

# Newsletter

Vol

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## Editorial

Welcome to the start of another season, I hope you all had a happy holiday and come home refreshed and eager to chase up the illusive ancestor. Have you ever thought how difficult it will be in the future? A recent newspaper article stated that fewer children were being christened, fewer couples were getting married and most people were being cremated when they died. All this means less families documented in parish registers and fewer monumental inscriptions. We family historians will be obliged to the government of the time for information on births, partnerships and deaths. I love researching my family history in original parish records, they often contain little bits of local information added to a page by the minister that tells you so much about the time your ancestor lived. They can be hard to read on microfiche but well worth the effort knowing that you have the correct date and names. In this modern era of all things being done for us by ever magical gadgets, we as family historians tend to look for information on the internet or on data CD's. Information at our finger tips, but is it correct? Somebody somewhere has looked the information up, interpreted it to their satisfaction and passed it on. Did you know that The Church of the Latter Day Saints website, [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) has converted ALL its dates to the Gregorian calendar. This means that any UK or USA dates given before 1752 is eleven days out or even one year out.

John S Booth

## FENTON MANOR

My ancestor, PHILIP BARNES BROADE lived at Fenton Manor until 1851 but by 1868, it was occupied by Edward Challinor. Thomas William Minton was living there by 1880 until at least 1884 but by 1892 it was occupied by Henry Warrington who still lived there in 1912. Thereafter various other tenants lived in Fenton Manor. In 1960 it was partly derelict and owned by Berry Hill Brickworks Ltd. and eventually demolished. The Fenton Manor Sixth Form College and Leisure Centre stand on the site today.

I have been trying to find anyone who can produce a photograph of Fenton Manor. I have written to the Sentinel, Hanley Archives and been on Radio Stoke in my search. Apart from two telephone calls from people who once had relatives living there, one of whom said that their relative had happy memories of living there, no one can produce a photograph. Hanley Archives did eventually advise that the William Salt Library in Stafford had an engraving which I have obtained. Strangely enough this engraving is on the abridged version of the first page of "A History of Fenton" by Barbara Young and J.G.Jenkins and is described as "Whieldon's Grove" which it is not, as this was a much larger house. A few of my other ancestors were apprenticed to Thomas Whieldon. Can you help as I do not think there is a chance of me ever obtaining a photograph and I shall have to be content with the engraving.

Dorothy Mear

If you think you can help Dorothy then please contact the Editor

## CHEADLE MILITIA

While researching her Family History Dianne Shenton came across this interesting snippet.

A Meeting was held at the Royal Oak, Cheadle on 7th May 1798 with Thomas Paton in the Chair. They resolved to form an Association for Local Defence, In view of the dire state of affairs, with volunteers being asked to go no more than 5 miles from Cheadle.

Enrolment was to be by the 21st May at the Royal Oak, Cheadle. Volunteers were to clothe themselves at their own expense.

Rules of conduct were set out, and a uniform selected which was:

-  
Coat - blue, single breasted, with a scarlet cloth collar, Yellow button engraved with C.V. a gold laced shoulder-strap. A heart at the flaps to correspond. Slashed Sleeves.  
Waistcoat - white, single breasted.  
Pantaloons - white.  
Gaiters - Black.  
Hat.- round, with a bear skin, white feather and Cockade, Black.

This information came from the Stafford Record Office - Papers of the Leigh Family of Leek as at the British Museum. Records of the Military Association of Cheadle. Film MF 54  
One document only.

Dianne Shenton

**ITEMS OF INTEREST OFF THE INTERNET****UNDERSTANDING DEATH CERTIFICATES**

Have you ever struggled to try to understand the cause of death on an old certificate? Have you ever wondered what Phthisis meant? Here's a site that has all the answers:

<http://www.antiquusmorbus.com>

**SHIP'S PASSENGER LISTS**

Did some of your relatives migrate? If so, you may find them recorded in one of the many Ship's Passenger Lists that have been transcribed.

For arrivals in the US the key source is the free Ellis Island site, where you'll find details of millions of immigrants who passed through the Ellis Island Immigration Station between 1892-1924:

<http://www.ellislandrecords.org>

Another great free site, this time for Canadian arrivals, is the Nanaimo Family History Society, where you'll find arrivals in Quebec (including Montreal) from Nov 1907 to October 1910:

[members.shaw.ca/nanaimo.fhs](http://members.shaw.ca/nanaimo.fhs)

Of course, for every arrival there must have been a departure (other than babies born in transit!), and findmypast.com in association with Britain's National Archives is making Outward Passenger Lists available.

Currently departures from Britain between 1890-1929 are online, including the passenger list of the Titanic, but eventually the records will go up to 1960:

[www.ancestorsonboard.com](http://www.ancestorsonboard.com)

Thank you to Findmypast website

**DON'T GIVE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION AWAY!**

There's a diversity of opinion about the advisability of posting family trees on the Internet.

Our view is that it's dangerous to post any information that could be of value to a fraudster, and inadvisable to publish a family tree that could easily be incorporated into somebody else's research.

We were horrified recently to learn of a site where many people have not only posted their trees, but also given their full names, email addresses, *and* full postal addresses!

We were able to view all this information without even registering at the site, which means that absolutely anyone could come along to that site and collect data without leaving any trace.

Please be careful what sites you use, and what information you publish, and always remember not to publish personal information relating to living people unless you have their permission!

A warning from the LostCousins website about identity theft

**BRITISH ARMY WWI PENSIONS COLLECTION**

We're pleased to announce that all surviving British Army World War One Pensions records are now available on Ancestry.co.uk. This means that, if your ancestors fought in the Great War and received a military pension, you should be able to track them down and discover some amazing facts about them.

Search the complete British Army World War One Pension records for your relatives now.

Although the records vary in their content, they could help you to build up a detailed physical picture of your ancestors, as well as find out where and when they served, medical history, former occupation and next of kin (which can be an invaluable entry point into the 1901 Census).

**Bethesda Chapel, Hanley**

Bethesda Chapel in Albion St., Hanley will be open to the public for three hours on Saturday 8th September. This special opening is to show how far the restoration has gone in completion of Phase 1.

*See newsletter page four*

**LOST AN ANCESTOR, WAS HE SENT "DOWN UNDER"?**

Some emigrated by choice. Many more (165,000 between 1788 and 1868) were deported for crimes as trivial as stealing a loaf of bread. If you have family who ended up in Australia, you can now trace their long journey with our new Convicts Transportation Registers.

The collection, from The National Archives, consists of the HO 10 & HO 11 record sets which, together, feature every convict ever sent to Australia. The HO 10 collection is made up of three databases:

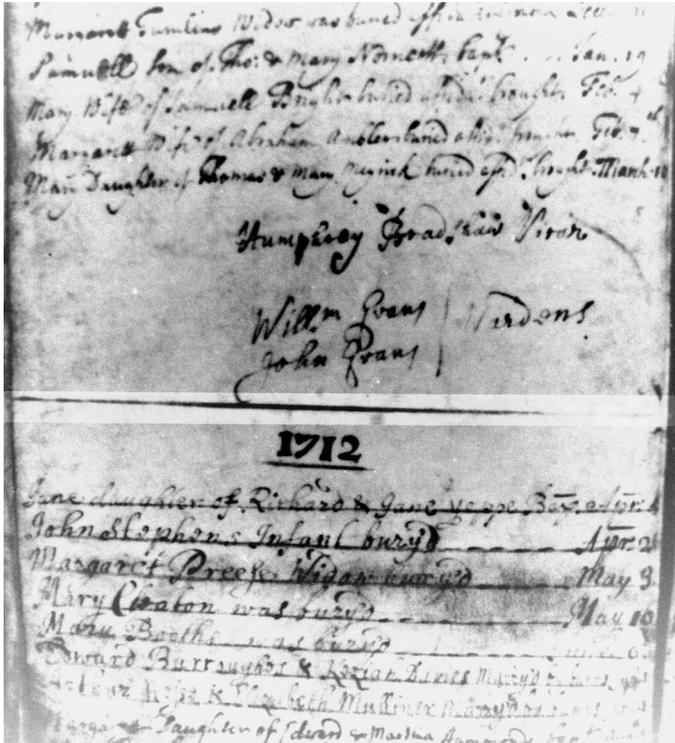
- [New South Wales and Tasmania, 1787-1834 Lists](#)
- [New South Wales and Tasmania, Convict Pardons and Tickets of Leave, 1834-1859](#)
- [New South Wales and Tasmania, Convict Musters, 1806-1849](#)

You can really flesh out your ancestors' stories – with details like name, age, birthplace, physical description, religion, when they arrived, the name of their convict ship, where and when they were convicted and what they were convicted of, their occupation and details about their children.

From the websites of both Ancestry.com and The National Archive

## Know your Dates in Parish Registers

From about 1190 until 1752, England used the JULIAN calendar in which the year began on 25<sup>th</sup> March (Lady Day) and finished the following 24<sup>th</sup> March. This would mean that January to March came at the end of the year. If we look at the year 1712 for example then January to March 1712 will come after April to December 1712. A little



hard to understand today but that was how it was. Then in 1752 the GREGORIAN calendar (the one we use today) came into effect. So when 1751 began on the 25<sup>th</sup> March it ended on 31<sup>st</sup> December and the year 1752 started on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Some parishes indicated this in their parish registers by writing the date as January 1751/52. To add to this confusion a slight adjustment had to be made in September of the same year, Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1752 was followed by Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 1752 and people thought that the government had stolen eleven days of their lives from them. But if you really want to be confused you will need to be aware that many parts of Scotland changed to the Gregorian calendar in 1600 and in Russia not until the late 1800's.

How did parish registers begin, well Henry VIII in 1538 (when he wasn't chopping heads off) instigated a law that every church should keep records of Christenings, Marriages and Burials. These records had to be kept in the church, in a coffer with two locks, one key kept by the minister and the other key kept by the churchwardens. The minister used to write events in the register every Sunday in the presence of the churchwardens and the information recorded differed between minister and

minister, parish and parish. Some ministers wrote "John Smith married his wife 25<sup>th</sup> April 1582", while others would write, "John Smith married Mary Wilson 25<sup>th</sup> April 1582". Some even put the age and occupation of the groom.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1754, Hardwick's Marriage Act came into force in England and Wales and its purpose was to tighten up the marriage laws. The Act stated that

1. All marriages should be preceded with the publication of Banns for three successive Sundays before the marriage.
2. Parental consent was necessary for those marrying under the age of 21. (Did you know that until 1929 the legal age at which a marriage could take place with such consent was 12 for girls and 14 for boys?)
3. Marriage Banns were to be recorded in a proper book of Vellum or good durable paper.
4. The minister, the couple and two witnesses must sign (or leave their mark) the register.
5. Marriage Registers were to be based on the "Form of Register" shown in the Act.

Most churches and chapels now had a separate register for marriages but still no uniformity was used in the recording of christenings and deaths until Rose's Act of 1813. This Act gave a set way in which church records should be written down which was a pity really because it stopped the ministers writing little snippets of information in the church registers such as the following I found while searching through the Bishops Castle parish registers.

### Burials 1593

*"At this time God began to punish us, with such severity that 174 Men and children died, snatched away by a most violent disease and contagious outbreak. God decided to afflict us thus because in many of our divine services and pronouncements of his Holy Word, we had not made known the just and holy rewards of the spirit, but, spurning the Word of God, had violated the Holy Sabbath on the 24<sup>th</sup> June which was the Lord's Day, with the full consent of the elders and the majority of the inhabitants of this Borough, a fair was held. On which account they were caught like thieves taken in the very act."*

Between the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1593 and 21<sup>st</sup> October 1593 174 burials were recorded under the above statement.

On 8<sup>th</sup> November the minister wrote the following

*"At this time God pitying us the contagion ceased".*

John S Booth

## PRESS RELEASE

### Come and see inside Bethesda for the first time in 20 years

Bethesda Methodist Chapel, in Stoke-on-Trent opens to the public for the first time in over 20 years on September 8<sup>th</sup> from 2pm to 5pm. Don't miss this opportunity to view the transformation outside, step inside to wonder at the vast galleried interior and make your suggestions for community activities you might like to hold here. People will be on hand to talk and guide you.

The Historic Chapels Trust has now completed Phase I of repairs to this major Grade II\* chapel – “The Cathedral of the Potteries” – comprising complete re-roofing, new rainwater disposal, window, stone and brick repairs and the repair and redecoration of Bethesda's celebrated bravura facade to Albion Street. Over £800,000 has been expended, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, North Staffordshire Regeneration Zone, the City of Stoke on Trent, Bethesda Friends, donations raised by the Historic Chapels Trust and the contributions of local people.



Bethesda Methodist Chapel became disused after the congregation departed in the 1980's. Now in the ownership and care of HCT, it has a new chance to revive, and to offer an exciting venue for a range of civic, community and young people's activities as well as for the continuance of occasional services of worship.

Bethesda Methodist Chapel dates from 1819 and was built to the plans of Mr Perkins, a local schoolteacher. His work survives in the rear part of the chapel with its curved end, windows and chequered brickwork which faces the newly landscaped burial ground, Bethesda Garden. During the C19th Bethesda became Stoke's leading place of worship, capable of seating up to 2,000 people and played a major role at the heart of Stoke's thriving religious, civic and social life.

The main entrance facade on Albion Street was rebuilt in the fashionable Italianate manner in 1859 by local architect Robert Scrivener and incorporates a portico of eight Corinthian columns, a central Venetian window and crowning pediment. Directly inside is a small 'minister's vestry' which opens onto the main body of the chapel. Unusually, the pulpit is ahead, a handsome mahogany pulpit with a double flight of stairs, also designed by Scrivener in 1856. This has been badly damaged by vandals but can be repaired; it will be almost certainly reset on rollers.

From the ground floor the whole of the vast interior is visible, with its late 19<sup>th</sup> century pews below, and famous continuous oval gallery with seven tiers of seats above. The gallery is supported on 24 slim iron columns. In the gallery over the pulpit are the remains of a Kirtland and Jardine organ of 1864 in an elaborate organ case. The organ is sadly vandalised but is to be replaced by an organ built by the same firm from a redundant church in Manchester.

Later phases of works to Bethesda will complete repairs, introduce new services, and add facilities to enable the Chapel to be used for community activities and occasional services of worship. This is currently expected to cost a further £2m. New WC's and possibly an administrative office will be located in the vestry.

HCT's Audience Development Plan has identified a large number of potential sympathetic uses for the chapel that will not compromise the amazing historic interior. These are likely to be musical and choral performances, meetings, conferences and ceremonial events as well as activities linked to the Potteries Museum including exhibitions, film shows and talks.

The Historic Chapels Trust was established in 1993 to take into ownership disused places of worship that are of outstanding architectural and historic interest. The Trust now has 17 chapels in its care, of which 10 have been regenerated.

For further information about Bethesda and the Historic Chapels Trust ring 020 7481 0533 or visit our website, [www.hct.org.uk](http://www.hct.org.uk) and [www.bethesda-stoke.org.uk](http://www.bethesda-stoke.org.uk).

Bethesda Methodist Chapel will be open on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2007 from 2pm to 5pm, free, as part of the Civic Trust's Heritage Open Days weekend. It will be open on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month in October (October 13<sup>th</sup>) 2pm to 5pm and 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month in November (November 10<sup>th</sup>) and December (December 9<sup>th</sup>) 2pm to 4pm. All welcome.

If you wish to help the project please send donations to:

Historic Chapels Trust  
St George's German Lutheran Church  
55 Alie Street  
London E1 8EB