



## Peterborough and District Family History Society Newsletter October 2024

### From the Chair...

Do you have anything in your home that reminds you of any of your relatives? I share with you two that I use or see regularly.

The first is a breadknife with a brown wooden handle which is about a foot long. I use it in preference to a smaller one because it used to belong to my father. He died in 1992 aged 90 so I have had it for about 32 years. He was a gentle and kind man, with a great sense of humour. In his youth he was a Rover Scout and attended a Jamboree with Lord Baden Powell, the Chief Scout. He worked for many years for the Brooke Bond Tea Company delivering tea in a red van to shops for sale. He was a committed Christian worshipping in a Baptist Church. All this from a breadknife I use everyday. An ordinary item that generates so many memories.

My next item is a pair of large chimney pots in our garden which house flowers. They belonged to my auntie Mabel who ran a drapery shop in Warboys, Huntingdonshire and at one time were in the garden of her large house and shop. I recall a phrase she used when serving customers: 'And your next pleasure, please.' I was her executor and in her old age would call on her frequently. When I worked in Education she would phone my secretary and tell her that she needed to see me urgently! A gracious lady, she never married and died aged 94.

What items remind you of your folks?

### Michael

#### From the Editor...

Following Michael's lead; is there an object that reminds you of your childhood?

You don't always remember things until you are prompted. I saw this photo on Facebook recently and it immediately transported me back to my childhood.

I remember sitting in front of the fire watching television until my cheek glowed red. I would then have to turn around for a short while until my cheek had cooled before starting the process again.

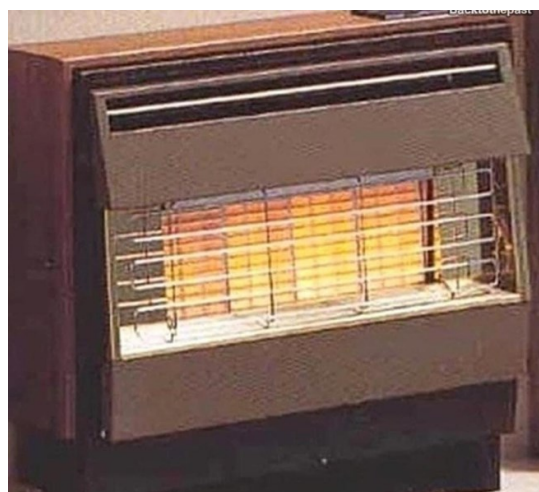
I also remember my night clothes hanging on the airer in front of the fire, warming for me to wear after bath time.

On Sundays evenings toast would be held on long forks in front of the fire for a supertime treat.

And when my sister was little the fire was encased in a huge cage, to protect her from harm.

I look forward to hearing about the objects that remind you of your childhood.

### Sadie

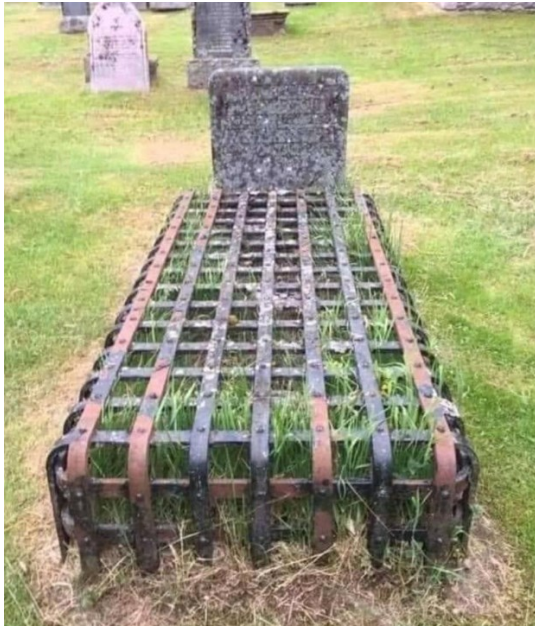


## Zoom Talks

Please find below the programme of meetings for the next few months.

All meetings are currently being held by Zoom, (except the October meeting at the Museum).  
Joining instructions will be sent in the week prior to the meeting.

Saturday 5th October	'Live' get together at Peterborough Museum	
Wednesday 6th November	The Real Downton Abbey	Ian Porter
Wednesday 4th December	A Merry Tudor Christmas	Kirstie Bingham



### Do you Know?

Do you know what the grill/ cage is over the grave?

What was its purpose?

The general answers concluded that this is a mort safe, or mortgage.

This device prevented the grave from being tampered with.

### False Assumptions

It has always been the belief that an 'x' instead of a signature was an indication of an individual being illiterate. But this may be incorrect as the letters to a newspaper, on the right, reveals.

One author commented that an 'x' on a marriage certificate 'may' be due to the celebrations getting rather out of hand prior to the ceremony.

Whilst another shared that individuals would not sign their name in case the 'powers- that- be' levy a tax on them.

If this is accurate it changes the way we view our ancestors and the level of literacy they may have had.



**Peterborough Family History Society**  
**at the Peterborough Museum**  
**Saturday 5th October**

**10.30 Arrive and coffee**

**11.00 Talk Jason Cumberworth 'Dusting off the Archives'**

The Curator of Archaeology at the Museum will take us into a deep dive into the archaeological collections held by the Museum and the project to rescue them and make them accessible to the public and researchers.

**12.15 Lunch**

Break for lunch. Take a walk around the museum displays, look at the society's displays, visit the society's helpdesk, chat with other attendees.

**2.30 Talk Alan Johnson 'The Society's Archives'**

The society's archivist will introduce us to our collection of archives.

**3.00 Farewell by the Society's Chairman**

Farewell and tea/ coffee

**3.30 Attendees Depart**

**Non-members are very welcome, no charge.**

**Please contact Sadie McMullon**

**[secretarypdfhs@gmail.com](mailto:secretarypdfhs@gmail.com) to register**

Its not too late to book a place on the society's day at Peterborough Museum. We look forward to seeing you there. Just contact Sadie, and please tell your friends.



# Anecdotes from the Archives

by Alan Johnson

*Just to give you a small taste of what our archives hold, prior to Alan's talk on Saturday 5th October.*

Today many people take their holidays abroad but a century ago 'holiday' foreign travel was only for the well-to-do (and their servants). But many people from lower down the social order also went abroad – some as soldiers, others by order of the court but the vast majority in the hope of finding a better life. Our archives contain examples of people who fit all these categories. Let's take the soldiers first.

William Shelton joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 95<sup>th</sup> Rifle Regiment in Nottingham on 14 September 1814, served under Wellington in Spain and was wounded at Vera in the Pyrenees, for which he received an Army pension after his discharge in Dublin on 17 December 1818. If the regiment seems familiar to you, Bernard Cornwall's 'Sharpe' novels are set in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. You will find many more details about William and his army life in file 1.BUP.004 – Linley Book Part 1.

Of more local interest is the regiment in which Whittlesey born Sir Harry Smith served and after the Battle of Badajoz met and married Juana Maria de Los Dolores de Leon. Many years later he became Governor of Cape Colony, South Africa. Ladysmith was named in honour of his wife.<sup>1</sup> Both of them are buried in Whittlesey Cemetery.

Other 'soldier' archives include 1.EXT.008d – Peterborough Military Marriages 1800-1813 (the grooms may have served overseas) and of course our records of over 100 Local War Memorials (1.CDS.025)

Archive Folder 1.IND.024 contains information about some local people who did not emigrate willingly. Having been convicted of what we now consider petty crimes, the local courts sentenced them to be transported to Australia.

So that leaves those who went willingly. We do not (yet) have any archives about emigration to the United States but 1.EXT.056 – Canadian Obituaries contains information about Colin James Evans (1927-2006); Mrs Beatrice Ellen Key (1889-1984); Albert C (Bert) Baines (1894-1986); Roy Thomas Hayhurst (1926-1995) and Chris Turner (1992-1993). They were all born in Peterborough except Mrs Key who was born in Castor.

File 1.BUP.005 – Truman Family, Appendix A details the impact Jonathan Hall Truman (1842-1924) had on heavy-horse breeding in the UK and USA. His provision of horses for use in opening up the mid-west for agriculture resulted in him being honoured by having his portrait hung in the Saddle and Sirloin Club, Chicago – an honour usually reserved for American citizens who have contributed in some way to improving agriculture in the USA. From 1874 he made 114 crossings of the Atlantic to further his cattle importing and horse exporting business. He also started the Truman Stud Farm in Illinois. He and his family are buried in Whittlesey Cemetery next to the tomb of Sir Harry and Lady Smith.

But if you want to read about the joys and sorrows of emigration to Australia in 1883 look at 1.BUP.008a – Diary of an Emigrant to Australia by Will Todd. I found it fascinating.

<sup>1</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir\\_Harry\\_Smith,\\_1st\\_Baronet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Harry_Smith,_1st_Baronet)

