Peterborough and District Family History Society

November 2025

From the Chair…

Over the last few years we have witnessed individuals perpetuating acts of violence on innocent members of the public. What is often reported only as a "footnote" is how their immediate and wider family are treated by the authorities and wider public. 420 years ago an act that we still commemorate threw up the same questions.

Remember Remember the 5th of November, Gunpowder, Treason and Plot.

We remember Guy Fawks but what of the other plotters and their (innocent) relations. The main instigator was Robert Catesby, aided by his cousin Francis Tresham - their mothers were the daughter of Sir Robert Throckmorton of Coughton Court, Warwickshire. In 1605 the property had passed to Sir Robert's eldest son Sir Thomas who had leased it to Sir Everard Digby. It was he who assembled members of the plotters' immediate family plus some others at Coughton Court to await the outcome of the plot. As we know it failed but what was the impact on the wider Throckmorton family?

The main Throckmorton line was (and still is) a leading Catholic family but two of Sir Robert's brothers were Protestants. One was Sir Nicholas, father of Bess who "had to marry" Sir Walter Raleigh. The other was Sir Clement Throckmorton of Haseley, Warwickshire who married Katherine, daughter of Sir Edward Neville who was executed by his 2nd cousin Henry VIII. They had 13 children and their daughter Matyr married George Lynne of Southwick Hall, Northants.* Thus Matyr was 1st cousin to the mothers of Robert Catesby and Francis Tresham.

I have not found that she and George were interviewed by the authorities about the plot, but I suspect they were very nervous about a backlash following it's discovery. I am sure they would have immediately made the king's chief minister aware of their loyalty. He was Sir Robert Cecil, son of Lord Burghley with whom the Lynne family had worked on many local issues.

This just shows how national events can impinge on the life of ancestors. Do you have a similar story? If so, Sadie would love an article about it.

Alan Johnson

**The next-door parish is Fotheringhay where Mary Queen of Scots was executed.*

Railway Anniversary

This year it is 200 years since the arrival of the railways.

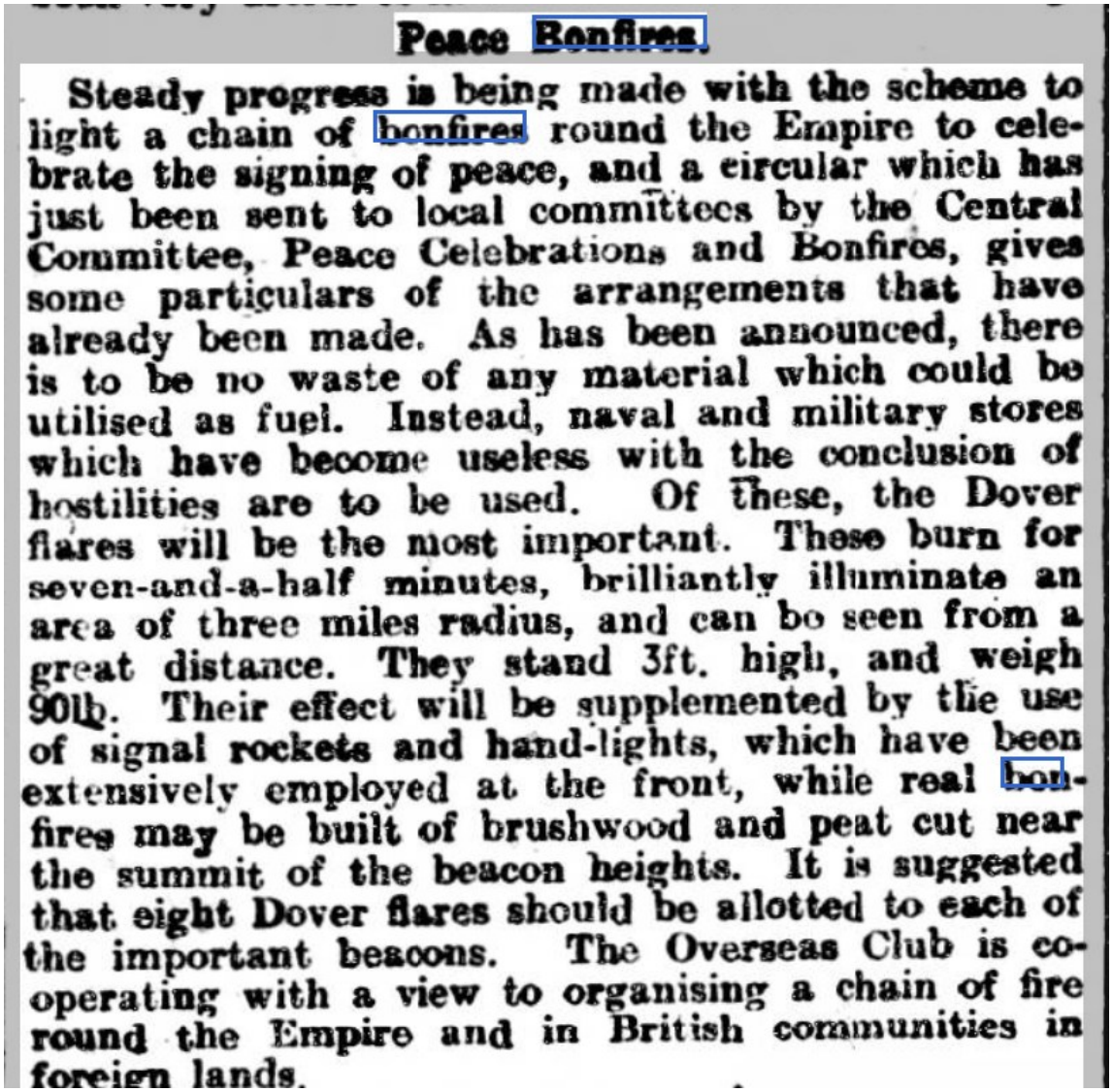
To celebrate I would like to devote the December journal to stories about the railways. Did your ancestors work on the railways? Was your family affected by the railways? Can you remember an important railway journey?

I look forward to receiving your articles, but be quick deadline is 15th November.

From the Editor…

Two events take place at the beginning of November. As Alan has already covered the first on the 5th November is Bonfire Night to remember Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot. The second is Remembrance Day on the 11th.

Bonfires were also used to celebrate the signing of peace in 1919. This article from the *Grantham Journal,* on the 5th April, explains the event.



Peace Bonfires.

Steady progress is being made with the scheme to light a chain of bonfires round the Empire to celebrate the signing of peace, and a circular which has just been sent to local committees by the Central Committee, Peace Celebrations and Bonfires, gives some particulars of the arrangements that have already been made. As has been announced, there is to be no waste of any material which could be utilised as fuel. Instead, naval and military stores which have become useless with the conclusion of hostilities are to be used. Of these, the Dover flares will be the most important. These burn for seven-and-a-half minutes, brilliantly illuminate an area of three miles radius, and can be seen from a great distance. They stand 3ft. high, and weigh 90lb. Their effect will be supplemented by the use of signal rockets and hand-lights, which have been extensively employed at the front, while real bonfires may be built of brushwood and peat cut near the summit of the beacon heights. It is suggested that eight Dover flares should be allotted to each of the important beacons. The Overseas Club is co-operating with a view to organising a chain of fire round the Empire and in British communities in foreign lands.

Unfortunately I haven't come across an image of a local peace bonfire, but images I have seen from elsewhere show huge constructions that must have been a feat of skill to build, and would have taken a while to burn. It would have been a spectacular sight.

This makes us wonder at the hugely important events that our ancestors would have witnessed. How were they part of them? And how did they receive them? Have any stories been handed down to you? Or your parents?

I look forward to hearing from you. Perhaps they can form part of an article for the journal!

Sadie McMullon

Zoom Talks

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

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

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Wednesday November 5th **‘A Family Mystery Tour’** **Gail Boyle**

Wednesday December 3rd **‘Christmas Food and Drink’**

Simon Fowler and Sylvia Levi

Wednesday January 7th

’Anthony Crosby: historian, artist, and advocate of practical design’

Gillian Cable

All meetings start at 7pm to allow social time prior to the talk at 7.30pm

Maps

Who doesn’t like a map? Maps can transport us to the very place where our ancestors lived and worked; to the surroundings that they called home. Maps can help us wipe away the modern street scene and conjure up a world long since gone.

Family History Books Online sell a range of folding maps that cover the length and breadth of the country. Relevant to Peterborough are:

Peterborough 1924

Peterborough Central 1901

Peterborough East and Flag Fen 1924

Peterborough North 1925

Peterborough South 1924

The website includes a useful description of the area each map covers, and they are very reasonably priced at £3.50

Family History Books Online

School Days

Member Jill Wozniak has very kindly donated to the society’s archives school day memories that she had gathered from her mum, dad and grandad, for a school project.

These can be found under 1.EXT.108a on the society’s website.

Peterborough & District Family History Society will be exhibiting at the Peterborough Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival

Step into the splendour of Peterborough Cathedral this festive season and experience its very first Christmas Tree Festival, a dazzling celebration of community, creativity, and Christmas spirit.

Wander beneath the cathedral's magnificent vaulted ceilings and discover a glittering forest of over 40 beautifully decorated trees, each lovingly adorned by local charities, community groups, and businesses. Every tree tells a story of joy, hope, and togetherness, filling this sacred space with the warmth and wonder of Christmas.

By day, enjoy the festival by suggested donation (£3.00), helping to support the cathedral's work in education and outreach. In the evenings, it becomes part of The Wonder of Christmas experience, where twinkling lights, festive music, and the beauty of this historic setting combine to create pure seasonal magic.

Bring your family, bring your friends, between 19th November and 7th January ,and make new memories at one of Peterborough's most inspiring Christmas traditions in the making…

A festival of light. A celebration of community. The true wonder of Christmas.

There will be 42 Christmas trees on display and our Tree Group is assembling a variety of decorations and information about family history and all its connecting branches that involve the area we live in - and further.

We hope you enjoy the society's tree.