I'm really glad I found it. Once again, it's thrown up more questions than answers! This is what appeared for 1909 for my paternal great grandfather who I know died in Rotherham (from his burial records for Hyde Park Cemetery) but what was he doing in Rotherham? & what Club was it?

PYLE Edward of 16 Bridge-terrace Doncaster, shoemaker, died 14 August 1909 at Henry-street Rotherham Yorkshire. Probate **Wakefield** 30 September to Thomas Avill club steward and Edward Pyle coppersmith.

Effects £73 4s. 11d.

Another mystery to solve....so I found out that in 1970 – “at the end of this short street, on the right, was the Rotherham Advertiser newspaper offices & printer. Today (2010) most of the building on the left is part of the Rotherham open market complex.” Google Earth now shows Henry Street as a dead end with only 1 shop & the rest is the back entrance to the market & a ground level car park on the other side so a bit of a **dead end** in more ways than one sadly.

Katrina (AKA Tina) O'Halloran, Member 4432

08/7/2020 Updated 26/3/21 & 13/4/21

Driver of the Mallard: Joe Duddington

Since 3rd July 1938, the name of Joe has been associated with a steam locomotive named MALLARD which achieved the world speed record for a steam locomotive. Following his railway career and later retirement Joe died in Doncaster in 1953, aged 78, and was buried in an unmarked grave in Hyde Park Cemetery, Doncaster.

The 'Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery' are a group of volunteers working closely with the site owners, Doncaster Council, to make a visit to the cemetery a pleasant and rewarding experience.

Following on from the 'Friends' successful appeal for donations towards updating the grave of Patrick Stirling, they launched an appeal to provide a memorial for Joe Duddington.

Within two weeks, the target of £2000 was reached and surpassed. The 'Friends' report that they are now able to provide headstone as well as kerbing and decorative stones and a marble plaque. Money can be put aside to hold a dedication ceremony (COVID permitting) and have a restricted fund for any future maintenance.

Sadly, there is no grave for Joe's fireman Tom Bray, who died 14th June 1998, aged 77. His ashes are within the grave of his brother Clifford, a gunner in the Royal Artillery, who lost his life on 27th May 1941 - His grave is in the War Graves Section of Hyde Park Cemetery.

Sources: Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery,

Mrs Jean Bray, widow of Tom Bray, the grandson of Fireman Tom Bray.

Keith Crouter, Member 1623

There will be an update to this story in the Winter Ancestor

Computer Group

The Computer Group continues to run, via ZOOM, most Thursday mornings between 10.00 am and 12.00 midday.

Numbers fluctuate from week to week depending on holidays etc, but is mostly well attended, and we have had new members join recently.

You have to supply your own biscuits and be aware that there is a bit of friendly competition on the biscuit front. You have been warned!

Feel free to join us, you will be guaranteed a few laughs along the way.

Contact George Hiley for the Zoom link.

Choosing and working through a Genealogy Course

During the latter part of the current lockdown, and taking advantage of some 'too good to be true' offers online, we decided to sign up for a heavily discounted UK-based genealogy course from **CentreOfExcellence.com** (which currently appears to be offering all of its courses for a great price of just £29, down from over £100...). We didn't hold out too much hope, to be honest, but thought that, for the price, this was an affordable way to keep us amused. And we *might* learn something...

For those who don't know, my background is in the development, creation, editing and publishing of distance learning/correspondence /flexible learning course materials – so I have a pretty good idea of what is a 'good' course and what is 'poor', in terms of both *content* and *presentation*.

Payment and logging on were fairly straightforward – and we actually got a bonus course, 'How to be a super learner'.

Immediately, my impressions of the course were very favourable. It is fully accredited as an NVQ Level 3 equivalent course (on a level with A Levels/BTEC National/OND courses) so at this level it should be of a fairly robust standard: certainly not 'Micky Mouse', but not quite qualifying for brain surgery.

Amanda has been keener to actually complete it, so she started work on the materials. I'll leave it to her to do a future article on the course content and her experiences, but I'll just post my immediate thoughts.

The overall structure of the course is really good. There are 11 modules, covering all of the essential elements: Surnames, keeping records, using computers, Census and BMD, copyright and presenting your information, and how everything fits together. Each module has several 'lessons' or 'sections' and there is an assignment at the end of each module – which you complete, send off, and get a mark and a commentary a week or so later.

The modules get a bit longer and more 'challenging' as you work through the course, and the degree of work required to complete the assignments get a little more complex – as it should be.

If you need assistance or have any queries, I found that you get a response from their help desk very promptly.

At the end of the course there is a certificate and, as an optional extra (if you

need it), you can get an accredited statement of equivalence, so you can get credit for this course towards other further or higher education courses – for entry to college or university, for example.

The presentation and content of the course is good: explanations are straightforward, the assignments are well designed to ensure you have understood *and can apply* the learning that has been delivered. Obviously, it's up to you how seriously you take the course, and how fully you complete the activities – you don't need to do anything if you don't want to. But to keep the grey cells working, and for those of us of a certain age (I remember my parents saying things like that!) any form of using your brain has to be a good thing.

I have no connection to this company; as a learning professional, however, I can say that this (even at the full price) represents real value for money, and provides invaluable learning for anyone starting – or well on their way to create – a family history project of their own.

As fairly seasoned family historians, Amanda and I can see how we would have benefited from this sort of course before we started! All the mistakes we made (there were plenty) – and one or two we are still making! – could have been avoided by more carefully recording, arranging and codifying our material. As with most people, I imagine, we learned as we went, and have tweaked and changed our processes, inventing (and then rejecting or modifying) different 'forms' or 'recording systems' to keep track of what we had done, what we had found and where we had found it. We could have saved lots of time – and kept a few hairs!

There are plenty of other courses out there – but the one key issue I would pass on is that it is so useful to do a course BEFORE you start work on your family tree – you'll save yourself so much time and frustration. The cost of two or three unnecessarily requested birth or death certificates would go a long way to paying for the course...

Whether you go to this company or not, my key message: study a bit before you jump into the murky waters of family history research! Try to learn to swim before you are drowning!

Part 2 to follow, when Amanda gets her final grading!

John Finegold, Member 4349

Treasures in the Tower

I wonder how many Doncaster Ancestors worked on the town's railways? Thousands of men and women staffed the mainline station, the locomotive depot, the carriage and wagon works, the signal boxes, the offices and all the other departments of a major railway centre.

Perhaps the most memorable aspect of all this activity was what took place at the Doncaster Plant, in Hexthorpe. Here, from the middle of the Nineteenth Century, were built and maintained what are to the unbiased observer simply the best steam locomotives ever constructed.

A high point in the history of the Plant came in 1935 when the first of Sir Nigel Gresley's streamlined Pacifics, 'Silver Link', emerged from the workshops. In the following years three more silver A4s were built, locomotives which captured the public imagination. It was against this background that a group of boys, pupils at the Doncaster Grammar School, decided to form a railway society. They held their first meeting in May 1936, thus beginning a remarkable story which still leaves its imprint on the town today.

We heard this story from Mr. Chris Barron at our May meeting when he told us about the 'Treasures in the Tower'. Chris was a pupil at the school, a leader of the Railway Society and a senior railway manager. He is also a trustee of the Society's collection of railway memorabilia which is now held by the Rail Heritage Centre of the new Danum Gallery, Library and Museum. He told the story with great skill and expertise, clearly striking a deep chord with those of us fortunate enough to hear him.

So, what was the Tower? It was the space in the school's clocktower originally designed to hold water tanks which became the home of the Society essentially from the last year of the war. The school had some splendid buildings opened in 1869 and which had been added to over the years. With admirable initiative the Society had acquired a room in 1936 in the former Headmaster's house for its meetings and an already elaborate model railway. The school, however, needed new facilities which required extensive demolition and rebuilding. Work started in the late 1930s and went on into the early years of the war. What was to become of the Society and its layout? Fortune smiled. The water tanks did not work; the space was empty; the Society moved in in 1944. There were regular meeting, lectures and visits. The model railway flourished and was a major attraction at the School's open days. It attracted literally hundreds of visitors despite the hazardous ascent up the narrow spiral staircase.

But what were the treasures? They were an amazing collection of railway

memorabilia consisting of thousands of items. The inspiration behind this collection was Tony Peart, secretary of the Society in the years after the war. Tony came from Wheatley Hills and was an expert on all aspects of railway history and performance, as well as being an authority on buses. He left the school in the early 1950s going on to Liverpool University where he read English and subsequently became a schoolmaster but continued his link with Doncaster and the Society. Chris explained how Tony was an avid collector. Under his leadership the Society acquired a unique collection of locomotive names and number plates, plates from rolling stock, whistles, chimneys, signals, signalling equipment, track, tickets and photographs. Some of the items were from the Doncaster area but Tony's network stretched far and wide, including items from the Great Western, the London Midland and Scottish and the Southern Railway. With the help of sympathetic staff, the items, some with great difficulty, were installed in the Tower and displayed on its walls with great care.

How did he do it? He had the support of able pupils such as Grahame Boyes who is a trustee of the collection and attended our meeting. He established close links with many senior railway officials who clearly respected his knowledge and ability. Some were even prepared to arrange the transportation of very heavy items to the school. Perhaps he was lucky in that there was not yet the widespread interest in railway memorabilia that there is today. It is indisputable, however, that many of the items he collected are today of great interest and value. For example, nameplates from two of the locomotives involved in the Harrow and Wealdstone railway disaster of 1952, 'Princess Anne' and 'Windward Islands'.

As time passed the collection became neglected. Chris showed us photographs of a Tower with its Treasures in a disorganised and abandoned state. The boys' grammar school had gone and Tony died in 2006, so Chris and his colleagues decided to act. They formed a trust and arranged for the Treasures to be transferred to Doncaster Council for exhibition in the Rail Heritage Centre. The exercise presented a great challenge. There were legal issues to tackle. There were also logistical problems since many of the items were extremely heavy and awkward to move. But, with the co-operation of Hall Cross School, they triumphed and Doncaster now holds the thousands of railway items, some of which are displayed alongside two steam locomotives built at the Plant and on loan from the National Railway Museum.

Chris told us that he was concerned that Doncaster's history as a railway town might be forgotten. The new Rail Heritage Centre will now ensure that

this will not happen. He and his Trust should be proud of their achievement. Through them the legacy of Tony Peart and the Doncaster Grammar School Railway Society is available to all of us.

Richard Carter, Member 4466

Catholic Burial Records Database

During the period of over 200 years from the middle of the sixteenth century until the late eighteenth century, when the practice of the Roman Catholic faith was illegal in what is now the United Kingdom, Catholics had no churches and no official burial grounds. Even well into the nineteenth century this was the case. Many Catholics were buried in the local Anglican churchyard as there was frequently nowhere else. This can make finding burials difficult for family historians looking for the graves of Catholics or even just a record of their deaths.

It was quite common for parish incumbents who were thorough in their work to indicate the religious affiliation of the deceased in their burial registers. The Catholic Family History Society (<https://catholicfhs.online/>) has now launched a database of such burials. This can be accessed from the website <https://catholicburials.weebly.com/>. It uses Google Sheets and so the data can be manipulated and searched or downloaded for that purpose.

The society hopes that family historians who notice Catholic, Papist or Recusant burials in the course of their research will be able to submit their findings in one of the several ways explained on the 'Contribute' tab on the website.

Colin Ashworth
(Project Coordinator)

Help Wanted

I recently received an email from a lady called Michelle, asking for information about a family called Thompson, probably Frank who had a butcher's shop in Doncaster.

I think she was quite surprised when I replied and said that my husband and I knew the family. Frankie Thompson was a member of Doncaster Gliding Club and later Burn Gliding Club. A few phone calls and I was able to speak with Frank's daughter Dawn and pass on contact details.

Michelle contacted me again and said that they had spoken at length. She also said "Who needs Davina McCall, Doncaster Family History, Top job x

DNA Surprises

In 2018 I did the Ancestry DNA test, mainly out of curiosity. I have found the results very useful as they have helped me to confirm the accuracy of much of my research and to find more information for my tree, but they have also thrown up a huge surprise.



Great Grandparents Alfred Beckett & Sarah nee Thomas

I knew I had ancestors from Cornwall on my paternal side; a family called **Thomas**, who came to the Doncaster area in the late 1800s. A daughter in this family, **Sarah Thomas**, married **Alfred Beckett** in 1896 in the Doncaster registration district. The **Becketts** seem to have been in Yorkshire for centuries and mostly lived in the Mexborough area. Sarah and Alf's daughter, Mary, married **Joseph Gamston** and they settled in Rotherham. I don't remember either of these grandparents as they both died when I was a young child.

When my Ancestry results came back I had DNA matches with previously unknown distant cousins who had the same ancestors from Cornwall in their trees, which I was pleased about. I couldn't find any matches on my **Gamston** side but in my tree, I had a **Samuel Gamston** who married a woman from Devon and took her back to his native Kidderminster. She had ancestors in Devon called **Nosworthy** and I have distant DNA matches with people who have this unusual name in their tree from Devon and from Labrador, Canada – a lot of

Labrador immigrants were from Devon too. I took this as evidence of my father's ancestry and thought maybe other people on the **Gamston** line just hadn't taken the test. All my mother's lines and the paternal **Beckett** line were confirmed with genetic matches on Ancestry.

What I couldn't understand is why my closest matches, including a supposed second cousin, had the surnames of **Martin** and **Pennington** in their trees, with some sharing the exact same family line with one another. As time went on, more matches appeared in my list, still with this family, who were from Stoke-on-Trent. I was scratching my head for a couple of years, wondering how on earth these people were linked to me. I made a large tree of that family with branches and descendants and still couldn't see a connection, and began to think I'd never solve this mystery.

Then I thought of getting one of my aunts to test. If the **Martins** and **Penningtons** showed up (or didn't) among her cousin matches I'd at least know what side of my family they were on. I bought another DNA kit and got

my paternal aunt to do it. When her results came back she didn't have the **Martins** but she had matches to **Gamstons**, including known relatives – and I didn't! I didn't even know these relatives had taken the test as they'd never appeared in my list of matches. After my father died my aunt said there had been rumours that he wasn't **Joe Gamston's** son but I dismissed it as he looked so much like this aunt and another sister of theirs, and from photos I'd seen of my grandparents I assumed they looked like their dad, but my aunt



Grandmother Mary Beckett with husband Joseph Gamston

says no, they resemble their mother, Grandma **Mary Beckett**. From the amount of DNA we share it turns out that my aunt is really my half-aunt, so I concluded that naughty Granny had had an extra-marital affair.

Delving further, it became clearer. I don't know why I hadn't spotted it before, but recently I saw in the records that two of the men from this **Martin** family moved to live in Rotherham and at the time of my father's conception and birth one of them

lived two doors away from my great granddad **Alf Beckett**, Mary's father. Ah! Now I was getting somewhere. Granny was a fence-jumper! This neighbour will have been my grandfather. He too was married at the time and died before I was born.

For some time, this gave me a bit of an identity crisis, then I thought there's no point being upset about it because if it hadn't been for my saucy grandma getting passionate with this **Martin** chap, I wouldn't be here. Just think – eighty years ago people couldn't have imagined that today we'd have the technology to uncover their raunchy secrets and to pinpoint who they'd had affairs with.

It just annoys me to think how much money I've spent over 15 years going down a false trail. Researching the **Gamstons** I've bought certificates, been to Worcester Archives twice, been to Kidderminster and visited the carpet factory as the **Gamstons** were carpet weavers there, and even been to Scotland to find the grave of an "ancestor" who moved to outside Edinburgh. When the Covid crisis settles, my next trip will be to Stoke to look at the pottery museums; the **Martins** were potters and lived right where the Wedgwood factory was. I've now taken an interest in Wedgwood pottery.

The **Nosworthy** name might have been a coincidence, so I've forgotten about them for now. Ancestry pinpointed some of my DNA to the Potteries but I assumed that was because I had ancestors from other towns in Staffordshire on my mother's side, but I've recently found out the Potteries were only the five towns that nowadays make up the city of Stoke-on-Trent. Ancestry was a

hundred per cent accurate in this respect, and the close DNA match really is a second cousin as we have the same great-grandparents.

Despite the shock of the revelations, I'm glad I did the DNA test and found out about my real ancestry, as I think it's better to know the truth.

Linda Gamston, Member 4452

Garden Nurseries Versus the Plant John Milne/Milan – Gardener & Seeds Man

John Milne was baptised on the 29th April 1787 at Edzell, Angus, Scotland.

We don't know why or when John moved to Arksey where, in 1816 aged 28, Gardener of the parish of Doncaster he married **Ann Walker** from Norton. Although the wedding is given as between John **Milan** and Ann Walker John's signature in the register is John **Milen**.

In 1829 and 1834 in Pigot's Directory he is described as Nurseryman & Seedsman at Baxter Gate Doncaster. On the 21st November 1835 aged fifty, John was killed in a coach accident near Dundee Scotland. We have often wondered why he had returned to Scotland, was it a family matter or had he travelled north for Scottish seed potatoes to plant in his nursery? Letters of administration were granted to **Ann Walker**, widow, **Thomas Walker**, her father and **Thomas Milan** her eldest son on 25th April 1838.



Thomas Milan

Thomas John Milan's eldest son was baptised at St Georges in June 1817, his surname being spelt **Mallone**.

In 1841 Thomas married Ann youngest daughter of Mr **Isaac Challenger** of the Flying Sturgeon Inn Sandal. In the 1841 census he and Ann are living in Baxter Gate, listed as a seedsman, with his mother and siblings. His mother is listed as owning a seed shop. By the time of the 1851 census they are living in St Peter's Square and listed as a Nursery man. Ann, his mother, is still living in Baxter Gate and listed as Gardner and Seedswoman.

In the 1861 census Thomas is listed as Nurseryman and Seedsman at 36 Baxter

Gate whilst his mother is living in Spring Gardens.

On 22nd November 1870 and 6th June 1871 Insolvency proceedings were Instituted under the 1869 Bankruptcy Act but in the 1871 census he is listed as Nursery and Seedsman employing 2 men and a boy.

In the 1881 census he is still a Gardener and Seedsman living at 53 Spring Gardens. However he died of heart failure on the 7th October 1888.

A relative wrote that after her husband John's death Ann continued to run the business with the help of her son Thomas and her son-in-law **Robert Marcroft** until they eventually sold out to the railways when the Great Northern Railway established its engine and coach building works in Doncaster. However, we believe that the Calcavalla Nursery owned by Charles & William **Keyworth** is far more likely to have been sold to the GNR Workshops (The Plant) in 1849 (The above information needs checking when the Archives return to Doncaster).

Of course, until 1848 there were no railways in Doncaster and there was an unbroken way out of Doncaster along West Laith Gate straight into Hexthorpe Lane. Indeed, the original line of the Great Northern Railway did not include Doncaster – London to York via Lincoln Gainsborough and Selby. In the end though the line followed practically alongside the Great North Road. The line was constructed in 1848 and 1849 not to mention all the other lines by the Midland, North Eastern, Great Eastern, the Lancashire and Yorkshire etc. Also, in 1848 the first temporary railway station was built in the town, replaced the following year by a more permanent one

The streets were laid out very differently in those days and West Laith Gate ran directly into Hexthorpe Lane the two meeting at the level crossing just outside the station. It was a direct run from the Calcavalla Nursery in Hexthorpe, over the level crossing along West Laith Gate and its continuation as St Sepulchre Gate to where the **Milan** family were living and running their business in Baxter Gate with the Priory Place Chapel nursery they also ran in Printing Office Street. In 1866 The Doncaster Gazette ran an article called Old Hortulan Grounds of Doncaster in which they mention*the site of Priory Place Chapel being a garden and in the possession of the late Mr Milan, the present nurseryman's father.....*

1853 was the year the Plant Works opened on land which had been Hexthorpe Nurseries and Thomas' nephew said that the **Milan** Nurseries extended far into Hexthorpe. **Hugh Parkin**, speaking in 2008 said that as early as 1847 the railway company started purchasing land in the Hexthorpe area. This was an agricultural area with orchards and gardens chosen for its proximity to the railway and the river. Did the **Milan** family after all sell directly to the Great Northern Railway?

John & Ann **Milans** grandson, Thomas, son of William Alexander said to the Doncaster Chronicle "I am descended from the **Milans** who ninety years ago were the largest firm of nurserymen in the North of England, owning nurseries which extended from West Laith Gate far in the direction of Hexthorpe." His father was a nurseryman and afterwards, an employee in the carriage department of the Plant Works.

From the census William Alexander was a nurseryman but by the time of the 1851 census when he was twenty he was living at home in Baxter Gate, where his mother was running the nursery business and he was already listed as a coach trimmer's apprentice. When he married in 1852 he was a Coach Maker living in Sheffield and by 1854 when son Thomas was born he was living in West Laith Gate still as a Coach Builder. The Plant only opened in 1853 so William Alexander was certainly one of the Plant's earliest Doncaster employees.



Thomas (son of William Alexander and grandson of John & Ann **Milan**) entered the plant works in September 1866 and retired in January 1925 after over fifty-eight years of service with the Plant works. He died 21st April 1937 aged eighty-two. The newspaper report goes on to say that he worked as a chargehand in the carriage trimming department for forty five years of years of those fifty eight years.

Apparently, Thomas had a remarkable memory and he could recall the days when there were no houses between Bridge Street and Hexthorpe Flatts except for Pybus's Farm and Hexthorpe Villa and when there was a footpath across country from East Laith Gate and Thorne Road. He remembered too cobbled streets near Spring Gardens and when houses in St Sepulchre Gate had posts and iron chains in front of them. Another memory was of his father galloping on horseback to Sheffield to carry the name of the St Leger winner.

We know three of John & Ann **Milan's** children and one grandchild worked for the Plant Works between the inception of the works and the 1911 census.

Sources: Audrey Milan, various newspapers, Hugh Parkin, Findmypast & other on-line sites over the years.

Jean Rounthwaite, Member 3664 & Kerry Milan, Member 2451

Table Manners

I was reading a magazine article about collecting napkin rings, these became a popular christening gift made in a range of materials but silver ones are the most collectable. In the article was this snippet:

One of the Dukes of Devonshire was one day buying silver at Asprey, when he noticed some circular silver rings. He turned to his steward and enquired of him what they were?

"Those, your Grace, are napkin rings."

The Duke, "A napkin ring?"

The steward replied *"Your Grace, when the middle classes breakfast, they take a fresh napkin and when they have finished, they fold it, roll it and place it through the ring. They use it again for luncheon, tea and dinner. Only at the end of the day is it sent to be laundered."*

The Duke was shocked. *"They use the same napkin throughout the day?"*

Steward – *"They do, your Grace".*

"My goodness," said the Duke "I had no idea such poverty existed."

Of course, the aristocratic class had no need for napkin rings as after a meal they would simply leave their used napkin crumpled for the servants to launder.

And the lower class had no need for napkins as they were lucky to be able to have a meal!

Also, on the subject a quote from a little book entitled "Waiting at Table".

"Fantastical ways of folding dinner napkins are not in the best taste, the most approved style being to fold them either in the shape of a mitre or in the shape of a slipper or simply fold in three. Where a single man servant is kept, it is his duty to fold the dinner napkins, but where a butler and footman are kept it is then the butler's duty to do this."

Jean Walker, Member 4092

New Members

Listed below are the names, and membership numbers of members who have recently joined the Society. We extend a warm welcome to them and wish them good luck in their personal research.

Mem ID	Title	Initial	Last Name
4466	Mr	R	Carter
4467	Mr	A	Bailey
4468	Mr	T	McDowell
4469	Ms	M A	Rhodes
4470	Mr	K	Hunt

Obituaries

Dave Valentine

Dave was a gentleman in the true sense of the word - family man - unsparing of his time to voluntary organisations - past Vice Chairman, Postal Sales, Society Fair Co-ordinator. **George Hiley**.

Ian Parker has informed us that his wife **Hazel Parker** has sadly passed away.

We have been informed by his daughter that **Gordon William Moss** has sadly passed away.

We send our condolences to all the families and loved ones.

- This investment will bring Doncaster Archives, the Local Studies Library collection and the Doncaster and District Family History Society together under one roof,
- The planned completion date for this work was October 2021.

Phase 2 – Cataloguing and Storage of items at other Heritage sites.

- A detailed feasibility study will be undertaken, with a detailed plan and funding options to be brought to Cabinet for consideration in spring 2022.

Phase 3 – Longer term Transformation Programme

- digitisation of archives a proposal would be brought to Cabinet for consideration.”

You can access the Doncaster Council's Cabinet 23 June 2021 papers on the Council's website:

<https://doncaster.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=3684>

Detailed planning discussions have yet to take place with the Council and no date has been agreed as to when the 'Reading Room' will be opened to the public.

The Society is very appreciative of the support they have received from the Doncaster Council and its staff and is looking forward to continuing a close working relationship with the Doncaster Archives and Local Studies.

George W Hiley
Chairman

Dates For Your Diary

St Oswald Church, Kirk Sandall, Doncaster

Open Dates

Sunday August 22nd 12noon – 4.00pm

**Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th September are Heritage Open Days
and we are also open 12noon – 4.00pm**

Devon Family History Society 28 August 2021

Join us in 2021 to commemorate the
sailing of the Mayflower from
Plymouth in September 1620

Devon Family History Society are
holding an online Day Conference
28 August 2021

For further details contact Maureen Selley:

conference@devonfhs.org.uk



D&DFHS Subscription Rates 01 Apr 2021 - 31 Mar 2022

Please make all cheques/postal orders
etc. payable to:

**Doncaster & District Family
History Society**

Send to Membership Secretary
- see back page
or **www.genfair.com**

Individuals	£10.00
Family in same house	£12.00
Institutions UK	£12.00
Overseas	
Electronic journal	£12.00
Paper journal	£15.00

**New Members who join January - March can receive
up to 3 months membership free**

DDFHS Research Enquiry Service

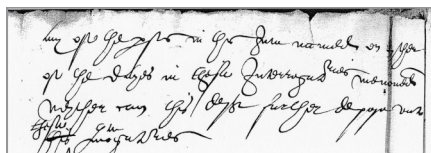
Due to the closure of the **HELP DESK** & to celebrate the Society's 40th Anniversary we are offering a limited free email Research Service.

The Research Service is primarily a "look-up" service and is limited to one surname search of the Society's 1.5 million transcriptions database. Any additional research will be at the discretion of the Society's Research Enquiries Coordinator, Trevor Betterton. **researchenquiries@doncasterfhs.co.uk**

If you are not a member we will endeavour to assist, but ask you to consider joining the Society as an appreciation of the time spent by our volunteers.

Transcription Service

**That will you have ordered or downloaded
Can you read it? We can!**



The Old Documents Reading Group are offering a Transcription Service of wills, inventories, deeds, indentures and other old documents, including ones that you have part-transcribed but just cannot make out that last bit.

Competitive charges. Send a photocopy of your documents (NOT the original) for an estimate of the cost to:

Philip Langford, 45 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, DN4 5JZ
Tel: 01302 539194 or email readolddocs@aol.com

Executive Committee & Officers Cont'd

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ddfhsmemberships@doncasterfhs.co.uk

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June Staniforth 07901523529 events@doncasterfhs.co.uk

Research Enquiry Service Co-ordinator

Trevor Betterton researchenquiries@doncasterfhs.co.uk

Exchange Journals/ Society Librarian/Archivist/Assistant Editor

Keith Crouter 21 Sandall Park Drive, Wheatley Hills
Doncaster, South Yorks, DN2 5RP
01302 342301

Members' Interests Enquiries/Unwanted Certificates Co-ordinator/ Website Co-ordinator

George W Hiley membersinterests@doncasterfhs.co.uk/
unwantedcertificates@doncasterfhs.co.uk
webadmin@doncasterfhs.co.uk

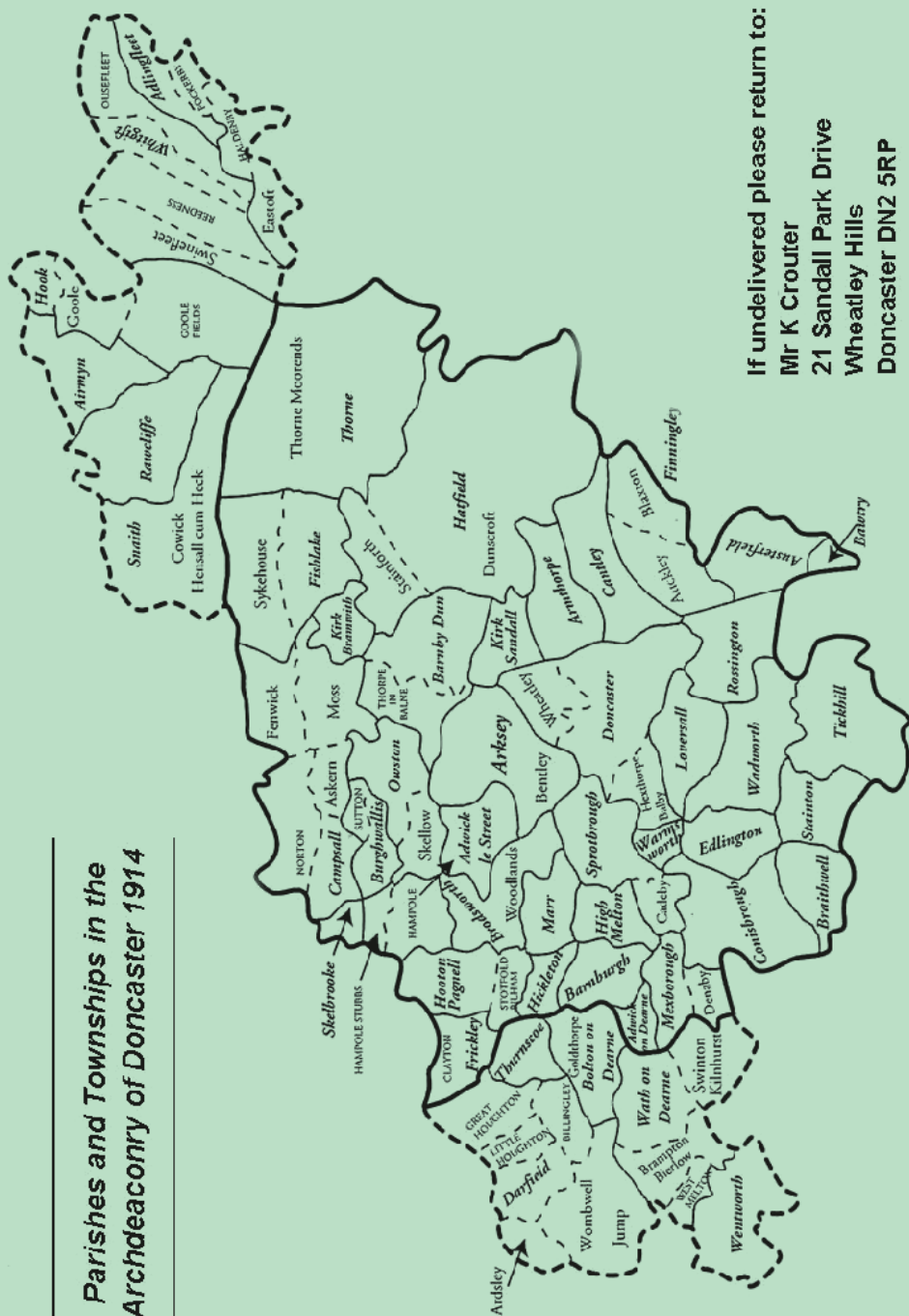
Vacancies

- Vice Chairman
- Committee Member
- Fairs Co-ordinator
- Bookstall Co-ordinator

Please contact the Chairman if you are interested in undertaking any of the above roles.

chairman@doncasterfhs.co.uk

***Please do not telephone Committee Members
and Volunteers after 9.00pm***



If undelivered please return to:
Mr K Crouter
21 Sandall Park Drive
Wheatley Hills
Doncaster DN2 5RP