Peterborough and District Family History Society

April 2026

From the Chair…

The May meeting will be our AGM. I know many think it a boring irrelevant exercise but it is actually the most important meeting of the year because:

1. It allows YOUR society to LEGALLY continue by:
   A. Approving/querying the accounts.
   B. Voting on who will be the officers and committee members for the next year.

2. It allows you to see how your subscriptions are spent.

3. It allows you to question the committee on decisions made.

4. It allows you to say what you want your society to provide if possible.

Many think 1B is just a case of musical chairs with the same faces wearing different hats. Why is that?

BECAUSE THE REQUEST FOR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS
RARELY BRINGS FORTH VOLUNTEERS!!!!

We hold committee meetings by Zoom so where you live is no longer a barrier to joining the committee and contributing fresh ideas on how YOUR society is run. We promise not to 'drop you in at the deep end' so please seriously think about letting Sadie know you are willing to stand.

Thank you

Alan Johnson

Memberships Subscription

Yes it's that time of year again. Your annual subscription is due.

It's easier than ever to make your payment; just head over to Parish Chest, using the link below.

Parish Chest

UK Individual membership £12

UK Joint membership £15

Overseas membership (individual and joint) £12

Thank you

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.

Wednesday 1st April Members' Meeting Memories of Our Childhood Homes

Wednesday 6th May AGM followed by:

'The Day I Helped to Open Up the Grave' Ewan Cappitt

Wednesday 3rd June Cards on the Table and Jerkins for Goalposts Kirsty Bingham

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

From the Editor…

Only a few weeks ago we celebrated St. Patrick's Day, and towards the end of April we will celebrate St. George's Day. Unfortunately, some of these days are not commemorated by large parts of society.

This made me think about other days which our ancestors may have celebrated, which we don't.

The first one that came to mind is Empire Day, celebrated on 24th May. It's origins started in marking Queen Victoria's birthday, but it soon turned into a celebration of the British Empire. If you have read school log books, you will read about the various activities that children were engaged in, flag making, learning songs, and tea parties.

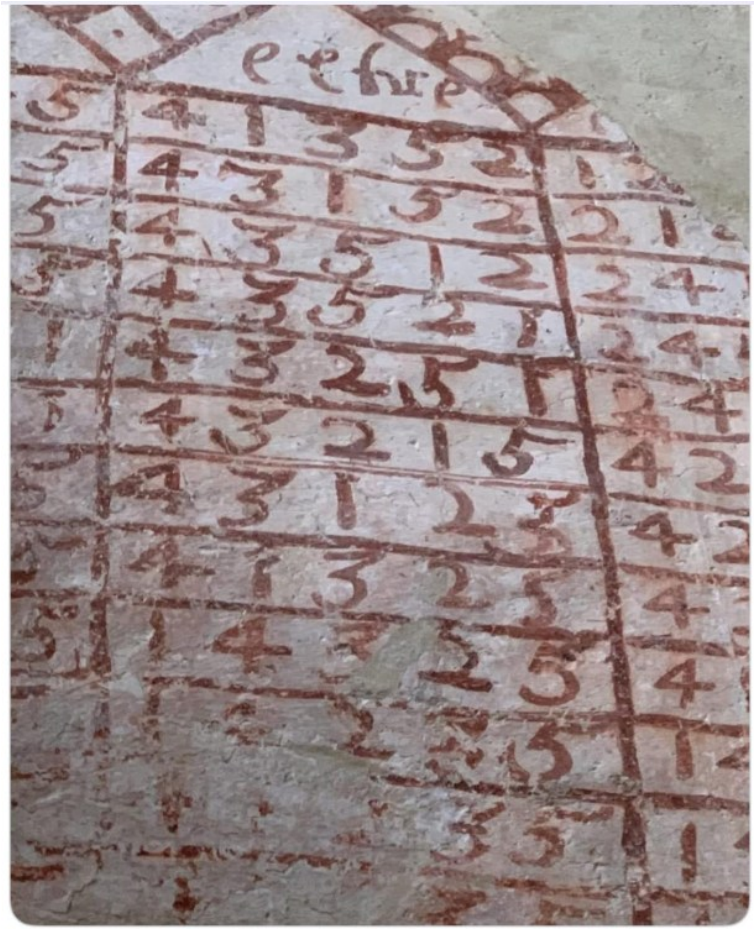
A new day to me, but one that is relevant as my youngest son is at a Scottish university, is Meal Monday. The meal refers to oatmeal. In the autumn break students would return home and replenish their supply of oats. Amazingly Meal Monday continued right up to the 1970s. I'm sure some parents would say that Meal Monday still continues, only now it's more likely to be an occasional credit to the bank account.

The final day I found out about, when I researched these forgotten celebrations, is Lughnasadh. Lughnasadh is a Celtic celebration which fell on the 1st August. It celebrated the start of the harvest season. Uniquely couples could marry on this day, through a hole in a door, and the marriage was only binding for one year. If after the year the couples found the marriage wasn't working they could separate with no fault on either side.

You know what I am going to ask now. What celebrations did your ancestors mark? Do you have photographs, memories, or stories from these holidays? Please share with other members via an article in the journal.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sadie McMullon



Mystery Object

Thank you for the many guesses that you sent me for this month's mystery object.

Unfortunately, no-one was correct. There can't be any bellringers amongst us!

Have you ever wondered how bellringers know that it's their turn to ring?

Well here is the answer.

Each bell has a number, and the order in which the bells must be rung is written on the board, or in this case the wall.

A music book for bells!

If you have a mystery object that you would like to challenge members with please send me a picture.

Appeal for Books

Your society will be attending the Really Useful Family History Show in St. Ives on Saturday 18th April 10.00am to 4.30pm.

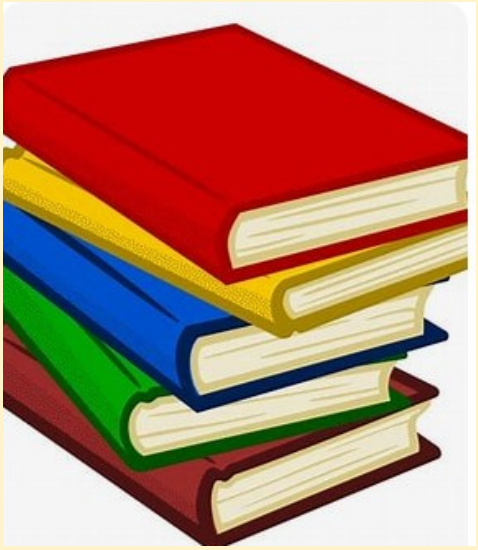
We hope that you will come and say 'Hi', or better still lend a hand on the stand for a while.

We have found that family history, or local history, books always grab attention on our stand.

So, now is the perfect time to de-clutter, have a clear out, and make room for more books!

If you would like to donate some books, journals, or magazines to the stand please let Sadie know.

We can arrange for the books to be collected, if you are reasonably local.



FAMILY HISTORY Federation
www.familyhistoryfederation.com

East Anglia
FHF REALLY USEFUL
Family History Show

PARISH CHEST™

The FHF Really Useful Family History Show is coming to East Anglia!

AGRA, Alde Valley Suffolk FH Group, Bedfordshire FHS, Burwell Museum, Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire FHS, Cambridgeshire Archive Services, Cambridgeshire Collection, Cromwell Museum, FamilySearch, Family Tree Maker, East of London FHS, Essex Society for FH, Family History Federation, Fenland FHS, FIBIS, Hertfordshire Archives, Hertfordshire FHS, Lincolnshire FHS, London, Westminster & Middlesex FHS, Northamptonshire FHS, Nuneaton & Warwickshire FHS, Overdale Postcards, Orders & Medals Research Society, Peterborough & District FHS, Pharos Tutors, RA Longley Publications, Romany & Traveller FHS, Suffolk FHS, This Way Books & Cassini Maps, WeAre.xyz

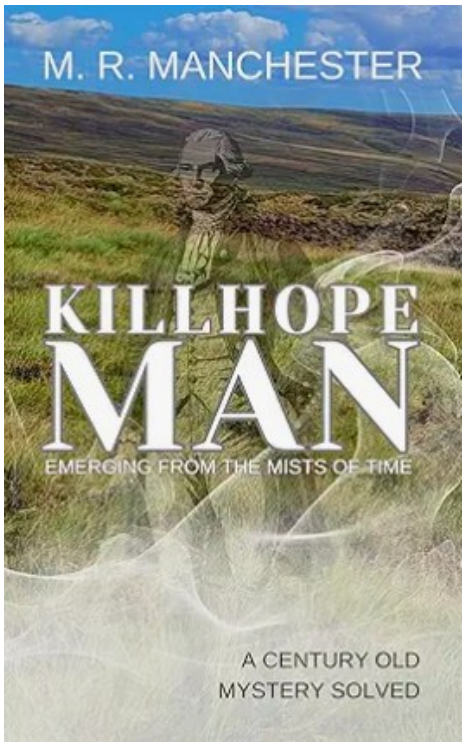
10AM - 4.30PM

Burgess Hall, Westwood Road, St Ives,
Cambridgeshire, PE27 6WU
What3words: ///rash.sharp.remaining

#RUFHSStIves2026

LIVE IN ST IVES APRIL 18TH 2026

Book Review



This isn't a traditional family history book, but it has all the necessary ingredients; a mystery, clues to unravel, and diligent research.

In 1921, a body was found in a peat bog on an English moor, sparking a romantic legend of a fallen Jacobite soldier. Over a century later, local archaeologist and author, Margaret Manchester, embarks on a meticulous investigation to unravel the truth. By dismantling myths and re-examining every clue—from clothing buttons to the shape of the coffin—she pieces together a compelling new identity for the mysterious Killhope Man, revealing his story.

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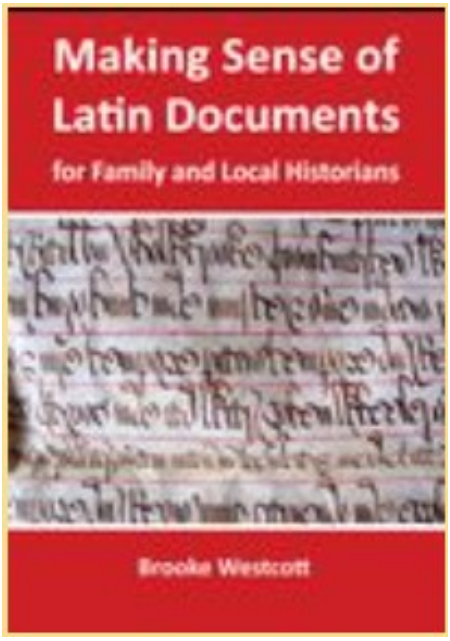


If we trace our families back far enough we may encounter Latin documents written either wholly or partially in Latin.

This helpful book guides you through the documents you might encounter, including wills, inventories, writs, and land deeds.

A valuable addition to any family history bookshelf.

To purchase, visit:

https://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com/making-sense-of-latin-documents-for-family-and-local-historians-by-brooke-westcott-2nd-e

From the Chair… An Apology

After the February Newsletter someone kindly sent an email and photo in response to "From The Chair". For some reason I cannot now find it to reply. Please can you send it again and sorry for the inconvenience.

Alan Johnson

Newsletter

Do you struggle to keep up with new datasets? Would you like to volunteer for a society or archive?

Please check out the Archive Liaison newsletter on the Explore Your Genealogy website.

Archive Liaison Newsletter | Explore Your Genealogy

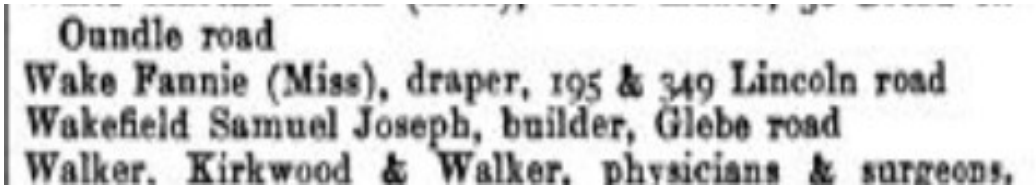
Help Wanted

An integral part of our family history research is to find out where our ancestors worked. Many women worked in the clothes industry, either making clothes, or providing the material for dress making.

One such shop was a drapers in Millfield, Peterborough. The drapers was owned by F. R Wake. It operated from 349 Lincoln Road, next to the tram/bus depot, for 60 years.

Do you have memories of this shop? Were your ancestors connected with the drapers?

If you can shred any light on this business then please get in touch.



Oundle road
Wake Fannie (Miss), draper, 195 & 349 Lincoln road
Wakefield Samuel Joseph, builder, Glebe road
Walker. Kirkwood & Walker. physicians & surgeons.

Image taken from Kelly's Directory 1914

Call for Memories

Our next members' meeting is about the memories we have of our childhood homes.

Was it a new home? Did you live with extended family? Did your family have a new labour saving gadget?

If you would like to share your memories, with other members, then please get in touch.

It’s good to know what members are doing to help new family historians, please attend the event below if you can.

Evenings at the Library presents

Starting your Family History journey with Deepings Library

A talk by Tim Cook

Ever wondered where your Grandparents were during the war? Where are your roots from? Find out how we can help you discover your family tree, using our free online resources

All funds raised go to the library running costs

ancestry

findmypast

Wednesday 22nd April at 7pm

Cost: £5 (including refreshments – donations welcome)

To book please pop into the library during opening hours:

Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 10-5pm & Sat 10-3pm

Or call 01778 346528