



St Helens Townships Family History Society

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Where did it go? I mean summer of course. Here we are in mid September and the few fleeting days of sunshine just a memory. There has however been plenty of activity by our society members, who have been the backbone of our Townhall meetings as follows

26th March we were treated to a well researched talk by our "Speakers Organiser" Ivy Swift about the early days of aviation, around the St Helens area. Ivy illustrated her talk with archive photographs and even some early movie footage. I understand that she will not be releasing the film to Cinemas across the Nation as yet.

23rd April Pam Richardson, shared her experiences with us when researching the Irish arm of her family tree. With such a large proportion of the St Helens population being of Irish stock. This talk had a relevance to many of us in the audience; the largest gathering we have ever had for a Town Hall Meeting



28th May A visit to Burtonwood Chapel. St Michael and All Angels Chapel Burtonwood was originally founded in 1604 and it features prominently in the history of the area.

It therefore came as a surprise and disappointment to find a modern interior, to what appeared from the exterior to be an ancient building. It transpired that the building was in danger of collapse, due to mining subsidence. It was saved by the installation of hydraulic ramps supporting the structure, and refurbishment financed by the coal board. The church is nevertheless interesting but what is needed is a motivated author to chronicle the history, as at the moment the records date only from the 1960s. Any volunteers??

25th June Member David Knowles talked to us about the history of Eccleston, one of the Townships which give our society its name. David's knowledge of the area and its characters entertained us all and a lively discussion ensued.

4th & 5th July Our Society enjoyed two very successful but hectic days at the **St Helens Festival** around 200 people were helped with their family history research at our tables. Thank you to all those who helped make the event such a success.



23rd July Our speaker was solicitor David Lambert on the subject of wills and probate. David's expert knowledge of his subject from ancient times to the present day inspired us all to seek out the wills of our ancestors. Much family history information can be gleaned from the will of an otherwise ordinary citizen.

27th August This meeting took the form of a forum. A wide range of subject matter was discussed, what emerged was that most of us have something in the form of advice and experience to give to others. Your editor's contribution was to reveal that his DNA "Y" chromosome proved that his origins lie in Transylvania !!! Not in Dumfriesshire as he previously presumed. Is that spooky or what!!

Our future Town Hall Meetings

24th September Our Speaker will be Sonia Neighbour the St Helens Cemetery and Crematorium Officer whose talk will be about the records and information available to Family Historians.

22nd October Our Speaker will be Mr Ray Proctor from the General Records Office, Smedley Hydro. About how the office works and its significance to family historians

26th November Dr David Meek, a Consultant Radiologist from Whiston Hospital will speak about the history and development of the Whiston Workhouse

The following is a very interesting article from Syd Cottle who's great grandfather changed his name to Smith. This the second time we have had an article about a family name change to Smith, it is fascinating — Read On

I had always been intrigued by my surname, its origin and who my ancestors were. Over the years I have wasted many hours on the internet trying to unlock the family treasure chest, but it made little difference due to my lack of knowledge or understanding of how to research family heritage. During this time it was always that next priority you never get round too and over the years my thirst for knowledge about my ancestors created a frustration due to not having the time and not being capable.

It was with some significant interest I was introduced to some longstanding friends of my wife's family, Peter and Margaret Crosbie. I was intrigued to find that they had experience of researching family trees. It transpired that they were more than capable and, importantly to me, eager to have a go at looking at my family tree. I was overjoyed and very grateful for the opportune

I had managed to get back to my grandparents (big deal!) but had struggled to get any further as the trail went cold and I couldn't work out why. It transpired through the efforts of super sleuth Margaret Crosbie that, as an itinerant dockhand, my peripatetic great grandfather had travelled with his young family following dock work from the southwest through to Bristol and Cardiff, and then onto Liverpool at the turn of the last century. Interestingly by the time he had arrived in Liverpool his name was '**Smith**'.

Now I understood why my research had hit a brick wall, but I had no idea why he had decided to change his family name. Through early census polls he is registered as a **Cottle** then the next as a **Smith**, by the third census he and his family were back to **Cottle**. No wonder I couldn't find him - he and his family were **Smiths** for a period of time between three census polls.

I would like to think this is down to being savvy and aware that local labour was always chosen over itinerant workers, and decided to change his name and probably accent to suit. Regrettably, I am now of the mind that he probably left Cardiff (and maybe Bristol) very quickly and under the cover of darkness leaving some form of debt behind.

Margaret delved deeper and found illegitimate children, my G G G Granddad, being borne out of wedlock during an age where it was deeply frowned upon. I am proud to say that it appears my G G G Granddad was beyond his time and the census shows that he provided a roof over the head of his 'wayward' daughter and young child when many others would have cast them astray. What a guy!

Now armed with a whole host of names and key information from Margaret I managed to put a half decent 'branch' on Friends Reunited. Adding to this I managed to obtain information from my mother's side of the family to balance up the tree, and I was very pleased with progress.

Then all of a sudden I was being contacted through Friends Reunited and managed to piece together a tree that took me back to the early 1700's. I was shocked and elated with the rate of progress.

I became even more enthused and, now partially informed through chats with Margaret, I decided to write to Somerset Council Records Office and obtained a history of the name of '**Cotel**, **Cottel** and **Cottle**' in the form of a significant family tree that goes back to **Sir Roger De Cotel** (a Knight) who is listed around the time of the Domesday Book. This tree linked up nicely in many ways with the info I had obtained from Friends Reunited. It seemed to have a level of credibility that gave it a value in terms of its accuracy. My tree now went back to the 1100's!

Along the way I have found ancestors who had been Lord Mayors of Launceston and a string of fathers and sons who married into money and a very early spilt in the family that formed the line of **Earls of Edgcumbe** (this line of land and property-owning military men only died out in the last century). It transpired that during a period of landowning we owned much of the land around Glas-tonbury and had taken legal action against those who had illegally taken land from us. Can I still do this??

In terms of ongoing work I am convinced that a **George Washington Cottle** who was killed at the Alamo, and posthumously having a county named after him in Texas, is a related ancestor but I need to find the link. I am also questioning if I am related to **Gerry Cottle** famous for his travelling circus.... He certainly has the peripatetic gene that my Great Granddad had..., I wonder if he owes money in the towns he has left?

We are always on the look out for new unusual and interesting family history related articles. So if you have anything which would be suitable for publication in our newsletter, even if it is only in note form we can edit it to form an article ready for publication

You can contact me via our Society email address
townshipsfhs@googlemail.co.uk Peter Crosbie—editor



Our society will have display tables at the following events
If you are able and willing to help please tell a committee member

North Meols (Southport) Family History Society Open Day –Saturday 26th September

*The venue is St Cuthbert's Church Hall (next to the church in Churchtown) PR9 7NE
 We have accepted an invitation to exhibit at this event and will be setting up our tables from 9:30 am
 In time for the opening to the public at 11 am to 4 pm*

Family History Day Fair 2009 at St George's Hall Liverpool—Saturday 24th October

*We will be attending this Major event with a full display and exhibition board. We will be setting up from
 about 9:00 am for opening to the public from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm*

We have been asked by the publishers of "The London Gazette"

to include a article about this valuable source of historical information. The Gazette has it's origins in the 1640's and is still in print to this day. Early contributors were Samuel Pepys, Lord Byron and Charles Dickens.

Because we do not have the space for a complete article, for those interested, we have provided a link to their website on ours, under " Link" then click " National " and select the London Gazette

To continue our series about Archaic Medical Terms, which may be useful for the interpretation of "cause of death" on certificates. Here are some interesting examples.

Berylliosis—A watch and clockmakers condition caused by inhaling Beryllium particles used in the production of watch and clock springs

Bad Blood—Syphilis No comment

Black Plague—Bubonic Plague

Bronze John—Yellow Fever

Brain Fever—Meningitis

Bladder in the Throat—Diphtheria

Bone Shave—Sciatica

Bule—Boils Tumours or Swelling

Breakbone—Dengue Fever—An infectious tropical disease transmitted by mosquitoes and characterised by rash, aching head and joints

More of Peter's Pearls

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds

He broke into song because he couldn't find the key

A boiled egg is hard to beat

I have a photographic memory which has never been developed

The short fortune teller who escaped from prison — A small medium at large

Acupuncture- A jab well done