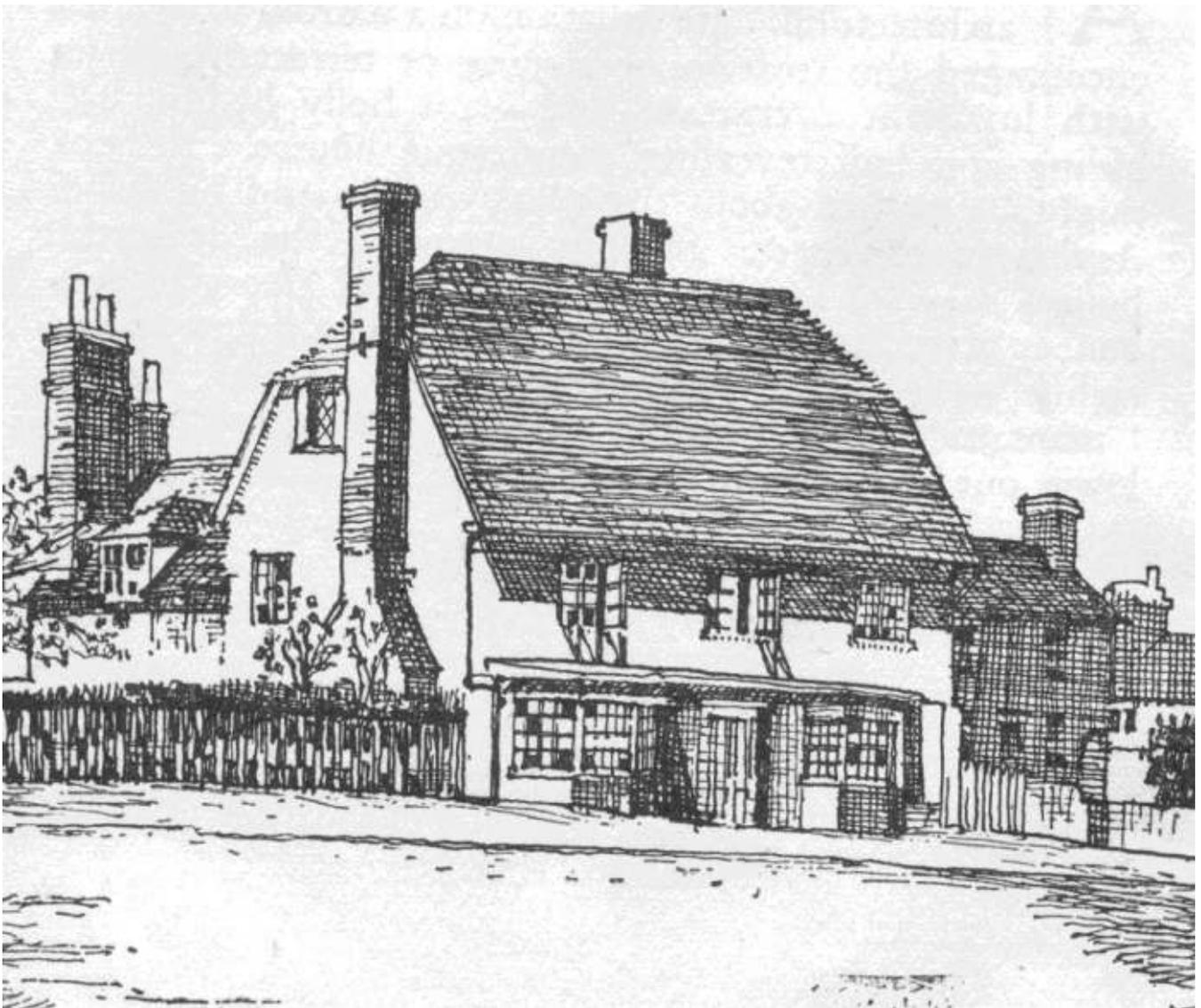


**Bedfordshire  
Family History Society  
Journal**

**Vol 23 No 4 Dec 2021**



Old School House at Lidlington

**BEDFORDSHIRE  
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

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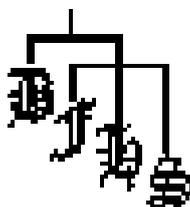
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**BEDFORDSHIRE  
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY  
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## BEGINNERS WORKSHOPS

BFHS are pleased to announce that we will be offering a 4 week programme of beginners workshops in the new year. The sessions will look to introduce new and inexperienced family historians to aspects and techniques of research which should enable them to trace their ancestry back to the early-mid 1800s covering around four or five generations based on English and Welsh research.

The programme will be covering the following topics with plenty of opportunity to learn about this fascinating and sometimes compulsive subject:

### **Week 1: – Thursday 10 February 2022**

- How to get the best from your research
- Visiting and using archives and record offices
- The value of your family archive and family resources
- Research from your front room - free and subscription family history websites
- Research techniques to locate the first few generations of your ancestry

### **Week 2: Thursday 17 February 2022**

- Birth, Marriage and Death certificates
- Census returns and the 1939 Register
- Using Anglican parish registers

### **Week 3: Thursday 24 February 2022**

- Nonconformist records
- The importance of locating wills and probate records.
- Researching using newspapers
- The value of maps and gazetteers
- Directories, rate books & electoral registers
- Mid - Late 19th and 20th-century military and naval records

### **Week 4: Thursday 3 March 2022**

- Records of the workhouse system and associated poor law records.
- Education, court and employment records
- Records generated by an ancestor after death.
- Locating an ancestor who moved and emigrated.
- Tips for overcoming research challenges and brick walls. “Thinking outside the box”

All sessions will be delivered via Zoom from 7 pm to circa 8:30 pm on each evening. Attendees should aim to attend all four sessions to gain the full benefit from them. Places at the sessions are free of charge but limited to 20 members per session. If you are interested in attending please contact Mark Tresidder by email at [chairman@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:chairman@bfhs.org.uk).

Please see next page for news on **Brickwall** workshops. □

## BRICKWALLS IN YOUR RESEARCH

We are planning to hold a further workshop over Zoom next year (date to be confirmed) to assist members in resolving any brickwalls in their research. To help us in planning and preparing for this session please send Mary Wooldridge at [research@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:research@bfhs.org.uk) details of your brick wall or burning question. We feel that being able to investigate and formulate answers in advance will allow us to best prepare for running a workshop for you.

## BFHS AGM REPORTS

The BFHS Annual General Meeting was held via Zoom on Friday 4 June. Reports to the AGM, including Minutes of the 43rd AGM held on 9 October 2020, and the Annual Report and Financial Statements, can be found in the Members Portal of the BFHS website, [bfhs.org.uk](http://bfhs.org.uk).

If you are unable to access the BFHS website, you can request a paper copy of the AGM reports by writing to BFHS (AGM REPORTS), PO Box 214, BEDFORD, MK41 8WB. Enclosing a large self-addressed envelope would be much appreciated.

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND PRICES FOR 2022

The UK Royal Mail have harmonised their overseas postage zones and to take account of this we are simplifying our membership categories for 2022 as shown in the renewal insert and inside back page of the journal. There are no changes for UK members or any members taking the journal via email in PDF format.

For worldwide (outside Europe) members taking the printed journal, the price is £18. This is actually a reduction in price for members living in Australia and New Zealand.

For members living in Europe, but outside the UK, taking the printed journal, the price remains at £14.

The printed journal is sent by 2nd class mail in the UK and by International Standard mail outside the UK. We are no longer offering worldwide economy mail.

We encourage members to take the journal by PDF if suitable for you.

We hope that members taking the printed journal like the introduction of some pages being printed in colour. The PDF is always in full colour.

Please note that the membership runs from 1st January to 31st December each year regardless of your joining/renewal date.

If paying by bank transfer please remember to put your name and membership number in the reference.

## THE PHOEBE STORY

*Eileen E Martin*

When I was a child in the 40s we often used to play “guessing a girl’s name”. My mother defeated us once with a name beginning with ‘P’. It was Phoebe - then highly unfashionable. My mother told us she had a great aunt Phoebe.

Then a few years ago I started on my family history and I noticed my mother’s great aunt, Phoebe, daughter of William and Abigail CATTERILL baptised in Pirton, Herts, in 1819 and dead some years before my mother’s birth. As I gradually progressed on that line I saw that each generation had a Phoebe: one the daughter of Thomas and Catherine Catterill baptised in 1776 in Pirton, another Phoebe the daughter of Thomas and Dinah Catterill also baptised in Pirton 1791. Phoebe was definitely a Catterill name. After great aunt Phoebe, there seemed to be no more.

By then I was researching the line of Catherine HAWKINS, who married Thomas Catterill. She had a sister Phoebe, baptised in Streatley, Beds, in the 1740s. So Phoebe was a Hawkins name. But the Hawkins yielded no further Phoebes - instead they appeared on the female side of the DEACONS. Alexander Deacon, a farmer of Bramingham, Luton, and his wife Catherine, nee FREEMAN, called their eldest child Phoebe. She was christened at St Mary’s, Luton, in the early 1700s.

Of course, I had no particular interest in the name Phoebe (or Phebe). It was just something I noted as I was following the various lines and it was not until I reached Catherine Freeman that curiosity was really aroused. She and Alexander Deacon married in Luton in 1709 and I wanted to find Catherine’s parents.

The Luton transcripts gave a baptism in 1680 of a Catherine, Daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Freeman. There were no other suitable Catherines, this one had not died in childhood and I decided she was mine. Thomas and Elizabeth had also had a son David (an unusual name for then) in 1678. I found a marriage, that of a Thomas Freeman to Elizabeth CAPON in 1677, and felt quite satisfied.

I then turned my attention to wills. The Freemans were yeoman farmers of Biscot and Legrave, and there were many of them. Several had obligingly left wills - one was that of a widow Phebe Freeman, made in 1729. It was quite detailed and among the bequests was one to “her daughter Catherine, wife of Alexander Deacon, one guinea”. So I got out my family tree, crossed off Elizabeth Capon’s name and inserted Phebe’s. I found Thomas’s will, made in 1717, in which he too left a bequest to Catherine, among his other children, the residue to Phebe. She was buried in 1731 and is described in Luton registers as ‘rich’.

I thought I would like to know who Phebe was, so I searched the transcript once more without success. I could not find a marriage for Thomas and Phebe, nor could I find a baptism for their daughter Catherine. What I did notice, on closer reading of the registers, was that on 14 March 1686 one Elizabeth Freeman was buried. Then in April 1689 a Thomas Freeman was married to...unfortunately blank...in the records. Elizabeth must have been Thomas’s first wife and he presumably married Phoebe in 1689. Subsequently, Phoebe, John and William, children of Thomas and Phoebe, were baptised.

I was able to look at the original Luton register in Bedford Record Office, but the

blank by Thomas's name in the marriage entry was just a white space. I had hoped I might be able to decipher 'Phoebe' beneath a splodge!

So, I was stuck. I was undecided as to whether Phoebe was the ancestor of all the other Phoebes or not and anyway, I did not know her surname. On the whole, I thought she was my ancestor, but it continued to niggle me.

I looked again at her will and I have now decided that Phoebe was a step-mother to my Catherine. The evidence seems clear on further study. She leaves her message, cottage tenement, and all her personal things, her clothes, her household goods to her daughter Phoebe and it is her son William who has her wedding ring, the feather bed and her residue of the estate. Her 'son' David receives a guinea, as does his wife and children. Her 'grandchildren' are all remembered, but her daughter Phoebe's children have 20 guineas each and Catherine's children have the same amount between them.

Perhaps in the 1760s the term 'stepchild' was not generally applied. Perhaps she was a good stepmother? I shall never know. Nor shall I know why Catherine called her first daughter Phoebe after her stepmother and her second daughter after her own mother Elizabeth Capon. Perhaps she hoped that the compliment would inspire her rich stepmother to look favourably on them.

Anyway, I feel as convinced as possible that the name Phoebe that remained in the family for so many generations came from a life whose name I do not know, and does not constitute a blood line at all. It is a pleasing thought though that the name Elizabeth (of Elizabeth Capon) has lasted longer. It was my mother's second name and mine and my daughter's. □

## **THE FISHERS OF GRAVENHURST AND RELATED MEMORIES**

*Barry Guy*

Having recently looked again at the *Journals* for December 2020 and March 2021 I was especially interested in the excellent articles written by Colin West about Gravenhurst.

My personal interest concerns Henry George FISHER and his family. Henry (1909 - 1971) was my uncle who had married my aunt, Hylda Violet Louise GILBERT (nee GUY) at Gravenhurst Methodist Church in 1944. She had previously been married to Frederick Charles Gilbert, that marriage having been at Mount Tabor Methodist Church on 31 May 1936. Sadly, Fred had been killed during an air-raid at Vauxhall Motors on 30 August 1940. Hylda's mother, my grandmother, Jennie (formerly Jane) Guy was also killed in the same raid when a bomb dropped on her newsagents shop in Seymour Road, Luton. So Hylda suffered a double bereavement on that tragic day. Fortunately, she eventually found happiness again with Henry Fisher.

I had some useful feedback from the Luton Family History Facebook group regarding the big air-raid mentioned above. I wondered if there are other accounts regarding that particular day in the town? My father, Reg Guy, was an ARP Warden at that time and was on duty at the other end of St Paul's Road where we lived when a bomb dropped on a house in Tennyson Road, next to the school. I am sorry I do not have personal recollections of it, being only two years old at the time - I had been born in May 1938.

I have happy memories of Hylda and Henry (Hylda was my father's sister who was

actually born in Witney, Oxfordshire, the area their parents were from going back several generations). I spent a couple of short holidays with them at their home in Gravenhurst in the late 1940s during my time at Tennyson Road Junior School, Luton. I remember making friends with a number of the children in the village although I cannot remember their names - possibly Mary and Joan were two that come to mind, but I may have that completely wrong! Certainly, on my arrival having just been shown 'my' room, a knock at the door announced two arrivals who greeted Hylde with "Hello Aunty Hylde, can Barry come out and play with us all?" I did get the impression they were related somehow, maybe through Uncle Henry.

Another memory was Henry's little Morris 8 car with running boards and seemingly luminous indicators, although he still needed to give hand-signals when turning or slowing down, etc.

At various times during the year Henry drove one of REDMAN's lorries and on at least one occasion he took me with him on a delivery round. Probably would not be allowed today!

Another interest of Henry's was Brass Banding. As far as I recall, I do not think I ever went to listen, but I have a feeling that it could well have been the Stotfold Band that he played with.

On a personal note, following an Ancestry DNA test, I have discovered a number of 'brick walls'. Although concerning my father's ancestors, I do not believe these affect any of the above details as the problems seem to relate to earlier generations. At the moment, it looks fairly sound at least back to my great-grandfather who was born in 1850.

My mother's side is, it seems, more straight forward, she being the daughter of William BURGESS, 1868 - 1949. He, with his brother, started the firm of Burgess Bros, Iron Founders, in Albert Road, Luton, in the late 1800s, but the firm is no longer in existence. My mother had an older sister called Grace who died in 1921 at the early age of 23, I was hoping to find something about Grace but so far there is only a very little. I know she was a very accomplished pianist.

My maternal grandmother (who married William Burgess above) was born in Luton in 1867 and her name was Carrie EUINTON. Other names in her family were PRUDDEN and GOODCHILD and some of these were born in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, but they all come together in Bedfordshire. Incidentally, the Burgess family came to Luton from Leicester in about the 1840s.

I would be interested to hear from anyone who has any more information on the Fisher, Burgess and Euinton families, especially Grace Burgess. I can be contacted at [barryguyirchester@virginmedia.com](mailto:barryguyirchester@virginmedia.com).

## A SPRING THRESHING - BEDFORDSHIRES CAUGHT NAPPING

Robin Schäfer, Historical Editor, Iron Cross Magazine

*Editor's Note: Early this year, an article appeared in some of the national press regarding pictures of WWI Bedfordshire Regiment POWs discovered by Robin Schäfer. Whilst the names of the captured soldiers are known, only one can be identified in the photographs. Robin was making a plea for relatives to get in contact to help identify them and understand what happened to them after the war ([robin.schaefer@warnersgroup.co.uk](mailto:robin.schaefer@warnersgroup.co.uk)). Robin has kindly provided further details of the soldiers pictured, and the photographs are reproduced courtesy of Dawn Monks, Zeitgeist Tours Ltd, Bedford. Mary Wooldridge, ([research@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:research@bfhs.org.uk)) has discovered further details of one of the soldiers and these follow this article.*

On 22 June 1917, German troops in Northern France near the town of Hulluch, launched a trench raid on the British trenches opposite them. While trench raids were common occurrences in trench warfare, this particular raid was unusual. The aftermath of the raid, which was conducted by soldiers of the German 72th Infantry Regiment, was recorded with a camera. Two photos were shot, one of them showing the entire German raiding party posing with two of their British prisoners and another, with the entire complement of British prisoners as the main subject.



The heavily armed raiders after their return, posing with two of the British prisoners.



Some of the raiders and a few other German soldiers pose with 10 of the prisoners directly after the raid.

The trench raid of 22 June 1917 is described and summarised briefly in the regimental history of the 72th Infantry Regiment (4th Thuringian):

*“On 22 June, a patrol under command of Leutnants R Heide and Störel of 11th company, both of whom were lightly wounded, conducted a successful operation named ‘Spring Threshing’. Major Zander had thoroughly planned the operation over the course of several days. It was launched against the southern part of the enemy trench system opposite us, with support of heavy artillery and mortar fire which completely suppressed the foe. The well furnished English trench was destroyed while dugouts and concrete reinforced observation and machine gun positions were destroyed by the sapper-miner squad of the company. Inside the enemy trench, one officer and 5 men were killed in close combat, while 12 to 15 others were identified to have been killed by the artillery barrage. In the close-in fighting inside the enemy trench, 11 men of the 8th Bedfordshire Regiment were taken prisoner and numerous spoils were captured. In addition to the officers, Vizefeldwebel Kühnlenz (2nd company) and Schröder (12th company) as well as Unteroffizier Stollerz (4th company) distinguished themselves. The Drummer Brinkmann of 4th company who, after getting permission from his platoon leader, voluntarily joined one of the assault squads, returned with a wounded English prisoner who he carried on his back! Our losses were two men killed, both of which were recovered and 12 men wounded. Again the men had proven that the old, victorious offensive spirit within them was still alive!”*

The war diary of 8th Bedfordshire Regiment keeps silent about the raid and simply records on 22 June:

*“In trenches. Enemy made much use of his trench mortars on right coy. His aircraft active but none crossed our line. Casualties 5 O.R. killed, 7 O.R. wounded, 12 O.R. missing. 2/Lt H J WELLER wounded.”*

**Editor’s note:** For those unfamiliar with military jargon ‘coy’ is a Company of soldiers, ‘O. R.’ is other ranks, ‘2/Lt’ is Second Lieutenant in this context.

In the picture above, the prisoner on the right, with soft cap with missing cap badge, looks very much like George BUGGS from Luton. One prisoner seems to be missing on this photo, and was most probably the wounded man who was carried back by Drummer Brinkmann, and was not able to stand to have his photo taken.

The following were captured:

Buggs, George: b 1895, d 7 June 1965, 52 North Street, Luton (22845) - held in Dülmen/Sythen POW camp.

BURSLEM, Frank: b 31 July 1893 in Manchester, lived in Birmingham - held in Grafenwöhr camp. (203316)

CHINERY, Hazel Phillip: b 1893, from Bulmer, Essex (40100) - held in Dülmen/Sythen and Parchim POW camps.

COLGAN, L C: Hertford (33255)

GEESON, Arthur Edward: b 1884, Gt Bercham Kings Lynn, Norfolk (29014) - held Dülmen/Sythen POW Camp.

GIPP, William Arthur: West Row, Mildenhall (40262)

GOUDE, Arthur William: b 17 August 1885, Northampton (31021) - held in Dülmen/Sythen POW camp.

GRANT, Corporal Leonard F: b 8 October 1892 in Upper Warlingham, Woodford Green (33185)

Served as Surname: Grant

Served as First names: Leonard Frederick

Theatres of War: Western Europe :1

First names: Leonard Frederick

Mother: Fanny Grant

Age On: 23

Jobs: United Kingdom Civil Servant Inland Revenue

Description: Fair Fair

Measurements: 5 4 32 2

Military Events Sickness and wounds: Taken from

Military Events Sickness and wounds: Taken from ‘Casualty Form - Active Service’ Form B103 Adm: to 7 Con Depot same day 58 Casualty Clearing Station PUO

Father: William Grant

Military Events Sickness and wounds: Taken from ‘Casualty Form - Active Service’ Form B103 7 Con Depot P U O

Religion: Anglican - Church of Eng, Irl, Wales or other

Military Events Sickness and wounds: Taken from ‘Casualty Form -

Active Service' Form B103 Adm at Casualty Clearing Station same day  
18 Field Ambulance PUO

Addresses: 235 Prospect Road, Woodford Green United Kingdom Parents

GREGORY, A E: Barton (22669)

MATTHAMS, Percy: b 16 July 1894 in Chelmsford (33247)

ROSE, L Cpl. Albert Raymond: b 23 May 1896 Far Cotton, Northampton  
(33427)

*Editor's note: 'L Cpl' is Lance Corporal and 'PUO' is most likely pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin.* □

## A SPRING THRESHING - MORE ABOUT GEORGE BUGGS

Mary Wooldridge

George Buggs, described as an errand boy at a cardboard factory in the 1911 Census, enlisted on 25 October 1915, at the age of 20 and went to France in April 1916. His married brother, Will, died from wounds sustained in the battle of the Somme in 1916, leaving a widow and a child at 104 Chapel Street, Luton.

Private George Buggs, aged 21, was interned at Dulmen in Westphalia but happily survived the war and was repatriated to return to his home at 52 North Street, Luton. He was registered as an absent voter in 1918 but was shown as at home when the electoral roll was compiled in May 1919.



Later in 1919 George was in trouble.

Assizes records, courtesy of Mr John GILLESPIE, grandson of Insp Fred JANES ([worldwar1luton.com](http://worldwar1luton.com)) show:

*George Buggs, aged 24, box maker, of 52 North Street, Luton, was charged with: "On the 19 July 1919, together with divers other persons whose names are unknown to the number of at least one thousand, then and there being riotously and tumultuously assembled together to the disturbance of the public peace, feloniously did unlawfully and with force begin to demolish and destroy a certain building to wit a shop belonging to Messrs S FARMER & Company, contrary to Section 11 of the Malicious Damage Act."*

He first appeared before magistrates in Luton on 25 July 1919, and was remanded in custody:

*"Yes, I was there," said George Buggs when arrested by Sergeant CLARKE. "I was coming down Wellington Street at 9.30. I went straight down Bute Street, and went straight home and don't know anything about this business."*

Chief Constable GRIFFIN said this was one case in which a civilian witness was available.

In a subsequent court appearance on 31 July, Charles PEARSE, a foreman employed by Farmer's, described the attack by the crowd on his firm's shop and said that pianos were dragged out, one being taken into George Street, one into Manchester Street and another into Bute Street. One was worth £20, another £63 and a third £60.

Witness said he tried to persuade the people to leave the shop, and some did so, his efforts being assisted by persons among the crowd. He saw some people leave the firm's office - among whom he recognised the prisoner, who shouted:

*"Now for the \*\*\*\* safe!"*

Witness placed his hand on prisoner's shoulder and said:

*"George, get out of here! You've done enough trouble for one night."*

Prisoner turned, had a good look at witness, and *"away he went"*. Sgt Arthur Clarke said that Buggs, when charged, replied:

*"Yes, I was there."*

Buggs was allowed bail "in £20 and his father in £10" (sic).

Before Judge GREER at the Beds Assizes in October, Buggs said he joined the Army in 1914 and was a prisoner in Germany for 18 months (from June 1917). He said he never entered Farmer's shop as alleged, or any other shop, and he did not do anything about bringing out a safe. He was watching the fire for about three quarters of an hour, but he never went into Farmer's.

Cross-examined, he said there was a lot of fighting and throwing going on, but he did not see pianos brought out into the street. As far as he could recollect, he had never been into Farmer's shop in his life. Mr F WEBB, blockmaker gave the prisoner an excellent character (reference).

Pointing out that the case of George Buggs turned largely on his identification by a solitary witness as being inside Messrs Farmer's shop and saying, *"Now for the safe,"* the Judge said it was not always safe to trust to the casual glance of even an honest, reliable person.

*"My brother one day ran after a man, addressed him by name, and asked him what he was doing in that street,"* said the Judge. *"Then he found it was another man altogether."*

Buggs was found not guilty on all counts, and his Lordship said to prisoner:

*"You have had the benefit of the doubt. Go away and look after yourself."*

George wed Beatrice NORTHWOOD in Luton in 1926 and lived his whole married life at 18 Elizabeth Street. In 1939 George was aged 44, married to Beatrice who was 8 years older than him. George was working as a woodworker using a circle saw. He died in the Luton & Dunstable Hospital on 7 June 1965, at the age of 70. He was living at 18 Elizabeth Street, Luton. Probate was granted at Oxford on the 27 January 1966 to Margaret Ethel WRIGHT, married woman, £3019. □

## OUR JOHN BRIMLEY (1817-?)

*Lesley Brimley*

In the December 2020 edition of the BFHS magazine, Dr Colin CHAPMAN mentioned that at least one BRIMLEY had been in Bedford Gaol. Following further research he writes in greater depth in the June edition of the magazine about several Brimley men who had been gaoled in the early 19th century for various misdemeanours. I thought readers might be interested in further details on one of them, who is a part of our family tree.

John Brimley was born in 1817 in Harrowden the son of John (1786-1864) and Elizabeth Brimley (1789-1860) (nee ROWNEY) and was one of at least 10 children, although not all survived to adulthood. On various censuses he states he is an Ag Lab or Gardener and he married Peecey OSBORN, the daughter of John and Susannah Osborn at St Paul's Church, Bedford on 21 January 1839. She had been born in Thurleigh, Bedfordshire in 1818.

John and Peecey had thirteen children between March 1840 and March 1863, six sons and seven daughters and it appears that all survived to adulthood. They were:

Joseph (1840-1916) married Jane MILLER (1842-1914); he was a stalwart of Roxton and both are buried in Roxton Churchyard. They had 8 children.

Sarah (1842-1917) married Samuel COOPER (1833-1916). Remained in the Bedford area. They had 6 children.

Fanney (1843-1867) never married and died in Bedford.

Mary (1845-?) married late in life to Isaac LANCASTER (1812-1887) who was a widower; there were no children of this marriage.

Susannah (1847-1919) married George Start SOPER (1847-1922) and lived her adult life in London and is buried in St Pancras Cemetery. They had 3 children.

John (1849-1925) married Hephzibah Lydia Soper (1845-1934) a spinster with a 7 year old daughter. There were no children of this marriage. (George and Hephzibah were siblings)

Elizabeth (1851-1894) never married but went to Australia in 1880 and had a son in 1882. She died in Sydney. My husband and I visited some of her descendants on a visit to Sydney in 1992, they were charming and delighted to learn about the family of whom they knew so little.

Samuel (1852-1933) married Emily FORSTER (1851-1907). Lived his whole life in Bedford and had many hobbies. He sold honey at the market, where he died suddenly and the newspaper report states he was the son of Police Constable E Brimley. As my husband's family descend from Samuel, I spent a lot of time looking for P C Brimley pre-internet, only to find Peecey with her family on a census in Bedford Record Office! He and Emily are both buried in Foster Hill Road, Cemetery. They had 7 children.

William (1854-?) married Margaret JACKSON (nee RITSON) a widow (1840-1908). They had a son John in 1877. John was left a clock in Peecey's will - did this mean William was dead or had he disappeared?

Jabez (1856-1939) married Elizabeth Sophia YEO (1860-1938). Spent his adult life in the London and Surrey areas. There were 7 children, all registered as having been born in Wandsworth.

Peecey Amey (1859-1927) married George REYNOLDS (1860-1923); he was a Metropolitan Police Inspector. There were 2 children.

Mercy Jane (1860-1931) married John Thomas JONES (1851-1914) and spent most of her adult life in Plumstead. They had 2 children.

Ebenezer (1863-1946) married Lucy Ellen Cooper (1861-1944) and they spent all their lives in the Bedford area. They had 5 children, the son dying young.

John's later life is a mystery as he appears to drop off the plot completely. He appears on the 1861 Census but I have been unable to find him on any other subsequent ones and in 1871 Peecey says she is married, but the 'Head' of the household. In 1881 she is at 36 Castle Lane, Bedford and says she is a widow and in 1891 she is at Hawes Court, Harpur Street. Peecey died on 21 January 1898 and is buried in Bedford Cemetery, as are several other Brimleys. Her headstone has the following inscriptions, "In Loving Memory of our Dear Mother, Peecey Brimley, who after a life of toil entered into rest 21 January 1898 in her 80th year" and "Art thou weary, art thou languid art thou sore distressed" and "Come to me saith one and coming be at rest". No mention of John and rather indicating she had a tough life.

I would love to have closure on John but all the leads I have followed go nowhere!

As an aside, I started researching the Brimleys in 1987 pre-internet and sat in the library in Plymouth, Devon, going through the telephone directories and writing down every Brimley I could find in the UK. There were less than 100 and over time I wrote to a number of them and built up trees based on what my father-in-law had known. I also spent quite a number of hours in the library of the Church of Latter Day Saints in Plymouth and it was on one of these visits that I saw a request from a Colin Chapman asking for anyone with Brimley connections to contact him. At that stage I had no idea who Colin Chapman was. I was just amazed that someone was asking about the name Brimley as we seldom encounter a Brimley anywhere! I still have his reply in my file suggesting if I get further with my research he may be able to help. I did get further and he did send me some trees. Over 30 years later, there are a few more Brimleys now and I am always keen to follow them up and to see if they are part of our tree! □

## REMINDER

The CLOSING DATE for articles to be published in the  
March 2022 *Journal* is **31 January 2022**.  
(Articles submitted near the closing date may not  
be published until the following Journal)

## LIBRARY NEWS

John Partridge, Librarian

### Beds FHS Facebook page

In the September 2021 journal I reported that we had 1016 ‘likes’ as at 21 July 2021. We continue to make good progress and attract more people and now have 1039 ‘likes’ and 1200 followers as at 21 Oct 2021. If you have a quick query or anything of interest regarding your Bedfordshire ancestors then why not message us or drop us a Visitors Post and we will attempt to respond to you with an answer.

### Articles in Recent Journals

*Finding DILLINGHAM.* In the June 2021 edition of Ancestor, the quarterly journal of The Genealogical Society of Victoria Inc. (Australia) is an article by Natalie Lonsdale who draws on letters sent to his family back home, and her own research, to trace the journey of a young convict from his native Bedfordshire to Tasmania, and later to the Victorian goldfields. This is Richard Dillingham of Flitwick who was found guilty of housebreaking and shipped off to Van Diemen’s Land in 1831. What is interesting is this is the same chap who was the subject of a talk we had in Jan 2020 ‘*A Convict in the Family*’ given by Margaret Butt.

### Returning Borrowed Books/Journals

With the return of physical members’ meetings at the school as from 7 January 2022, can I remind members to seek out those borrowed books/journals from before the ‘lockdown’ last March and return them at the first meeting they attend next year. I will not be available for the first meeting so the library may not be in place, but arrangements will be made to collect any returned items. □

## THE FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION

The Old School House at Lidlington has an interesting history. The first known fact is that long ago it was an inn, as witness the iron ring at the top of the well worn cellar steps where the beer barrels were hauled up and down. Later it became a school house for boarders, chiefly the sons of farmers and well-to-do middle-class people. The actual school building, now pulled down, stood on what is now the vegetable plot behind the house. There were two successive masters named Batchelor who owned the school in the latter half of the eighteenth century. During this time one of the two large front rooms was still being used as a public house until the coming of a Mr Wright from London, who bought the property and greatly raised the prestige of the school. He had as many as a hundred boarders, about half of whom were London boys. He built a row of houses (just visible on the right of the drawing) to serve as dormitories for the boys, with servants’ offices on the ground floor. There were two generations of Wrights, schoolmasters, followed by a Mr Miller, who gave up the school when it became the property of the Duke of Bedford, and took Flying Horse Farm at the Turnpike, Ridgmont, where his great-grandson still lives. Since 1866, the old house has been the dwelling of a succession of six head teachers of the village school.

This illustration and text are taken from ‘*Our Heritage: A Bedfordshire Sketch Book*’ drawings by G Alan Fortescue FRIBA, notes by ‘*Touchstone*’, published 1943. □

## THE FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION AS IT IS TODAY Old School House or the Old School House

*Paul Woodcraft*

That is the question?

After 3 visits to Lidlington I came back with a group of photographs of 'The Old School House', the first photo below.



I was happy that this was a current shot of our *Journal* cover despite not looking much like the sketch. I concluded that much building work had been done.



After research by Jan Darts, our *Journal* Co-ordinator, I paid a fourth visit and found the house in the photo to the left. Clearly the subject of our *Journal* cover.

So 'Old School House' or 'The Old School House'? You need to read the write up about the cover and then one can see how we end up with two Old School Houses. Photo number one, the village school, became a private house and was named 'The Old School House'.

Photo number two, the sketch on the *Journal* cover, was a private school house for boarders and then became a dwelling house for head teachers of the village school. Known now as just number 10, but is 'Old School House'. □

## OUR RETURN TO MARK RUTHERFORD SCHOOL

We are pleased to announce that the Friday night meetings of the BFHS will return to Mark Rutherford School with the talk by Richard Morgan on 7 January. The meetings offer members instructive, interesting and often amusing talks on subjects that fascinate all interested in history and genealogy in general, and are usually particularly relevant to those with a Bedfordshire heritage. We look forward to seeing you in person again.

Returning to the school is subject to whatever COVID restrictions may be in place at the time and, of course, the weather!

**Please do not attend the meeting if you have a cough, fever, or other COVID symptoms.**

When attending, please be mindful and respectful of others and occupy seats with plenty of spaces. On entering and leaving, please maintain some social distancing out of courtesy to others. Although it is not be a legal requirement to wear a face covering, the government advice and encouragement is that we wear them in indoor spaces where we gather with others who are not in our own household. Hand sanitisers will be available. Additional ventilation of the venue may be required so wrap up warm!

Currently, talks held at the school will not be live streamed, but available later on the website in the members' portal, subject to approval by the speaker. Live streaming of the talks is under investigation because this has proved to be popular over the last 18 months and has allowed members from around the globe to join in.

The address of the venue is Mark Rutherford School, Wentworth Drive, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 8PX.



## WHY NOT WRITE SOMETHING FOR THE JOURNAL?

We are always on the lookout for contributions to the *Journal*, any size, short or long. To give you some idea, a *Journal* page takes around 450 words to fill. We would also welcome items shorter than a page. No need to worry if you are not used to writing, we are here to help. Seeing your own work in print can feel like a real achievement and others will appreciate your effort. Simply writing down your 'brick wall' can help you see the problem more clearly and, you never know, someone reading it may be able to help you move forward. If you need ideas to get you going or would like to discuss your ideas, please send an email to [journal@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:journal@bfhs.org.uk).



## PROGRAMME

**All talks are scheduled to take place at Mark Rutherford School (see page 16 for details). Doors open at 7 pm with the talks starting at 7.30 pm.**

### **The Brooks Family of Flitwick Manor Richard Morgan Friday 7 January 2022**



Richard Morgan has been researching his BROOKS and other Bedfordshire ancestors for several decades. He has published *The Diary of a Bedfordshire Squire* BHRS Vol 66, 1987, *The Diary of an Indian Cavalry Officer: John Hatfield Brooks 1843-1863*, Pagoda Tree Press 2003, and *Life Runneth as the Brooks: The Brooks Family in Bedfordshire*, Pagoda Tree Press 2011. He has also written *Henry John Sylvester Stannard 1871-1951*, Beds Local History Association 2018, and contributes to *History in Bedfordshire* and

*Family Tree*.

The Brooks family rose from humble origins to own Flitwick Manor from 1789-1934. In that time, they won and lost a fortune, played a prominent part in Bedfordshire, pioneered horticulture, and left copious letters and diaries chronicling their lives.

### **Life in Nelsons Navy Major Alan Gilmore MBE, BA(Hons), ACII, AIL Friday 4 February 2022**



A factual talk detailing the daily lives of the lives of the officers and men in the Royal Navy during the period 1750 to 1815. Includes information on pay, conditions, food, disease, punishments and battles. This talk will probably change any preconceptions you may have had.

I was born in 1942 and after winning a scholarship was educated at public school before joining the Army under their Apprenticeship scheme. After serving 12 months in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers I was recruited in 1960 by Military Intelligence. After completing an intensive 9 months training programme I served as a Field Officer in the Middle East, Russia and Cuba.

I left the service in 1971 and set up my own charter airline business and successfully ran this for a number of years until the sharp rise in oil prices compelled me to change careers. Moving into the insurance sector as an insurance Claims Investigator, I worked across the UK, West Indies, Yemen and Kuwait until retirement.

I hold degrees in Arabic and Russian, am fluent in 12 languages and competent in a

## PROGRAMME (cont'd)

further 8. I have previously held a private pilot's licence, have had two books published and was once nominated for the British Olympics Pistol Team. With an interest in amateur dramatics, singing and stand-up comedy I now spend my retirement giving talks about my life experiences and enjoy spending time with my wife traveling the world one cruise at a time.

### **The Admiral and His Mistress – Horatio and Emma David Fowler Friday 4 March 2022**



Retired Chartered Civil Engineer, Bedford Tour Guide, whose family history goes back for at least 190 years around Bedford.

We all know about Horatio Nelson, but the rise of Emma from a blacksmith's daughter, to a lady setting the style in London and even on the continent was astonishing. She must have been one hell of a character!

*The 'APRIL' talk is scheduled for March because of the timing of Easter!*

### **My Ancestor Was A Liar Dave Annal Friday 25 March 2022**



Dave Annal is a professional researcher with over 40 years' experience. He is a former Principal Family History Specialist with the National Archives and he worked at the Family Records Centre for many years. In 2019 he was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Genealogists. Dave has written a number of family history books including the bestselling beginner's guide *Easy Family History* and *Pen & Sword's Birth, Marriage & Death Records* (with Audrey Collins) and, with Peter Christian, he is the co-author of *Census: the Family Historian's Guide*. He is also a regular contributor to *Family Tree Magazine* where he runs the Family Tree Academy. Dave is a popular speaker on the

family history circuit and has spoken at a number of major events including *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* and *Rootstech*, as well as giving regular talks to family history groups.

Dave has been researching his own family history since the mid-1970s and he hasn't finished yet!

Sifting through the evidence to find the truth (or what passes for the truth in the world of genealogy) is a skill which all serious family historians need to develop. The

## PROGRAMME (cont'd)

information left by our ancestors is all-too-frequently misleading, inaccurate or just plain wrong! As we become more experienced, we find that they had any number of reasons to be economical with the truth.

Of course, sometimes our ancestors simply did not know the answer to the questions thrown at them by the clerks, registrars and enumerators. Using real examples, this talk will look at some of the reasons why our ancestors might have lied and offer suggestions on how to recognise their varying degrees of ignorance, half-truths and wilful deception.

### FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE

*Kerr Clement*

*I must stress that this article is my personal experience alone and that the only purpose of the article is that I wish to share this experience for the greater good and learning of the BFHS members. The article is neither promoted nor sponsored by BFHS or Family Tree. It is only one of 4 FH magazines that I subscribe to and thoroughly enjoy each with their own perspective, articles and advice on family history.*

The Family Tree Magazine (FT) for myself, is more than just another family history magazine. For the members who have also joined the Family Tree Study Club (FTSC), set up by the magazine staff for subscribers only, it has become an extended family. I have found that during this lockdown period it has been invaluable in as much as I have increased my basic knowledge, read some very interesting stories, read articles on how to break down brick walls, have a better understanding of DNA and am also following up on the many research tips given in various articles. There are a number of recommended websites, additional reading material or articles given each month

related to articles within that month's issue that are worth following up and broadening your understanding of the subject material.

The FTSC hosts an online meeting each month using Zoom. These have been a tremendous success. The hostess is a Helen Tovey, the FT magazine editor, who has pioneered this Club and is a very knowledgeable lady and very helpful. If you have not used Zoom there are guide notes in the Zoom Talk invitations to members from our Treasurer, Peter Sharp, an excellent guide and very easy to follow. No matter what your skill levels are with software, your efforts will be a success.

Importantly, the FTSC membership is



free to FT subscribers, either in digital or magazine format. The format of the meetings change depending on what the members have chosen and any other events that the Editor, who manages the Club, can arrange. Content suggestions are polled from the participants at the meeting and actually are followed up at subsequent meetings. There have been some tutorials on *Ancestry* and *Find My Past*. Members have given advice and sought guidance from each other and, where some queries have been of interest and unanswerable at the meeting, have been answered at subsequent meetings after some research by the members or the FTSC Staff.

I personally have benefitted from research undertaken on my behalf in trying to track down my father's stepfather, a Mr James CLEMENT, thereby breaking one of my brick walls. The research result was of enough interest to be an article with photos (Mum and Dad) in the FT May issue 2021.

For those military buffs amongst you my Father served with the Seaforth Highlanders in WW2. He was involved in the D-Day Landings and also with a number of Operations amongst them Operation Goodwood and later he was involved in the Battle for Arnhem.

The shield pictured on the previous page was made by one of my Uncles, a Pattern Maker/Joiner, David KELSO, and Dad's badges were mounted on to it, apart from the one badge that was made into a necklace which my Mum is wearing in the photo below. The Tartan pad in the centre is the McKenzie Tartan, the



Tartan for the Seaforth Highlanders. Their home is Fort George which I visited with my Dad before my teens. I remember him looking up the remembrance books to see his comrade in arms that had fallen. I got sent out when he found the right one and warned to behave.

The information from the researcher went beyond the article and into the war service. I am still working on extensions of the information. To have my brick wall resolved and to be included in an article in the FT magazine was a wonderful experience for which I will be eternally grateful. I also greatly appreciated the expert research from FT specialists Mary Evans and Graham Caldwell. Graham is a military researcher and has published, amongst other magazines, articles in the *Armourer* magazine.

Graham's father was also present at D-Day so we exchanged a few interesting emails

There is a vast amount of information available online to FT members, videos, podcasts, stories etc, far too much to list here. I am currently participating in an online DNA course through FT magazine. This is so well presented and the guidance and information from Michelle Leonard is phenomenal.

To open up a new experience you should subscribe to the magazine, join the FTSC and thereby widen your involvement in Family History and have many hours of satisfying research and fun. Winter is coming.

## SUGGESTION BOX

Your committee is continually looking for ways to improve what is offered to members and following the useful responses from the recent Members' Questionnaire, we thought how could we keep the ideas coming.

So, to encourage more feedback from members at meetings we now have a suggestion box. For members who are not able to use the suggestion box we invite you to email us at [bfhs@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:bfhs@bfhs.org.uk).

Your committee appreciates any help, ideas or suggestions that you may have regarding any aspect of the BFHS organisation.

*BFHS Committee*



## 2021 PUBLICATIONS LIST UPDATE

The following Parish Register microfiche are now out of stock:

Amptill (List page 10)

Woburn (List page 11)

## BEDFORDSHIRE HERITAGE TEA TOWELS

The Society has had a supply of Bedfordshire Heritage tea towels printed and these are now being sold to raise funds.

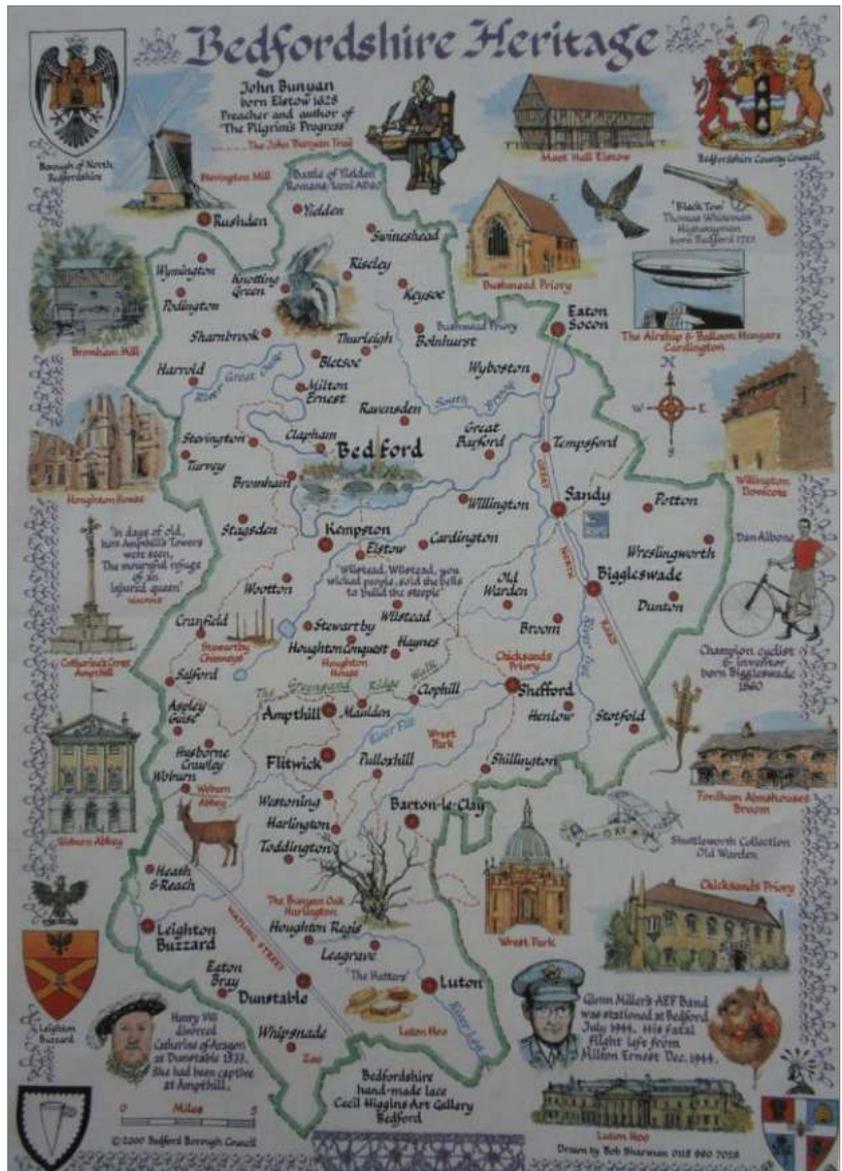
These tea towels are really too nice to use for drying up; they are beautifully colour printed with some famous Bedfordshire landmarks forming a border for the County map. Even if you do not have any Bedfordshire ancestors they make ideal gifts.

They are 100% cotton and at £4.50 each can be obtained from the bookstall at members' meetings, by email to Lynn Manning at:

[secretary@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@bfhs.org.uk),

or by post to Lynn at:

38 Risborough Road, Bedford, MK41 9QW, Tel. 01234 306482.



For UK orders please add postage and packing as follows:

- Up to 2 tea towels add £2.00
- 3 to 6 tea towels add £3.00

For orders from outside the UK please enquire before ordering.

Cheques should be made payable to Bedfordshire Family History Society.

## GIFT AID DECLARATIONS

We would like to remind members that if you have sent us a Gift Aid declaration in the past, we continue to claim Gift Aid on your membership donation each year. We claim 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate, however, if you now pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains tax than the amount of gift aid claimed on all your donations in the tax year you need to advise us accordingly.

If we claim Gift Aid on your donation and you receive your *Journal* by post, then your address label will show the letters 'GA' on the label.

If you receive your *Journal* in pdf format via email and are unsure if we claim Gift Aid on your donation, please email [treasurer@bfh.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@bfh.org.uk) for clarification.

## Membership Subscriptions by Standing Order or Bank Transfer

If you pay your **2022** membership by SO or BT please drop an email to [treasurer@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@bfhs.org.uk) to advise your name, post code, payment method and membership type.  
Your help would be appreciated.

### BEDFORDSHIRE

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Bedfordshire MK41 8JH

England

Tel: (01234) 364956

Email: [colinndavison@gmail.com](mailto:colinndavison@gmail.com)

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## LIFE IN THE 1930S AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

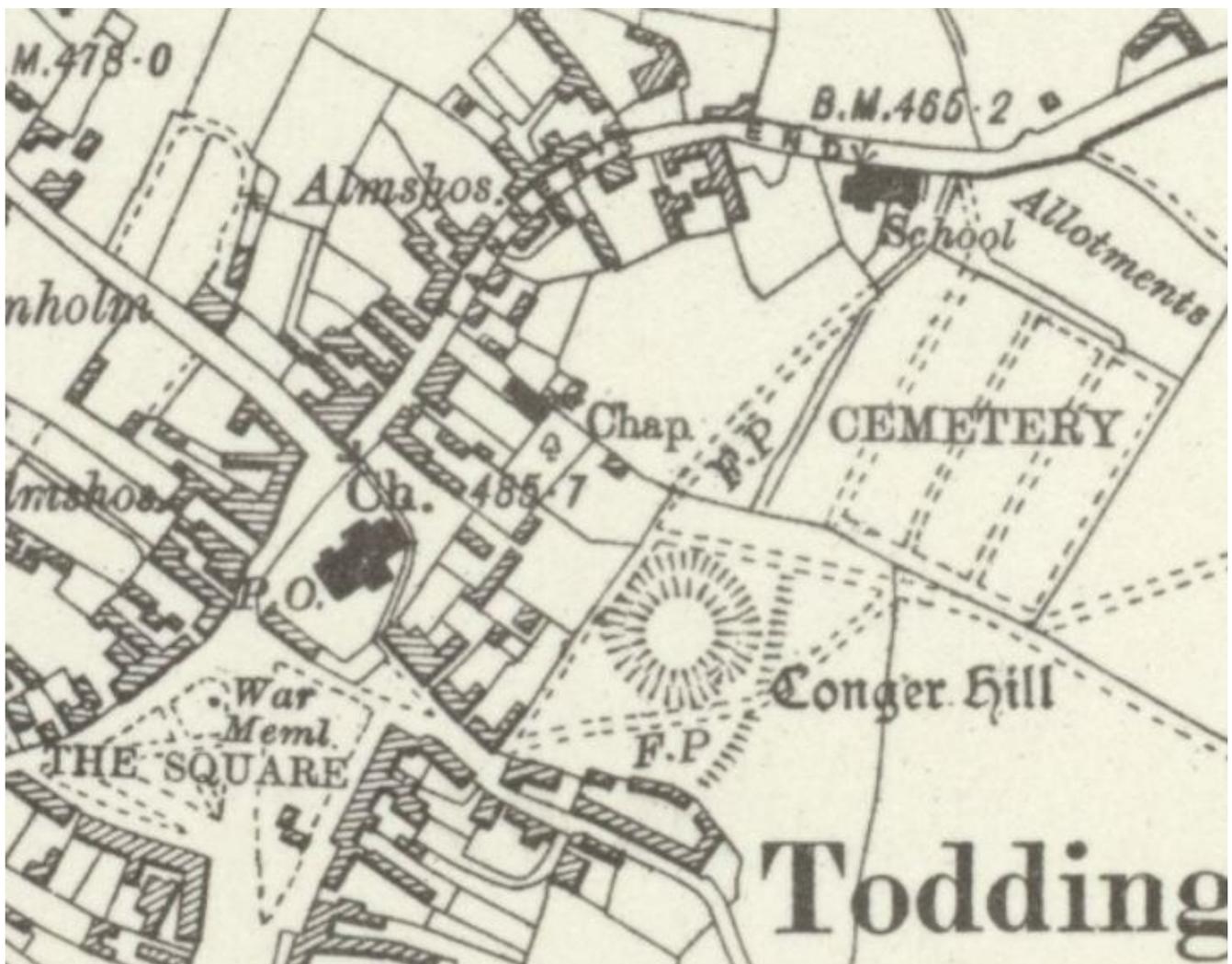
Priscilla Hart

*Written in 1990 by Priscilla HART nee IRELAND (deceased), contributed by her son Richard Hart. The Toddington and Fancott maps are from Bedfordshire Sheet XXIX.NW, Revised: 1924, Published: 1927, and reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland, [maps.nls.uk/index.html](https://maps.nls.uk/index.html).*

I was fortunate in spending all of my childhood living on a farm. It was a small mixed farm of 100 acres, very small compared with the large farms today.

My parents, Fred and Rosa Ireland, bought Feoffee Farm in the hamlet of Fancott in the parish of Toddington when they married in 1914. They had three children, Fred, Mary and myself, Priscilla.

'Feoffee' is a Saxon word meaning 'charity'. Feoffee Yard opposite St George's Church has the same name because originally the rent from Feoffee Farm was used for the upkeep of these old age pensioners' homes.



I started at the National School in Station Road in 1930 at the age of 5 years, and could write my name, knew the alphabet, my numbers, and lots of rhymes. This was thanks to my elder sister Mary, who at a very early age knew she wanted to be a teacher, and it was her pleasure to line up all our dolls and teddies, plus me and pretend to be teaching! I certainly had to do as I was told - a good training for school life.

My first teacher at school was Miss Annie WALKER, and I can still remember clearly the wooden frame on a stand at the front of the class on which we learnt to weave by passing a stick through the bands of braid. The next class was taken by Miss DOLEMORE (Mrs PETT). Here I remember copying letters of the alphabet in pencil and the joy of receiving a present from Father Christmas after the school play – it was a table tennis set. Next came Miss Flora SEYMOUR (Mrs NELSEY) and here there was great competition to get your sums right. Every Friday afternoon she produced a sweet tin and every pupil who had done well, chose his or her favourite humbug. Miss GARRATT (Mrs BRIDEN) later took over the class, and then followed Miss Elizabeth HIGGS, famous for her history lessons. My final teacher was Miss ASHCROFT (Mrs JOY). In this class Miss Ashcroft really made us work and every year some pupils passed the entrance exams for the High, Modern and Technical schools in Luton. She was excellent with a sewing needle and taught us girls to hem, darn and embroider. Hard words to spell were remembered by rhymes or song, eg Mrs D, Mrs I, Mrs F F I, Mrs C, Mrs U, Mrs L T Y, - Difficulty. On Friday afternoons we had the treat of a story, when she read aloud ‘The Christmas Carol’, ‘Kidnapped’ and ‘Water Babies’, etc. Many a tear was shed and a smile made as her voice altered for each character, to make the book come alive.

Whilst in this class a new girl arrived, by the name of Bessie HOBBS. Her family had just moved into the Manor Lodge House in Park Road, her father having taken the job as Head Gardener at Toddington Manor. Bessie (now Mrs BRAZIER) was placed near me and we have been friends ever since.

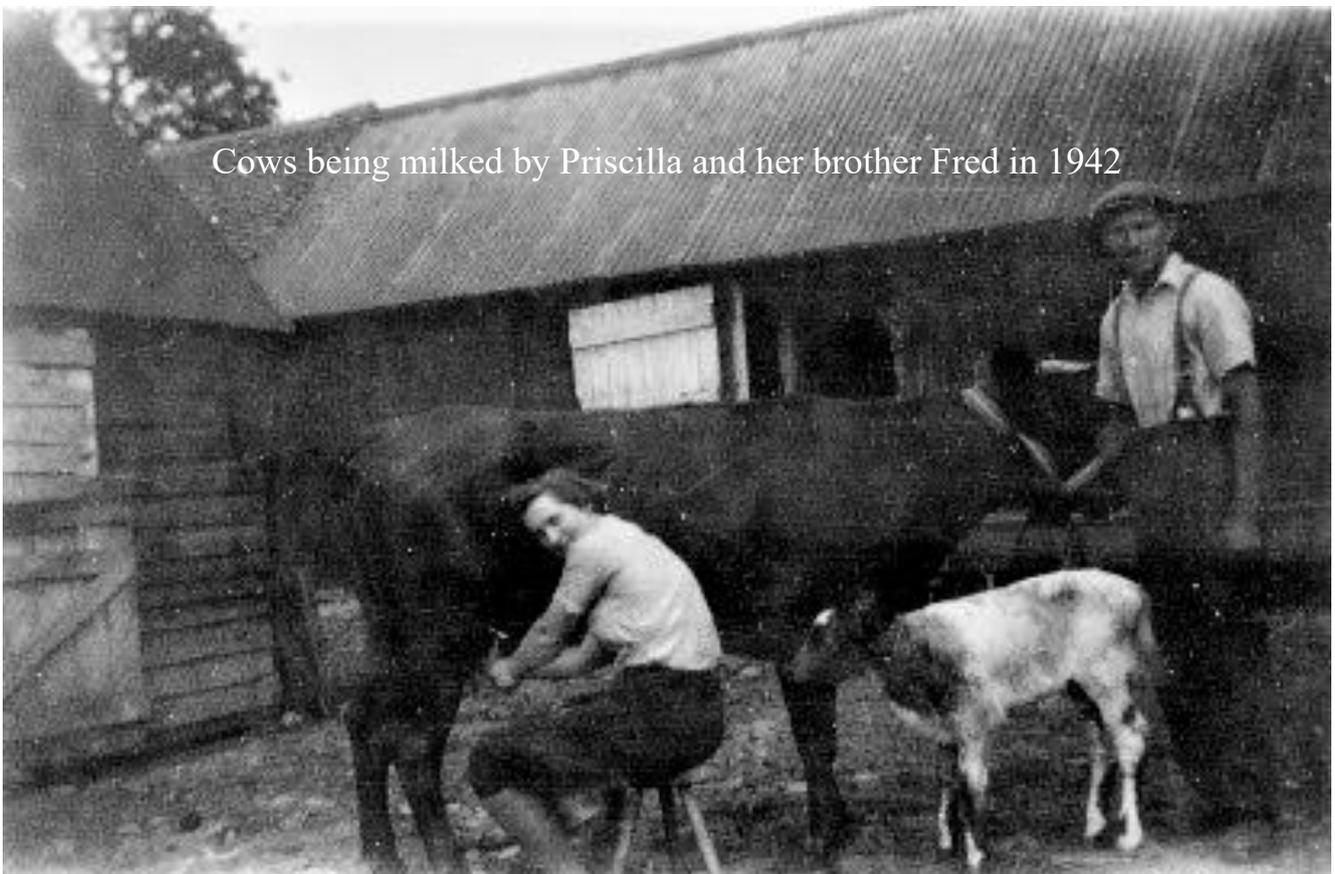
Mr Bruce WOOTTON was Headmaster and taught the top class. He was good with the handling of senior boys, and was keen on music and gardening. A curtain divided his class from Miss Higgs, and many a time a splash of ink was thrown from an ink pen onto this curtain, hoping to hit a pupil in the lower class. Inkwells were filled up each morning by pupils and also coke brought into school from the coal shed for the school stoves.

Whilst attending this school, I experienced the news of the sad death of Eileen BRITTAIN - her father, affectionately known as ‘Waggy’, ran the cycle and accessories shop on a small piece of land opposite the Recreation Ground and near the Co-op Stores in Luton Road. Eileen’s funeral service was held in St George’s Church, and myself with several other pupils, all in the navy school uniform blazers represented the National School. This was the first funeral I had ever been to and we all felt very sad. The cemetery was at the rear of the National School, so often on our way to or return from school we children would meet a funeral procession. We would immediately stand to attention and boys would take off their caps in respect of the family in mourning. All downstairs house curtains would also be closed on the road the procession was using. Everyone in the village knew when a death happened by the tolling of the church bell - a very dull sound.

As I lived a mile away from school I was allowed to stay to school lunch. These were cooked and served on the premises of the Council School in Leighton Road and eaten in the school hall. The chief cook was Mrs CRAWLEY and later Mrs CRUMP, and they will long be remembered for their spotted dicks and treacle puddings with custard. Every girl having a dinner took turns in helping to prepare the vegetables and wash up afterwards. A few lessons were missed in the peeling of potatoes etc and time lost in the dinner hour with washing up - the boys were not expected to do those chores!

In the early 30s I used to bus to school in winter, a 1d (one old penny) fare from Fancott Bridleway near the letter box to Toddington Green, and walk on fine summer days. In the spring we used to count the number of dead frogs lying in the road from the Fancott Clay pits to the hill - sometimes it came to over 100. They had all been run over and squashed flat! Another game was to walk the first two telegraph poles, and then run to the next. As I grew older and owned my first bicycle, this was a great way of travelling. Also when I received a pair of roller skates, these were used for skating the mile to school and then used in the playground as well, especially when roller skates were the 'in' game. Everything had its seasons - skipping (a large, long rope was great fun); ball playing, singing games like "The Big Ship sails through the Alley Alley Hoo"; whips and tops - I still have two wooden tops from those days, they are well worn at the pointed stud end, and still have traces of the coloured chalk pattern on their tops. What a tale they could tell! Another game was linked to the Oxford and Cambridge boat race. This involved 'Favours' which us children could buy in the local shops very cheaply. Light blue for Cambridge, dark blue for Oxford. The favour of the team you chose was pinned on your dress or coat, and then you would try and convert others to your side. I used to buy mine (Cambridge) from Mr Harry TIMMS who had a grocery and sweet shop in Station Road (opposite the Baptist Chapel). These favours used to hang on a card just outside the shop, to catch the eye of children passing by. He also sold sherbet dabs, gob stoppers, aniseed balls and liquorice comforts, to name a few of the favourite sweets for children.

School sports were held in Mr AYERS's field next to the school playground. We were allocated into four Houses as teams - Red (St George), Yellow (St David), Green (St Patrick) and Blue (St Andrew) and I remember great excitement one day when Johnny



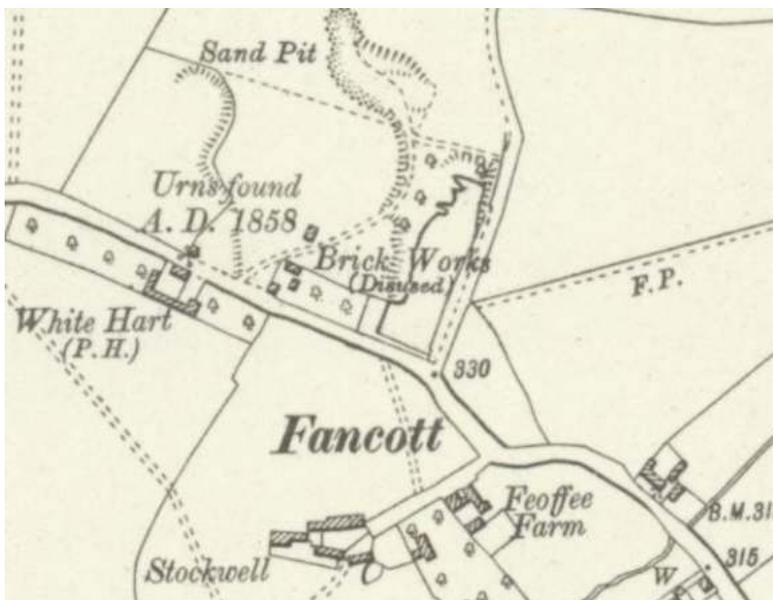
Cows being milked by Priscilla and her brother Fred in 1942

KEMPTON (younger brother to William Kempton who ran the cycle business in the High Street in later years), jumped higher than himself. Extra holidays were always enjoyed – especially Pancake Day on Shrove Tuesday when the older children were allowed out of school at 11.50 am to run over to Conger Hill and when the pancake bell tolled at midday, listen to the old woman frying the pancakes<sup>1</sup>. We really believed we could hear the sizzling! Empire Day (24 May) and Ascension Day were also half day holidays. With the latter it was a service in church and then the older children were allowed to go up to the church tower.

For various reasons some children could not attend school and Mr CROSS, the Education Attendance Officer, would often appear on parents' doorsteps to know the reason why. In fact his name only had to be mentioned in Toddington and some parents and pupils would tremble - such was the fear of the man!

My pocket money was usually 1d per week, but often I would meet my father in the school lunch break, have a short ride in the milk float, and talk him into giving me another penny to spend. Numerous shops and pubs sold sweets in Toddington, but my favourites were the ones I passed on my way to school. CLIFFORDS, the Bakery where one of my friends, Edna, lived with her sister Ann. Another favourite not far from Timms was Mrs CAPEL at the Nags Head. My father often called here, so being friends I was a back door customer and she always gave me good value for my penny.

The school dentist used to visit school about once a year and he and his nurse used to take over a small classroom for his visit. None of us liked his treatment of course, and another dislike was the nurse who looked in your hair for nits.



On the farm we were all trained to do our various jobs. Whilst mother got the fire going to boil the kettle for tea and cooked breakfast on the kitchen range (no gas or electric at the farm in those days), I would let the chickens out of their houses (shut up at night to avoid being eaten by foxes), and give them their corn and fresh water (often frozen over in winter). The same with the ducks and geese, and then the pet rabbits had to be fed. My brother kept ferrets, of which I was not very fond. After school other chores were done - eggs collected

up and washed clean ready for selling. The cows were fetched from their grazing field with the help of old Jessie, our faithful dog, ready for their second milking. Each cow had a name - Daisy, Bluebell, Hyacinth, Primrose, Polly, Brenda – to name a few, and each one knew its place in the shed for milking and was tied up with a neck chain. Milking was done by hand and it would take up to two hours or more to milk over 30

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<sup>1</sup> Further details of the pancake making witch can be found at [bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-26368070](http://bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-26368070)

cows. Milk was strained through a muslin sieve and put into churns ready to deliver to customers. Later, a law came in to have a tiled storage place with a cooler. Milk was poured into a small tank over the cooler and then the milk ran down either side of the stainless steel grid (cold water ran inside the grid) and the cooled milk then ran into a churn below. The water was worked up by a pump action handle.

The milk float was drawn by one horse and the float had a platform inside at the front on which to place two churns of milk. These churns had taps at the bottom from which milk was passed into a carrying-can, complete with ½ pint measure. A plunger in the churn was used periodically to keep the even distribution of the cream. Milk was delivered to back doors of customers' houses and measured into a jug or suitable receptacle. Very poor people would often provide a 2 lb jam jar. We also sold eggs, butter, fruit and vegetables. Churns were thoroughly washed with boiling water on their return (a job done by the females!), ready for refilling the following morning. During a very frosty morning the horse, Judy, had to have nails put into her shoes to assist pulling the float up Horse Hill to Toddington. Quite a performance before setting off on a milk round early in the morning. Toddington had several farmers delivering milk during the 30s. Harry CHILDS, Mr WILD, Billy MARLOW and Jack WITTINGTON. Today [1990], just my father's round exists worked by Harold FLETCHER, the others having been taken over by larger corporations.

January usually brought the snow - life was fairly peaceful at this time of the year - hedges were trimmed and laid and odd mending jobs were done around the farm. At one time we had 20 breeding sows, and this was the month when little pigs were often born - usually in the middle of the night. How I loved it when the tiny ones were brought in, to be placed by the kitchen fire, given a teaspoon of whisky with warm water if they needed it, and played with by us children. My mother never complained about the litter being brought in, the floor was scrubbed daily anyway. If there was a little 'Harry' pig this was my favourite - so small and soft with a little pink nose - a pity pigs grow up so ugly!

February brings memories of the Fancott Claypits frozen solid - quite a large area to slide and skate on and very popular for the youths and lasses from Toddington. I can clearly remember Victor Seymour walking down towards Fancott, skates slung over his shoulder and holding his daughter Rosanna's hand, as they made their way to the Claypits.

Easter was a happy time with little chickens and ducks hatching out, and our treat of an Easter Egg. Not the selection we have today, but still very tasty chocolate. April was the month of primroses and as a birthday treat I usually had a few friends to tea. We would go over the fields to Chalgrave Brook and pick bunches of primroses and watercress (having first asked permission from Mr Charlie FULL at Chalgrave Manor). Another visit was to Woodcock and Ipsies, two very popular woods for wild flowers and a brook to paddle in on the way.

May brings memories of Whit Sunday - the day we used to travel by Governess Cart to visit my mother's brother, William FANE and family at Caddington. Later, as I grew older and owned a bicycle it was an outing to cycle there and seemed such a long way.

Haytime used to start in June/July. Extra labour was taken on at this time and it was "all hands on deck" until the last cart was unloaded onto the rick. Tea and beer, bread

and cheese were taken back in one of the empty carts going back to the field, when everything stopped for five minutes for refreshments. The job given to me was known as 'Hojey Boy'. This meant standing by the horse's head and moving him on every so often to the next heap of hay, shouting out 'Hojey' very loudly so the man on top of the cart could hold onto his fork for support whilst the cart was moving. Harvest in August/September was very similar and there was great excitement with the rabbits and hares running out and being shot as the patch in the centre of the field got smaller and smaller.

The end of June was also St George's Sunday School Anniversary. Classes of children met outside the Town Hall for Evensong complete with bunches of flowers from the garden. Then we marched in twos into Church via the West Door, separating either side as we passed the font, and then up to the altar where the Rector, the Rev HUNT received the flowers, and we all marched back to find a seat. The tune played on the organ was "All Things Bright and Beautiful" and to this day if ever I hear this hymn sung it brings back a beautiful memory. After the service the flowers were taken to the sick and poor of the parish.

Bank Holiday Monday was celebrated with a big show held in ALLEN's field behind 24 High Street, which is now Chapel Close. Cyril and May Allen and their two children (Jean, now Mrs COMPTON) and Betty were great friends of our family. So we were able to leave the horse and governess cart in their builder's yard and go to the show, and afterwards have tea.

All our family used to attend the Harvest Festival service in September, as did all the farmers around, and if one did not get there early it was standing only! The church was absolutely packed with all the local produce so kindly given - sacks of potatoes, sheaves of corn, and fruit and veg of every description. Every shelf and corner was decorated in this large church, everyone was pleased to say 'thank you' - especially if it had been a good harvest.

October was the month for picking orchard fruit for storing. My grandfather Henry Ireland (a smallholder at Stockdale) set a variety of fruit trees on a piece of land east of Bradford Road. The trees produced good fruit, the only disadvantage was being so far away from the actual farm. I think most children in Toddington knew that orchard and have at some time enjoyed scrumping - someone else's fruit is always better than your own! After a windy night, fallen and bruised fruit was picked up and put into skips and then fed to the pigs. The best fruit was picked by ladders, stored in an airy loft and supplied to customers through the coming months.

One of the jobs I most hated was picking up potatoes. This time usually came just before starting the Autumn School Term. The potato field was often near the Terrace (near Princes Street) and on these occasions we took on extra help, pocket money for many local housewives. My mate on these days was a character who lived in one of the Terrace Cottages by the name of Attle BATES. He made a back-aching job more bearable with his sense of humour.

The highlight of November was Bonfire Night and all us children at Fancott looked forward to this date. A big bonfire was made in the field opposite the farm buildings (for safety) and everyone helped with collecting paper, old mats, bushes, etc. Viv BAUMBER was one of us children and lived in a small cottage next to the Fancott

Arms<sup>2</sup>. Every year his grandmother made us a splendid guy which we little ones took round to every house, finishing up at the Fancott Arms where we would usually collect a nice sum of pennies to buy our fireworks.

A pig was usually killed at this time of year and provided us with good food - pork was put in vats of brine and bacon smoked. My mother made excellent brawn and pork pies. Even the chitterlings were eaten, and it was my job to clean them. This has put me off eating them for ever!

Poultry was ordered by customers for Christmas, so the week before Christmas we were busy killing, plucking and cleaning and finally weighing and pricing. Our Christmas cake was never iced before Christmas Eve, but time was found somehow to fill stockings with goodies to be opened on Christmas morning.

My father quite liked his pint and game of dominoes (known to many dominoes players as 'Devlin Double Two') but he never went out on a Sunday evening or Christmas night. This was family time with a singsong round the piano and stories told by a log fire. In the summer it was a leisurely walk all round the farmland and up to the orchard, calling at the Fancott Arms for refreshments or often a ride in the governess cart around the villages on a fine Sunday evening.

Monday was family wash day. Our large whites were sent to a Mrs COLES in the Dunstable Road. The clothes would be parcelled up with brown paper and string and delivered on the milk round. A tablet of Sunlight soap, blue bags or a packet of Rinso would occasionally be put in the parcel. This way a widow was able to earn a little money to help with a few luxuries.

Market Day in Luton was also held on Mondays and sometimes my mother, sister and I would accompany my father with the horse and float, sitting at the front on a long narrow cushioned seat, complete with rug and behind us would be pigs, calves or whatever was ready for sale with a large thick net over the top to stop the livestock jumping out, and thus we drove right into the centre of Luton to the market near the Town Hall. My brother was left at home to do the milk round and look after things. The treat for us girls was a mug of hot Horlicks and a cream horn at 'Healeys', the cake shop near the market.

Monday evenings was Parish Council night once a month. In those days my father represented Fancott on the Council, so it was a quick wash, clean shirt with starched collar and stud, clean shining shoes and off he went to catch the 7.40 pm bus to Toddington. As a Councillor he helped provide gas street lights and the letter box at Fancott.

Thursday on the farm was butter making day and during school holidays this was a day I loved. Cream was separated from the spare milk (skimmed milk given to the pigs) and then put into a butter churn with enough warm water added to bring it to the right temperature. The churn was then turned for about 45 minutes and when the little glass circle on the lid showed spots of butter, one could feel the weight change. It was then separated from its buttermilk, put into a large pan with salted water. This then drained and was made up into ¼ and ½ lb pats using a figured wooden stamp to mark the pat

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<sup>2</sup> The Fancott Arms (now the Fancott) are the buildings east of Feofee Farm shown in the map above.

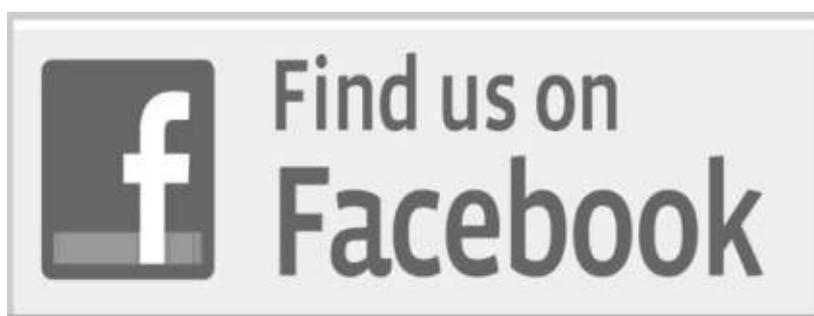
with a cow's head or similar design. On very hot days these pats were put into a skip and lowered into our deep well to keep cool until delivered to the customer. No fridges in those days on Feoffee Farm. Another item, often given away to the poor, or sold on the milk round was beestings (pronounced 'bisning' in this area) - the first milk from the cow after the calf is born. A cow giving a good milk yield more than supplied her calf, so the surplus was very welcome to cook as a delicious pudding (similar to egg custard).

When I was old enough to cycle on my own I was asked by my parents to check the flock of sheep we had in pastures rented down Tingrith Lane. This was often done after school lunch, quite a ride in the summer months to Hubbins Green field, halfway down the Lane. The number of sheep were counted, checked that none lay on their backs, and also that they were free from maggot fly. I was also allowed to cycle to Sunday School on Sunday afternoons. St George's Church had a large attendance of children in those days. The teachers I remember were Jack SMITH, Mrs May Hobbs, Miss Gladys LANE, Miss Bertha HYDE, Miss Elsie Smith and Miss Dorothy Bates. Dorothy taught the older children, and at the age of 16 we had instruction for confirmation with the Rev Hunt at Denbigh House. A confirmed bachelor, the Rector had accommodation at Denbigh House, the home of Mrs BARCLAY and he was allocated a rear room as his study.

Sunday School treats came once a year when we travelled to Wicksteed Park near Kettering on a double decker bus, calling at Olney for fish and chips on our return. It was quite an occasion for children and adults, probably the longest distance some people travelled that year. Little Edwin, who pumped air for the church organ used to sit in the front next to the driver – it was certainly a treat for him.

Daily papers were collected daily by my father from George Hart's paper shop. I can remember looking forward to the arrival of my comic 'Bubbles' and my brother's 'Wizard'. We also took the 'Farmer & Stockbreeder'. When going into the newsagents, little did I know that one day I would be marrying into that family.

These are happy years to look back on and I am sure many other children who grew up in Toddington during the 1930s will agree that although some of us were poor in wealth we were blessed with good parents, had the company of loving brothers and sisters and good friends. Toddington was indeed a special place in which to grow up. □



Bedfordshire Family History Society now has a presence on Facebook for news and discussions visit

**[facebook.com/BedfordshireFamilyHistorySociety](https://www.facebook.com/BedfordshireFamilyHistorySociety)**

## ELLEN PARTRIDGE OF BLETSOE 1873-1894

*John Partridge*

In the BFHS *Journal* of September 2017 I wrote an article on Edward and Martha PARTRIDGE of Bletsoe who had 10 children, one of whom was a daughter Ellen. This is what I wrote about her back then:

*Ellen born Sep 1873, baptised 11 Feb 1874. She is only found on the 1881 census aged 8 living with parents and siblings in Bletsoe. Could she be the Ellen Partridge who died Biggleswade RD in Mar 1894, aged 21. Not found in 1891 census unless she is the anonymous E P aged 18, birth place unknown, resident lunatic at Stotfold Three Counties Asylum? She is not listed amongst siblings of her brother John Charles P's attestation document of Sep 1896.*

Since then I have uncovered more about her life history thanks to the *Bedfordshire Workhouse & Poor Law Records* sourced from Bedfordshire Archives now available on Ancestry. I found 33 or more different records for Ellen Partridge of Bletsoe born 1873 for the period 1882 through to 1894. Initially she is listed aged 8 with her parents and siblings in early 1882 and again aged 12 in early 1885 where they were applying for meat, latterly Ellen is reported as having 'wholly bad eyes'. Her next appearance is in August 1888 again with her parents and siblings. Ellen is now aged 15, reported as 'wholly imbecile, subject to fits' and they were there asking for her admission into the Workhouse.

She was admitted into the Workhouse on 29 August 1888 although I have not found an admissions register for that period. Throughout 1888, 1889 and 1890 she appears on Quarterly Lists of Imbeciles in the Bedford Union Workhouse and Indoor Relief Lists. On 29 Nov 1890, when Ellen was 17, it is reported that she is of 'wholly unsound mind' and applies for her 'Removal to Asylum'. On 1 Dec 1890 she is discharged from the Workhouse by the Master to the Three Counties Asylum at Arlesey. There she stays until 1894 where she is listed at the start of each year on Bedford Union's 'True List of Lunatics' and on the yearly 'Annual List of Pauper Lunatics' for each year ending Michaelmas. The last list dated 1 Jan 1894 has Ellen aged 20. She dies there in March 1894 and is buried in the burial ground at Three Counties Asylum.

Her death certificate records that she died aged 21 of Phthisis (Tuberculosis) on 20 March 1894 at Three Counties Asylum, Stotfold and says she was daughter of Edward Partridge, farm labourer of Bletsoe. She was then buried on 24 March aged 21 at the Lunatic Burial Ground at Three Counties Asylum (the burial register is available at Beds Archives). □

### BACK TWO GENERATIONS

In our June *Journal*, Wendy VARVEL explained that her grandfather William Lancaster was born in 1855 and her grandmother Eliza JOHNSON was born in 1856. The question was posed as to whether other families went back so far in just two generations. Thus far, only member Josephine KNIGHT has offered up her maternal grandparents Rose MANTON, born 1867, and Joseph MARSHALL, born 1865. Josephine found that Rose married Joseph when she was 16 - but the marriage certificate records her age as 19! Rose went on to have 15 children.

Going back 155 or more years in two generations does appear to be rare. □

## DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

A few days before we are scheduled to hold a monthly talk via Zoom, I send an invitation, via email, to society members with log-in details for the meeting. If you do not receive these invitations then I do not have your valid email address.

If you would like to start receiving the invitations, please let me know your email by contacting [treasurer@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@bfhs.org.uk).

Many thanks, Peter Sharp, Treasurer

## BEDFORDSHIRE PARISH REGISTERS

Many new computers do not have CD drives so we are pleased to announce that all our CDs are now available for sale as downloads from Parish Chest and Genfair.

The available downloads include all 128 Bedfordshire Parish Registers, Bedfordshire Nonconformist Registers, Marriage Licences, Poor Law papers, BFHS back *Journals* Vol 1-19 with an index to surnames and subjects, and the four Bedfordshire Will books. BFHS *Journals* volumes 20-23 are available free in the Members' Portal of the BFHS website.

To access the stores directly please visit [parishchest.com](http://parishchest.com) or [genfair.co.uk](http://genfair.co.uk), although the simplest way of accessing a BFHS download is to visit our website [bfhs.org.uk](http://bfhs.org.uk) then select 'Online Stores'. If you then select Parish Chest the majority of the downloads are to be found in the 'Downloads' folder, but Poor Law, Journals and Wills book are listed under the appropriate folder located down the left hand side of the screen. If you select Genfair, the downloads are listed alongside the CDs in the relevant section. Both stores have a search feature and the content of each product is given. Downloads are the same price as the CDs.

BFHS has produced a resource to help in finding your missing relations. If they were baptised or buried before 1852 or married before 1837 (and in some cases later) in Bedfordshire and appear in the Parish Registers, then they will appear on our Surnames CD, available as a free download on the home page of [bfhs.org.uk](http://bfhs.org.uk). Alternatively, the CD is available for only £10 including UK P&P, from Sales, Bedfordshire Family History Society, PO Box 214, Bedford MK41 8WB, enquiries to [bookstall@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:bookstall@bfhs.org.uk).

CDs for all 128 ancient Bedfordshire parishes listed below are available from:

Sales, Bedfordshire Family History Society, PO Box 214, Bedford MK41 8WB,  
or [bookstall@bfhs.org.uk](mailto:bookstall@bfhs.org.uk)

Each CD or download contains, for one parish:

All Parish Register transcripts up to 1812 (images)

Searchable Indexes to the Parish Registers for:

Baptisms at least 1813-1851 (some parishes all up to 1851)

Marriages up to 1885; and all Burials to 1851

The relevant 1851 Census Index for Bedfordshire (images)

CDs marked † also contain Monumental Inscriptions (MIs) from a graveyard in the

parish (church, chapel or cemetery). Those marked \* contain records from the registers or graveyards of Nonconformist chapels in the parish, photographs, and other records are included as available.

‡ Holwell: MIs and Burials only, not Registers (now in Herts).

Prices include UK or overseas post and packing. The cost of a full set of Parish CDs is £1,250.

Any recently revised CDs are indicated by the **issue number in bold**. Please note that **CDs will no longer be updated** whereas downloads will be updated when more indexes and any new MI listings become available.

Parish	Price	Issue	Parish	Price	Issue
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Arlesey	£20	2	Eaton Bray	£20	2
Aspley Guise †	£15	4	Eaton Socon † *	£25	2
Astwick †	£10	2	Edworth †	£10	2
Barton	£15	3	Elstow †	£15	2
Battlesden	£10	2	Eversholt †	£15	2
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Dunstable † *	£15	2	Little Barford †	£10	1

Parish	Price	Issue	Parish	Price	Issue
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Knotting	£10	2	Shillington †	£15	2
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- P.G. Dip. in Archive Management

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The following email addresses are also available:

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