



**FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION**  
Supporting the Family History Community for Fifty Years

# REALLY USEFUL Bulletin

## No 43

March 2024

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin*

*inside find...*

Lead article this month is *The English Almshouse: a perspective on philanthropy*  
plus news from local FHS and how to join the Federation's Celebration Day

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# Really Useful Bulletin

## THE ENGLISH ALMSHOUSE: A PERSPECTIVE ON PHILANTHROPY – Early Medieval England to the Eighteenth Century

by Dr Judy Hill

Almshouses originated in early medieval England as places that provided care for the sick poor and were usually attached to a monastery. Monasteries were obliged to distribute alms to the poor at the monastery gate.

Hospitality was seen as an important Christian duty and the term hospital derives from the Latin word *hospitalis*

meaning concern with *hospites* or guests who need shelter particularly passing pilgrims. The original focus was on providing board and lodging for travellers and caring for aged and sick monks. In the seventh century the monastery of Whitby Yorkshire was described as having a building “to which they used to take those who were infirm or who seemed to be at the point of death” and this was extended in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to include the care of sick or feeble lay people in a separate establishment. One of the oldest almshouse foundations still in existence is thought to be St Oswald’s Hospital in Worcester founded in c.990. The Bishop of Worcester, St Oswald created a hospital where the brothers could:

*Minister to the sick, bury the dead, relieve the poor and give shelter to travellers who arrived after the city gates were closed at night.*

In addition, hospitals were established by non-monastic benefactors – the crown, clergymen, the aristocracy and gentry, urban livery companies, guilds and individual wealthy merchants. For example, in the late eleventh century Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, established St John’s Hospital in Canterbury to take on the long-time care of people who were too ill or disabled to care for themselves “oppressed by various kinds of infirmities.” Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent and Lord Chief Justice of England in 1227 founded the Mason Dieu in Dover. The original building was a large hall with a kitchen to give “hospitality to all strangers.” The hospital also accommodated permanent pensioners, poor and sick soldiers as well as pilgrims visiting Thomas à Becket’s tomb in Canterbury cathedral. The Hospital of St Cross Winchester was founded between 1132-1136 by Henry of Blois, monk, knight and politician, grandson of William the Conqueror and appointed Bishop of Winchester in 1129.

The hospital was to support thirteen poor men so frail they were unable to work and to feed one hundred men at the gate each day.

From the late fourteenth century, almshouses established by lay people were usually administered by a board of trustees. The trustees’ aims were the smooth running of the almshouse and administration of the endowment. The endowment of an almshouse was a highly visible form of charitable giving and required a substantial investment, the establishment of a trust and the construction or purchase of a suitable building. The presence of almshouse residents in their local communities was attractive to founders who wished to be remembered and honoured by posterity. Original trustees often included relatives of the founder, local clergymen and



other worthies of the parish. As the initial trustees died out, they were replaced with local dignitaries and clergy. These administrators could benefit by association from the founder’s status and reputation.

Almshouses intended for old people were relatively few in number before 1465 but by the late Middle Ages the number had increased. Both London and York had about thirty-five hospitals, Norwich fifteen, Exeter ten and Canterbury nine. The paucity of surviving records from the pre-Reformation period means that it is likely a number of hospitals went unrecorded, especially if they were small and had a short existence. Residences for the elderly poor that are characteristic of the modern almshouse evolved in the fifteenth century when English parishes played a fuller role in the relief of local elderly people who had fallen into poverty on account of their age or failing health. Parish fraternities increasingly accumulated stocks of land or animals, gave doles to the poor or established almshouses especially in market towns. Historians have revealed an upsurge in foundations after 1465 in eight southern and midland counties of Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Middlesex, Nottinghamshire and Suffolk. This upsurge in foundations at the time reflects the growing wealth of these areas.

It has been estimated there were over 500 almshouses on the eve of the Reformation and their number was reduced



# Really Useful Bulletin

to half this by the mid-sixteenth century due to the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536 and 1539 and subsequently in 1545 and 1547 when the Crown confiscated the property of chantries and some hospitals. Stand-alone hospitals and almshouses not attached to religious houses stood a better chance of survival. John Innocent, Master of St Cross Winchester in 1535, received a visitation from Dr Legh, one of Thomas Cromwell's commissioners, but St Cross avoided closure as it was a secular foundation. The survival of some almshouses was also as a result of the intervention of petitions from town or city corporations who wanted their local foundation to survive.

By the end of the sixteenth century the numbers of almshouses began to recover but the numbers were still lower than those of the 1520s. The establishment of the Elizabethan Poor Laws codified with the Acts of 1598-1601 established a clear legal obligation for parishes to deal with three broad classes of applicants for relief:

*The lame...the old, the blind and such other among them being poor and not able to work.*

The Acts also required poor children and orphans to be apprenticed and the able-bodied set to work. These Acts were important because they established a national framework for the provision of welfare in the parishes based on the levying of a property-based poor rate. Although poor law provision was highly irregular in most rural parishes well into the seventeenth century, it has been estimated by the end of the century, rate-based poor relief was providing three times as much relief as did private charity. By this time, it has been estimated about one in ten parishes possessed an almshouse. The urban distribution of almshouses by the eighteenth century shows a concentration of almshouses in towns of ancient foundations and towns which had enjoyed relatively large populations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Of course, it must be recognized that there was substantial local variation in the availability of charitable funds financing almshouses. In recent years an increasing number of county and regional surveys have identified most of the well-established institutions. Our knowledge of these wealthier foundations is now much greater because some building and archival material has survived but, of course, these are not typical of all almshouses. Many very small foundations have not been identified; archive material has not survived due to their short existence.

Almshouses also received additional bequests or endowments over the years, possibly from donors who wished to be associated with such a visible form of charity. For example, at St Cross Winchester, Cardinal Beaufort created the Order of Noble Poverty in the mid-fifteenth century for thirty-five brethren and three sisters who were impoverished but of "gentle birth". For many almshouses, further endowments after their initial foundation were

essential for their long-term survival. Additional bequests or endowments from donors who wished to be associated with such visible good could also be taken as an indication that the almshouse and their inhabitants were held in high regard in the local community. For example, the Perry Dawes

almshouse in Wotton-

under-Edge Gloucestershire. The oldest part of the Hugh Perry foundation was funded by a legacy in the will of Hugh Perry, merchant and Alderman and of the City of London. He left £300 for almshouses to be laid with a garden and they were built in 1638 for six poor men and six poor women. In 1722 Thomas Dawes, another local man, left property and later the two almshouses were replaced with a general hospital founded by both Perry's and Dawes' trustees. By 1871 the almshouses had benefitted from additional bequests to provide money, bread and coal for residents.

Almshouses tended to cater for the "respectable poor" local residents who had fallen on hard times in old age, the "deserving poor." The terms of the endowment were important in determining who were to be given almshouse places. Admission to almshouses was determined by certain criteria including age, gender, income, disability, religion, demeanour. People were required to have a local settlement in order to qualify for admission to an almshouse. Admission criteria in some cases also detailed the type of person that was likely to be considered by the trustees worthy of admittance. The term "poor" was used often as a qualification for admittance and on occasions it was stated that applicants would not be considered if in receipt of Poor Law relief payments. Some almshouses had extensive lists of people to be excluded, for example those with faults such as drinking, gambling, fighting or scolding. The admittance criteria for St Helen's Almshouses in Ashby was very detailed; applicants were required to be *poor widows or widowers of good character who have been born in the parish of Ashby and who have not during the period of two years next preceding the time of their appointment received poor relief, and who from age, ill health or accident or infirmity are wholly or in part unable to maintain themselves by their own exertions*. Religion was clearly regarded as an important criterion by some founders; Bishop Duppa's Almshouses founded in 1661 for ten unmarried women over fifty years in Richmond insisted that the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles Creed were all recited in English by the candidate before admission.



*Hugh Perry foundation Wotton on the Edge Gloucestershire 1638*





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Rules and regulations concerning the almshouses also reflected the wishes of the founder; most of these were to control the lives of the almspeople within the almshouse to provide the smooth running of the establishment. The rules were administered by the overseer, clerk, superintendent, or master who would often live within the almshouse. George Abbot had firm ideas as to how his foundation, the Hospital of the Blessed Holy Trinity, should be run. The twelve brothers and eight sisters were placed under the care of a resident master whose duty it was to “rule and govern with mildness and love ...otherwise with moderate severity”. A requirement for all new residents was to sign the rules or to take an oath to keep the rules of the hospital. Residents could be expelled and the most common reasons for expulsion were committing crimes, disobeying the rules, misconduct and in some almshouses not wearing the almshouse gown (if required). More commonly almspeople would be admonished for not behaving in a respectable and morally upright manner. Francis Bancroft, who had been Lord Mayor of London, left £25,000 in his will to the Drapers’ Company to set up a school and hospital for only “deserving and real poor objects...of good life and conversation.” Bancroft’s hospital opened in 1736 on Mile End Road London. There were twenty-eight rules set out by the Drapers’ Company for the almsmen and their families to observe; breaking them resulted in an appearance before the Visiting Committee. In 1889 the school, but not the hospital, moved to Woodford Wells, Essex. It appears from the Drapers’ Company records there were many disciplinary problems including drunkenness, bickering and fighting among the thirty almsmen and their wives; this may have influenced the decision to close the almshouses when the hospital was demolished in 1884. Not all almshouses had such clear rules and regulations but the lack of rules and regulations regarding the administration of an endowment could have serious consequences. For example, Andrew Windsor’s Almshouses in Farnham, Surrey, founded in 1620 had few rules and regulations so on the death of the founder in 1625, there was a lengthy and costly court case to establish his unwritten wishes.

It must be recognised that almshouses conferred status for



*The Hospital of the Blessed Holy Trinity Guildford founded 1619*

almshouse inmates within the local community. Some benefactors insisted that the residents wore a gown and badge whenever the residents left the almshouse so that they were identifiable and advertised the benefactor’s generosity. The brethren of the Hospital of St Cross who were members of the original foundation wore a black gown, a black trencher hat and a silver badge in the shape of the cross of Jerusalem. The brethren of the Order of Noble Poverty wore claret-red gowns,

claret-red trencher hats and a silver Cardinal’s badge as a reminder of their founder, Cardinal Henry Beaufort. Trinity Hospital Castle Rising, founded by Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, was built 1609-1614 for twelve women of the parish; they were provided with red cloaks which were badged with an embroidered white lion on the breast of each cloak and conical hats. The sisters had to attend daily chapel, and attend St Lawrence Church every Sunday and on Holy Days dressed in their gowns and hats and say prayers for their founder whose badge they wore. Badges were important and were often worn as part of the ceremonial costume. The badges were very elaborate and effectively functioned as liveries. Wearing badges publicly represented the generosity of the benefactor and the gratitude of those who were proud to accept the charity. In some almshouses residents were also provided with everyday clothing; for example, the eight widows in the almshouse in Titchmarsh, Northampton were given a gown, apron, cap and handkerchief annually. By the nineteenth century clothing or provision of cloth became less common.

Of course the experience of almshouse life and the benefits that occupants received was variable. The great variation in benefits reflected the worth of the endowment. Their standard of living did not necessarily make almspeople a pauper elite and many aspects of their lives mirrored those

of other poor people, including parish paupers dependent on poor relief. Some provided residents with comfortable accommodation, a regular allowance, clothing and fuel. The master and twelve brethren of Lord Leicester’s Hospital, Warwick, founded in 1571, had an annual income of about £200 to share among themselves. Other foundations were very modest in their provision. For example, Thomas Oken’s almshouse in Warwick, founded in 1571, paid six almswomen one shilling a quarter.



*Charles Webb almshouses Capel Surrey 1871*



# Really Useful Bulletin

This was not sufficient and it is recorded the women had to apply for parish relief. Conversely, the brothers and sisters in Abbot's Hospital, Guildford in 1622 received two shillings and sixpence a week and in addition they were provided with coal, firewood and gowns. In his will dated 1630, Hugh Perry left funds for residents of his almshouse in Wotton-under-Edge; this included *their shoes, stockings, shirts and smocks; £5 a year for wood and coals; ...twenty shillings apiece for the almsfolk on the four usual feasts of the Church plus £12 a year for them*. It was also often possible for residents to receive additional payments by undertaking duties such as reading daily prayers and nursing sick residents. It has also been recognised that wealthy foundations more often supplied extras such as fuel, clothing, medical aid and covered funeral costs.

Almspeople did have advantages compared with other poor old people in the parish. They had the comfort and security of almshouse accommodation and some financial allowance, no matter how small. Unlike those who received parish poor relief, their allowances were not regularly assessed and they did not have the fear of being sent to the parish workhouse if the cost of their maintenance increased. An almsperson could only be removed from their room or lose their allowance if they persistently broke the almshouse rules. Admission to an almshouse was generally sought after and their status as "deserving poor" gave them a standing in the local community.

Medieval choices for hospital sites were clearly visible on main roads leading in and out of towns. This was crucial for fundraising although begging was not normally allowed since it would be demeaning to the founder's reputation. This continued post-Reformation; for example, Abbot's Hospital situated in Guildford High Street had an alms box in the main entrance. The name "hospital", widely used before the Reformation, was replaced by the term almshouse from about 1640. By the nineteenth century with population increase and industrialisation, their situation was less desirable for housing, so many were relocated. For example, Sir Thomas Gresham's eight almshouses were built in 1575 on Broad Street in the City of London; in 1768 the almshouses were demolished to make way for a new excise office and moved to Green Yard, Whitecross Street



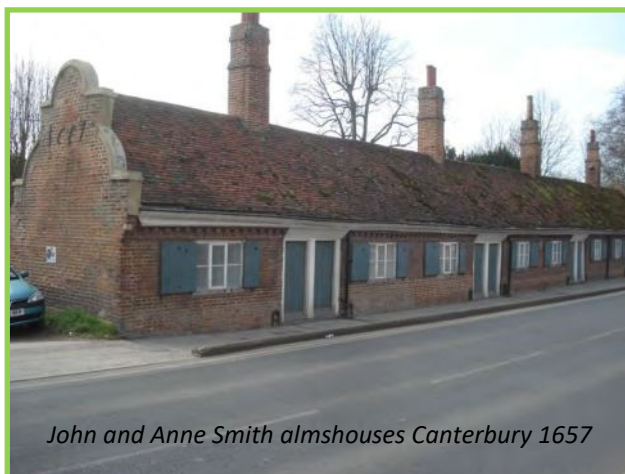
*Captain Henry Mudd of Ratcliffe donated the land to Trinity House almshouses London 1695*

which was alongside the City stables, where the Lord Mayor's coach was kept and where stray horses and cattle were housed. The place must have been full of noise and bustle, not to mention the smells and dirt. Later in the 1880s the residents' situation improved as the almshouses were moved to the then rural area of Brixton. In addition, almshouses were often purpose-built but the materials and resilience of the houses could vary considerably from stone and brick to examples from west Kent where the shortage of local brickmaking meant the almshouses were timber-framed and not very resistant to the elements. As a result,

many became dilapidated; for example, the hospital of St John in Canterbury, founded c.1087 for the poor aged and sick, survived 600 years but the medieval buildings were demolished c.1684. Almsmen then lived in small houses and in the nineteenth century the almshouse was rebuilt around a courtyard.

Over the centuries the design of almshouses has changed. In medieval times the long hall was a design typical of the period. This central space had beds down either side and a chapel at the far end so that the sick and infirm could easily see the altar. This was important because care of the soul was just as significant as the care of the body. A good example is the thirteenth-century foundation of St Mary's in Chichester but this form of building ceased to be used by the time of the Reformation. By the fifteenth century there was a shift away from communal living with the construction of individual chambers. At St Cross Hospital, Winchester, Cardinal Beaufort's House of Noble Poverty constructed in 1445 provided residents with individual chambers for greater comfort and privacy. A retreat from communal living was mirrored by the introduction of monetary allowances for residents in lieu of the provision of shared meals. In some almshouses residents were still expected to eat in a communal dining hall as was the case at

St Cross. The courtyard design became popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as this could accommodate over twelve residents as part of a community. Examples include Abbot's Hospital, Guildford, founded in 1619 by Archbishop George Abbot and Whitgift Hospital, Croydon, founded in 1596 by Archbishop Whitgift. In general though, by far the most popular design was called *the row*; it was a single storey that



*John and Anne Smith almshouses Canterbury 1657*





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*The Sisters Trinity Hospital  
Castle Rising Norfolk 1609 -1614  
Image: Richard Humphrey CC BY-SA 2.0 DEED*

could be built relatively cheaply and could be as plain or elaborate as the founder wished. At the centre of the building, there was often a clock or plaque recognising the benefactor. John and Anne Smith's almshouses built in 1657 in Canterbury are a good example of this row style; their row accommodated four poor men and four poor women. Charles Webb founded almshouses in Capel, Surrey in 1871, built in the same style; his row accommodated six aged couples.

Few famous architects have been commissioned to design almshouses; many were anonymous or were selected as the "local firm". The Royal Hospital Chelsea is an exception designed by Sir Christopher Wren for 412 residents, a Charles II foundation of 1682 for retired soldiers due to age and disability. The pensioners were housed in small rooms off long corridors, an echo of the long hall design of the medieval period. The very limited personal space was perhaps a reflection of military barracks. There were in addition large communal spaces, a sitting room, dining hall, chapel, library and garden. This design has now been changed to offer pensioners their own bedrooms, study space and en-suite shower room facilities.

This article set out to examine how almshouses originated in early medieval England as places that provided care for the sick poor and were usually attached to a monastery. Almshouses have been portrayed as institutions providing care and shelter for a small number of respectable privileged elderly poor people. Only recently have historians attempted a comprehensive survey of their existence and records and included almshouses as part of the range of poor relief provision provided in the parish to meet the needs of the poor. Almshouses played an integral part in the welfare provision provided by parishes in England and are important when considering the mixed economy of welfare. Almshouses have continued to exist and thrive into the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries but that is another part of the story.

## References

Almshouse Association, [www.almshouses.org/](http://www.almshouses.org/)

County Record Offices are a good starting point.

*Victorian County History* : A History of (relevant county)

*White's History Gazetteer and Directory* (relevant county)

Unfortunately, for the early period  
not all records have survived.

*Part two covering post-1800 will come out later this year.*

## About the author:

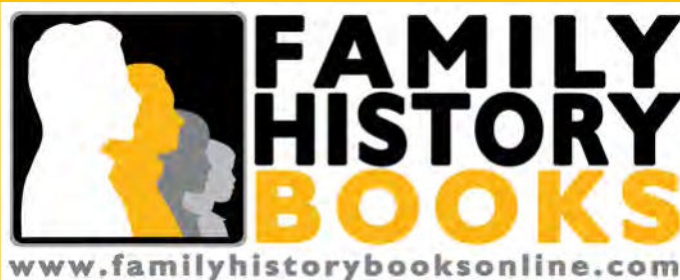


Dr Judy Hill was elected member of the Royal Historical Society in 2007 and taught history at the University of Surrey. Now a freelance lecturer and researcher who lectures widely in Surrey and neighbouring counties to university groups, historical societies, Probus, WI, Society of Genealogists, Family History Societies and various other societies.

She has published on emigration from Britain in the nineteenth century and on poverty and unrest in England including the Swing Riots of 1830-32.

Judy is available as a speaker – Live or Zoom.

See [www.familyhistoryfederation.com/family-history-speaker-surrey-judith-hill](http://www.familyhistoryfederation.com/family-history-speaker-surrey-judith-hill) for some of her talks or email [judy@judyhill.co.uk](mailto:judy@judyhill.co.uk) for the complete listing.



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See the special book offer for Easter on page 9.



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# Family History Societies



**Calderdale  
Family History Society**

## **A further source of information from the recent past - Undertakers' Records**

Many family history researchers are frustrated by the limitations put on them by GDPR and the inability to access records from the recent past. One of the sources of such information is from records concerning people who have passed away and are subsequently outside the jurisdiction of GDPR.

At Calderdale FHS we have been fortunate enough to have been given detailed records of funerals undertaken by a firm of local funeral directors dating from 1935 into the 1980s. We have transcribed over 10,000 of these records and added them to our society database, which is available online, free of charge, to our members. Additionally, there is an index entry for everyone on the transcription index on our society website [www.cfhsweb.com](http://www.cfhsweb.com) under the menu item "Research". This is available to everyone, along with nearly 2½ million other records we hold under numerous different headings.

Some of the other sets of data are monumental inscriptions and the burial records from Halifax's major cemetery, Stoney Royd, details of which go back to 1860. The transcription index neatly groups these entries together for an individual, so that it is easy to see where the records for that person are held.

Examination of all the different sources can reveal a much fuller picture than just from a single source. For instance, a monumental inscription for an individual may only give details of the family at the time the headstone was carved, whereas Stoney Royd records for that death may show parents and the funeral director records may show siblings, other relatives and even friends, with some addresses.



*Picture from CFHS website*

## **Families in British India Society**

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### **Calderdale FHS continued...**

In addition, the funeral records hold places and dates of death as well as those for burial or cremation, and also who was the responsible person at the time of death – often, but not always, a relative.

Finally, our society is able to retain the images of the records themselves – not always allowed by local archives who hold many of the historical files – and we offer our members the chance to have the image for any record of interest. From that, they can see information that we have not transcribed, due to it not being of direct genealogical concern. Items include type of coffin, what happened to the deceased's jewellery, who the account for payment was sent to and many other incidentals.

All this information is available to Calderdale FHS members free of charge for just their annual membership fee which starts at as little as £6pa. Membership can be gained either by direct application to our society or via [www.genfair.co.uk](http://www.genfair.co.uk) where purchase can be made by credit card.

Please visit our website for further details  
[www.cfhsweb.com/](http://www.cfhsweb.com/)

**The Really Useful Bulletin welcomes contributions from all Federation member organisations.**

**It is opportunity to promote *your* society to the extensive Bulletin readership.**





# Family History Societies



## Essex Society for Family History

Join the society in celebrating their  
**50th Anniversary!**

### *50 years of Researching Essex Ancestors*

The celebrations will begin at Galleywood Heritage Centre on the 18 May with the Anniversary Roadshow with a *Then and Now* display. Members are invited to send in photos of the area they live in from the early 1970s and showing the same place this year for this display.

The grand finale will take place at the Keene Hall, Galleywood on the 21 September where Toni Neobard and Kate Broad's interactive family-history-themed murder mystery evening, *Where There's a Will*, will take place. Toni and Kate are established local playwrights, authors, and speakers. The performance is a comedy in three acts with interaction from the audience, who will be invited to bring their own refreshments. There will be a raffle and prize for the winning team guessing the murderer(s).

There will also be a *Genealogy Challenge Trail* for all our members from the UK and all over the world, with some great prizes. All you need to do is follow the genealogical clues to help solve a crime. Why not join Essex Society for Family History and take part.

Further details are on our website [www.esfh.org.uk](http://www.esfh.org.uk)

### Calendar of Events

Sat. 18 May	Galleywood	50th Anniversary Roadshow
Sat. 6 July	Westcliff-on-Sea	50th Anniversary Roadshow
Sat. 13 July	Colchester	50th Anniversary Roadshow
Sat. 4 Aug.	Harlow	50th Anniversary Roadshow
Sat. 21 Sept.	Galleywood	<i>Where there's a Will</i> : Family History Murder play

The Essex Society for Family History was formed in September 1974 in Chelmsford. Over the years the membership has grown from 200 to over 1,700. We have monthly meetings at our branches in NE Essex, SE Essex and West Essex as well as regular meetings at Galleywood Heritage Centre in Chelmsford.

Membership of the society starts from £8. Our website [www.esfh.org.uk](http://www.esfh.org.uk) gives further information about the society, our branches plus news and events. Becoming a member is easy and can be done via our website. Membership gives access to our genealogical database with over two million records available. You can add your surname interests and contact other members researching the same surnames as you. Many of our talks are recorded and can be viewed on the day or by using the zoom links in the members' area. Our magazine, the *Essex Family Historian*, is published three times a year and our newsletter is emailed to members monthly, keeping members up to date with latest events and press releases.



## Northamptonshire Family History Society

Northamptonshire FHS was founded in 1976 so we will be celebrating our Golden Anniversary in 2026 – although we have yet to decide what form this will take!

Like most societies, we hold monthly branch and zoom meetings with a wide range of speakers and topics. Zoom meetings, whilst not to everyone's liking, have become an established part of our monthly programmes. The benefit is that it allows our members from across the county, country and indeed overseas to join in and to be involved.

We have recently issued a questionnaire to our members asking for their views on what the society presently offers, what they might like to see in the future and perhaps, more importantly, what they hope to gain from being a member of our society. We'll be sharing the results with our members once they've all been collated.

One of the society's main projects over a number of years has been the recording of the memorial inscriptions in the parish churchyards. Once the most recent batch come back from the printers, we shall have available 225 booklets of memorials from around the county. All of these are available via Parish Chest. Do have a look!



We are looking forward to attending the **FHF-Really Useful Show Live at St Ives on 20 April**. [See cover] It will be great to be out and about again, to meet up and to chat face-to-face with visitors. If you are researching Northamptonshire

ancestors then do come and visit our stall!

In partnership with Discover Northamptonshire, the society is organizing a **Heritage Fair on Sunday 28 April at Wicksteed Park, Kettering**. We have a large and wide range of heritage organisations, heritage attractions and archives attending. Entrance is free.



Please visit our website: [www.northants-fhs.org/](http://www.northants-fhs.org/)

The Really Useful Bulletin welcomes contributions from all Federation member organisations.

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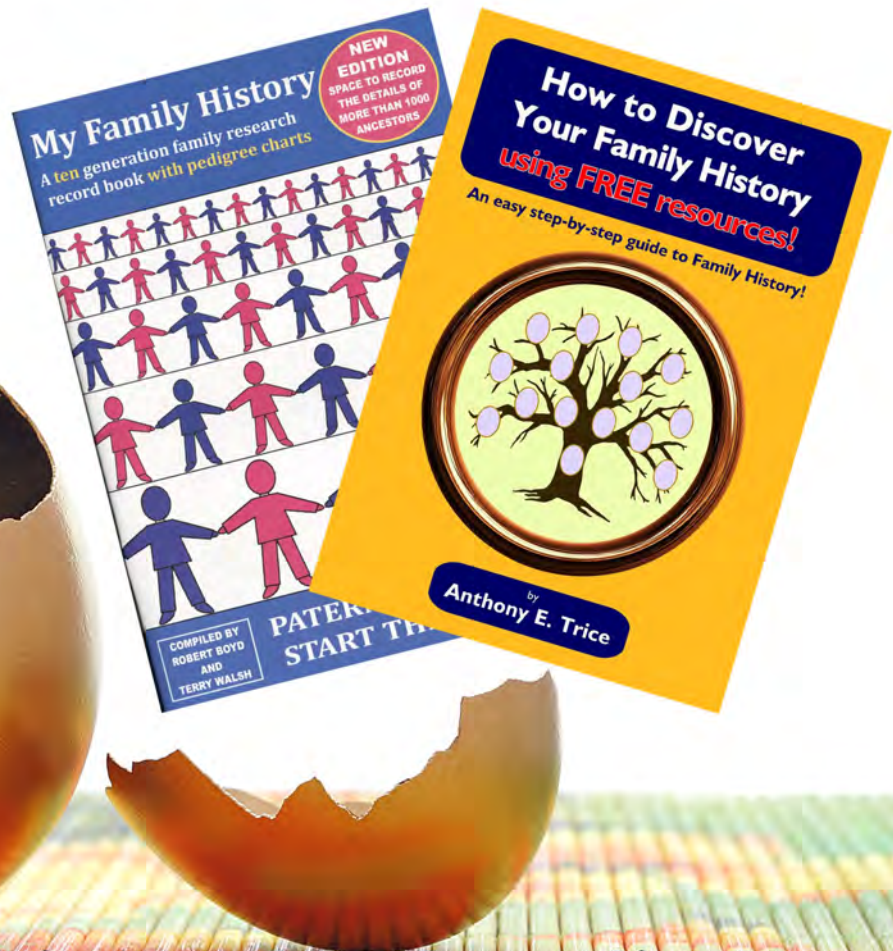


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# Really Useful Bulletin

## News from the Federation

**Let's celebrate supporting the family history community for fifty years!**

**Join us for this celebratory day which includes the Federation's annual meeting**



**Saturday 11 May 2024**  
at  
**Wesley's Chapel and**  
**Leysian Mission,**  
**City Road, London EC1Y 1AU**

The day's proceedings will commence at 9.30am with coffee and registration.

At 10.00am there will be a welcome from the Federation's chairman, Steve Manning, after which everyone can enjoy a presentation by Janet Few, President of the Federation and a popular speaker on family and local history topics. Her presentation will be of interest to all involved with family history research.

After Janet's presentation, those representing member groups will move to another room for the formal meeting. For those not involved in voting, *FamilySearch* representatives will give a presentation on the extensive records now available online free for all to use.

Lunch—provided free only for all those who are registered—will be at 12.30pm followed by a presentation by Nick Barratt, past-President of the Federation and well-known for his research work and TV programmes. His talks are always informative.

Close to Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission is the famous Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. Following the afternoon talk, we have reserved a number of specialist guides who will escort small groups around the burial ground. This is available to all who register for the day. The tour will last ninety minutes or so. Learn more about Bunhill Fields [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunhill\\_Fields](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunhill_Fields)



Voting representatives of member groups take priority on places until 31 March—but there will be plenty of space for friends to register to take part.

**If you would like to join the Federation for this free-of-charge special celebratory day with informative talks and the guided tour of Bunhill Fields, please register by emailing your name and address to [admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com) no later than Tuesday 30 April 2024.**

**Please put *Celebration* in the subject line of your email.**

**If places are oversubscribed on the closing date, names will be drawn at random and everyone notified.**





# Really Useful Bulletin

## More News from the Federation

### Out and About

It was lovely to meet so many family historians at the recent Creative Crafts show and also The Family History Show—Midlands. It was wonderful to have individuals returning to thank our volunteers for offering ideas to further their research, and a delight when one gentleman reported that the book *How to Discover Your Family History Using Free Resources* was excellent and did 'exactly what it said on the cover'! It makes all the hard work by our volunteers worthwhile

when individuals return to thank them!



*The Family History Show Midlands in Malvern—bookshop waiting for the doors to open!*

### MONEY, MONEY, MONEY...

When visiting fairs, shows and similar, please remember that there are societies and groups that do not have facilities to accept debit/credit cards. Also, not all venues have ATM cash dispensing facilities.

Please have real money with you so you are not disappointed by being unable to make your purchases.

### Comment

It is amazing how many people we meet at events who are plodding on alone with their family history and had never heard of family history societies, let alone one that may meet very close to their home!

We ask family history groups to use all local facilities available to them (local free press, social media, word of mouth and even paid advertising if affordable!) to promote their existence and to welcome family historians of all levels of experience.

The Federation continues to promote all member groups when exhibiting at major events.



### REALLY USEFUL SHOW

#### EAST MIDLANDS

**Saturday 15 June**

University of Nottingham  
King's Meadow Campus,  
Lenton Lane,  
Nottingham NG7 2NR



Family history societies  
Archives and *Family Tree* magazine  
PLUS Expert talks  
Optional tour of University Manuscripts  
and Special Collections Rooms  
(book on arrival, limited numbers)

**Free admission Free parking**

**Full details will be in our May edition**

[www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/2024-live](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com/2024-live)

### STOP PRESS!

Oxfordshire FHS Fair is back! **Saturday 26 October** at  
Cherwell School North Site on Marston Ferry Road, Oxford,  
OX2 7EE. More details [www.ofhs.uk/](http://www.ofhs.uk/)

**Global collection for tracing  
British Home Children  
launched by Findmypast**

**Find  
my past**

A new collaboration between Canadian and UK organisations sees creation of the first major collection of records pertaining to Home Children.

Over 130,000 British children were sent to British Overseas Territories as part of forced migration schemes between 1860s and 1970s.

Offered for free, the records will allow an estimated 4m+ descendants of Home Children to trace their ancestors for the first time.

*This collection launched on Findmypast at Rootstech. It is in collaboration with The National Archives, British Library, Library and Archives Canada, and Home Children Canada.*

[www.findmypast.co.uk/page/british-home-children](http://www.findmypast.co.uk/page/british-home-children)



# Really Useful Back Page

## Family History Research Aids from the Experts



Parish Chest, a service from the Family History Federation, has over sixty family history societies and some twenty-plus traders, at a one-stop online shop, offering a wide range of family history materials in some sixteen categories including:

- *Parish register transcriptions and more from local FHS*
- *Memorial inscriptions information from gravestones across the country, compiled by local FHS*
- *Nonconformists: Baptists, Wesleyans, Independents, Quakers and many more nonconformist lists*
- *Wills and Probate Indexes of wills and administrations*
- *Folders, printing facilities, giftware*
- *..and more!*

**Societies and suppliers regularly add new lines, so visit to see what is there to help you add to your family tree.**

[www.parishchest.com](http://www.parishchest.com)

**Societies and others interested in joining Parish Chest should initially contact:**

[admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com)



# FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

[www.familyhistorybooksonline.com](http://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com)

Family History Books (FHB) is an online bookshop and publisher; it is owned by the Family History Federation and the aim is to provide a service to the genealogical community. Family History Books offers a range of relevant titles relating to family history research.

FHB welcomes contact from authors! Works of general and specific interest to family historians with wider social history topics are of interest. FHB does not publish individual family histories or fiction. If you have a book in the making, then do contact FHB via

[admin@familyhistoryfederation.com](mailto:admin@familyhistoryfederation.com)

Recent publications include the very popular *Introducing Nonconformist Records—Explaining Nonconformist Records for Family Historians*.



In addition to its [online shop](#) FHB can also be found at major live family history events around the country including the LIVE REALLY USEFUL Family History Shows in Cambridgeshire and Nottinghamshire. Come and visit us and see all the latest titles available. The stall is always very popular!

Happy browsing!

Please explore the range, and place your orders, at

[www.familyhistorybooksonline.com](http://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com)

## The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

Live shows 20 April and 15 June

Online 15 and 16 November

Please view [www.fhf-reallyuseful.com](http://www.fhf-reallyuseful.com) for full details



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