

**Peterborough and District
Family History Society Newsletter
January 2024**



From the Chair...

Most of us have made use of wills in the course of our research and know what valuable sources of information they can be. But did you know that the UK government has proposed a plan to digitize millions of wills dating back to the 1800s to improve the current storage system? This programme could see millions of wills moved online and made more easily accessible. There will be an expected saving for the taxpayer. There is a consultation seeking views on keeping hard copies for about 25 years while saving them digitally longer term. Where wills belong to notable individuals or have significant historical interest, the physical copies would remain preserved. However, after that 25 year time limit, most hard copies would be destroyed. Historians have accused the government of planning to 'delete history' by digitizing and then destroying millions of people's wills. The legality of a will is something that needs to be established, and in many cases this is done by the courts in granting probate. If this does concern you, you can find more details on-line: google 'digitization of wills'. You can then make your feelings known.

I wish you a very Happy Christmas and a positive 2024.

Michael Kennelly

From the Editor...

Happy New Year to you all and may it bring you solutions for all your brickwalls.

The New Year is traditionally a time for resolutions. The first New Year pledges were made by the Ancient Babylonians 4,000 years ago. I wonder what pledges these people made? Perhaps to honour their gods more dutifully, to be more diligent at their work or perhaps treat their servants or slaves kinder. Today resolutions tend to focus on eating less, exercising more and perhaps cleaning out that cupboard that you can't close the door of anymore! Well as the journal editor I must ask you to add another resolution to your list, you know the one, to contribute an article to the journal or newsletter.

The society has two resolutions of its own. The first is to attend a live Family History Fair on 10th April, at the Burgess Hall, St. Ives, 10am to 4pm. The second is to hold an in person meeting in Peterborough in the summer. More details about this will follow in due course.

Finally, I must apologise for the lack of colour and images in this newsletter, my laptop has been a bit temperamental, hopefully normal service will resume in the next edition.

Sadie McMullon

Zoom Talks

Please find below the programme of meetings for the first five months in 2024.

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

Wednesday 3rd January	DNA Basics	Steve Manning
Wednesday 7th February	Freedom of Information in Genealogy	Richard Holt
Wednesday 6th March	Remember Them 1946-1969	Janet Few
Wednesday 3rd April	Reminiscences of Peterborough	Member's Evening
Wednesday 1st May	AGM followed by Hereward and the Wakes	Alan Johnson

Book Review

There are several genealogy books that have been released recently.

If you enjoy M. J. Jones' Maze Investigation books then you will be pleased to know that since I last checked online two books have been published:

The Reluctant Chartist (Maze Investigations-The Genealogy Detectives Book 7)
ASIN : B0BHKSSM2H.

And

Clamhunger Row (Maze Investigations—The Genealogy Detectives Book 8)

ASIN : B0CKHTBNBH

Family history and house history are subjects which are often woven together. In 'The Crown Post' Paul H. Rowney tells the story of a medieval house during almost 200 years of history between 1485 and 1660. He tells his story through the fictional inhabitants that lived in the house. Paul was also a recent inhabitant of the house and if this book is successful he intends to continue writing the history of the house.

ASIN : B0CPBTFWGM

I haven't read any of these books yet so please let me know what you think of them.

Clock Enquiry

I have been contacted by Luke Fromant, who is researching his family history. He writes:

'I am trying to locate any clocks which were made either by my great great uncle Frederick D. Fromant who traded in St Ives, Huntingdonshire, or by my great grandfather Henry Pryor Fromant, who traded in Spalding, Lincolnshire and later in Stamford in the late 1800's - early 1900's. Or by my grandfather John Henry Fromant who traded on the Market Place, Market Deeping from the 1920s to the mid 1940s.'



If you have one of these clocks, or know someone who does, or know anything about the family then please let Sadie know.

Brickwall Breakthrough

In the December journal Alan asked for help with his Truman relative.

Matthew Truman born Yaxley 1823, a drover, it was reported in the local paper that he had stolen 13 sheep and was sentenced in 1848 to be transported for 10 yrs. Somebody's family tree in Ancestry had MT marrying somebody in Australia in 1853 but Alan has copy of 1851 census of Yaxley and MT is on it - how so? Alan had found that around that time Australians were getting fed up with lots of convicts being dumped on them and that some had had sentences commuted. Where to look to clarify? Could it be that he went out of his own accord?

Julie Watkins has responded with a suggestion.

I have just read through the latest journal and may be able to shed some light on the query about Matthew Truman. My ancestor, Jacob Cliff, was sentenced to ten years transportation to Australia in October 1851, yet didn't set sail until April 1855. The intervening three and a half years were spent biding his time in various prisons in the south-east of England. He finally arrived at Fremantle, Western Australia in July 1855 and received a Ticket of Leave immediately on arrival which meant he could live freely and work for an employer. Two years later, he received a Conditional Pardon, the condition being that he could never return to Britain. I'm wondering whether Matthew Truman, on the 1851 census, is in prison in Britain, awaiting his transportation journey, which may have taken place between the census in 1851 and his marriage in Australia in 1853? I note that he is listed as living with his mother and siblings in Yaxley on the 1851 census. Could it be that his mother told the enumerator that he lived in the family home at that point to save face, when in fact he may have been in prison? Might be worth a look at the prison records between 1846 when he was sentenced and his 1853 marriage.

I am glad to report that Alan thinks Julie may have found the answer to his brickwall.



Christmas in the 70s

When the Christmas decorations were put up the week before
Whilst you queued to visit Santa in a large department store
And when Slade declared "It's Christmaaaaaas" back in 1973
That's when paper chains and wessel cups hung on your Christmas tree

Proudly dangling from the ceiling your Blue Peter Christmas wreath
Was adorned with festive candles which you lit from underneath
With some tinsel covered coat hangers, the ones made out of wire
They looked absolutely great...until they set the house on fire

Off to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve for carols and a prayer
Most were calling after closing time so much the worse for wear
All the doors on advent calendars were opened by that night
Just a picture of a robin – not a chocolate treat in sight

A nice *Bunty* Christmas annual or *Beano* for the boys
Or *Monopoly*, some felt tip pens and *Dinky Matchbox* toys
A *Scalextric* and *Subbuteo*, an *Action Man* or *Chopper*
Or a *Tiny Tears* and *Etch a Sketch* or maybe a spacehopper

A new *Spirograph*, a *Sindy* doll, a *Viewmaster* and *Clackers*
Just a party hat and corny joke inside the Christmas crackers
Your Selection boxes filled with *Spangles*, *Aztec* bars and *Treets*
With a *Bar Six* and a *Marathon* and all your favourite sweets

Whilst your dads got *Hai Karate* your mums much preferred their *Tweed*
With soap on a rope and bath cubes absolutely guaranteed
A large turkey for your dinner, not your la-di-da flash nosh
And prawn Cocktail for your starters - oh but only if you're posh

When your trifle came in boxes topped with lashings of *Dream Topping*
With unlimited *Blue Nun*, *Asti Spumante* corks a popping
Loved a *Cherry B*, some *Babycham*, a snowball made with advocaat
A keg of *Party Seven* with an extra large *Hamlet* cigar

The golden age of Christmas songs, Slade, Wizzard, Bing and Mud
What with Johnny Mathis, Boney M – it's never been as good
Whilst we stepped right into Christmas, Elton John played in the shops
And on Christmas Day, before the Queen, we watched *Top of the Pops*

Once we settled down to watch TV, *The Generation Game*
Yes we only had three channels but it's never been the same
Then it's circus time with *Billy Smart*, kids can't believe their eyes
And *Mike Yarwood* and *The Good Old Days* of course *Morecambe and Wise*

Yes it's true we had the three day week, a high rate of inflation
And a winter filled with discontent which ripped right through the nation
As we laugh and talk about those days the young ones needn't snigger
'Cos the music was just great and tins of *Roses* were much bigger!

©Carol Ellis, December 2022 (Mrs Yorkshire the Baking Bard)



Although the festive season is behind us, being a child of the 70s, that is I was born in 1969, the words of this poem, which I saw on Facebook, brought back my childhood Christmas memories so vividly I just had to share. If you wrote a similar poem what would your memories be? Please let me know, in readiness for our December 2024 journal!!