

# E Newsletter



Welcome to the NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY (MIDLAND ANCESTORS)

Meetings : 1st Monday of the month at 7:30 pm unless First Monday is a Bank Holiday, then second Monday

There is a free car park at the side of the centre and ample on street parking in Harpfields Road and Flash Lane.

We are asked though to avoid parking in Vicarage Lane which is adjacent to the building since it is narrow & difficult for residents

## Coronavirus

In view of the current Government advice, all Midland Ancestors events and meetings are suspended. This includes the Family History Centre in Birmingham, outings, members meetings, both in Birmingham and at satellite groups.

The situation will be monitored and will be reviewed as and when the position changes.

To all the North Staffs members please stay in contact with the group organisers through our website. We will try to keep you up to date with the current situation using this website, via the society Facebook pages and Twitter feeds, and updates will be made available through the newsletter.

The newsletter will be added to the web page on the following dates for you to view:

31st December 2021

31st March 2022

30th June 2022

30th September 2022

# LOST MEMORIALS

More and more churches and chapels are being lost or turned into restaurants or residential properties so this begs the question where do the memorials go?

Are they taken to the mother church?

Are they left with the property ?

Are they dumped into a skip?

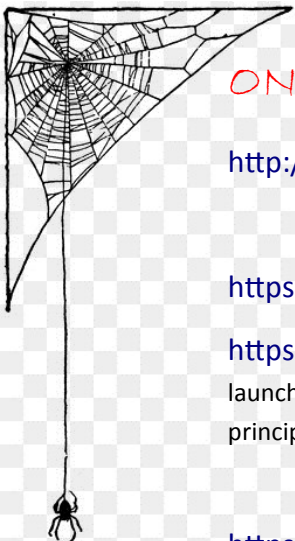
Can you spare a little time to photograph:

- \* Memorials located inside churches, chapels etc.
- \* Photograph any war memorials
- \* Headstones within churches or chapels

If you feel you can help please email me and I will let you know which churches/chapels need to have their memorials photographed near you.



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## ON THE WEB

<http://www.genealogybooks.com/category/english-genealogy/>

<https://www.inannararebooks.com/detail/27165AB/>

<https://theclergydatabase.org.uk/> the Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835 (CCed), launched in 1999 and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, makes available and searchable the principal records of clerical careers from over 50 archives in England and Wales

<https://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/> The Railways Archive contains over 5000 historical railway documents and 9000 accident reports.

<https://www.angloboerwar.com/> Anglo Boer War includes a database containing records of over 500,000 soldiers who fought in the Boer War (1899-1902) as well as other South African conflicts between 1779 and 1906.

# STAFFORDSHIRE PEOPLE

**Edward John Smith** (27 January 1850 – 15 April 1912)

Born in Well street, Hanley, on the 27th January 1850. to Edward Smith, a potter, and Catherine Hancock, nee Marsh, who married on 2 August 1841 in Shelton, His parents later owned a shop.

Smith attended the Etruria British School until the age of 13 to join the merchant navy and the Royal Naval Reserve. He took an apprenticeship with Gibson & company, Liverpool.

On 13 January 1887, Smith married Sarah Eleanor Pennington at St Oswald's Church, Winwick, Lancashire. Their daughter, Helen Melville Smith, was born in Waterloo, Liverpool on 2 April 1898. The family lived in a red brick, twin-gabled house, named "Woodhead", on Winn Road, Highfield, Southampton.

Smith joined the White Star Line in March 1880 as the Fourth Officer of SS *Celtic*. He served aboard the company's liners to Australia and to New York City, where he quickly rose in status. In 1887, he received his first White Star command, the *Republic*. In 1888, Smith earned his Extra Master's Certificate and joined the Royal Naval Reserve, receiving a commission as a Lieutenant, which entitled him to add the letters "RNR" after his name. This meant that in a time of war he could be called upon to serve in the Royal Navy.

Smith was *Majestic's* captain for nine years commencing in 1895. When the Boer War started in 1899, *Majestic* was called upon to transport troops to Cape Colony. Smith made two trips to South Africa, both without incident, and in 1903, for his service, King Edward VII awarded him the Transport Medal, showing the "South Africa" clasp. Smith was regarded as a "safe captain". Smith retired from the RNR in 1905 with the rank of Commander. His ship had the distinction of being able to fly the Blue Ensign of the RNR; British merchant vessels generally flew the Red Ensign.

In 1904, Smith became the commodore of the White Star Line and was responsible for controlling its flagships. He successfully commanded the *Baltic*, *Adriatic* and the *Olympic*.

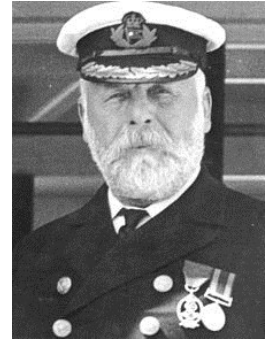
On 20 September 1911, *Olympic's* first major mishap occurred during a collision with a British warship, HMS *Hawke*, in which the warship lost her prow. Although the collision left two of *Olympic's* compartments filled and one of her propeller shafts twisted, she was able to limp back to Southampton. At the resultant inquiry, the Royal Navy blamed *Olympic*, finding that her massive size generated a suction that pulled *Hawke* into her side. Captain Smith had been on the bridge during the events.

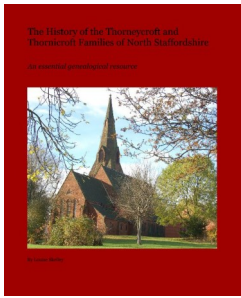
The *Hawke* incident was a financial disaster for White Star, and the out-of-service time for the big liner made matters worse. *Olympic* returned to Belfast and, to speed up the repairs, Harland and Wolff was forced to delay *Titanic's* completion in order to use one of her propeller shafts and other parts for *Olympic*. Back at sea in February 1912, *Olympic* lost a propeller blade and once again returned for emergency repairs. To get her back to service immediately, Harland and Wolff again had to pull resources from *Titanic*, delaying her maiden voyage from 20 March to 10 April.

Despite the past trouble, Smith was again appointed to command the newest ship in the *Olympic* class when the RMS *Titanic* left Southampton for her maiden voyage. Although some sources state that he had decided to retire after completing *Titanic's* maiden voyage, an article in the *Halifax Morning Chronicle* on 9 April 1912 stated that Smith would remain in charge of *Titanic* "until the Company (White Star Line) completed a larger and finer steamer."

RMS *Titanic*, struck an iceberg and sank on 15 April 1912; over 1,500 perished in the sinking, including Smith, who went down with the ship. For his stoicism and fortitude in the face of adversity, Smith became an icon of British "stiff upper lip" spirit and discipline.

Smith's mother, Catherine Hancock, lived in Runcorn, Cheshire, where Smith himself intended to retire. She died there in 1893. Smith's half-sister Thyrsa died in 1921 and his widow, Sarah Eleanor Smith, was hit and killed by a taxi in London in 1931. Their daughter, Helen Melville, married and gave birth to twins, Simon and Priscilla. Simon, a pilot in the Royal Air Force, was killed in World War II. Priscilla died from polio three years later; neither of them had children. Helen died in 1973.

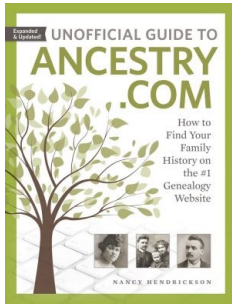




## The History of the Thorneycroft and Thornicroft Families of North Staffordshire An essential genealogical resource

by **Louise Skelley**

Two Thornicroft/Thorneycroft families arrived in Stoke-On-Trent, North Staffordshire in the 1780's. This book charts their origins from Cheshire in 1300 to the present day. Many living Thorneycroft descendents have contributed their information and photos. Included are complete census transcripts, certificates, newspaper extracts, trees and charts, over 100 photos, Parish records, Criminal records, Ships records and more. A branch of the family can be found in Illinois, USA. Famous relatives include George Benjamin Thorneycroft, Ironmaster and first Lord Mayor of Wolverhampton. There are al



Nancy Hendrickson is a contributing editor at Family Tree Magazine and the author of several genealogy books, including the Unofficial Guide to Ancestry.com and the Unofficial Ancestry.com Workbook.



### **OLD PARISH BOUNDARIES OF STAFFORDSHIRE VOLUME ONE: PIREHILL**

A guide to the administrative units of Staffordshire

By **Tim Cockin**

Pp364, £19.99, 136 illustrations and planspp364

This is the first volume in a new series of guides to the administrative units of Staffordshire. It focuses on Pirehill Hundred, which covers the unitary authority of the City of Stoke-on-Trent, the municipal boroughs of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford, the settlements of Abbots Bromley, Audley, Biddulph, Colwich, Eccleshall, Madeley and Stone. All ancient parish, township, ward and civil parish boundaries are shown on 47 separate parish maps, hand-drawn by the author.

There is an index of 10,561 places, each place identified to its respective old township. Tiers of government higher than the civil, the Poor Law Union/ District/ Borough and the County Electoral Division are shown. Each parish chapter has an abstract on parochial archives – for instance, parish registers, probate/ vestry records, old workhouses, deserted villages. The area of study is the Hundred.

In addition there is a large supplement showing a full list of members of parliament for all Staffordshire from medieval times to the present, with a full list of the Staffordshire Peerage and representatives at the European Parliament.

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