



FAMILY HISTORY Federation

Supporting Family Historians since 1974

REALLY USEFUL Bulletin No 62

October 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin*
inside find...

Lead article is *The Story of Emigration - 1850-1914 (part 2)*
plus news from local FHS and from the Federation

FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS & MAPS
www.familyhistorybooksonline.com

1000+ NEW MAPS ADDED

LAUNCH BONUS EXTENDED

ALL STOCK MAPS STILL ONLY £3.00 PLUS FREE MAGNIFIER WITH EVERY ORDER

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com

OLD ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS
Belfast (East) 1902

OLD ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS
Swindon (NE) 1922

The *Really Useful Bulletin* is provided free of charge to registered subscribers. It should not be copied or passed onto others.

Register at www.familyhistoryfederation.com/subscribe-to-our-newsletter. Only registered individuals may take advantage of offers, etc.



Really Useful Bulletin

The Promised Land

The Story of Emigration - 1850-1914

by Martin Greenwood

This extensive article has been split into two parts. This is part 2 and covers migrant ports, shipping, passages, disasters and diseases, plus the Butler family from Fringford. Part 1 was in last month's bulletin and covered major emigrant settlements, agricultural depressions and the great exodus 1850 – 1914.

Introduction

It goes without saying that emigrants travelled by sea; England was a seafaring nation and so its ports gained a new type of business and cargo – people, specifically emigrants. Some ports flourished more than others.

Liverpool

Liverpool was one of the centres of the slave trade until its abolition in 1807 but the port developed a new role in the transportation of emigrants after the end of the French wars in 1815. In 1818 a regular scheduled packet boat service was started to New York; its original intention was aimed at business travel and freight. Emigrants from all parts of the British Isles were attracted to it and so Liverpool thrived with 20,521 ships trading through the port by 1845.



Liverpool docks c1880s

CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication

By the 1840s, Liverpool had become the leading European migrant port; it sent approximately 160,000 passengers to America in 1851 alone. Most travellers from northern Europe found it was cheaper to take a ship to Hull on the east coast of England and then make their way across to Liverpool by train in order to board a ship for America. Between 1830 and 1930, over nine million emigrants left Liverpool in search of a new life in the United States, Canada and Australia. Liverpool also began regular voyages

to Australia and New Zealand, but by 1860 other UK ports such as London, Southampton and, to a lesser extent, Plymouth and Bristol became popular departure points too.

A number of local parties of emigrants, largely consisting of agricultural labourers with little education and no experience of travel, were guided to Liverpool, a journey of some eight days in wagons and on foot. These people would never have seen or experienced a large bustling city like Liverpool and this would have left them very confused and frightened. In the mid-nineteenth century, they were also liable to harassment and fraud by local confidence tricksters, who became known as 'runners'. From the 1860s the situation began to improve as steam started to replace sail, and the steamship companies started to look after emigrants during their stay in the city.

Other ports

By 1860, regular voyages from other UK ports had become popular and these included London (Gravesend), Southampton, Plymouth and Bristol. The south coast ports were more convenient for emigrants coming from mainland Europe, particularly from Hamburg, on their way to the USA or one of the British colonies.

There was also significant emigration from Cornwall and Devon comprising mainly of out-of-work miners; the ports of Liverpool and London meant a long journey for them, certainly before the railways. Ports on the north and south coasts of Cornwall and Devon therefore became important ports of departure. These included including Padstow, Fowey, Truro, Falmouth, Penzance and St Ives, together with Plymouth and Bideford. A great many of these Cornish emigrants went to Canada and the USA between 1831 and 1860. From Padstow alone, some 6,200 emigrants sailed to Canada in those years. Indeed in 1841, Padstow was the third most important departure point for Canada, surpassed only by Liverpool and London.

Shipping

Both the nineteenth and early twentieth century were the great age of passenger travel at sea, and with the development of sea transport came a massive expansion of emigration. America was the primary destination, with many seeking to escape war, poverty and religious and political persecution in search of a better life.



Really Useful Bulletin

Canada and Australia also attracted millions. The dream of the emigrant was to arrive in a country where land was free and fertile, religious and political dissent was tolerated, and class division did not exist; they were looking for the *Promised Land*.

Initially, the shipping companies were more interested in transporting mail and merchandise than in carrying passengers. However, it was soon realized that good passenger facilities brought status and increasing custom. So large liners were built to transport emigrants; these ships had first-class conditions on the upper decks for the wealthy, and 'steerage conditions' with communal cooking and living arrangements on the lower decks for the poor. The main shipping companies in Liverpool were Cunard (1839), White Star, Inman and the Liverpool and Great Western Steamship Company (Guion), and they were all quick to involve themselves in the emigrant trade once they realized that this could be lucrative.

The 1855 Passenger Act also helped to improve conditions as it laid down minimum standards for rations, space and sanitation. In the 1860s, steamships started to replace sailing ships and this cut the length of the journey time to North America from over four weeks to about eight days; the journey to Australia decreased from up to seventeen weeks to just four to six weeks. In 1907, the White Star Line moved the focus of its operations from Liverpool to Southampton, which since 1858 had been used by British shipping companies and their major continental rivals.

In Britain there had long been depots for emigrants on government assisted passages to Australia and New Zealand. Facilities in the depots were basic but made a good impression on agents for the colonies and medical inspectors. In 1883, for example, the assistant Agent-General for South Australia, impressed by the cleanliness of the beds and walls at the Plymouth Emigrant Depot...*had no idea that emigrants were so well treated.*



Cunard Building

Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

At Liverpool, Cunard provided free accommodation for emigrants awaiting embarkation in what amounted to... *a village by itself in the centre of Liverpool consisting of several buildings, holding over 2,000 guests if need be.* Guests were greeted on arrival by a matron and hotel keeper in Cunard uniform, who offered refreshments and showed guests to their quarters. Men and women were strictly segregated and accommodated in dormitories sleeping no more than fifteen people; these dormitories were... *well-ventilated and provided with heat and electric light.* Wholesome food was offered in the dining rooms.

The 'Cunard Hotel system' was visited daily by a company doctor to carry out medical examinations to identify any ill or diseased passengers who might be rejected on reaching America.

This system was certainly superior to that of the average emigrant depots. But there were attempts to reassure people both at home and in the colonies that emigrants, especially young women, passing through depots were well looked after. In 1883, Ellen Joyce, as a supporter of female emigration, was impressed by the services held for young women going to Queensland by the sub-matron of the Plymouth Depot, and the singing of an appropriate hymn, *Go Forward Christian Emigrant Beneath His Banner True*. As a group, they had been allowed to form their own mess and choose a mess captain from amongst themselves. Medical inspections, 'passing the doctor', had been suitably decorous. Mrs Joyce was keen to reassure families of the young women that they would be well looked after, physically, morally and spiritually.

Passages

The scene as an emigrant ship set sail is vividly evoked by the artist Henry O'Neil in his 1861 painting *The Parting Cheer* and also by Charles Staniland in *The Emigrant Ship* of the 1880s. Both artists concentrated on the emotions of those left behind as an emigrant ship left an undefined location along the Thames. There was a real sense of excitement when a ship set sail but it was mingled with apprehension and a great deal of confusion.

In December 1850, for example, when the *Star of the West* set sail down the River Mersey, *the spectators on shore took off their hats and cheered lustily, and the cheer was repeated by the whole body of emigrants on deck, who raised a shout that must have been heard at the distance of a mile even in the noisy and busy thoroughfares of Liverpool.* There was no going back at this point and the passage to a new life had begun.

There were stirring send-offs but these were only a prelude to the real horrors of steerage. Hundreds of people crowded together in squalid, cramped, poorly-lit compartments endured long journeys that could take about six weeks to North America or up to seventeen



Really Useful Bulletin

weeks to Australia in the days of sail; this could be considerably longer with adverse winds and bad weather.

In 1853-54, Alfred Joy's passage to Melbourne took 155 'tedious' days. After 1837, steamships started to challenge sail and Brunel's paddle steamer, *Great Western*, reduced the advertised time of the Atlantic crossing to fifteen days. After the mid 1850s, a new non-stop route to Australia picked up the roaring forties for a high-speed dash across the southern ocean.

By then many sailing ships also had auxiliary steam engines powered by a single screw and this ensured that they did not get becalmed in the doldrums and thus made seventy-five to eighty days a realistic target. By the 1870s, steamships were regularly carrying emigrants to Australia, although sailing ships continued to the end of the nineteenth century. Improved engines allowed ships to maintain speeds of fifteen knots, cutting the journey down to six weeks.

Disasters

Between 1847 and 1852, only forty-three emigrant ships were lost out of the 6,877 which left British ports; and out of nearly one-and-a-half million passengers on them, only 1,043 died as a result of shipwreck or fire. Many fell victim to the epidemics which were rife on the emigrant ships and which were the true killers. There were two notable disasters involving local people.



The Cataraqui wreck 1845

Public domain

The ***Cataraqui*** was a British ship which set sail from Liverpool on 20 April 1845. On 4 August 1845, a severe storm was raging and the ship sank just off King Island – a mere one day short of their destination in Port Philip. The ship sank and broke up, leaving only nine survivors (eight of them crewmen) out of a complement of 423. The survivors were eventually picked up and delivered to Melbourne on 13 September. This was Australia's worst maritime disaster. There is a beautifully carved oak door in St Nicholas Church, Tackley, dedicated to the forty-two villagers who died in the shipwreck.

The ***Cospatrick*** was a British wooden sailing ship which sailed from Gravesend in September 1874, bound for Auckland, New Zealand. On 17 November 1874, the *Cospatrick* caught fire 250 miles west of the Cape of Good Hope. The crew did their level best to fight the fire but were beaten in the end. Only three members survived out of 470 on board and this has since been regarded as New Zealand's worst maritime disaster. Seven Wychwood residents were lost - all members of the families of Richard Hedges and Henry Townsend. Four years later a stone memorial fountain was erected on the Green at Shipton-under-Wychwood to commemorate the community's tragic loss. After this disaster, local interest in emigration waned!

Epidemic diseases

Epidemics were rife on the emigrant ships and many passengers fell victim to them and died. In 1848 alone, 5,293 people died of typhus during a voyage from England to Quebec, and a further 10,037 ended up in Canadian hospitals. Many of these emigrants were fleeing the Irish potato famine or the Scottish Highland clearances.

The ***Ticonderogo*** was a clipper ship and earned the sobriquet *the fever ship* after a scandalous voyage ending in disaster. In 1852, the *Ticonderogo* set sail from Liverpool bound for Melbourne with 795 emigrants on board. When the ship arrived, it was discovered that conditions on the ship were dreadful and surgeons were called in to examine the patients. During the voyage some 100 died of typhus and an equal number of people were still suffering of the fever when the ship went into quarantine at Port Phillip Heads. A quarantine ship was sent alongside with stores for three months. The citizens of Melbourne were appalled and the local press had a field day!

Cholera was another feared disease and even more malignant than typhus. In 1853, of the seventy-seven ships that set sail from Liverpool for New York, forty-six were stricken with cholera and 1,328 emigrants died as a result.

Despite all the problems facing the emigrant to Australia and New Zealand, the regulatory framework of assisted passages meant a higher chance of survival than on the shorter, unregulated crossing to North America. Unlike the US and Canada, both Australia and Argentina continued to operate liberal immigration policies and to encourage immigration with assisted passages well into the 1930s.

The 1852 Passenger Act allowed emigrants to stay on board free of charge for forty-eight hours after arrival, which gave them more time to find somewhere decent to live and even a chance to find a job. There were also immigrant depots at Melbourne, Sydney and Port Phillip where they could stay free of charge.

It was often the case that all the emigrants had been engaged within two days after the inspection was over. For



Really Useful Bulletin

example, there was a scramble for housemaids because of the scarcity of servants as many young eligible women were able to find a husband quickly. However, young women were warned against marrying the first settler they met. One young woman from Newcastle on arrival in Port Phillip was more sensible and she turned down an offer of marriage with the comment saying... *Nay, nay hinney, nay, my hinney, I'se to wait a wee and see what turns up!*

The Butler family from Fringford

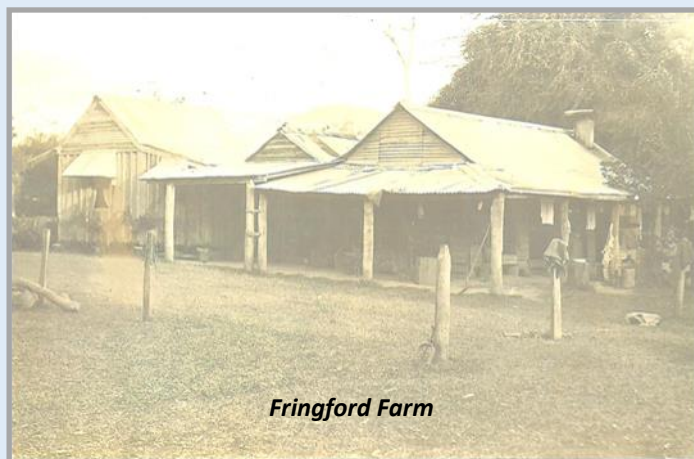
Richard Butler was a cordwainer in Fringford, married to Rhoda Thame. They had twelve children of whom four died in infancy; four sons emigrated to Australia - Henry, Joseph, Charles and Thomas. Henry moved from Fringford to Liverpool in the late 1850s, where he worked on the railway.



Family photo of Thomas, Henry Charles Butler

Joseph (1848-1909) was the first brother to emigrate; he sailed from Gravesend on the *Royal Dane* on 9 December 1869 and landed at Rockhampton, Queensland. It seems likely that he had left Fringford earlier to join his brother, Henry, in Liverpool working on the railway.

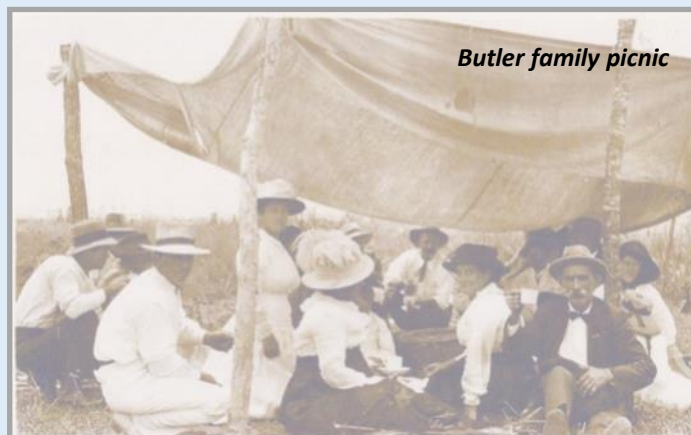
Henry (1834-1924), with his wife and four young children, sailed from Gravesend on 30 July 1870 on the *Royal Dane* arriving at Rockhampton on 19 November 1870. They were due to go to Brisbane but the Government of NSW ordered the ship and immigrants to go further north to Rockhampton to increase the settlement there. But there was little work available there, so he moved further north to Mackay, and then two years later moved again to Townsville. He also purchased a small sailing boat and would sail to Magnetic Island in the bay on weekends where he built a *log and slab hut with a thatched roof and was the first white settler among the local aborigines*. He was joined there by his brothers Charles (1852-1946) and Thomas (1856-1948) after they arrived in 1874. In 1877, Henry brought his family to the island where they lived for



twenty-one years. He died in 1924 but his daughter, Ellen, continued to live on the Island until her death in 1958.

Charles and Thomas erected a lime kiln in which they *burnt coral and later freighted it in its powered [powdered] form* in their sailing boat to Townsville. They built their own coral house which was still in existence in 1938. Thomas left the island and moved further north to Mackay to work as a line repair man, and in 1896 he was transferred to the post office in Cardwell. In 1900, he purchased some 168 acres of land, house, and fruit trees in Murray Upper (the upper reaches of the Murray River). The property was then called *Blechynden* which Thomas changed to *Fringford*. Joseph also moved to Murray Upper in 1900 where he and his wife, Emma managed the property until Thomas and his family moved there from Cardwell about 1902. Joseph then bought a property across the creek from Fringford, where he built a house called *Yabbon* and he farmed the land and bred cattle and horses until his death in 1909.

At the 'Fringford' farm, Thomas grew maize and bananas, raised fowls and pigs and bred cattle and horses. All the produce was taken by horse-drawn wagon to Cardwell for shipment to southern Australia, and on the return trip they collected their groceries. The whole trip took two or three days and at night they camped out on the side of the road. In 1926, Thomas took up post office work again on the Murray River, and his son, Ormand, began the first





Really Useful Bulletin

motorized Royal Mail Service with a Model T Ford truck. Thomas lived on at 'Fringford' until his death in 1948. Electricity was not connected to the Murray District and 'Fringford' until 1974. None of Thomas' children married and like him, they were all buried on the property, except for Hugh Ramsey, who was killed in action in France on 28 November 1916 while rescuing a friend.



Butler family crossing the river Murray

The Butler family certainly played their part in the history of the early pioneers. The emigration experience had its challenges for the brothers but they were welcomed as immigrants, encouraged to buy land in areas which had never been developed and they were their own masters. It was all a far cry from working in England in the 1870s, on the railway or on the land for very modest wages of some 11s (55p) or 12s (60p) a week. It is very unlikely that they had any regrets at their decision to emigrate.

Conclusion

I hope that these two articles have explained the extent and nature of emigration, focusing on Oxfordshire, from 1850 to 1914. In the early years particularly before the invention of the steam engine, the prospect of the long, uncomfortable and dangerous passages in sailing ships must have been very daunting for potential emigrants. Most of them were agricultural labourers who had barely even left their own parishes. It was a long walk from Oxfordshire to Liverpool for a start, and the hustle and bustle of the big city must have been terrifying.

There were all sorts of risks from rogue sellers of lodgings and passages and all the supposed requirements for the journey. Improved protection was provided later by emigration agents and ship owners but it must have been very confusing for these naïve farm labourers. That said, life for most of them in their new countries seems to have been a success and better than their prospects staying in England.

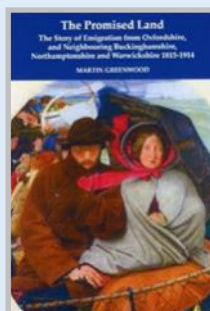
The Butlers and their descendants prospered in comparison with what they might have expected in England. They, and so many others, also made a major contribution to the growth of the colonies and the Victorian Empire. There were undoubted benefits, not just for the United Kingdom, in the development of shipping, railways, emigration and the colonies.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank members of the Butler family, particularly Rhonda Smith, for all their interest and assistance with my project. I would also like to thank the staff of the Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) for their patience and assistance in answering my queries. I am hugely indebted to Bob Boyd for all his assistance and advice in publishing my original book. I would also like to offer a special thank you to Marilyn Yurdan for her rigorous but kindly reading of the text.

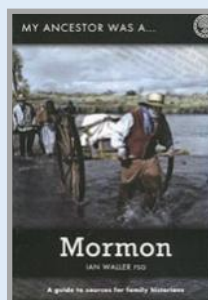
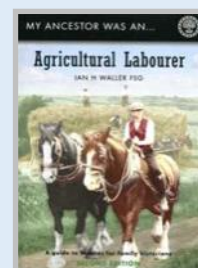
About the author

Martin Greenwood, a well-known local historian, has written about village life in Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise* country and more widely in Banburyshire. His most recent book was *Banburyshire, a Walker's History*.



The Promised Land, The Story of Emigration from Oxfordshire, 1815-1914 was published in 2020. It is available from the Banbury Museum Shop, Coles in Bicester and from Martin at martinwgreenwood@btinternet.com.

Ian Waller's *My Ancestor was an Agricultural Labourer* is available from Family History Books. £10.99 plus p&p. Simply click [HERE](#) for full details.



In some regions (Herefordshire especially) many migrated with the Mormons. A book which will be of interest to readers is *My Ancestor was a Mormon*. £9.99 + p&p. Full details [HERE](#).





Family History Societies



Oxfordshire Family History Society

Family History Fair

Saturday 25th October 2025

10am – 4pm

Free entry, free parking

Cherwell School (North),

Marston Ferry Road, Oxford, OX2 7EE

Wheelchair and child-friendly



Get help with your research – particularly in Oxfordshire but also in other counties and countries
A variety of experts will be present, browse and buy books, CDs, maps, postcards and materials from specialist companies.

Refreshments available (until 3.15 pm)

==oOo==

Comments from the 2024 Fair

Very informative - friendly people.

Great show! Well laid out and good signage.

Great refreshments.

Good venue for public transport.

Really good fair, the best one we've attended so far.

==oOo==

For more information

including advice on how to get to the fair visit

www.ofhs.uk/fair2025 email: fair@ofhs.uk Tel:

OFHS Helpline: 01865 358151

Registered Charity Number 275891



Will be present with a broad selection of books and maps



Huddersfield and District Family History Society

Family and Local History Fair

Greenhead Masonic Hall

26 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield, HD1 4EN

Saturday 25 October 2025 - 10am to 4pm

Admission £5—children under 16 free

Refreshments and free car parking available



Talks Programme

10.30am: Ian Stevenson—*How to research the history of your house*. Ian will describe some of the interesting house history projects he has been involved in for the society over the last few years and will give hints and tips on how to research your own house history.

12 noon: Christine Leveridge—*Yorkshire folk on holiday in the early twentieth century*. Christine will give an illustrated talk about how our recent ancestors holidayed.

1.30pm: Chris Smith—*A walk around Huddersfield in old postcards*. Chris returns in person this year to give an illustrated talk on many interesting locations and events through his collection of old postcards.

Ask the experts family history research service

Exhibitors include family and local history societies, books, maps, genealogy supplies and more.

Further details: <https://hdfhs.org.uk/the-family-history-fair/>

Charity No. 702199



Family History Societies



Society of Australian Genealogists

Pathways to Professional Genealogy

An online conference presented by the Society of Australian Genealogists

Are you ready to take the next step in your genealogy journey?

Pathways to Professional Genealogy brings together experts to explore what it means to move from passionate family historian to skilled professional genealogist. Across this online conference, you'll gain insights into opportunities in the sector, while connecting with a community equally committed to advancing family history research.

Whether you are considering professional practice, seeking to strengthen your expertise, or simply curious about the future of genealogy as a profession, this event will inspire and equip you for the journey ahead. Presenters include:

- ◇ Cathie Sherwood, Family History Academy
- ◇ Cassandra Seaborn, NSW Trustee and Guardian
- ◇ Danielle Lautrec, Generations Genealogy
- ◇ Angela Phippen, Librarian and Visiting Fellow, State Library of NSW
- ◇ Jennifer Bates, Koorie Family History Service
- ◇ Simon Bligh, Worthington Clark - Genealogy and Asset Research

There will be a panel of experts drawn from those undertaking a variety of professional roles.

For more details: www.sag.org.au/events



East Yorkshire Family History Society

Our 2026 recruitment initiative not only supports the East Yorkshire Family History Society but may also provide a potential blueprint for other member societies looking to boost membership retention, attract new members and encourage early subscription payments. With so many societies seeing a decline in membership numbers, sharing effective strategies might help reverse this trend. The *Triple Prize Draw* features three major prizes, thanks to several generous sponsors—support particularly valuable during challenging economic times.

The prizes have a face value of circa £350. By dedicating time to attracting sponsors, the entire promotion has been funded without incurring any direct expenses. It is unlikely local societies could justify spending £350 without assurance of a proportional return on such an investment.

Draw 1 – Twelve Months Subscription to Find My Past

Open to all new members² joining the EYFHS *before* the 1st April 2026. New Members will be automatically entered into this free prize draw. You can join The Society at any of our meetings or events, on our web site, or at the Carnegie Heritage Centre, Anlaby Road, Kingston upon Hull.

Draw 2 – Family Tree Maker 7

Everyone who pays their 2026 membership subscription *before* 6th January, will be automatically entered into our draw for this superb software package.

Draw 3 – Twelve Months Subscription to Ancestry Complete

For existing members only. Recommend the EYFHS to your family and friends and, if they join *before* 1st April 2026, you will be eligible for this super prize draw. You must send you name, address and email address, and those of each of your nominees to membsec@eyfhs.org.uk. You will receive one free prize draw entry for every one of your nominees who becomes a member *before* the cut-off date.

Other societies might consider an alternative promotional plan, such as providing current members with a fifty per cent membership discount for one year if they successfully recruit a new member. Such a promotion could result in minimal or no additional costs to the society. Another option, referred to as Plan C, involves offering a £10 voucher, redeemable in your society's shop, as a prize. While this approach does incur some costs, they are typically less than the stated value of the prize and may contribute to the recruitment of new members. A bigger prize will appeal more to your members, so finding sponsors is likely the most effective way forward.

Good luck with your annual recruitment drive. If you identify an approach that is particularly effective, or otherwise, please ensure to share your experience with fellow Federation Societies.

Alan Brigham

See website: www.eyfhs.org.uk/



Family History Societies



**Calderdale
Family History Society**

Calderdale FHS' Major Project

Calderdale FHS is undertaking a major project of transcribing and publishing the monumental inscriptions (MIs) for Brighouse Cemetery, which is one of the largest cemeteries in the area.



Brighouse Cemetery

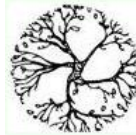
Image © Humphrey Bolton, via Geograph, CC BY-SA 2.0

There are over 3,000 graves with headstones, all of which are being photographed and then transcribed and validated by a team of volunteers, before being uploaded on to the society's online database, access to which is available free for society members. Non-members can still see what is available through access to the transcription index on the society website www.cfhsweb.com/index/select/.

The cemetery is divided into twelve sections, six for consecrated burials and six for unconsecrated. The first two unconsecrated sections have been completed and the results available on the online database and transcription index. The next two unconsecrated sections are due to be uploaded during October.

This project adds to the availability of MIs from 106 different sources throughout Calderdale, all of which are available through the society. It is hoped that the project will be completed during the early part of 2026.

For more information see www.cfhsweb.com/



**West Surrey
Family History Society**

Surrey Family History Fair

Saturday 8 November 2025

10am - 4.30pm

**Woking Leisure Centre,
Kingfield Rd., Woking, GU22 9BA**

Free entry



If you are just curious or interested about your family history or a seasoned researcher, this is the event for you!

Genealogical, commercial, family and local history societies represented (including Family History Federation), also computer lookups and helpdesks to assist you on your family history journey

Including the West Surrey Family History Society Bookstall and Reference Library

See our website for current details

www.wsfhs.co.uk

or contact: fair@wsfhs.org



*Will be present with
a broad selection of
books and maps*



Family History Societies



Wiltshire Family History Society

Family History Day at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre



Saturday 1 November 2025

10am-4pm

Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre,
Cocklebury Road, Chippenham SN15 3QN

LISTEN to talks about how to start your family history and using newspapers as a great resource for genealogists

DISPLAYS of original genealogy sources from the archives

BEHIND THE SCENES tour at 2pm
(first come first served, limited availability)

ONE-TO-ONE ADVICE from experts from the Wiltshire Family History Society

Whether novice or expert,
this is the event for you!

No need to book!

Refreshments available

www.wiltshirefhs.co.uk/



BOOK THE DATE!



Really Useful Show *Live*

Saturday 18 April 2026

10am—4.30pm

Burgess Hall, St Ives PE27 6WU

There will be talks by leading experts
A hall packed with family history and local societies
plus commercial exhibitors and
Family History Federation with the bookstall!
Please put the date in your diary today!

CHECK THE DATE!

Before setting a date for fairs and events,
always check what else is on live—avoid clashes

Clashes will limit your visitors!

Clashes will limit your exhibitors!

People cannot be in two places at the same time!

The Federation encourages all organisers to list activities for FREE on the *Genealogical Events* section of GENUKI: www.genuki.org.uk/

The LIVE family history events
we already know about for next year:

The Family History Show—Midlands (Malvern)
Saturday 14 March—Three Counties Showground
<https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/midlands/>

Really Useful Family History Show
Saturday 18 April—Burgess Hall, St Ives
www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/

The Family History Show—Liverpool
Saturday 9 May—Aintree Racecourse
<https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/liverpool/>

Suffolk FHS Fair
Saturday 9 May—The Hold, Ipswich
[//suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/pages/view/society-fair](http://suffolkfhs.co.uk/index.php/pages/view/society-fair)

City of York FHS Fair
Saturday 27 June—York (t.b.c.)
www.yorkfamilyhistory.org.uk/

The Family History Show—London
Saturday 3 October—Kempton Racecourse
<https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/london/>

List all YOUR events for free on GENUKI!



Really Useful Bulletin

DNA –unexpected results

In family history, before the advent of affordable DNA tests, we had some useful sayings, one such being— *the mother is the mother, the father is who the mother says he is.*

You have done all your paper research. You have the copy certificates, baptisms and censuses. You know for sure who begat whom. Then your DNA result arrives and not a single surname looks familiar even though some matches have a relatively high count of centiMorgans (cM - the measure used in matches) and some surely should carry surnames you have in your extensive and carefully researched tree.

Initially you think it is the testing that is awry – you must have received the wrong test result. You check the shared cM project <https://dnapainter.com/tools/sharedcmv4> to see the relationships. But then you do some quick and dirty trees for the closer matches and some familiar places appear. You may also persuade other family members to test and see who matches whom. But you realise that the genetics do not match your thorough and well-documented family history paper trail.

Finding that a doting and much-loved grandfather was not related to you can be earth-shattering. He is no longer around for you to thank for being there for you. Imagine the shock to find the best dad in the world is not actually your father, and mum has passed so you cannot ask her!

Remember one key point: those who raised you, or raised one of your parents or grandparents, chose to do so possibly knowing the truth about the genes involved. The genetics do not lie, but nurture is a vital part of upbringing. Depending on your age, you may need to rule out your conception having been sperm donation (see <https://donorconceiveduk.org.uk/> and www.uhliverpool.nhs.uk/services/service-finder/donor-conceived-register).



However, finding that dad is not genetically your dad does happen. A spot of Googling will produce the story of how the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, discovered Gavin Welby was not his natural father. See also:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Montague_Browne

You have confirmed that your DNA results are correct and that your tree was built on nurture rather than nature, so what do you do? You research your genetic tree! But do you shout out and tell the world – as Welby did (probably before a newspaper broke the story) - or do you keep the findings and your new tree firmly to yourself to avoid the

chance of hurting others involved? But what about your matches? Will they explore the connections and spill the beans? Will someone among those matches know the real story from the mouths of their parents or grandparents and be able to tell you more if you make contact? Your next action needs exceptionally careful consideration.

With DNA it is no different to secrets from the past discovered in documentary research: we have a moral duty to use what we find with utter discretion and tact. Listen to BBC Radio 4's series *The Gift* : www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0gd2dgb. See www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ethics_and_DNA_Testing or <https://bcgcertification.org/skillbuilding-the-ethics-of-dna-testing/>.

Family history can be challenging but, with an open mind, care and consideration of others, it is wonderfully rewarding too!

Discovering a “not the expected parent” in your immediate forebears can be challenging to your mental health. Some may feel their identity has changed, others may experience great loss and some may suffer anxiety. If this is you, don't bottle it up - seek help from a mental health professional.

Buy your *FamilyTree* DNA kits from Family History Books Online:

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com/dna-kits-376

Do you belong to a local family history group? If not, join NOW!

www.familyhistoryfederation.com/find-a-society

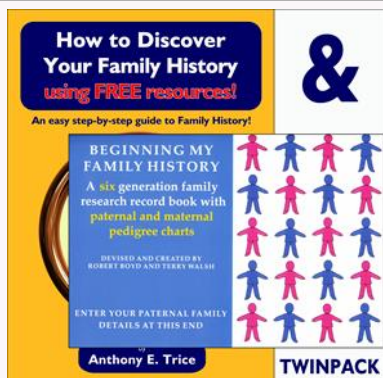


Really Useful Bulletin

Family History Books and Maps



Christmas is coming! Time to find a bargain from the online shop for all your friends and family!



Something to get a family member or friend started on their family history journey in style is this great twin-pack.

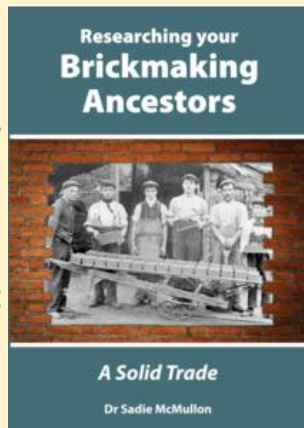
A six-generation record book plus a guide to doing your research with free resources!

Saving £5 on RRP!

Just £12.45 + p&p

[Click HERE for full details.](#)

This detailed book, published earlier this year, will make a super gift for everyone—whether or not they have a specific interest in brickmaking or brickmakers.



RRP £14.95

Buy today for £12.95 + p&p

[Click HERE for full details.](#)

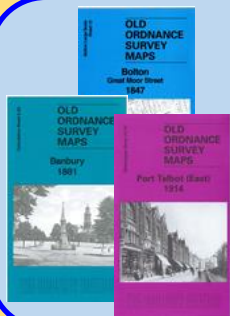


This twin-pack of coffee-table-quality books are great for those interested in photography, fashion or family history.

RRP £38.90. This special Christmas offer is:

£20 for the two + p&p

[Click HERE for full details.](#)



**Need a gift to pop in the post which won't break the bank?
How about a map of the town or village where your friends live or have an interest?**

Make a selection of ANY FIVE maps from the shop for just £15 + p&p.

Normally £3.50 each

[Click HERE for full details.](#)

Don't delay—be ready to load Santa's sleigh!

All offers close at 11.59pm UK time on Saturday 22 November 2025

UK book and map orders of £40 or more—postage free

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com/



Family history groups are welcome to join the Family History Federation—see

www.familyhistoryfederation.com/society-join



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

Really Useful Show *Live*



Saturday 18 April 2026
10am—4.30pm
at Burgess Hall, St Ives PE27 6WU

CALL FOR EXHIBITORS

Following the extremely successful show in 2024, the East Anglia Group of Family History Societies in conjunction with the Federation have reserved the venue for 2026.

Booking for societies who wish to take part is now open

Contact EAGfamilyhistoryshowlive@gmail.com for full details. Bookings should be returned by 1 December — spaces are rapidly being filled! *First come, first served!*

There is opportunity to promote your society in the show brochure, too. Just ask for details.

This is the premier family history event for East Anglia, the Midlands and Home Counties.

We look forward to many societies joining us for another exciting and successful show.

Muriel Halliday and the show organisers

Out and About

As winter draws closer, here are some dates where you can come and meet the Federation's volunteers at events, plus those where the Family History Bookshop will be present with books and maps, too.

Federation plus Family History Bookshop

Sat. 25 Oct **Oxfordshire FHS Fair**

Details in this edition

Sat. 8 Nov **West Surrey FHS Fair**—Woking Leisure Centre

Details in this edition

Federation roadshow—help, advice and a few books!

23-26 Oct **ICHF Creative Craft Show**—SEC, Glasgow

Roadshow booth at recent ICHF event at Westpoint, Exeter where our volunteers were very busy helping the public and promoting societies



When the world of corporate genealogy turns ugly

In almost twenty years working as a genealogist, I don't think I have ever been as angry as when, at the end of September, I read about Ancestry's latest endeavour. In a quite frankly appalling development, Ancestry is taking the National Records of Scotland (NRS) to court in a bid to gain access to many of the records available on ScotlandsPeople's website. The full story is at www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy50gn5353zo, whilst *Who Do You Think You Are?* magazine's account lists the records being fought over www.whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com/news/ancestry-nrs-records.

This is because the NRS has refused to enter into a financial agreement with Ancestry. The Information Commissioner's Office sided with the NRS, but Ancestry challenged this through a body called the General Regulatory Chamber where Ancestry stated it wished to "exploit... commercially" NRS' collections. The Chamber ruled that NRS should be able to make the records available, but that it hasn't got the legal authority to compel it to do so. There will now be a separate hearing.

In the past, Ancestry has entered into agreements with The National Archives in England but those were as the result of a decision by TNA to seek commercial involvement. TNA also partners with TheGenealogist and FindMyPast.

The NRS holds its records in trust for the people of Scotland. If I, a Scottish-based taxpayer, was to challenge the NRS that it was not providing access to Crown copyright records, there would, perhaps, be a moral case to support the challenge. But Ancestry is a multinational for-profit company with its main interest being profit for its shareholders. The idea that it has a right to demand access to records to make them available on a for-profit basis is, quite frankly, shocking.

This is a slippery slope. As things stand, it is my sincere hope that Ancestry backs off (I have more appropriate but unprintable words!). Ancestry will certainly win few friends with this action.

Good luck to the National Records of Scotland in the legal proceedings.

Edited from Chris Paton's Blog

See Chris' update after he studied the full documents! <https://scottishgenes.blogspot.com/2025/09/>





Really Useful Back Page



Family History Research Aids from the Experts

Parish Chest, a service from the Family History Federation, has over eighty family history societies and associated suppliers at a one-stop online shop, offering a wide range of family history materials in some eighteen categories including:

- *Parish register transcriptions and more from local FHS*
- *Memorial inscriptions information from gravestones across the country, compiled by local FHS*
- *Nonconformists: Baptists, Wesleyans, Independents, Quakers and many more nonconformist lists*
- *Wills and probate indexes of wills and administrations*
- *Folders, printing facilities, giftware*
- *..and more!*

Societies and suppliers regularly add new lines, so visit to see what is there to help you add to your family tree.

www.parishchest.com

Societies and others interested in joining Parish Chest should initially contact:

admin@familyhistoryfederation.com

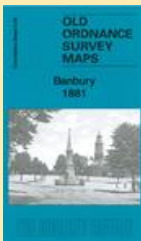


**FAMILY HISTORY
BOOKS
& MAPS**

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com

Family History Books (FHB) is an online bookshop and publisher; it is owned by the Family History Federation and the aim is to provide a service to the genealogical community. Family History Books Online offers a range of relevant titles relating to family history research, plus a range of specialist maps for historians.

FHB welcomes contact from authors! Works of specific interest to family historians with wider social history topics are of interest. FHB does not publish individual family histories or fiction. If you have a book in the making, then do contact FHB via admin@familyhistoryfederation.com. We would love to hear from you about your ideas.



Family History Books now stocks an extensive **range of affordable reprint maps** from the Alan Godfrey series. These handy maps are designed to be used! Most carry detailed area notes on the reverse—just what you need when studying where the forebears lived! See the range [HERE](#).

In addition to its [online shop](#) FHB can also be found at major live family history events around the country. Come and visit us and see all the latest titles available. The stall is always very popular!

Happy browsing!

Please explore the range, and place your orders, at

www.familyhistorybooksonline.com

The **REALLY USEFUL Bulletin** is published monthly and circulated free of charge. Members of the Family History Federation are encouraged to provide information about their projects and activities for inclusion. The Federation policy is to not include paid-for commercial advertising. However, when space allows, the editorial team includes mentions of activities relevant to readers which are offered by other organisations—plus any relevant special offers, too. The team is considering the option of including relevant commercial advertising for 2026.



The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

LIVE on Saturday 18 April 2026—Burgess Hall, St Ives, Cambs.

Can FHF members get together and put on a regional show— assistance available.

Contact: chairman@familyhistoryfederation.com



FFHS does not exercise any control over the content of external website links in this Really Useful Bulletin. It is not responsible for the content or quality. Nor does FFHS endorse any companies or products advertised.
Copyright © 2025 Federation of Family History Societies. All rights reserved.

Family History Federation: www.familyhistoryfederation.com; info@familyhistoryfederation.com

Family History Federation is the operating name of the Federation of Family History Societies.

The Federation of Family History Societies is a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Company Number 2930189 (England & Wales) Registered Charity Number 1038721

Registered Office: 2 Primrose Avenue, Urmston, Manchester M41 0TY

