

THE WAKEFIELD



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**Summer/Autumn
Edition**

**Volume 29 No. 1
2025**

WAKEFIELD & DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

(Registered Charity 1104393)

Patron: The Lord St Oswald

President: Chris Welch

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman:

Paul Gaywood

Pear Tree Cottage, Bolus Lane, Outwood WF1 3DT

chairman@wdfhs.co.uk

Vice-Chairman:

Carol Sklinar, 1 New Lane, East Ardsley, WF3 2DP

vicechairman@wdfhs.co.uk

Secretary:

(Vacant) secretary@wdfhs.co.uk

Treasurer:

Sheelagh Jackson

treasurer@wdfhs.co.uk

Webmaster:

David Huddart

webmaster@wdfhs.co.uk

Other Members:

David Bradley, Martin Jackson,
Claire Pickering & George Scogings

The Wakefield Kinsman

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Cover image - Walter Icly Wraith
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Visit our Website www.wdfhs.co.uk

While the Society always uses its best endeavours to ensure that the information in its publications is complete, errors may from time to time occur. The Society will not be held responsible for the consequence for such errors but will make corrections in future editions.

Opinions and comments expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Society Kinsman.

Chairman's Letter



Welcome to another year in the life of our Society and I hope that it will be one which includes many memorable events and interesting publications. Since the last edition of the Journal we have held our annual general meeting which provided an opportunity to say thank you for those members who had served on the committee and volunteered to help at our meetings. I should have made particular mention on that day of Charlie Amos who has served the Society in so many ways for many years but has now reached the point where he must

opt for a more leisurely pace of life. We do hope still to see him at our meetings.

On reflection I believe that I should highlight and give thanks on everyone's behalf to those members who submit articles for publication in The Kinsman. Your contributions are what distinguish this publication, and sharing your work with the membership may generate valuable insights that help resolve challenges for both yourself and your colleagues. Please therefore do keep working on your stories and submit them to editor@wdfhs.co.uk. The future of The Kinsman is very much in your hands. As additional incentive to get members writing the committee decided that we should run again the competition for the Norman White Prize. This provides a £50 reward for the article judged to be the best submission on the chosen subject which is "A Black Sheep In The Family". I personally have a few stories in my family tree but members of the committee are not eligible. The articles can be up to 3000 words and should be submitted by the end of May so that the award can be made at next year's AGM.

Returning to the matters resolved at the AGM a new committee was elected with the members of last year's team being nominated and duly elected. Martin Jackson, a longstanding member of the Society, was also elected to the committee. He brings a keen interest in family history and through membership of a number of other societies will bring ideas and knowledge to the team. You will hear more of him as the year goes on. There were still no nominations for the roles of Society Secretary or Kinsman editor and a key activity of the new team will be to find appropriate members to be co-opted to these roles.

At this time in our annual cycle we begin to finalise the speaker programme for the following calendar year and we are always keen to have recommendations for speakers from our members and likewise to have requests for specific subjects to be covered. Please do let us know of any ideas you may have. George Scogings' talk at the AGM about one of his ancestors was very well received and as well as entertaining us all he received a few suggestions to help with further research and this illustrates the potential benefits to the individual as well as the Society if members will volunteer to tell their own stories.

Paul Gaywood

Editor's Ramblings

Well, the AGM has come and gone and we are at the start of another family history year, and those you who are still delving into their families are still finding that interesting relative. That relative could be, as I like to call them, the good, the bad or the ugly – not ugly in those terms but as a bit of a rogue 'ugly'. I have the good, a few of the bad and thank goodness even less of the ugly.

In my tree I have a few Knights of the Realm, a couple of Victoria Cross awardees, a hangman and an attempted murderess. The latter three are the most interesting!

Samuel Mitchell, VC, was born in Aspley Guise, in 1841 and in 1870 he married Agnes Ross from Drainie, a small village in Morayshire.

Samuel joined the Royal Navy aged 16 and on the 29th of April, 1864, aged 24 and during the Maori Wars he was awarded his Victoria Cross. His citation reads: War Office, July 23, 1864. The Queen has been graciously pleased to signify Her intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross on the



undermentioned Seaman of the Royal Navy, whose claim to the same has been submitted for Her Majesty's approval, for his gallant conduct in New Zealand as recorded against his name;

Samuel Mitchel 'Captain of the Fore-top' of Her Majesty's ship 'Harrier'. Date of Act of Bravery 29th April, 1864. For his gallant conduct at the attack of Te Papa, Tauranga, on the 29th of April last, in entering the Pah with Commander Hay, and when that Officer was mortally wounded, bringing him out, although ordered by Commander Hay to leave him, and seek his own safety. This man was at the time 'Captain of the Fore-top' of the

'Harrier', doing duty as Captain's Coxswain; and Commander Sir William Wiseman brings his name to special notice for this act of gallantry'.

Samuel's VC in the early 1900's had been sold at auction to a collector in Bradford and subsequently ended up in Colonel Frederick Gascoigne of Lotherton Hall's collection. Samuel's wife petitioned for the return of the VC. By 1928 the medal has passed on to Gascoigne's son, Alvery, who Gascoigne was sure would return/sell the VC back to the family for £70. The money was raised and returned to the family and remained there until Samuel's daughter's death when it was gifted to the West Coast Historical Museum at Hokitika, New Zealand.

Samuel had lived in NZ for 30 years, since his arrival onboard 'The Harrier'. Upon his discharge he was granted £80 from which he purchased a plot of land at Mikonui near Ross, where he farmed and mined gold and acted as a ferryman on the Mikonui River – which had a reputation for flooding. And it was during one of these floods that he was drowned while attempting to make a crossing – a thing he had done many times.



The grave of Samuel and his wife is in a small graveyard plot on an isolated hillside.

A group of medals including Victoria Crosses, was stolen from a museum in NZ and it is believed Samuel's was one of them. There is a copy of the medal on display in a museum. The original, following its return is now also on display in another museum.

Do any of you have such a tale?

Reports from our Meeting

Our speaker on 3rd May was **Jo Heron** who gave us a talk entitled '**Your Name, My Name, What's In A Name?**'

Overcoming the technical difficulties which presented themselves, Jo nevertheless gave us an interesting talk on the pleasures and pitfalls of following a single name search. She informed us that when she was working at the Yorkshire Archaeological Society in Leeds there was criticism of family historians as they were seen as not very academic but people who are researching their family history reveal a great deal of information.

Jo went right back to the beginnings of communication as a need to identify one group of people from another - friend or foe. Pre-history was before

history was written down; Greek and Roman writers would have written names down. Post Roman, it was mainly the clergy recording names as many people would not have been able to write. As Christianity was the main religion given names would have followed on from the Bible. Surnames came out of a need to further identify people and possibly originated through nicknames or appearance - black, grey, cold, small etc. Occupations played a part e.g. John the Baker. Landmarks also helped - wood, heath, by water.

Jo then explained that in 1068 **William I** listed all the properties in the country which became known as the Domesday survey, and people believed it was the end of the world they knew. Anyone who refused to be recorded had their estates destroyed and people were killed - this became known as the harrying of the north. We were given a picture of how every aspect of people's lives was controlled.

Early records contained minimum detail and women were used as pawns to create alliances and had little choice in who they were married to.

Jo gave us an outline of the languages used in old documents - Old English, Latin, French, introduced by William into the courts, and New English.

Joining a society like the Metcalfe Society can be helpful to researchers, as can family history societies. The Family History Federation covers the whole country and they can be contacted for information. Jo explained that over a generation of about 20 years it doesn't take long to reach a great number of names within your tree. She told us to be cautious of census records; people would have had accents, enumerators would have made errors and variants of a name could easily be created when information was recorded in error.

Jo gave us her own personal story of researching the Metcalfe name and how the society came into being, with over 2500 members now and the books which the society has produced. She told us about the Guild of One Name Studies which has over 2000 members, databases including 7500 names and 2000 individual studies. It is sometimes possible to find out the whole history of your family's name.

We were told how family lines develop, how families moved around and how religion played a part. Jo concluded her talk by reminding us that although it could be rewarding, a study of one particular name can be far from easy.

Our speaker on 7 June was **Dr Phil Judkins** with his talk entitled '**Went the Day Well? We Plan; The God's Laugh**'.

Phil started by saying that most TV and film accounts of D Day tell us what went right and that he would tell us what went wrong - but started with a big success! Monitoring of German radio messages was key, and code breaking critical. It was a priority to keep up the 'Double Cross' deception, that the

Normandy beaches were a feint and the Pas de Calais would be the real invasion; the messages intercepted from the Germans showed the 'big lie' had been swallowed. Bletchley Park was in overdrive decoding messages and Phil told us he knew of at least two Wakefield women who worked there.

He went on to inform us about Bomber Harris and Leigh-Mallory and how they both opposed Montgomery's plans to bomb certain French towns flat. Eventually they were overruled but when the go ahead was finally given, bombs fell inland and not on the Germans who were ready to slaughter the invading Allied troops.

Phil informed us about the various weaponry used which was offered to the Americans; they only accepted the swimming tank. This was a big mistake as was seen at Omaha beach. The prime challenge was also to get the troops across the Channel; 6000 ships were used and they had to move under German radar. Our scientists had 100 days to make this happen and Phil shared a visual showing some of the solutions including the creation of two false fleets named Glimmer and Taxable to draw German attention away from Normandy. This impressive illusion was achieved by precisely controlled aircraft dropping pieces of aluminium foil and supported by motor launches which were equipped so as to appear on German radar as large ships; sound effects were also used.

D Day was postponed for a day owing to bad weather but the game was nearly given away by one group of ships not receiving the communication and setting off using the route which was going to be used; they were eventually recalled. Another close shave was one associated press teletype officer practising her speed typing by inventing a message about the Invasion which inadvertently became live on the international news circuit - it was cancelled within 30 seconds.

Phil showed us the intricate detailed preparations used for D Day, including the building of detailed models of bridges which were used to practice, practice, practice; the real thing would involve gliders using no lights and no brakes. He told us about Titanic: the Fake Paratroopers which caused confusion in the critical early minutes of battle. Eventually 15,000 Paratroopers were dropped from 600 aircraft. Bad weather and heavy cloud played havoc with navigation, compounded by inexperienced air crew. 101st Airborne division suffered 83% casualties and most of their kit was lost. The 82nd Airborne division landed fairly accurately but much of their equipment fell into German hands.

Once landing had started, tanks were falling into the craters created by the bombing of the beaches and inaccurate bombing often hit Allied troops. Allied big ships had a lot to achieve; the Normandy landings were almost the last hurrah of the Navy big ships and they were especially vulnerable to air, submarine and torpedo attack. Phil reminded us that landing craft were built in Wakefield; 80 were built by Drake and Waters in Thornhill Street and its largely female workforce.

Phil went on to give us detailed accounts of landings on Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches - the number of troops landed, how this was planned and the successes and casualties which also ensued. Utah was relatively successful but Omaha in America is a byword for slaughter, partly because the USA had decided not to use the British special tanks. Bad weather when landing at Gold beach was a major advantage and Phil told us the story of the only D Day VC award to **Stanley Hollis**. We were informed that most of the troops landing on Juno were Canadians; the Germans thought the rocks would deter it being used as a landing beach.

The talk came to a close with some statistics. Collectively the casualties were almost unbelievably high. 150,000 landed on D Day, 4000 plus died - 3%. Churchill had anticipated 20,000 dead. The Normandy campaign itself resulted in 73,000 deaths, plus 20,000 French civilians, often forgotten.

In summary, said Phil, D Day was 'a damn close run thing'; a knife edge which could have gone either way.

The **26th AGM** was held on **5 July 2025** and this was preceded by our patron, **Lord St Oswald**, saying a few words about his own family history.

He said his family had always had great pride in Wakefield through the centuries and it was as close to his ancestors as it is today and he chose to tell us about one of his ancestors, Sabine Louise Winn, wife of Sir Rowland Winn, who was not a typical woman of her time. Born in 1794 in Switzerland, she met Rowland when he was on his Grand Tour. However Sabine never fully integrated into English society and this affected her mental as well as her physical health, which was exacerbated by Rowland's death in 1785.

Lord St Oswald told us she was an excellent hostess, extravagant, with a strong interest in natural health remedies; she planned an apothecary garden and owned a large collection of medical books. Sabine and Rowland had a happy marriage, having two children Rowland and Esther, who was never forgiven for eloping with the estate baker.

He told us that Nostell was rich and diverse in its history and was pleased that the National Trust continues to do its work. We were told about the current exhibition about Sabine at Nostell and how she never really realised her potential because of the time in which she lived.

The AGM was followed by our speaker, **George Scogings** who gave us a talk on one of his ancestors, **James Arthur White A.P.O.W.s Life**.

George told us he was interested in researching this member of his family tree because it was someone who nobody could tell him anything about. James Arthur White was born in Leeds in 1904 but the family moved to Wakefield and could be seen on the 1911 census living on Charles Street near Kirkgate Station. James married **Ruby Wilkin** in 1931 and George found a great deal of information on James' military records when he was serving with the 4th KOYLI. He worked in a tunnelling company, which was made up mainly of miners.

George's richly illustrated talk gave us information on what happened when he was deployed to Doullens in France and George was able to track his journey north to Boulogne Sur Mer, including various diversions; this is where James was captured. He was taken to Stalag 20A in Poland to Dabrowa Gornicza coal mine where he was expected to work. He was then moved to Walbrzych Factory. We were shown his POW questionnaire which contained useful information, as well as details about his discharge.

George showed us James' death certificate dated 1965 which showed that he had contracted emphysema whilst a POW which was a contributory factor in his death; the coroner recorded a verdict of misadventure.

The 1939 register showed Ruby living in Coventry; apparently, believing James was dead, missing in action, she had started a relationship with another man who was the verger at Wakefield Cathedral. In 1942 they had a son together. When James returned, Ruby tried to divorce him but he refused so she stayed in Coventry and James stayed in Wakefield, separated from his family and living with his brother. His family grew up without him.

George concluded his talk by saying that although this was a sad story, it was good that his family now knew of his time during the war and have reconnected with other members.

Lorraine Simpson

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE AGM

Our Society as a volunteer driven organisation relies upon the dedication of its members and the broader community to fulfil its mission of advancing education within family history and genealogy. Today at our AGM we have an opportunity to recognise what we have achieved together over the last year and highlight the contribution of those members who have been actively involved in making these things happen.

At our last AGM we had presentations about heritage open day events in anticipation of two such events we had scheduled. The first was held here in this building where we presented a display about the project to build this memorial hall. It was focussed on the local people who developed the idea and made it a reality and the groups like us that have made use of it since its inception. The second event was held at Church Institute in Outwood and this celebrated the history of that building and the four Anglican churches in the north Wakefield benefice which feature in the histories of so many local families over the 200 years of their existence. The profile of this second event was raised by bringing **Nick Barratt** to Outwood to deliver two relevant presentations about family history in the digital age which proved to be a significant attraction. To follow this we had our programme of Saturday meetings which covered a wide range of topics and included some very memorable presentations. We have continued with the hybrid Zoom format for these meetings which presents us with a range of technical challenges but we have persisted because of the benefits it provides to those who are not able to come to the live meetings.

Our other major activity for the benefit of our members is of course our journal *The Kinsman*. It will have been obvious to our members that we are still struggling to fill the shoes of **Elsie Walton** to the extent that this year for the first time since the early years of the Society we only managed to produce three editions rather than four. **Carol Sklinar** has stepped back in as temporary editor and we owe a big thank you to her but this is clearly not a sustainable solution as she has so many other commitments, including the production of the exhibitions of our Saturday meetings. So please think about helping us – if you are not able to help with the production then please try to contribute some articles.

Our activities depend upon a team and you will note from the cover of *The Kinsman* our listing of the Committee Members and Key Volunteers and praise is due to all of them. There are some contributions which must be mentioned. **Chris Welch**, now our President, co-hosts the hybrid meetings but as well as this he also plays a major part in setting up the meetings and dealing with sales of publications. **Sheelagh Jackson** who joined the Society last year has taken on the critical post of Treasurer and you will hear from her shortly. **Debbie Staynes** provides a vital role as Membership secretary, as does **David Huddart** who looks after our website. **Stella Robinson** is one of the original members of our Society and she plays an active part in every meeting arriving as one of the first into the hall and is one of the last to leave and in between she provides help to members in her own inimitable style. **Shirley Frost** has provided an invaluable service acting as an independent examiner for our financial accounts.

Accounts for 2024/2025

Wakefield & District Family History Society

Receipts & Payments accounts for year ending March 31st 2025

Receipts	2025	2024
Bank Interest	507	494
Donations	119	2
Membership Subscriptions	2435	2569
Raffle	199	180
Refreshments	164	122
Royalties	1066	1182
Sales of Books & Publications	460	790
Tax Refund		213
Total Receipts	4950	5552

Payments		
Books & Publications	0	41
Fair Expenses	55	50
Miscellaneous	0	50
Other Printing	100	0
Postage	207	660
Printing	1555	1949
Rent	725	677
Repairs & Renewals	0	40
Speakers	559	210
Subscriptions	190	0
Zoom Costs	156	143
Total payments	3547	3820

Net receipts/payments	1403	1732
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Cash funds Y/E 31 March 2024	20889	19157
Cash funds Y/E 31 March 2025	22292	20889

Statement of Assets & Liabilities

Cash Funds

Current Account	3525	2628
Bank Reserve Account	5331	5258
Yorkshire Building Society	13371	12938
Cash in Hand	65	65

TOTAL CASH FUNDS	22292	20889
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Closing Stock	5290	5440
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Membership News

A Welcome to New Members

Mem. No. 1588 **Susan Dhir**

Mem. No. 1589 **Anne & Stephen Wroe**

Mem. No. 1590 **Joanne Stone**

Mem. No. 1591 **Tricia Winfield**

Re-joining the Society after an absence of 5 years is
Mem. No. 1483 **David Dickinson.**

We have been informed that Mem. No. 1401 **Eileen Little** has died. She was born and bred in Wakefield but was resident in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, BC Canada when she joined the Society in 2014. She was an enthusiastic member who struck up a good friendship, via email with Elsie Walton. Eileen was a frequent contributor of articles for The Wakefield Kinsman and will be sorely missed.

I would like thank all the members who renewed their membership so promptly in June.

Members' Articles We Will Remember Them

NAME - **Walter Iclly Wraith**

DOB - 14th November 1903 DOD - 13th June 1998

SERVICE NUMBER 1537608 RANK - Corporal

SERVICE - Royal Air Force Fitter/Armourer

FAMILY - Son of **William** and **Mabel Wraith** (nee Hoole) Husband of **Jenny Adelia (Hartley)**

War Service

Dad had his medical at Huddersfield 21st May 1941 and reported to RAF Padgate on 19th July 1941. After kiting out he was posted to Redcar for basic training. He was then posted to Sutton Bridge in Lincolnshire to work on Hurricanes. After passing to be ACI he went on a 5 month fitters course at Kirkham near Blackpool, passed the course and was then posted to Castle Kennedy in Scotland. Next posting was to Mona on Anglesey where he passed for LAC.

Then it was back to Castle Kennedy, 36 Operational Training Station. Soon after he was made up to Corporal His main work was working with the Aircraft Guns and on one flight test fired over 500 rounds into the Irish Sea. He also repaired turrets which had damaged Perspex. It was not all work and he was able to partake in his love of fishing and refereeing rugby matches.

The last posting was to Church Fenton and he could not be any nearer to home. He came home every night and I used to meet him at Normanton Station at 5.55pm. Sometimes he would bring a rabbit home for a meal that he had shot on the Airfield. Having worked on Ansons, Bothas, Hurricanes, Spitfires, Lancasters, Halifaxes the last plane was a Mosquito. One of his last jobs was to go to Sherburn to clear up unexploded bombs after a train had blown up. I remember this, hearing the explosion and the plume of smoke and this was at Normanton! He was discharged on 19th November 1945.

Family Life

Walter was born at Robin Hood and left school at 12 years old to work at Armitages Farm at Thorpe. Later he worked at Robin Hood Colliery as a Clerk, then Armitages Brick Works, making bricks. Then up to call up as an Insurance Man for Refuge Ins. Co.

Whilst at the Brick Works he married Jenny Adelia Hartley at Eastmoor Chapel on 19th September 1931 and lived at 73 Jacobs Well Lane, Wakefield. As his work for Refuge was at Normanton it meant a move to 109, High Street. Here he was in the A.R.P until his call up. He always thought that the Germans used the Half Moon at Kirkthorpe as a turning point, one way they went on to bomb Sheffield and the other Leeds.

On his demob he went back to work for the Refuge but he did not like it, so he bought a milk round when milk was still rationed and delivered with a horse and cart. The round was in Wakefield on Lawefield Lane, Thornes Road and Mount Crescent area. Another house move was in 1950 to 56 Wakefield Road, Flushdyke, Ossett until he retired in 1970. Even having a seven day a week job he was still able to take part in his love of sport.

He refereed his last Rugby League match in 1953, having joined Wakefield Referees Society in 1930, he was made a life member. His real passion was for fishing and he caught his first fish at 5 years old (1909). He joined Wakefield Tradesman Angling Club in 1923 and was made President in 1986.

His other clubs were West Riding Anglers and they made him a life member in 1983 and Ossett A.C. In 1984.

After Mum died in 1968 he moved to 13 Athold Drive, Ossett and passed away on 13th June 1998.

Story submitted by David M. Wraith

From the Papers

Wakefield and West Riding Herald – Friday 8 January 1858 – **To be let**, an excellent Dwelling-house, situated in St John's Street, Wakefield, lately occupied by **Mrs Tootal**.

The house contains dining, drawing, and breakfast rooms, nine bedrooms, kitchens, and cellars. There is also a Coach House and Stabling for two horses, with other outbuildings attached.

For rent and particulars apply to **Mr White**, Land Agent; or to **Messrs. Scholey & Skipworth**, Solicitors.

The Victoria Portrait Gallery, Providence Terrace, Providence Street, Wakefield. **Mr Walker**, Photographic Artist and Miniature Painter, begs to announce to the inhabitants of Wakefield that he has re-opened the Portrait Gallery recently occupied by **Mr Howson**, in Providence Terrace, Providence Street, and respectfully invites their attention to his unequalled Enamelled Collodiotype Portraits. In life-like truthfulness, artistic beauty, and boldness of effect, they will bear comparisons with the finest Miniatures of Ivory, and will be found superior to any Photographs ever before offered to the inhabitants of Wakefield.

Every picture guaranteed correct and properly finished.

Prices, from half-a-crown to two pounds. Duplicates at a reduction.

Miniature portraits for ladies' lockets, brooches, or bracelets, at very moderate prices.

An inspection of the Specimens at the Gallery is respectfully solicited.

Open daily, from nine in the morning till five in the evening.

Wakefield Free Press – Saturday 4 September 1875 – **St John's Wakefield**.

To Be Let all that Detached Villa Residence, called Beech House, containing Dining, Drawing, and Breakfast Rooms, Kitchen, Store Rooms, with good Entrance Hall on the ground floor, Seven Bedrooms, Dressing and Bath Rooms, w.c., and excellent Cellaring; also Stabling for two horses, Carriage House, Saddle Room, small Greenhouse, Garden &c. Possession may be had next October. Apply to **J Howgate**, Auctioneer, &c., 9 Southgate, Wakefield.

Leeds Mercury - Friday 7 January 1938 – **Links with the Law** – The engagement is announced of **Mr Thomas Rhodes Catterall**, elder son of **Ald. and Mrs Thomas Edward Catterall**, of Ryburn, St John's, Wakefield, and **Miss Molly Williamson**, eldest daughter of **Mr and Mrs Robert Chapman Williamson**, of St John's Wakefield.

The engagement links two of the oldest and best known firms of solicitors in Wakefield and the West Riding. Mr Catterall's great grandfather, the late **Ald. Joseph Rhodes**, was Mayor of Wakefield in 1865 and his grandfather, the late **Ald. William Rhodes**, died during his term of mayoralty in 1904. His father, **Ald. Thomas Edward Catterall**, is a Freeman of Wakefield and has been prominent in public life in the city for over 30 years. Mr Catterall, who was educated at Mr St Mary's Jesuit College, near Sheffield is a partner in the firm of which his father is the principal.

Mr Robert C Williamson is Clerk to the Wakefield City Justices, but before his appointment he and Alderman Catterall were opposed in the chief courts of Wakefield and the West Riding in hundreds of cases. For some years he served on the Wakefield City Council, and he is well known in the public life of the city. His father was chief clerk in the Wakefield District Probate Registry, and his brother holds the same position there.

Wakefield Express – Saturday 7 September 1918

Gallant Wakefield Soldier. **Lance-Corporal Albert Scaife**, Royal Warwicks, son-in-law of **Mr H M Teasdale**, Arundel Street, Wakefield, has been awarded the Croix de Guerre for gallantry during an attack upon an enemy machine-gun emplacement. The gallant soldier, who is 37 years of age, was a Wakefield Tramway Inspector before joining the Forces about two years ago.

Alledged Assault Case Dismissed. **Tom Barlow**, Grove-road, was summoned by **Albert Parkin** for common assault. The parties are members of the Discharged Sailors and Soldiers' Association, and the trouble arose over some dispute as to the balance-sheet for the recent sports in connection with the organisation. Complainant said that defendant knocked him down, on Saturday night last, when he was at the top of Westgate, and he called two witnesses, but they were only able to say they saw him on the ground, and did not see a blow struck. Defendant said that he was talking to another member of the committee, when complainant kept on interrupting. Eventually he turned round on complainant, who stepped back and slipped. The Bench dismissed the summons, holding that the charge had not been proved.

Prisoners of War or Missing

Corporal Frank Horsfield, 28, Mount Pleasant, Stanley-road, Wakefield, who had been missing since May 8th is now a prisoner of war in Germany and quite well. His parents have received a postcard from him.

Private G H Westmoreland, Quebec-street, Wakefield, who was posted missing since May 27th, is now a prisoner of war in Germany. He is stated to be well. He is 24 years of age, and prior to enlisting was employed at the Wire Works at Thornes.

Wakefield and District War Casualties

Captain Francis Milthorpe Whitlow, son of the late **Mr John Whitlow**, St John's, Wakefield, and a grandson of the late Mr Francis Milthorpe, a former Mayor of Wakefield, was killed in action in France on August 10th. Captain Whitlow went to Canada when quite a young man, and he afterwards took part in the South African War. When the present war broke out he came to this country and enlisted.

Second-Lieutenant W S I Mahon, Loyal North Lancs, son of the **Rev. W Mahon**, Vicar of St Catherine's, Belle Vue, Wakefield, and Chairman of the Wakefield Board of Guardians, is now in the Marylebone Hospital for Officers, suffering from a gunshot wound in the head. He was brought to England as a stretcher case, but happily the wound is not dangerous. He had been in France only four months, and had been in the fighting line for some time, taking part in the last push. He is nineteen years of age, and an old Wakefield Grammar School boy. He went to his regiment from the Cadet School, Trinity College, Cambridge.

Private Herbert (Bert) Oakland, East Yorks, second son of **Mr and Mrs Walter Oakland**, 4 Grantley-street, Wakefield, was killed on 28th August by a shell which fell into the trench. He was nearly 19 years of age, and before enlisting was assistant at Taylor's Drug Store, in Silver Street. He was training for about three months at Brockton Camp, and was sent out to France last Easter. His father and mother have received the following letter from his Officer, **Second-Lieutenant R A Alcock** :- 'It is with the greatest possible regret that I write to inform you of the death of your son, Herbert. He was killed yesterday morning by a shell which fell into the trench just near him. I had been talking to him within a minute and had walked along the trench, but seeing the shell I went back, but only to find him dead, so death mercifully came instantaneously. As you perhaps know, he was my servant, and a more splendid lad I have never met. He was fearless and brave and always did his duty like a man, and having lost him I feel that his place will be hard to fill. Everybody regrets his end as he was so popular both with officers and men. I live in Leeds and should I have the good fortune at any time in the future I should be glad to come and see you and tell you anything else I can.' His elder brother Private Tom Oakland, KOYLI, has been in France about two years, and is a drummer in the band. He joined up at the commencement of the war, being a member of the 1st KOYLI, who were in camp at Whitby, and who were recalled from there at the declaration of War. He is 20 years of age.

Editor – Second-Lieutenant R A (Randal Arthur) Alcock, of Headingley, Leeds, never did have the chance to visit Bert's parents and tell them face to face of how their son was liked by all who knew him, as on the 1st of September 1918 he also was killed and rests in Bancourt British Cemetery near Bapaume, France. Unlike Bert, he has a grave.

Sergeant Cyril Atkinson, Royal Field Artillery, second son of the late **Mr Alfred Atkinson** of the Ram Hotel, Wakefield, was killed in action on Monday last. Formerly he served eight years in the Navy, in which he became an expert gunner. On leaving the Navy he was in the employ of the Wakefield Tramway Company, but in April, 1915, he joined the RFA, and soon rose to the rank of sergeant. On several occasions he was recommended for a commission, but he preferred to remain an NCO. Finally, however, after pressure, he decided to accept a commission, and was expected home this week preparatory to under go his training. He was 28 years of age, and leaves a widow and one child, who live in Grantley-street. Mrs Atkinson has received a very sympathetic letter from the Chaplain who states that her husband was regarded as one of the smartest gunners in the Battery.

Herbert Oakland, son of Walter and Elizabeth Oakland, is remembered on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial. **Private Tom Oakland**, Bert's older brother also fell and is one of 'my boys' in Sugar Lane Cemetery, Wakefield.

Reading Mercury – Saturday 20 May 1916

An allegation that a prisoner of war interned at Wakefield has been ordering pocket flash-lamps from London is to inquired into by the War Office.

Germany has apologised to Spain for the 'erroneously' torpedoing the Sussex, and had promised an indemnity to the family of the composer **Granados**, who lost his life in her.

Mr John Hill, general secretary of the Boiler-makers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders' Society, in his monthly report, states that there is extraordinary activity in all branches of the trade. Of a membership of over 73,000 there were only 155 members out of employment.

Residents of Weybridge are offering prizes to local school children collecting the largest number of dead 'queen' wasps and destroying wasps' nests.

Thirty thousand women paraded in Glasgow on Saturday as a protest against the manufacture and sale of alcohol during the war and for six months after.

London roads will not be watered this summer.

Jersey has decided to fall into line with the Daylight Saving Bill.

Shakespeare and the Daylight Saving Bill – Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day. Comedy of Errors.

Farm servant girls at Sleaford, Lincolnshire hiring fair demanded an increase of 25 per cent in their yearly wages.

Family Trees

For most of my life I have been interested in the ambitions of many to trace their family trees and for the past twenty or more years have researched my own ancestry. Throughout this time I have had cause to read many magazines on the subject (including of course the excellent Kinsman) and one aspect of heredity which gets occasional mention in them is the reporting of what were known as Bastardy cases, particularly those mentioned in the English Press during the nineteenth century. The importance of the outcome of the cases sometimes related to inheritance problems, but many were concerned with the claim by the mother of the child for maintenance payments from the claimed father.

It has always seemed to me that the occurrence of illegitimate births over the centuries must always have been greater than those which became public knowledge, often due to the willingness of parents to accept a child as their own to avoid local notoriety, which must have been the case for many families.

This raises a question of the validity of some family trees, even well researched ones. Does this matter? In the modern world with DNA evidence available it probably does, but where a child was accepted into the family and raised as one of the family, it can be argued that as a child of the mother there should be no distinction. It's an interesting thought that had our societies developed differently with emphasis on the female line then an "illegitimate" birth would have no significance at all.

My conclusion in all this is to accept the fact that each one of us has an "Official" family tree, with which if traced back as far as desired or possible, we can often take great satisfaction. We should also bear in mind that there might be an "Actual" family tree, which might differ from the "Official", and which by virtue of circumstances will probably never be traceable. We can though take some satisfaction in the fact that the "Official" and the "Actual" will in many cases be the same.

Chris Pearman Mem. No. 1253

Editor – A very true and interesting point. My grandfather was 'base born' in Morayshire. I know his mother had an amendment made to his birth certificate – a Record of Corrected Entry. This entry appeared in the margin on the front of his certificate, Scotland is wonderful, with added notes on the reverse – something England does not do but in my opinion should. From this entry I knew who was the father (supposedly). From this RCE (as they are known), I could follow up on a court case when my great grandmother, Jesse Riach took the father of her child to court. She was awarded 7 guineas (about £1,300) a year for 7 years. A lot of money in 1899. So, my granddad, John Riach, may or may not, should or shouldn't be a RIACH and therefore my One-name Study might have been MacDonald. But the Riachlotts are easier to find, match with families, unless you are called John or James Riach, and are more fun to find.

Looks like my granddad's line falls into one of these categories.

Richard Gower (1823 – 1890)

A Tale of Coal and Hull

Thomas Heald, wealthy Wakefield merchant, had just four grandchildren. They were the three sons and one daughter of his son Charles and they all grew up in the slums of Hull after being abandoned by Charles who opted for a life of ship's captain and trader in the East India Company including bigamy and debtors' prison in Calcutta (see Kinsman Vol 27 N°4).

Charles Heald married **Sophia Redmore** in 1822. The curate was **George Mackereth**. The curate for his parents' marriage in Wakefield 36 years earlier had been **John Mackereth**. It seems that Charles hadn't completely cut his ties with Wakefield! Having come from a wealthy family in Wakefield it might be imagined that he married well below his station in life. But the indications suggest that Sophia was from a middle class family. She signed the marriage register in a confident hand unlike the mother-in-law she never knew; she had certainly had some education! The Redmores were a Lincolnshire family who can be traced back to the early 17th century, moving from town to town; Boston, Partney, Sibsey, Louth... A professional archaeologist/historian friend on hearing the list said, "Sheep! They were all major sheep markets especially Partney which is now no more than a village." So they were probably dealing in sheep or sheep products. The Redmores – two brothers and their families – crossed the Humber at the end of the 18th century. One line of the family produced two of the greatest marine artists of the 19th century; **Henry Redmore** and his son **Edward King Redmore**. The former has a blue plaque on the house where he lived in Hull.



So for Sophia to be abandoned to eke out a living in the courts of Hull while working as a laundress must have been devastating. She raised the four children and by 1841, the eldest, Edward, was working as an apprentice carpenter. By 1851 the boys were all doing fine; Edward had moved out while Thomas (plumber and glazier) and Charles, jnr (wood turner) were employed and presumably helping the family finances. But for the daughter, Mary, things were not so good. She was married, had a four-year old son, **Albert Heald Gower**, but she was living with her mother. She had married **Richard Gower** in August 1846 two months before the birth of Albert. Richard then deserted her.

It seems that he had married Mary in haste after getting her pregnant. On his marriage certificate he is described as 21 years old and a widower! He had married **Elizabeth Grassby** just two years previously in April 1843. The following year Elizabeth had given birth to a boy – naturally named Thomas after Richard's father. But the boy died soon after birth and on 2nd January 1845 Elizabeth also died. She was just 25. The cause of death was recorded as "Visitation from God in a natural way". This was a customary way of saying that they hadn't a clue why she had died. Presumably nothing to do with post-natal complications!

After leaving Mary, Richard moved in with a single woman called **Jane Jacques**. She was a native of Saltfleet in Lincolnshire and four years his senior. In the 1851 census she was living as 'Jane Gower' with Richard on Dagger Lane in Hull Docks. This was just ¼ mile from Mary, her mother Sophia and little Albert in Amity Court. Richard had got his mariner's ticket and was a stoker on the steam ships – a very hot, unpleasant and dangerous occupation for the toughest of men!

It's not certain how long Richard and Jane lived together but by 1861 Richard was back with his wife Mary and son Albert who was now 14 years old. Richard was described as an engine driver in the census but whether this was a stationary engine that was used in the docks or a locomotive is unclear. My guess is it's the former. Albert was a basket maker (think in terms of industrial containers!) Meanwhile Jane was back under her maiden name (Jacques) on Dock Street as a servant in the house of a military officer and his wife.

By this time there was the problem of Mary's elderly mother, Sophia. Having brought up her family she was now condemned to live alone while continuing as a laundress. She lived nearby, still in Amity Court. It seems a family decision was made to move her to Althorpe in Lincolnshire to be near to one of her sons, **Thomas George Heald**. There was also the lingering problem of Jane Jacques. It's hard to imagine that she meekly accepted being thrown over after many years living as Richard's wife and then being forced into service. A plan seems to have been concocted because Sophia moved across the Pennines to the Lancashire coast to live near her eldest son Edward Redmore Heald. At the same time Jane Jacques also moved to the same place. As Sophia was over 70 it is likely that Jane was paid to take the old lady and to stay with her in Lancashire! Sophia died in the following year at Hesketh Bank near Preston. Jane found a farmer, **Robert Rimmer** with whom she lived as his common-law wife (she died as **Jane Rimmer**).

Richard and Mary then had a further four children born between 1861 and 1869. The second born son, inevitably called Richard, was 15 years younger than his elder brother Albert!

By 1871 Richard was running his own business as a coal dealer. He was a well known person in his neighbourhood and with the authorities. In 1874 he found himself in front of the court charged with criminal damage. It seems he took some timber belonging to a Mr Hart's premises and sawed it up. He was found guilty, fined 5/- (25p) and ordered to pay costs. In 1882 he ran over a woman in his 'rully' (horse drawn wagon) who subsequently died. In 1884 he was again in front of the court charged with performing his coal business without displaying his ticket – fined 5/- plus costs.

In 1890 Richard made his last court appearance charged with cruelty to his horse. The full story (*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 28 May 1890) really does tell us about Richard Gower's character:

*HULL – EXCITING CONDUCT IN THE POLICE COURT – Yesterday at the Hull Police Court – before **Mr Twiss**, stipendiary magistrate – Richard Gower, coal dealer, was summoned for cruelly treating a horse. A constable deposed to seeing the defendant thrash the animal; in a shocking manner with a whip stock. Another witness, a **Mrs Gaunt**, stated that she had seen him drag the horse up and down the street by its tongue. Defendant admitted this, and said he should continue to ill-use it if it refused to obey him. The animal had refused on the day in question to allow its collar to be put on, and he thrashed it out of revenge. Defendant behaved in a very singular manner in court, and made use of strong language. He also began to whine and growl like a dog, and some of the occupants of the court, evidently thinking of hydrophobia [rabies], left the court. Mr Twiss then ordered the man, who had closed his eyes and let fall his hat, to stand on one side. He refused to do so at first, and being assisted to a seat, he said to the officer in attendance, "Don't treat me like a ----- dog." Mrs Gaunt was recalled and said defendant was a terror to the neighbourhood where he lived; but she thought his conduct was assumed. He used most violent language to anyone he came across, and sometimes struck them. She believed he was in his right senses, for a doctor had seen him and pronounced him to be "sound". His conduct was sheer badness the medical man had stated. Defendant was ordered by Mr Twiss to be taken to the cells for a while, and subsequently on being again brought before his Worship he continued his singular conduct, and maintained an impudent demeanour. He was committed for 30 days.*

He sounds a formidable bully. In fact, according to his seaman's ticket he measured 5' 6"; about the same height as Napoleon!

How did Mary cope with this singular husband? One way was by turning to God in the form of the Catholic Apostolic Church. This had been recently established (1835) and was close to where they lived at Amity Court. Catholic Apostolic? It's nothing to do with Roman Catholic and is a form of dissenting Protestantism with some unconventional beliefs(!).

Adherence to this church passed down the female side of our family until it was soundly rejected by my mother and her four sisters! But a second cousin of mine, Eileen, remembers being in meetings with a variety of female relatives and friends as a child and being expected to comply with the beliefs. She too rejected it and became a licensee of a village pub in Lincolnshire!

Richard didn't fade away. He died just four months after his release from prison. The cause of death was "Apoplexy, three days" which means he had a stroke and died three days later. His estate was valued at £49 (about £5,500 in current values) and was passed to his wife Mary. When she died two years later, her will was very specific and details what each of her children receive. Perhaps the most surprising item is "the oil painting of my husband"! Presumably that had been funded by the bequest from Mary's Auntie Eliza in Wakefield. The value of Mary's estate was £55 (£6,020).

One of her children was Eva Cresswell Gower (pictured). This was my mother's grandmother; the grandmother who was reputed to have come from a 'good family'. She was very religious, formal and not held highly in my mother's affections. My mum and her sisters had no happy memories of her. The same traits passed to her daughter, my grandmother. Was family history set by Charles Heald's betrayal back in 1830?



And I wonder what Thomas Heald (the Wakefield merchant) would have thought of the husband of his only granddaughter. It was two separate worlds!

Another Walk Around Sugar Lane

Sugar Lane Cemetery is not the most photogenic cemetery, unlike Highgate or Kensal Green in London or even Undercliffe in Bradford. But Wakefield's City of the Silent has a few interesting stories - some already told, while others wait in the wings.

When I first saw this headstone, my first reaction was **Dr Skidmore**. Do the names on this slightly adorned headstone have a connection to the doctor?



I'm not sure, but I may be able to find out. If I don't, I may provide you with enough ammunition to find out for yourself.

Joshua Annable Skidmore of the Parish of Matlock, married **Sarah Agnes Robinson** of this Parish (Richmond) by Licence on the 11th of September 1828. The Leeds Mercury of Saturday, 10th September, 1828 – A local newspaper of the time informs friends, neighbours and distant family - At Richmond, Mr J A Skidmore, of Matlock Bath, to Sarah Agnes, eldest daughter of **Mr J Robinson**, of Richmond.

In 1851, Joshua was living at St John's, Wakefield. He was with four children and two servants, and Sarah Agnes was not at home. Ten years later, the family address is St John's Place. At home on the night of the census were Joshua, Sarah, two children and two servants. Joshua described his occupation as a Commercial Traveller in the Grocery and Tea Trade.

Did Joshua and Sarah Agnes have a nondescript life? You decide, as both Joshua and Sarah Agnes are mentioned in the Quarter Sessions in 1857/8, along with their cook, concerning a little black bonnet. The Indictment can be found on the Ancestry website and is an interesting read. **Ann Person** and **Charlotte Hirst Taylor** also get a mention.

Joshua seems to have had his fingers in a lot of pies. Alternatively, there may have been more than one Joshua Annable trading, working, and living in Wakefield during that time. There was his son. 1835 - 1870. The British Newspaper Archive and Newspaper.com have numerous entries for Joshua, but during specific periods, it is challenging to distinguish between them. Partnerships are being dissolved, and bankruptcies are being brought before the authorities. I think that the worsted company and the railway dealings are to the son as Joshua Snr is always on documents as a Company Traveller of sorts.

I digress, but I feel I must vindicate Joshua Sr. Joshua Jr., his wife, and servant were in St. Peter Port, Guernsey, in 1861. Joshua is a Proprietor of Railway Shares and Mortgages, so I presume, a thing you should never do. However, upon examining newspapers from 1845, the time the younger Joshua would have been a child, it appears that the elder Joshua was the Director of a railway.

The electoral registers, which I looked at for 1863, indicate that Joshua qualified to vote as owning both Freehold houses and Freehold and Copyhold land - more than likely on Burton Street.

Five years later, Sarah Agnes, the beloved wife of Joshua, died on the 1st of December 1865. One source for where Sarah Agnes died states that she was in Holland Park. Could she have been visiting Holland Park when she was missing from the census in 1861?

Joshua survived another 20 years, dying on April 10, 1885, at the age of 84.

Joshua Annable Skidmore of now Cheapside, Wakefield, is included in the National Probate Calendar of 1885. His entry reads:- *Skidmore{Joshua Annable Esq.}. Personal Estate £1,285 8s 1d. 27 May. The Will of Joshua Annable Skidmore late of Cheapside Wakefield in the County of York Esquire who died 10 April 1885 at Cheapside was proved at Wakefield by **Charles Skidmore** (1839-1908) of Darlington in the County Palatine of Durham Barrister-at-Law and **Henry Skidmore** (1841-1923) of West Applerly Bridge near Leeds in the County of York Commercial Traveller the Sons and **William Rogers** of 13 Belsize-Park Hampstead in the County of Middlesex Gentleman the Executors.*

I feel that I have planted the seed and primed the ammunition; it is now time for someone else, either a relative or a curious reader, to carry on, determine who was the bankrupt, and find out why Joshua Jr. went to the Channel Islands. Also, prove or not, is there a connection to Dr Skidmore? And possibly write an article.

The Skidmore family of Derbyshire were originally lead miners. For anyone interested in the family, a One-Name Study and website are available for the surname.

The National Archives

Podcasts from the National Archives cover a broad range of subjects with information gleaned from material held within the archive and are added to on a regular basis.

Some of the varied subjects include; 700 Years of the Thames. From frozen festivals to royal polar bears, wartime recovery to medieval merchants. Another 'On the Record' theme is 'Victory in Europe Day'. If you fancy a delve into Official Secrets, then the podcast about MI5 and Britain's security is right up your street. 'Working Women in History' explores lives, struggles and resilience. 'Echoes of the Empire' delves into over 4,000 boxes of letters, papers and artefacts from ships captured by the British between 1652 and 1815 and explores our history on the high seas.

Others that relate to family are immigration records, wills, BMD registers in England and Wales. Plus military subjects, suffrage, civilian bravery. There is always a subject that you will find interesting and helpful.

New Releases – Over 200 Cabinet Office and Prime Ministers' papers some of which relate to the late Queen Elizabeth's beloved Britannia.

These podcasts and many more are found at: media.nationalarchives.gov.uk

A Wakefield Coal miner and His Wife

Thomas Bennett and Elizabeth “Betty” Westwood

A stone church dedicated to St. Michael & All Angels sits on a green hill in Thornhill, Yorkshire. The church dates back to the 14th century, but fragments of Anglo-Saxon crosses suggest that the site has been holy ground to Christians for much longer, at least since the 9th century. The church covers an old Anglo-Saxon burial ground; a much newer graveyard abuts the church in the back.

It was to this ancient church, in the spring of 1805, that **John** and **Martha Bennett** of Thornhill Lees brought my three-times great-grandfather - three-week-old **Thomas Bennett** - to be christened. As the vicar dipped a cup into the great stone baptistry, the old knightly Savile family slumbered in their ornate tombs, whilst St. Michael, the prophets, and the Christ watched from their medieval stained glass windows. Four months later, coalminer **John Westwood** and **Mary Smith** of Middlestown christened my 3-times great-grandmother Elizabeth, affectionately called Betty, at the same church.

No one then—except perhaps St. Michael—could have guessed that little Thomas and Betty would grow up to fall in love and wed 20 years later on the day after Christmas, in the nearby All Saints Cathedral in Wakefield.

Early Lives

When Thomas and Betty were born in 1805, **George III** was king of England. Europe was in the throes of the Napoleonic wars. Yorkshire, in the middle of the first Industrial Revolution, was quickly growing into a coal mining and woollen manufacturing centre. By the time they turned six, the Regency Era had dawned. By the time they were seven, the Luddites were mobbing against the industrialization of weaving. At age 15, they saw the coronation of a new king - **George IV**. And in 1825, when they wed, Yorkshire welcomed its first passenger trains.

We do not know much about either Thomas or Betty's early lives. We know that Betty's father John and all of her brothers were coal miners. We also know that she was the fourth of six children: Jane (1794-1862) (married to **William Wilkinson**); Thomas (1800-1874) (married to **Frances Scargill**); Margaret (1803-); Betty (1805-1875) (married to **Thomas Bennett**); John (1808-1870) (married to **Mary Rotheray**); and Henry (1810-1870) (married to **Jane Dews**). We also know that Betty was close to her older sister Jane. The Bennetts lived near the Wilkinsons for most of their married life and one of Jane's sons would later take in some of Betty's sons.

We know even less about Thomas's early life. We do not know his mother's maiden name or even what his father John did for a living, although he was likely a coal miner or a weaver. Through recent DNA matches, we know that Thomas had at least four or five older siblings or half-siblings. Thomas worked in the coal mines his whole adult life and, given the times, may have worked there as a child.

Neither Betty nor Thomas had much, if any, formal education. Both used their marks to sign their marriage record. But Thomas, at least, eventually learned to form his letters well enough to compose and sign several letters to their daughter Ellen - my three times great-grandmother - after she left England for America.

Horbury Years

The newlyweds settled in nearby Horbury. By 1833, they lived on Hagg's Hill Lane. Thomas worked in one of the local mines, probably in **John Woollin's** Hagg's Lane Colliery, just down the road. Woollin's Hagg's Lane Colliery was small and eventually became the site of the Old Roundwood Colliery, a much larger coal mining operation.¹

Eight children blessed Thomas and Betty's Horbury home: Mary Ann (1827-1898); Francis (1829-1831); George (1831-1898); Ellen (1833-1889); Henry (1835-1906); John (1838-1899); Martha (1841-1897), and Charles (1844-1913). The Bennetts' children had a remarkably low mortality rate for the times. All lived to marry and have children of their own, except for Francis, who died at age 18 months.

Thomas and Betty christened their first five children at the local Anglican church—St. Peter & St. Leonard's in Horbury. Unlike St. Michael & All Angels, St. Peter and St. Leonard's was new and modern, a mere four decades old. The Neo-classical church, completed in 1794, was a gift from **John Carr**, a local prominent architect and son of a Horbury stone mason.

But by the time the two youngest children - Martha and Charles - were born, Thomas and Betty had adopted Methodism, which was then enjoying a revival among the Yorkshire working class. There is no record of John, Martha, or Charles being baptized in the Church of England. Rather, eight-year-old Martha and five-year-old Charles were baptized together on 30 August 1849 in the Primitive Methodist Church, which "front[ed] the turn-pike road leading from Wakefield to Huddersfield." The stone chapel had been built in about 1842.

1 Ossett's Coal Mines, https://www.ossett.net/ossett_coal.html (last visited on 14 April 2025).

If Thomas worked in the mines before age ten, his children did not. According to the 1841 England Census, none of his children - ranging in ages from one to 14 - were working. By 1844, when Charles was born, Parliament required mills and mines employing children to give them six half-days for school every week, although these employers were not always compliant. When the Bennett children were born, the literacy rate for men in England was only about 60%, and was likely lower in the working and poorer classes. The rate among English women was about half that. By the 1870's, the literacy rate for both men and women in England jumped to 76%. The Bennett children fell within that top 60 to 70 per cent, as shown by their letters to their sister Ellen after she left for America.

When the Bennetts lived in Horbury, there was no formal church school, "only a small endowed school which barely taught the '3Rs', several Dame schools and the old Sunday School run jointly with the Wesleyans." Given their connection to the Methodist Church, the Bennett children's education likely came from the "old Sunday School" in Horbury.

In the mid- to late-1840s, Thomas and Betty moved to Hartshead cum Clifton, where **Robin Hood** supposedly met his infamous death. The timing of their move coincided with the selling of the Haggs Lane Colliery.

Marriages, births, and deaths

As the 1850s dawned, life looked promising for the Bennetts. In 1851, most of them lived at 100 Clifton Road in Hartshead cum Clifton. The older children were all employed and could thus contribute to the family coffers. Ellen, now 17, was the oldest child living at home and worked as a power loom weaver in the woollen mills. Her younger brother, 12-year-old John, worked in a coal mine. Martha, ten, and Charles, seven, were in school. Mary Ann had married coal miner **Joseph Saville**, also of Horbury, three years earlier. They lived just down the street, at 128 Clifton Road, with one-year-old **Elizabeth Saville**, Thomas and Betty's first grandchild. Their second granddaughter, **Jane Saville**, would arrive just four months after the 1851 England Census. Meanwhile, 19-year-old George and 16-year-old Henry worked in a coal mine in Horbury and lived with their cousin **Joseph Wilkinson** and his wife Betty.

The decade, however, saw its ups and downs for the Bennetts, bringing more marriages, more grandbabies, and partings. By February 1852, Mary Ann and Joseph Saville moved to nearby Brighouse where they buried their first child - three-year-old Elizabeth. A year later, they greeted their third daughter, Sarah, only to part with her 18 months later. A year after that - 1855 - their first and only son Thomas joined his only surviving sister, three-year-old Jane. Thomas and Jane would be the only two of Mary Ann's children to survive childhood.

Ellen was the next of the Bennett children to marry and leave home. She wed **Edward William Darnley** at St. Peter's Cathedral in Bradford, on 5th September 1853. Although Ellen was only 20, the parish marriage record lists her age as 21. Because the age of consent then was 21, it is likely that Thomas was not there to give his consent. Or, perhaps, Ellen believed that her father would not approve of the marriage, and so added a year to her age. Edward, a stone mason, was also 20. He listed his father's occupation as brewer on the parish marriage record. Edward neatly signed his name, while Ellen used her mark.

We do not know where or how Ellen and Edward met, although in 1851, Edward's parents—**Henry** and **Christiana Darnley**, nee **Cash**—and Edward's two brothers lived just down the street from the Bennetts on Clifton Road. About a year before the marriage, Ellen had been baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). The two possibly met at church meetings, although Edward did not formally join the church until 1857, four years after they married.

Ellen and Edward settled in Westgate Common, Alverthorpe-cum-Thornes, not far from Clifton. It was here, on 28th August 1854, that they had their first child, Mary Ann. Ellen and Edward soon moved to Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, not far from where Edward's mother's family were from and where there was an active branch of their new-found church. In 1857, they had their second and last child, **Charles William Darnley**.

Meanwhile, George married **Sarah Hemingway** in 1854; Henry married **Ann Ainsworth**, in 1855; and John married **Phoebe Walker Cawthorne**, in 1858.

"You have not been forgotten . . ."

In 1860, Ellen and Edward took their children and sailed to America with a group of other Latter-day Saints, with plans of joining the main body of the church out West, in the Utah Territory. Edward and Ellen remained behind in New York City to save enough money to continue their journey west. Edward worked in the Cypress Hills Cemetery in Brooklyn, carving headstones. Little six-year-old Mary Ann died in October of that year. She was buried in the cemetery where her father worked. Edward died two months later, leaving Ellen alone to care for three-year-old Willie. Edward was buried near Mary. The cemetery is an active burial ground today. Ironically, neither the stone mason nor his daughter have a headstone marking their graves.

Thomas and his sons wrote to Ellen, urging her to return to England and promising to somehow send her the money for her return passage. But, in 1861, on the eve of the American Civil War, Ellen and Willie managed to cross the plains to Utah. Ellen eventually married my 2-times great-grandfather **David White Rogers**, with whom she had five children, including **Martha Ella Rogers**, my great-grandmother.

Thomas and his sons again wrote to Ellen expressing their great disappointment at her decision to go the “valleys”: “Ellen, do you remember when you was about to cross the sea, you said, ‘*Father, pray for us.*’ Ellen you have not been forgotten. At the hour of grace, your name, Ellen, has often caused the tears to gush from your poor father’s eyes, and mother’s to gush with tears.”¹

By 1861, Thomas and Betty moved to Morley, near Leeds. The 1861 England Census, shows Thomas in Morley as a lodger with another coal worker and Betty, a “coal miner’s wife,” in Alverthorpe with Martha and Charles. But, as their letters to Ellen show, the entire family soon moved to Morley.

Daughter Martha, 23, married clothier **Thomas Firth Copley** in 1864, at Batley All Saints. The youngest brother Charles signed as a witness to the marriage. Charles, himself, wed **Hannah Peace** two years later.

“I still live . . .”

Although Ellen and her family corresponded faithfully from 1861 until the early 1890’s, the letter box at the Bennett’s Morley home remained empty for many, many months. In late 1865, or early 1866, Thomas fell ill and was unable to work for 15 months. His illness was so grave that he was not expected to recover and his children wrote as much to Ellen. But Thomas rebounded and was able to work from about August 1866 to February 1867, before relapsing.

On 25 March 1867, Thomas wrote to Ellen that he had read “with joy,” her letter of 6 March to her brother Charles. *“I see that you want to know more about Father’s sickness and how mother was. Well, Ellen, I thought your Father would be as likely to tell you about his sickness as your brother Charles.”* Thomas wrote that they had “often wondered” that she had never written her parents in Morley, *“but when I read your letter, I then know that you thought that I was dead. But Ellen, I still live and have the pleasure of writing these few lines to you once more.”* Thomas explained that they had *“thought that you had forgotten your Father and Mother at Morley, but we had not forgotten you at the throne of grace, nor yours.”*²

1 Letter from Thomas Bennett to Ellen Bennett Darnley, dated 26 March 1862 (original in author’s possession) (spelling and punctuation corrected for ease of reading).

2 Letter from Thomas Bennett to Ellen Bennett, 25 March 1867 (original in author’s possession) (spelling and punctuation corrected for ease of reading).

This would be Thomas's last letter to Ellen. Less than 3 months later, the coal mines where Thomas had spent his life, claimed his lungs. Thomas, 62, died of chronic bronchitis. He was buried in the Morley Cemetery. He too lacks a marker for his grave.

Thomas's passing was deeply mourned by his family. Two years later, Charles would write to Ellen: *"I am still trying myself to walk in the steps of our Father, which has gone to heaven, that I may have the pleasure of meeting him again at the right hand of our God."*

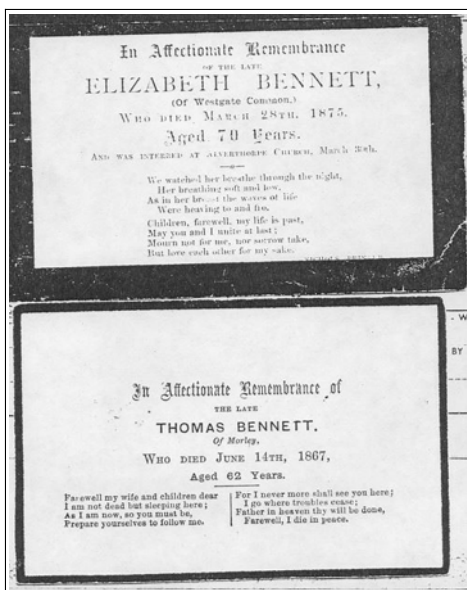
A Coal Miner's Widow

After Thomas's death, Betty lived with their daughter Martha and her husband Tom Copley in Morley. Betty minded the house and children while Martha worked at the mill where her husband was an overlooker. In February 1872, Mary Ann wrote that their mother and one of Martha's little girls was visiting Mary Ann in Rastrick for a few weeks. Mary Ann wrote to Ellen that their mother had wistfully remarked that if Ellen "was only a hundred miles off, she would go and see you."

Betty and Ellen never met again in this life. Betty, who in life was called a "coal miner's wife," was in death called a "coal miner's widow." She died on 28th March 1875, of *"decay of nature,"* at the home of her son Henry, on Ossett Road, Westgate Common, Thornes. She was 70 years old. A memory card sent to Ellen announcing the death, said: *"Mourn not for me, nor sorrow take, But love each other for my sake."* Betty was not buried next to her beloved Thomas; she was instead buried alone in an unmarked grave in the churchyard of St. Paul, at Alverthorpe.

Legacy

At the time of her death, Betty and Thomas had at least 43 living descendants: seven children and 35 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. They had been preceded in death by one child, 14 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild. Today they have hundreds of descendants. Most of their descendants have remained in Yorkshire and England. Some, like Ellen, emigrated to the United States and Canada. Many of them, like Thomas, were coal miners.



Others were quarry workers, foundry workers, and mill hands. Some became engineers, surveyors, school teachers, and lawyers. Some of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, on both sides of the Atlantic, gave their lives in World War I. Later descendants would serve in World War II. It is unlikely that they, their parents, or even St. Michael, would have guessed the long reach that a Yorkshire coal miner and his wife would have for generations to come.

Laura Dupaix Mem. No. 1499

Edward Redmore Heald (1823 – 1911)

Thomas Heald, wealthy Wakefield merchant, had three grandsons. In the last article I described the tribulations of his granddaughter, Mary, and her struggle with her errant husband **Richard Gower**. Her brothers had very different experiences in life.

Thomas George Heald - The second born, Thomas George Heald (named after his grandfather, Thomas, and great-grandfather, George) led a quiet life with no notable events, much to the annoyance of Peter, the holder of the Heald bible and a direct descendant. Thomas married, settled in North Lincolnshire, had a large family with many grandchildren and worked as a plumber and glazier. However at least one of Thomas's descendants has become a person of note in his own field. **Liam Bramley** is currently a noted football coach who has worked for Newcastle United, Aston Villa, Norwich City and is now (June 2025) the England Under-18 manager.

Charles Broadley Heald - The youngest, Charles, was a troubled person throughout his life. Perhaps the loss of the father he never knew, and after whom he was named, was a factor. As a teenager he was in court for a serious sexual assault against a young woman and fined £6. He was twice married but had no children. In 1900 he posted an advert that asked for information about his brother Edward in Australia. He didn't die peacefully in his bed either.

In 1905 the Hull Times report stated, "Suicide whilst of unsound mind was the verdict returned at the inquest held on the body of a joiner named **Charles Heald** of 7, St. Marys Terrace, Manchester Street, Hull, who on Saturday was discovered by his [step] grand daughter **Ethel Williamson**. She gave evidence and said her grandfather had been strange in his manner recently and depressed." His wife said he went out this morning. He returned about noon and said he felt queer. He then went upstairs for the purpose, he stated, of chopping wood. He hung himself.

Edward Redmore Heald - Edward Redmore Heald was the eldest son of Charles Heald and **Sophia Redmore**. Like his siblings he had a difficult

upbringing after his father disappeared. His mother and sister had to wash clothes to make a living and they lived in the 'Courts' which were the slum dwellings of Hull. Edward became a shipwright. He married **Emma Postill** in 1842 when he was 19 and they had two children (Sophia Heald and Edward Redmore Heald, jnr.). He is recorded twice in the 1851 census, once at home in Hull and the other in Shipley, West Yorkshire where he was lodging in a beer house with another shipwright from Hull. Shipley is on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and it is likely he was working away from home. In 1860 Emma died; she was 35.

Edward moved away and in the following year he was working as a shipwright in the navy dockyard at Sheerness in Kent and lodging in the town. There he met a local girl, **Mary Ann Clunn**, 14 years his junior. The following year they had a son, **Edward George Heald**.



In 1863 Edward made a decision that would change his life. He was working on a naval ship called the Victor which had been put into the port of Sheerness for repair.

The Victor was a steam-powered vessel with auxiliary sails. It was sold by the Navy to a businessman, ostensibly for use in the China trade. However the purchasers weren't businessmen and they weren't about to sail to China. The British authorities found out that she was destined to be a Confederate commerce raider and ordered her detention. Too late – the vessel immediately set sail from Sheerness with workmen still on board and only a token crew. The American Civil War had been raging for two years and the British Government was allied to the Unionist States and therefore the Confederacy had the status of an enemy power. As it was still being



fitted out as a warship a number of shipwrights were enlisted into the Confederate Navy – Edward Redmore Heald being one of them. The photo here shows him in Confederate uniform.



This meant that the English men who had signed up were now wanted men! The Victor, now renamed the CSS Rappahannock, fled down the Thames Estuary. She was commissioned a Confederate man-of-war underway, but while passing out of the Thames Estuary her bearings burned out and she had to be taken across to Calais for repairs. That was the last manoeuvre she made. The French impounded the ship and prevented her from continuing and the crew were stranded.

The English couldn't return home because they would have to stand trial for treason: Edward unsurprisingly stayed in Calais. Mary Ann joined him in Calais and they were married there in 1864. After the end of the American Civil War they made their way back to England, apparently now safe from the risk of arrest. He returned to Kent but tragically his six year old son drowned in the creek at Milton.

By 1871 he and his family had moved to the coast of Lancashire (Hesketh Bank) which is where his mother, Sophia, came to live with him. It seems he was working as a shipwright on small vessels – coast and canal. In 1881 the family moved to Wigan which is on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. In 1889 his two surviving sons, **Thomas George Heald** (another one!) and **George Frank Heald** emigrated to Australia. They were 17 and 21 respectively. Not to be outdone Edward and Mary Ann followed them two years later and settled at Echuca, Victoria. No doubt the passage of all the Heald family to Australia was funded from the £100 inherited from **Eliza Heald** in 1882. Edward and Mary Ann had a long retirement with Edward dying in 1911, aged 87. Mary Ann died five years later. There are many Heald descendants in Australia with several descendants named Thomas George Heald.

The Family Bible of...



In a previous article I wrote about **Thomas Heald**, a prosperous merchant of hats, wigs, perfumes and hairdressing who traded from Kirkgate in Wakefield as well as St James, Piccadilly in London. Thomas had a family bible. The bible is everything you would expect the bible of a prosperous merchant to be. It is enormous, about 18" high, 12" wide and about 4" thick. It is made with high quality paper and bound in a thick leather binding. It probably weighs about 8kg. It had been printed in the Flesh-Market in Newcastle in 1787 (see below) and would have been very expensive. The contents are magnificent with many wood-cut illustrations and chapters on

theology at the back. Originally on the spine was a gold-embossed panel with the names of Thomas and his wife Mary (see photo above). That is now fixed inside the bible for reasons that will become clear.

I said Thomas's bible. Why not Mary's bible? Because she was illiterate and signed the marriage record with a cross so it is unlikely that she ever used the bible (unless she looked at the pictures!) All the entries of births and deaths carefully recorded inside the back cover were made by Thomas. But there was no entry made in 1808 for Mary's death. Thomas didn't record it; it definitely wasn't Mary's bible!

Like so many family bibles this is a precious record of the members of the Heald family. It helped to solve the problem of his son Charles's birth date. Charles was baptised in Wakefield All Saints (the Cathedral) in March 1802 but various records suggested he was born a few years earlier; the bible records his birth as 11th November 1799. Problem solved but no reason given for the delay in getting the baby baptised.

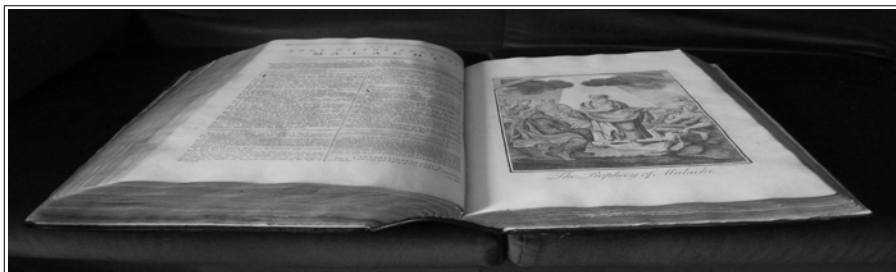
Peter, the current holder of the bible, began researching his tree long before the Internet provided digital records. He travelled to churches and various archives. He also made contact with his second cousin **John Heald**, who lived locally. **Thomas George Heald** (1827 – 1903), the son of Charles, is their common ancestor.

John seemed to know very little about family history but asked to be kept informed. Peter then spent months travelling to archives to build the tree. He then went to see John again to share what he had found and what could not be discovered. John said he felt it was a waste of time. But then his wife said, "What about that book?" "Which one?" "The one in the loft."

'The book' turned out to be the bible. Inside the front and back covers there is genealogical information, recorded by the Healds between 1791 and 1905. It contains all the information that Peter had spent many months accumulating from various sources in a multitude of locations. He consoled himself with the fact that his own research was now proven by the bible.. Eventually he persuaded John to hand over the bible. It was in a bad state with the binding loose and disintegrating and water damage such that the leather binding was soft and mushy in parts.

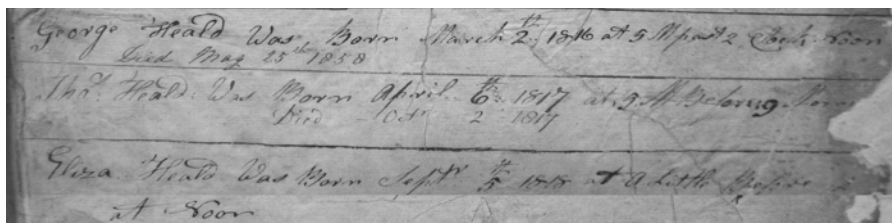
At a local history group Peter mentioned the bible and discovered that one of the group was a specialist in restoring old documents, a job he was contracted to do solely for a northern Cathedral. Peter asked him if he could help and said he would pay whatever it took. His contact told him there was no way he could do it – it was more than his job was worth. Later, when they were alone, the restorer told Peter he would have a look at it. He told him to bring the bible to the cathedral in a nondescript bag. He was to walk into the

cathedral as though he was confident of where he was going and to avoid reception. He gave further directions to his workshop; he was to leave it there.

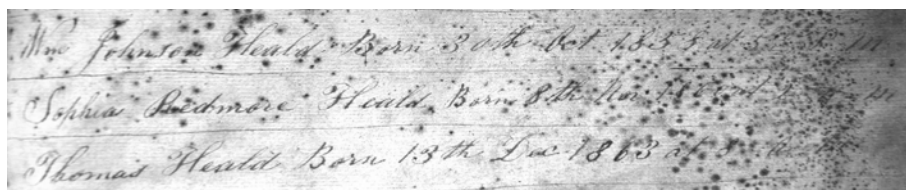


And so the bible was professionally restored for £200. It is in remarkably good condition considering the state it had got into in the loft. The restorer also included a special box for it to be kept in so that it wouldn't fox any further. There is some water staining on the pages but it is not bad and the bible can be read easily.

Unfortunately the genealogical information recorded by the family has fared worse. Written on inferior paper the foxing is progressing and making areas of script illegible. Fortunately Peter had transcribed and photographed the script at a time when it was less damaged.



Below are examples of the water damage to the family data – top shows the 18th century sheet which has lost some edges and has ripped. Bottom shows cheaper 19th century paper which has foxed badly in places.



So how did the bible come into **John Heald's** possession? Thomas's daughter, Eliza, was the last of the Wakefield family. The only other person in the Heald family that she knew was Edward Redmore Heald, the eldest of

Charles's (the one who went to Calcutta!) children. But, nine years later, Edward emigrated to Australia (1891). He evidently passed it to his next brother, Thomas George Heald, who lived in Belton, Lincs.

This Thomas, grandson of the merchant Thomas, continued the tradition by recording the births of his NINE children by his wife **Elizabeth** (née **Johnson**) between 1853 and 1873. The bible then passed to his seventh child, James. James recorded his first two children, Ada (1901) and Walter (1905). Two further children who died in infancy were not entered into the bible. The bible went to Walter who died in 1954 and it was his son, John, who was in possession of 'the book'.

What would have happened to it if Peter hadn't taken possession of it? Probably, like so many other family bibles, it would have found it's way into landfill or used to light the fire, dismissed as a waste of space and ripe for de-cluttering. Perhaps the loft was an equivalent place.

A Mysterious Street



This postcard size photograph was in the file containing my father's recollections of his childhood living in Quebec Street, Wakefield. My cousin John when reading through the file decided it was a view of Quebec Street. I on the other hand thought it was of Ings Road. However, one day I realised that there was a small white sticker at the bottom right-hand corner. Curious to discover what if anything was beneath, I slowly peeled it off and the words revealed, though faint, were YORK STREET.

Debbie Staynes Mem. No. 1059

Dad's Letters

Post Mark 9th September 1942. 2/ Lt. T. Staynes

N2 1. Group

A. A. P. C.

West Africa Forces

6/9/42

My dear Vi,

Another week gone – quite eventful too. First of all they've changed the address – no more A.P.O.'s etc. My new official address is given above. However, that does not indicate any change of station. I still eat, sleep and work in the same depot. To-night, however, I suffer a mysterious change and to-morrow I shall no longer be a pioneer attached to Ordnance; I shall be a Pioneer attached to Signals. It's a long story, with intrigues and counter-intrigues; both **Harding** & I were working hard enough for ten men – to wit, doing the jobs of two officers, an orderly officer, sergeant major, quartermaster sergeant, corporal of the guard, orderly sergeant, quartermaster's clerk, orderly- room clerk and general duties man – and so when **Hunt** had a stormy interview with the powers that be, we decided it was the last straw. I went in to town and sought out the O. C. Pioneers and things moved. **Parker**, who was with signals here, has been re-called for a good job with our own people; I got the offer of his job and snapped it up one time; Hunt has a job up country to go to in the near future. This morning, I handed over my job to **Boase** and shook the dust of the store off my feet.

My new job is quite a tidy little affair and likely to last for a couple of months. It has the advantage of being compact and clear cut – less actual work but more responsibility. Of course, I've nothing to do with the technical side – I have a sergeant to look after that end with skilled tradesmen working under him. I look after discipline, sign whatever has to be signed, collect cash and pay out the men, employ & discharge native labour as my sergeant advises, censor the odd letter and keep an eye on things generally. I have a company commander thirty miles away who is too busy to bother us at this end. I'm here in sole charge, and know exactly what I can do and what I can't. That is a big improvement on the last job, where I had to get somebody else to sanction everything I wanted to do. My days as sanitary man, are, I believe, over and done with. I fear the unfortunate Boase will have that thrown on to his already over-burdened shoulders. Petrol, Kerosine, bottle-burying, canteen accounts, marriage palaver, leave palaver, police palaver, chop palaver also devolve on somebody else. The only job I'm keeping is B.O.R's messing. So, if this letter is shorter than usual. It is because I anticipate more time for writing during the week. I started this letter late, being occupied in taking over from Parker.

Wednesday was the big day this week. I went into town on Parker's lorry and spent the morning on odd jobs and interviewing my O.C. After lunch I went up to Ordnance H.Q. where the lorry was to pick me up. Unfortunately, the lorry had broken down. A telephone call had come through and thoroughly upset his Ordnance Lordship who had jumped to the conclusion that it was one of his lorries. We usually get a cold reception when we go into town; but this time it was terrific. Why was I in town? What had I brought in the lorry? I told him I had brought nothing. That nearly brought on apoplexy. After that the conversation became quite spirited, and I was told that no transport could be spared to take me back; and I said that soldiers and pioneers were quite capable of looking after themselves – and that I hadn't asked for any transport from him. That seemed to be his chief worry, because after I assured him, I didn't want his precious transport he became comparatively friendly and we parted on more or less amicable terms. I toddled down to the docks, but was out of luck and none of the lorries were going my way. So, I walked up to the station and asked for a train. There happened to be one – the 'rich mixed' with a solitary first-class coach and whole string of third-class literally packed to the roof. The African station-master asked me if I had a ticket and I said 'of course not' so he summoned the booking office clerk. The clerk promptly locked up his office and summoned the guard. The guard summoned a minion who promptly produced a key and unlocked the first-class coach. I got in and settled myself in one corner; the other three passengers being Syrian, were shepherded up to the other end of the coach. There was a loud clanging of bells, a furious puffing, skidding and clanking and we dashed out up the street at a good five miles an hour.

I always enjoy riding in a railway train – it renders one philosophic; and I have always felt a desire to travel on this Bassett-Lowke affair. The engine was a little saddle-tank engine like the fussy little things you see in a colliery siding.

The coaches are of the cattle truck variety in which the first-class passengers sit in twos facing each other, a gangway running down the middle, and sixteen passengers to a coach thus:-

At the end of each coach is an open platform by way of which you mount and dismount. The first-class coach is, of course, next to the engine to enable you to get the full benefit of all the smoke and fumes and the full ringing of the bell or tooting of the whistle.

The journey commences up the main street, then turns off into the native suburbs. It was rather comical to ride in a train between dirty native huts and through a native market. Outside one hut a buxom wench was giving her skin an airing and hanging her sole garment on a clothes line; she turned round to watch the train pass and wave to the engine driver. We jogged along at five

miles an hour, with two stops, until clear of the town; then we came to the railway sheds and repair shops. It was raining heavily; and the view across the lines of track, the dirty coaches in the sidings, the odd locomotives being overhauled or re-fuelled might just as well have been of Doncaster or York.

After leaving the town the speed increased and we reached anything up to twenty miles an hour; and the atmosphere was definitely of a good old English railway – waste ground, paths leading away to who-knows where, cuttings and embankments, the attendant telegraph poles, and occasional sidings. Only when the train stops, does Africa come into its own. Stations (with a low platform only) are fairly few. Mostly the train stops by a small corrugated iron shelter; passengers jump off on either side and simply disappear into the bush. A native boy strolls about with half-a-dozen coconuts, or a woman with a bowl of bananas or rice-cakes, or koln nut. As we ran into the hills there was a view down on to the river below; and we crossed several awe-inspiring bridges; one I distinctly remember. We approached at about thirty miles an hour down a gradient, suddenly slammed on the brakes and did a right-angled turn over a steel bridge spanning a terrific gorge. The telegraph poles went down the hillside and looked no bigger than a man; and a lone palm tree by the river looked incredibly small.

As we neared the end of my journey the native guard came along and tentatively inquired if I had a ticket. “No” say I. “O.K. Suh” says he. “Moreover,” says I, “I want to get off at ____ (The depot bus by the railway, mid-way between two stations) “I will tell the driver, sah says he; and at the last preceding station the driver was called to the window of my coach. I told him to stop at the depot – not by the big sheds but farther along by the little “houses”. I crossed his palm with a two-shilling piece and two hours after leaving town the ‘rich mixed’ drew up outside the officer’s mess, I said good-night to the guard and the driver (who both dismounted to see me safely off the premises) and felt well pleased with life. Harding was bathing at the time and emerged swathed in a towel to watch the train go by. The whole incident shook him considerably – he knew my lorry had left me stranded but never expected me to turn up on the rich- mixed.

I sent you a cable when I was in town; partly from exuberance of spirits, partly because it was the month end and partly because I wanted to send you one. I don’t know quite what started it all; but on the previous evening I had been out for a stroll – an off duty stroll, not inspecting guards or anything – and some little trifle suddenly made me think of the hotel in Frankfurt and **Jim Banham** in the next room and I felt an infinite longing – what the Romans meant by ‘desiderare’ a wistful desire for something you know perfectly well to be beyond reach; and when I turned in, my little camp bed seemed so big and empty and I went sadly to sleep amidst happy thoughts. What was that funny little verse about ducks on a pond and a green bank beyond-----? I forget: I

forget lots of things nowadays; about as bad as Boase, who has just paid me a visit in a most distraught condition – and I fear I wasn't very sympathetic.

Every second Sunday a padre visits the camp; and though it is a camp matter really, Boase is the only one conscientious enough to worry about it, and provide a place for the service and have chairs put in, and provide a congregation. And, of course, nobody else worries because Boase can be relied upon to work himself to death pro-bono publico. he once enlisted my help – a purely voluntary service he said; so, I called for a sergeant and said “make me a list of all African Protestants” Then I gave the list to **Sgt. Williams** and said “See that all these men are informed of a voluntary service at 3 o'clock”. In true Army fashion he subtracted half-an- hour; and if he misunderstood me, it was entirely his fault. I only ordered him to inform them about the service. The egregious sergeant paraded the whole lot at two thirty, made them carry in the chairs and then sit on them until the padre arrived, said his piece and departed. I fancy Boase discovered what had happened, for he never mentioned services to me again.

However, to return to the story. To-day, apparently, it was the turn of the Methodist preacher (we get C of E, Methodist, C of S etc), in rotation – hence the title ‘protestant’ service. The R.C's look after themselves, and nobody cares about the Pagans, Mohammedans, and Europeans. Boase has had a particular hard week contracted a fearful cold and been upset by the news of my imminent & Harding's impending departure. In this chaotic state of mind he wrote out a notice, typed by an African clerk with unquestioning stupidity, saying there would be a service for all “dissenters”. Why he confused dissenters with Protestants I don't quite know; luckily the obtuse Sgt. Williams had the day off, or I am convinced he would have paraded either the sufferers from dysentery (both of them) or else all the people who didn't want to go. Be that as it may, about nine o'clock to-night, poor old B, suddenly remembered he'd forgotten all about this service, who had put the chairs into the tent? Who had met the padre?

Had anybody attended the service? Had the padre come at all? He came to me for comfort – and, mea culpa, I was most unsympathetic. I pointed out that the affair was entirely voluntary, and if he didn't want to parade a congregation of victims, he must be prepared to have no volunteers. As for the tent, he spoke feelingly about services in a dirty chop tent and I told him that my chop tent was clean enough to eat in and therefore clean enough for anything; as for chairs, there were eight benches in the tent and sixty-four empty petrol tins (they act as tables & chairs since real tables are not available) more than enough for all the dissenters in the camp. Nor, said I, were my benches ‘scruffy’ – I pointed out that selected victims scrubbed them every Wednesday night and Saturday mid- day with boiling water; and with cold water after every meal. Finally, I advised him to go away and sleep

peacefully; a study of tomorrow's sick parade for sufferers from piles would show if the worshippers had been sitting on freshly scrubbed benches. No piles would indicate (a) that the congregation sat on dry chairs – in which case he had nothing to worry about or (b) no congregation – which nobody can blame him for, if the service were 'voluntary'. And if no congregation, why worry about the absence or otherwise of chairs. Besides, I added, the Salvation Army rarely carry chairs about the streets with them; and half-a-dozen Nigerians with empty petrol tins could out bang any big drum. He seemed to think me unnecessarily callous about the whole affair; so, I suggested that if the padre had found no congregation, he would have dropped into the mess for a double whiskey. But Boase found no comfort in that. He still worried about not providing chairs. I said that whilst the average man required a seat of sorts to say his prayers, sitting with your head in your hand was really cheating, and a padre couldn't possibly pray sitting down and therefore would have no use for a chair; as for the congregation – well what was good enough for the parson was good enough for them, and anyhow they had no Sunday trousers with creases to spoil, so they had no reasonable excuse for not kneeling. Boase was still dismal, so I tried to cheer him up with the story of the young R.C. curate who took his first confession – a fair young female penitent – under the strict eye of his vicar (or whatever the R.C's have). After the sermon he asked his reverend preceptor if he had managed all right. "Yes" said the R.P. "but, I would liked to have heard from you more 'Tut, tuts' and less 'whews'! Boase smiled feebly and vanished in to the night.

And you, my dear, are entirely to blame; for if I had not been engrossed in concocting a love letter to you when Boase intervened, I would have been my usually friendly & sympathetic self. I was just bursting into poetry when Boase interrupted. Would you like me to quote poetry to you? I don't think I can now – I've forgotten it all, and the night is full of clouds and there are no stars to gaze at. Only your photo- which I regret to say is lurching drunkenly towards the ink-bottle. This is a sordid country. They say there is a mail boat in the river. I wonder if there is, and what it holds for me.

This is a long letter after all – and it's a bed-time one too. I think I'll go to bed. Goodnight my sweet.

Your Tommy.

Cable mentioned in the letter.

Posted mark 12 Sept. 1942

Reads :- LETTERS ARRIVING REGULARLY VERY HAPPY TO HEAR
FROM YOU DEAREST AM FIT AND WELL FONDEST LOVE DARLING
T STAYNES

Debbie Staynes Mem. No. 1059

Do you know where The Editor has been?

In the previous edition of Kinsman I asked if you knew where I'd been? Well, did you know from the clues I left.



The industrious bees and hive within the tiled floor is at the outside entrance to one of the shops, part of the old Co-op building on Westgate. Not a shadow of how it used to be when it was swept and cleaned every day and had a steady footfall of customers – but it is still there for all who care to stop for a few seconds and take a look.



Where do you think I've been this time? Just to give you a little clue or two. If you have lived in Wakefield I can guarantee that at some time you will have walked past this building. There is water and plenty of nature close by. Plus a collection of greenhouses. It was a family home but the house was not owned by the family but did have a beautiful garden.

Wakefield Gazette April 9 1907

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IN BOTTLE, PINTS 2s. 6d. PER DOZ.; GILLS, 1s. 6d.
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For HIGH-CLASS CHOCOLATE-
PURCHASED direct from the leading
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Milk Chocolates stocked.
Rowntree's Pastilles, etc.
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Fancy Boxes, Novelties, etc., always in
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FINEST ONLY
IRISH ROLL **8d.**
BACON. Per lb.
Blind by the latest Machinery
Finest Lilywhite FLOUR 1/1 per st.
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3 lbs. PLUM & APPLE JAN 10.

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27th Annual Watch, Clock & Jewellery
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JUST COMMENCED. SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM 6d. Per Week
A SPLENDID SELECTION OF
Watches, Clocks, Rings, Brooches, Necklets
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JOIN AT ONCE.
FRED LAND, Jeweller,
22, KIRKGATE, WAKEFIELD..
67, HIGH STREET, Normanton

Notices

Articles for Inclusion in your Kinsman

I look forward to receiving articles for inclusion in Kinsman and I, during my stints as Editor, have regularly had a supply of articles – thank you.

But like other committee members, I am a volunteer, so I would therefore ask the following when sending in articles.

1. Could I ask you to not to include footnotes or other linked notes. Add sources and other information, unlinked, at the end of the article.

2. Please send photographs and/or images as a separate file and include where you wish the photograph or image to be in your article along with source.

3. Please email as a Word or similar document and **NOT** as a read only document or pdf as I need to be able edit the font and size, line spacing, and margins etc easily. Also if you can remember – don't use the return or end line key as your end of lines may be smaller or larger than the Kinsman page.

4. Although an emailed article is preferred, a type written or handwritten article is still very, very welcome. editor@wdfhs.co.uk

5. And don't forget to include your name and membership number

I look forward to receiving snippets, articles, help wanted, and other bits that, you, our members will find interesting or help with their family history.

Thank you

Dear Members,

We have Moved to online bank and our new details are as follows:-

Virgin Money 6-10 Northgate Wakefield
Sort Code 82-12-08
Account 009199074

Please feel free to use our Nat West bank for your membership fees this time, but we would very much appreciate it, if you could use our Virgin Money account for future renewals. Please amend any standing orders.

If you require any assistance please ask a member of the Committee or a Key Volunteer who will help or point you in the right direction.

Sheelagh Jackson,
Treasurer

Distant Search for WDFHS Members:

We now have offers of help from members who are willing to undertake specific research in the following areas: Bristol area, Keighley, TNA, The Society of Genealogists, Metropolitan Archives, Glasgow, Central Scotland Members wishing to use this service or who are willing to help, please email joyjoseph105@gmail.com or contact her at Joy Joseph, 105 Bartholomew Square, Bristol, BS7 0QB.

What would you like our speakers to tell you about? The Committee is asking what subjects you would like to have speakers for. The Society is yours, and the Committee would like you to become more involved in choosing speakers at our Saturday morning meetings. Please pass on your suggestions to either a committee member or email: editor@wdfhs.co.uk. Please let us know if you would like to recommend someone, know of a speaker or volunteer yourself – or indeed if there is a subject that you would like to be covered in one of our meetings.

Principal Wakefield Information Centres

West Yorkshire History Centre, 127 Kirkgate, Wakefield, WF1 1JG.

The Archive has a unique collection of original documents but you must book an appointment to consult them. Be warned at the moment that the earliest available appointment is usually several weeks after you make contact. You can examine their website online to discover documents relevant to your research and they will normally ask you to confirm the documents you want to examine shortly before your visit.

Opening hours:

Mondays 10:00am - 4:00pm

Tuesdays 10:00am - 4:00pm

Thursdays 10:00am - 4:00pm

On Fridays the Exhibition space is open (but not the search room to view originals) 10:00am - 4:00pm

Please email wakefield@wyjs.org.uk or call 0113 535 3040 to book

Wakefield Library

Local Archives and Family History

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday	9am - 7pm
Tuesday, Friday	9am - 5pm
Saturday	9am - 4pm

KEY VOLUNTEERS

Membership Secretary:

Debbie Staynes
1 The Bungalows, Halifax Road, Dewsbury, WF13 4DJ
membership@wdfhs.co.uk

Publication Sales & Journal Distribution:

Chris Welch
101 Thornes Road, Wakefield, WF2 8QD
cdgwelch@aol.com

Bookstall Manager:

Eileen Marshall

Exchange Journals & Library Assistant:

June Jamieson

Help Desk:

Stella Robinson, Carol Sklinar, Dave Bradley,
& Debbie Staynes

Meeting Reporter:

Lorraine Simpson

Minutes Recorder & Assistant Librarian:

Jacqueline Ryder

Publications Stall:

Ros Bartle

Publications Stall Assistant:

Deborah Scriven

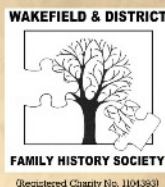
Refreshments Organiser:

Sue Vasis

Refreshments Assistant:

Mary Buttigieg

Wakefield & District Family History Society



Programme to December 2025

SATURDAY MEETINGS

at Outwood Memorial Hall

Doors open 9.30am - Talks begin 10.30am

June 7th WENT THE DAY WELL (An Alternative View of D Day)
Dr Phil Judkins

July 5th AGM followed by A MINER AND PRISONER OF WAR
George Scogings

Aug 2nd MY IRISH FAMILY
Sheron Boyle

Sep 6th ASYLUMS AND MY GRANDFATHERS ASYLUM STORY
Jude Rhodes

Oct 4th JOSEPH COX: "A VALUED PUBLIC SERVANT"
Deborah Scriven

Nov 1st COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION ARCHIVE
Elizabeth Smith

Dec 6th WHAT MADE YORKSHIRE GREAT
Stuart Hartley

For further information about this
event, please scan the QR code



wdfhs.co.uk

