

Peterborough and District Family History Society Newsletter May 2023



From the Chairman...

It will not be long now before we are viewing the Coronation of our King, Charles III. Queen Elizabeth reigned for 70 years and 214 days – what a long time in a job! I realise that I have lived during the reigns of five monarchs: George V; Edward VIII; George VI; Elizabeth II; and Charles III, and I am still a monarchist! I remember watching the late Queen's Coronation on a neighbour's television on 2nd June 1953. Today I have received an ornate invitation for Pauline and me to watch the next one with some friends. These occasions tend to bring people together and I believe add a bit of joyful ceremony to our sometimes mundane lives.

Most of us have celebrated important events with family or friends at some time or another, and I think that could provide a good topic to add to our own personal memoirs. It is odd that we might find more illustration for those events before the advent of modern digital phone cameras than in the eras after, as the earlier ones were printed off for posterity. Enjoy your celebrations.

Michael Kennelly



From the Editor...

The sun has begun to shine and its nice to get outdoors again. But don't forget your family history research. Why not coincide a walk with a trip to a churchyard, or a drive to visit your ancestor's town or village. Don't forget your camera and please let members know about your visit. What did you find out? Was it how you had imagined? The house my grandparent's lived in is just a few doors away from my house and every time I walk past I remember what the house looked like when I visited many years ago.

The coronation of King Charles III is almost upon us. How will you be celebrating? How will your children, grandchildren and great children be celebrating?

I have been transcribing the school log books for Conington and Woodwalton recently and regular entries are holidays for special events. These include a days holiday for the coronation of King George VI, and a half day's holiday for the King and Queen's silver wedding anniversary in 1948. Undoubtedly these days off school were gratefully received and perhaps there were parties. My daughter is a teacher and at her school this tradition is being continued. Although the children aren't having a days off school they are going to celebrate with a Kings Day. I wonder what their memories will be in years to come?

Sadie McMullon



The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

17-18 November 2023



Please view www.fhf-reallyuseful.com for details

Zoom Talks

All meetings are currently being held by zoom. Joining instructions will be sent in the week prior to the meeting.

Wed 3rd May	7.30pm	AGM followed by 'Thomas Stokes Apprentice'	Steve Manning
Wed 7th June	7.30pm	'A Most Notorious False Lying Fellow'	Sue Paul
Wed 5th July	7.30pm	'Gateways to History'	Alan Johnson

Communication

Have you changed your e.mail or snail mail address recently?
Please keep us up to date with your current contact details.

Remember Membership Subscriptions Due

Don't forget your annual subscriptions are due April 2023

Individual and Overseas £10 Joint £12

Head over to the Family History Federation website and opt for 'Parish Chest'.

Then opt for 'Society Subscriptions'

Scroll down until 'Renewal UK member individual/ joint' appears beside our logo.

Enter in your details and continue receiving our amazing member benefits for another year.

New password, to continue accessing our website and archives, will be sent out June/ July,

Lych Gates

The lych gate on the right is at All Saints, Paston. Lychgates, pronounced lich-gate, can be found in many English churchyards. The word comes from the Old English or Saxon word for corpse, which is lych. The lych gate is part of a collection of words connected with death.

There is also the lych bell, the bell that was rung in front of a corpse as it was carried from the house to the church. The lych way, the path which was used to carry the corpse to the churchyard to be buried. The lych owl, sometimes called the screech owl, because it was believed that the sound it made was an omen of death. Finally there was the lyke wake dirge. We think of wakes as being held after a funeral, but they originated when people would watch over the body between the time of death and the funeral.



The lych gate is a covered gateway at the entrance to the churchyard. Before the days of mortuaries the corpse would be brought to the lych gate a few days before the funeral. The corpse would then have rested awaiting burial. In some ancient churchyards you might find a corpse shelf built into the walls of the churchyard.

The 1549 Book of Common Prayer made it a requirement that lych gates were used at the start of the funeral service, it said that the Priest who 'metyng the corpse at the church stile, shalt say...' This made it a requirement that lych gates were built.

Following the Great War many lychgates, such as the one at Paston and the one at St. Augustines Woodston, on the left, were built as war memorials.

My thanks to Ian Summer's article which triggered my interest in the history of lychgates.

Causes of Death in London 1632

Today we are used to visiting the doctor and accessing treatment for a variety of illnesses. It was very different in 1632.

Causes of death reported in London in the year 1632 included: king's evil 38, bloody flux, scowring, and flux 348, chrisomes and infants 2,268, dropsie and swelling 267, executed 18, consumption 1,797, killed by several accidents 46, planet 13, purples and spotted fever 38, quinsie 7, suddenly 62, teeth 470.

Thank goodness for the NHS!

Coronation

How will you celebrate King Charles III's coronation? How did you celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's coronation? How did your parents celebrate royal events? Were their street parties and fancy dress competitions? Please put pen to paper and share your memories with other members.

In the meantime here are some fascinating coronation facts.

Coronations have been held in Westminster Abbey for over 950 years.



Queen Elizabeth II's coronation was the first to be televised, with an estimated 27 million audience, a further 11 million listened on the radio.



We think of the Tower of London as a place of imprisonment, but in medieval times the monarch would move to the tower a few days before their coronation to prepare.



Queen Victoria's coronation was a comedy of errors and was called 'the last of the botched coronations'. The archbishop had to force the coronation ring onto Victoria's finger as it had been made too small, elderly peer Lord Rolle fell down the stairs and a bishop announced the end of the ceremony at the wrong time.



Before 1066 coronations took place in Bath, Oxford or Canterbury.



Coronation chicken was invented for Queen Elizabeth's coronation by florist Constance Spry. It was designed to appeal to foreign guests and was served cold.

