

Newsletter

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Editorial

Well hear we are again, Christmas is approaching and our thoughts wonder into what the next year will bring. Every day I seem to get an email from *Ancestry.com* or National Archives or some other genealogy website telling me that some useful information has been added for me to search (for a price). I try to keep you all abreast of what is new but quite frankly there is so much being offered on the internet just lately. The National Archives have just informed me that they have digitised the "Burnt" records. For anyone who has an ancestor who was in the First World War they will be very useful. The "Burnt" records are the First World War soldiers' records that were literally burnt during the Blitz.

Ancestry will now trace your ancestors through DNA. Their advert states "*Discover your ancestral origins. Find out where your ancestors came from, their ethnic background, and how they have migrated throughout the world today*". Mmmm I wonder?

Another useful website is :- www.wishful-thinking.org.uk/genuki/STS/MIs.html as it lists lots of Staffordshire churchyard monumental inscriptions. Please be aware that it does not list ALL the monumental inscriptions in the church stated but you might find one that interests you.

For those who do not have a computer I thought of writing a book review but I don't tend to buy modern books apart from Parish Registers. I collect 18th, 19th and early 20th century books many of which are local biographies, local

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directories and local history books (I also collect local postcards). Many books printed today are picture books showing old pictures of Hanley (written by me), Burslem, Tunstall, Stoke on Trent and Longton (out in December). The "Potters in" series of books by Mervyn Edwards are very interesting telling us how our ancestors lived in the past and there are personal memory books that tell stories of life not so long ago, "The Story of Normacot—Lest we Forget" being one. Many of our remaining pottery manufacturers have published a book on their history. A very good one is "A Pottery Panorama" by Audrey Dudson recording some history of how pottery started in our area. Did any of you buy a Raymond Rush book when he entertained us in October? I did and found them very enjoyable and informative.

I shall now stand on my very old soapbox and beat my very old drum. Why don't you write down all your family history findings? It is not that hard. You write a portion about one particular time or person or family. When you have run out of ideas you put it to one side and write about another time. Do this for different families, going back and adding things as you find more out. Eventually put it all together and you have your own personal family history book. No author ever writes a book from start to finish in one go, we write ideas down as they come to us, expand on them later and put it all together. You then edit what you have and make it readable. During the last Bethesda Chapel Open Day a family from Pershaw in Worcestershire asked if they could be shown down the crypt. It turned out that during his family history research he had found out that

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some of his ancestors had been Methodist Ministers and ended their ministry at Bethesda. When they and their family died they were placed in the crypt below Bethesda Chapel. He then showed me a book about his family history. The book was wonderful and had been printed on a computer using a Publisher programme. I showed him the crypt and he took pictures of the memorial stone that covered his ancestors resting place. He was going to add them to his book. I then met a gentleman and he too had his family history written down in longhand book form. He told me that he wrote everything down as he didn't have a computer and this would be the best way to pass his research on. I know we sometimes think that our families are not interested in family history but I can assure you that when they are older they will be. If you want to go to the expense of having your family history published there are many local publishers but if you just want your research bound into book form then there are a few book binders who will bind the odd one or three for you.



May I, on behalf of your Family History Society Committee wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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TRANSFER OF GRO TO IDENTITY & PASSPORT SERVICE

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and creation of the independent Office for National Statistics (ONS), left the General Register Office (GRO) uncertain as to which government department it would move to from ONS for the next financial year.

However it has been announced today that the GRO will become part of the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) from 1 April 2008. Under the new arrangements ONS will relinquish the registration role it currently holds.

IPS is an Executive Agency of the Home Office, and is responsible for handling passport applications from UK Nationals. It employs over 3,500 staff at various locations around the UK. You can find more information about them on their website www.ips.gov.uk. The decision to make the

transfer of GRO to IPS has been finalised following the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

A full statement on these changes can be found at :-

www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/aboutus/lookingahead/registration-transfer.asp

Maggie Loughran

Administrator, Federation of Family History Societies

Excerpts from Parish Records – burials

25 Jan 1794 William Rose, never came to Church. tho. often warned & kindly exhorted, died suddenly.

06 Feb 1794 Moses Nock, of Cradley, who not having the Fear of God, notoriously illtreated two wives. He dropt down in his own yard on the 1st Inst. and lay exposed to very inclement weather until the 3rd, when he was found in a shocking condition, in which he languished till ye 4th, 9 o'clock A.M.

25 Mar 1795 Daniel Bridgewater, who did not speak to his wife for many years till just before his death.

29 Mar 1801 Joseph Windsor. He lived like an infidel, but yet was some years governor of the workhouse in this Parish!!!

30 Sep 1802 Alice, w. of Stephen Rolinson. She was murdered by a red-hot nail rod being thrust into her side while at work in a nail shop. It penetrated through her stomach & a considerable way into the right lobe of her liver. She died in about an hour after. The coroner's inquest sat on the body from 12 o'clock at midday till 6 the next morning when a verdict was returned Willful Murder. The murderer was acquitted at the following Stafford assizes.

30 Oct 1804 Martha, w. of Saml. Phillips, of the Dog kennel.

16 Jan 1805 Edwd. Round, aged 84. He was remarkably hearty & active. About 10 o'clock on the morning of his death he left his own house in good health & spirits; & was observed by some of his neighbours to walk with peculiar speed & sprightliness; but he had not gone further than two miles when he was overtaken by death. His body was found before 12 o'clock in the foot road leading to Langley Green near Titford Bridge, but his soul had winged her way into eternity.

29 Apr 1806 Elizabeth, d. of Saml. & Hannah Round. She died in consequence of her cloths taking fire a few weeks ago while her mother just stepped out of the house to part some cocks which were fighting; tho much burned she languished in death for so long a period. She was about 4 yrs. old, or perhaps not quite so old.

01 Mar 1807 John Homer, P. He died suddenly between the public house called the Cock at Cock green & the Poorhouse on Friday morning last. The keeper of the above public house saw him fall, went to his assistance & raised him up, when he walked a few yards & then fell again, he then raised him a second time in order to conduct him to the Poorhouse, but he died immediately.

29 Dec 1807 Joseph Hackett. He was a man who spent all the money he got in ale, except a very small portion with which he procured a little food, but ale was the chief of his support. Of course he was a drunkard in the most proper sense of the word. The evening before his death, viz., Decr. 25, he left a public house in the lower side of this parish where he had spent a great part of the day, in a state of intoxication, uttering profane curses. He was found dead & cold early the next morning at a very small distance from that house. Let every drunkard beware.

29 Nov 1810 John Goold, 74. He took cold in the damp, cold miserable church of this parish, during divine service, about three weeks ago, and attributed his death to that cause! ! !

14 Jan 1811 Chenaniah, s. of Josh. & Ann Taylor, 9 wks., chin cough.

09 Jun 1811 Sarah, w. of Jno. Chambers, 66, mortification on knee.

03 Oct 1811 Elizh., d. of Richd. & Ann Hall, 1, watery head.

08 Mar 1812 Benj. Timmins, junr., 26. A bitter opposer of the intended new Church: he was taken ill while in the very act of opposition at a public meeting in the church & died raving mad in about a fortnight after.

20 Sep 1812 Ann, d. of Jno. & Esther Grove, 2, scalded to death by drinking out of the spout of a boiling tea kettle.

Sent in by David Bourne

Wills at Lichfield Record Office

When you have found out the basics of your family History i.e. Births marriages and Death dates, you may wish to try to find out a bit more about these ancestors and Wills can be one way of doing this. Wills can be written as a direct form of speech and can be very illuminating as to how that person viewed his relatives. This was illustrated by a Will I found at Lichfield which I am pleased to say DID NOT turn out to be one of my Husbands' Shentons. (see Précis below)

Lichfield holds the Wills which were proved in the Bishops Court at Lichfield so cover the area of his Dioceses which means that there may be some from areas outside Staffordshire- (Maps available in Lichfield show what is covered). Up to 1858 they are original and may be Photocopied. After 1858 they have copied them into huge tomes which are too big for the photocopier so have to be transcribed by hand.

Firstly to find a local will you have to look at the "Calendar of Wills" which are either in Paper form at Lichfield or filmed version at Stafford Record Office. This will give you a name, place and date it was proved. This is what the staff need as the Reference to find the Will.

This "Calendar of Wills" are indexed firstly by year, and then by Alphabetical order of Surname. So it can be a bit laborious to find a Will if you do not know the year of Death. It is also worth bearing in mind that the Will may not be Proved until several years after Death if it is connected to another Will. EG I found a husband and wife where the Husband had left everything to his wife for life and then to his children. The problem was that his wife died 11 years before him so her will wasn't proved until after his death.

Example of a Will seen at Lichfield Record Office.

This comprised the Letters of Administration, Probate and the Will.

Will of Matthew Shenton, Yeoman, of Cheadle, Deceased. Probate to his son George residing Longton.

Elizabeth Shenton was appointed Administratrix. She was to make a true Inventory of the personal Estate of Matthew Shenton. Signed Elizabeth Shenton, John Malkin and Saml. Keys. Letters of Administration to Elizabeth Shenton signed X.

Will – He tells us his wife Elizabeth "is duly provided for by her late Husband Michael Keys" so as a token of his affection for her he leaves her the "Plate, linen, china, household goods and Furniture which belonged to her previous to my marriage to her". The residue of these to his son George Shenton. His Messuages in Charles St. and Dwelling houses in Paradise Lane to John Malkin upon Trust for the life of his said son. The income from this was to give his son George 5/- weekly, and the rest to go into a Savings Bank until 10 years after Matthew's decease.

Then all was to go to George, or if he was Dead, to Matthew's wife Elizabeth (for life?). If George dies but leaves a wife then it was to be divided between her and Matthew's two nephews - Samuel Shenton of Alrewas and William Gee of Eaton (Nr Congleton) - equally.

If George dies with no heirs, then his share to go to the two nephews.

Witnesses John Tipper, John Tipper Jnr. and Edw. Allen.

Matthew then gives to Catherine Scuffam of Sandaway nr Lichfield £10 as a "Token of Respect". AND "If George should make sale of his said annuity of 5/- weekly to any person, then it shall cease and become void, and the executors shall sell everything as if George had died". Dated 21st April 1834.

Do you, like me, conclude that he thought his son a spendthrift? What do you think about him leaving Elizabeth her own Plate, linen etc?

Please note, the Will is printed as written with its original spelling.

Sent in by Dianne Shenton

WRENS

Over 5,000 women joined The Women's Royal Naval Service during World War One, popularly known as the "Wrens". These records are now available online for the first time from **The National Archives**.

Search by surname, forenames, date or place of birth and discover if your great grandmother was in the "Wrens".

Senility Prayer

Please give me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to meet the ones that I do and the eyesight to tell the difference.

Now that I'm older, here's what I've discovered

I started out with nothing and still have most of it.
 My wild oats have turned into Shredded Wheat.
 I finally got my head together, now my body is falling apart.
 Funny, I don't remember being absent minded.
 All the reports are in, conclusions have been drawn up..... life is now officially unfair.
 If all is not lost, where is it?
 It's easier to get older than it is to get wiser.
 Some days you're the dog, some days you're the lamp-post.
 I wish the buck stopped here, I sure could use a few.
 Kids in the back seat, unprotected, cause accidents.
 Accidents in the back seat cause kids.
 It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.
 The only time the world beats a path to your door is when you're in the bathroom.
 If I'm supposed to be able to touch my toes why aren't they on my knees?
 When I'm finally holding all the cards why does everyone decide to play chess?
 It's not hard to meet expenses.....they're everywhere.
 The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.
 These days I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter....I go somewhere to get something then wonder what I'm here after.
 When I bend down to tie my shoe-laces, I try to think of something else that I can do while I'm down there.

Sent in by Ray Keeling

METHODIST BAPTISMAL REGISTERS

15 to 20 years ago a number of our members transcribed over 100 local Methodist Baptismal registers which had been borrowed from various sources. The earliest of these registers starts in 1806 and some go up to 1983. The area covered is bounded roughly by Milton, Forsbrook, Trentham, Wrinehill, Wolstanton and Burslem. Unfortunately, these transcripts were before the popularity of home computers, and are only available on individual slips of paper. The majority of these have been sorted alphabetically, but the sort is by no means complete. These records show Names given; Parents; Dates of Birth & Baptism; Where living, if given; Which Church; Page of Register. In many cases maiden names of mother are given, some give names and occupation of mother's father; also Adoption details may be given
 Please contact **Mike Griffin** at the fiche club desk if you can help in computerizing these valuable records.

BMD REGISTERS

The recently launched BMD Registers website provides online access to The National Archives' collection of nearly 5,000 nonconformist and other non-parochial registers. The documents (from TNA record series RG4 and RG5) include Florence Nightingale's birth certificate and a record of William Blake's burial at Bunhill Fields as well as many thousands of births and baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials dating from the sixteenth century up to the start of civil registration in 1837. Many of the registers contain miscellaneous items such as accounts and lists of congregation members - the register of the Old Presbyterian Meeting Place in Colyton, Devon includes several pages written in shorthand!

Family Records.Gov