

# Newsletter



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## Editorial

Welcome back from your holiday and all refreshed to chase that illusive ancestor.

The controversial closure of the Family Records Centre in Islington was partly justified by forthcoming changes - but now the private contractor responsible for implementation of these changes has withdrawn "by mutual consent", and it isn't clear when, or if, the project will re-start. With the GRO now part of the Identity and Passport Service, the interests of Family Historians are going to come well down in the list of priorities. For several years the G R O has been working on a major project to digitise birth, marriage, and death records - and this could have provided England & Wales with an equivalent to the online registers at [scotlandspeople](http://scotlandspeople.gov.uk) have. Anyone researching Scottish ancestors will know how helpful this website can be and it is a great shame that England and Wales have nothing like it.

The new series of "Who Do You Think you Are" has started on BBC TV and each time I see the programme I seem to learn something new but I always end up wishing that there was some highly knowledgeable person on tap to help me when I get stuck.

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## Guild of One Name Studies

The Guild of One-Name Studies is the world's leading organisation for one-name studies. A one-name study is a project researching facts about a surname and all the people who have held it, as opposed to a particular pedigree (the ancestors of one person) or descendency (the descendants of one person or couple). The Guild is a charitable organisation dedicated to promoting the public understanding of one-name studies and the preservation and accessibility of the resultant information. Founded in 1979, the Guild now has over 2000 members spread across the world, studying over 7500 individual surnames. The Guild brings together those with an interest in one-name studies and other forms of surname study (such as DNA projects). Many members register a surname so as to embark on a Guild-recognised one-name study and coordinate world-wide activity in studying the surname. Only one person may register a specific surname, but membership of the Guild is open to all with an interest in surname studies, and is not restricted to those who wish to register a name.

I contacted a member of the guild who was researching the name RODEN and received a full list of all the Roden's in Shropshire. It helped me with some missing links.

John S Booth

## On The Web

There are quite a lot of websites on the internet that will help Family Historians. Below is a list of *some* of them. Some you may know, some you may not.

[familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org)

Has been upgraded recently.

[findmypast.com](http://findmypast.com)

Has recently joined with the Federation of Family History Societies to launch a collection of Parish Records on line. This website has lots of information.

[parishchest.com](http://parishchest.com)

Is a new website where you can obtain more helpful information than you can shake a stick at. Everything from Family History Society addresses to MI's in county order to where you can purchase parish registers on line.

[staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/about/newsletter](http://staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/about/newsletter)

On this website you can keep up to date with what is happening at your Staffordshire Archives. The newsletter also has interesting local family history stories

[familychest.co.uk](http://familychest.co.uk)

They have a vast collection of old documents for sale and they are indexed by county and surname.

[midlandshistoricaldata.org](http://midlandshistoricaldata.org)

This website digitise books and sell them. They have county directories, census's and church records all on CD's.

## **The Ladies' Law of Leap Year**

It may, perhaps, be interesting to all young ladies who are not already aware of the important fact, that leap year empowers them to do something more than "pop the question." I am informed by a fair friend, that, if in the course of the ensuing year of 1856--which is a leap year--she should so far forget herself as to suggest a union between herself and a bachelor acquaintance, who should be uncivil enough to decline her proposal, she could, thereupon, demand from him the gift of a new silk dress. But to claim this dress with propriety, she must, at the time of asking, be the wearer of a scarlet petticoat, which, or the lower portion of which, she must exhibit to the gentleman, who, by the law of leap year, is compelled to present to the lady the dress that shall cover the petticoat, and assuage her displeasure at the rejection of her proposals. This item of feminine folk lore may prove exceedingly useful to the male readers of "Notes and Queries," in putting them upon their guard during the forthcoming leap year ; for it is not, probably, without a determined significance that the wearing of scarlet petticoat is made one of the chief novelties in ladies' dresses for this winter season. Indeed, it may reasonably be inferred that the ladies' law of leap year is about to be inflicted upon the gentlemen in its most expensive silk dress form ; and that the assumption of those scarlet petticoats is merely the initiatory step to a sterner process.--Notes and Queries.

The Cork Examiner, 16 January 1856

Sent in By Bill Harrison

## **Announcement from the Federation of Family History Societies**

Petition concerning digitization of Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes.

In the FFHS Ezine of October 2007 we drew attention to the e-petition "to ensure that the General Register Office of the ONS completes ASAP, as promised, the digitisation of, and online index to, the national BMD ledgers dating back to 1837 previously held in the Family Records Centre in London." The petition closed on 26 July and the following response has just been posted on the Internet. "The General Register Office (GRO) has a statutory obligation to make index data for registration records publicly available. Since the closure of the Family Records Centre in March 2008, it has provided copies of the indexes in microfiche format at several libraries and record offices across England and Wales. Many people who would previously have had to visit London to view the indexes are now able to do so much closer to home. Further details on where to search the full range of GRO indexes from 1837 to 2008 can be found at [http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/research/groindexes/holders\\_of\\_the\\_gro\\_ind](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/research/groindexes/holders_of_the_gro_ind) GRO recognises that the creation of a publicly-accessible online index will be of even greater value to many family historians. GRO was transferred on 1 April 2008 from the Office for National Statistics to the Identity and Passport Service (IPS). IPS has confirmed that the creation of an accessible online index is a commitment which GRO will continue to work towards

A necessary pre-requisite is that all the registration records from 1837 must be created in a digitised format. The project to achieve this has encountered delays, with about half the records currently digitised. IPS is investigating a new project to complete the work and to address the requirement for an online index. At this stage options for the best method of implementation are being reviewed, and new timescales will be announced as soon as decisions based on the outcome of the review can be taken."

Roger Lewry Archives Liaison Officer FFHS

## **Newcastle under Lyme Registration Services**

Staffordshire County Council introduced a £10 premium fee for certificate on the 1st April 2008. This means that anybody wanting a certificate produced on the day of asking has to pay a £10 premium fee on top of the £7 certificate fee. HOWEVER, there is a way around this. We suggest that you write to the appropriate office requesting the certificate, if possible quoting the Staffs bmd reference. This way the certificate will only cost the usual £7.00. We also need to inform our Family Historians that we are going over to a call centre from Friday 6th June. The number is what they would normally dial as our calls will be transferred. The call centre will take certificate requests and the customer can pay over the phone if they wish. However with the introduction of the £10 premium fee the call centre staff might push to have this service, and I don't want to put our regular clients off Judy Tompkinson. Superintendent Registrar

Sent in by Bill Harrison



