



FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION
Supporting the Family History Community for Fifty Years

REALLY USEFUL Bulletin No 47

July 2024

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

inside find...

Lead article this month is *Where am I? Are you searching in the right place?*

plus news from local FHS and from the Federation

MEET THE EXHIBITORS

Experts in genealogy, research and DNA, all ready to help you!

FREE EVENT!

What will you discover?

Northern Ireland
FHF REALLY USEFUL
Family History Show

PRIZE DRAW

Attend before midday and be in to win one of many fantastic prizes!

WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE, TIM MCGARRY!

Tim has taken a DNA test - join us at 2pm when we reveal to him for the first time who he is and where he's from!

The Really Useful Family History Show
10th August 2024
10am to 4pm
Europa Hotel, Belfast

TAKE A BREAK!

Come to Belfast for a few days' holiday and don't miss visiting the show!

The hosts of this show, North of Ireland Family History Society, look forward to welcoming you!

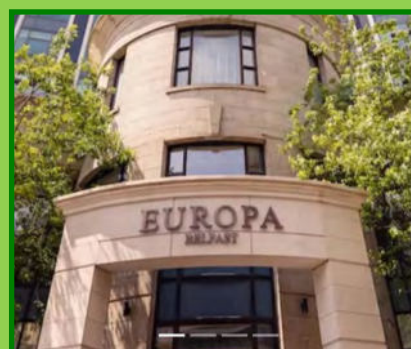
Why not take a DNA test at the event?
Special show prices!

EXHIBITORS

- ◆ Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
- ◆ Federation for Ulster Local Studies
- ◆ ABC Family History Association
- ◆ History Hub Ulster
- ◆ Ballinascreen Historical Society
- ◆ Presbyterian Historical Society with *Eddie's Extracts*
- ◆ Strathclyde Institute for Genealogical Studies
- ◆ Irish Genealogical Society
- ◆ North of Ireland FHS - DNA
- ◆ North of Ireland FHS - information and research

**Come and meet
the exhibitors!**

The venue is Belfast's iconic
Europa Hotel



Regular updates: www.nifhs.org/event/ni-really-useful-family-history-show/

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Really Useful Bulletin

Where am I?

Are you searching in the right place?

by Janet Few

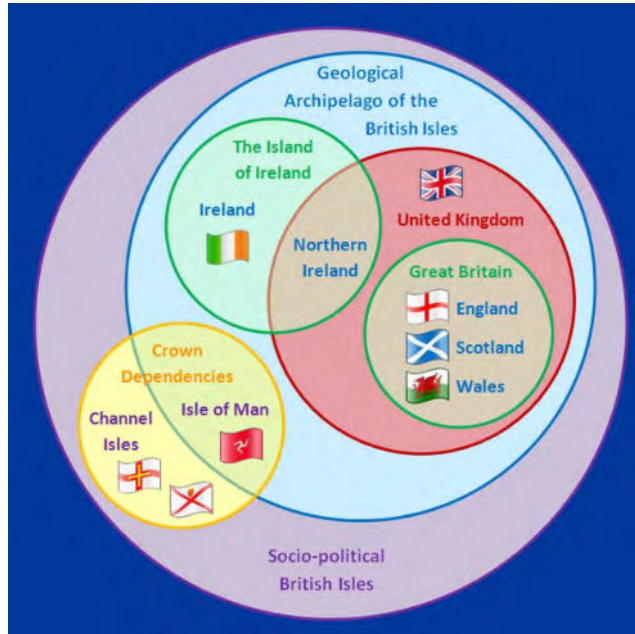
Sometimes we fail to find a family member because we are looking in the wrong place and occasionally we can be misled by the area that a place name refers to. Boundaries and jurisdictions in the British Isles can be confusing, particularly if you are researching from elsewhere. There's the first problem; what is the difference between, the British Isles, Great Britain and the United Kingdom?

The United Kingdom (UK), or to give it its full title, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (below) is a sovereign state; in other words, a

political entity with an autonomous government. It is currently made up of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, as well as islands that are part of those countries. It does not include the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands, which are self-governed Crown Dependencies, so are not part of the UK. This is not the same as the British

Isles. The British Isles is a geographical unit consisting of over 6,000 islands, many of which are uninhabited. It is not a political unit. The Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, the Hebrides, the islands of Orkney and Shetland and the Scilly Isles, as well as others, are all part of the British Isles but as we have seen, some but not all, are part of the UK. The British Isles (above right) also includes the whole island of Ireland but the Republic of Ireland (Southern Ireland) is a completely separate country. For the purposes of family history research, it is important to remember that this has not always been the case and that for centuries, until 1922, the whole of the island of Ireland was under British rule.

Great Britain, sometimes just Britain, is different again. This is a term that refers to the main island that includes Scotland, Wales and England. Although England, Scotland,



Venn diagram displaying the relationships between the subsidiary nations of the UK and the meaning of the term "British Isles" and how the "Crown dependencies" fit in. [CC-BY-SA-3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

Northern Ireland and Wales are countries, they are not sovereign states, as although they have devolved governments, they are not fully autonomous. We have probably all seen these referred to erroneously as 'England', much to the chagrin of the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish.

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are divided into counties. Unlike American counties, these are not normally referred to as County Surrey, County Kent, nor indeed Kent County, all of which sound very odd in a British context. They are counties but that is not part of their name. The exceptions are County Durham in England and

the six counties of Northern Ireland all of which can correctly be referred to with County at the beginning as part of the place name. There are two pitfalls to be aware of with counties. Firstly, there was a major reorganisation in 1974 when some counties were renamed, new areas, such as Tyne and Wear and Bristol and Avon, were created and others were amalgamated. This had a particular impact in Wales, where thirteen historic counties became eight. The second problem is that some county boundaries have changed. Poole, once in Hampshire is now in Dorset, for example. There are also anomalies. The parish of Norham, on the English side of the Scottish border, was once a detached part of County Durham, rather than Northumberland, by which it is surrounded.

A word about the use of 'shire'. Without wishing to complicate things still further, I won't go in to details about what a shire was but many, although not all, of our county names end inshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Flintshire, Aberdeenshire, Yorkshire and so on. Devonshire, is the only one that seems to have lost its 'shire' to become Devon, although Devonshire is not incorrect. You can't drop most of the shires without causing confusion as, within the county of Bedfordshire is the town of Bedford, similarly with York in Yorkshire, Aberdeen in Aberdeenshire and so on. This is significant. When your ancestor claims to have come from Bedford, do they mean the county or the town?





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Some larger counties were subdivided. Yorkshire's three ridings are relatively well-known but did you know that Kent is divided into Lathes and Lincolnshire has 'parts': the Part of Kesteven, the Part of Lindsey and the Part of Holland?

Colin Chapman devised a series of three letter codes for all the counties of the UK. These are a very valuable shorthand when doing our research but remember that not everyone that you correspond with will be familiar with these abbreviations. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapman_code

The British Isles has other jurisdictions for researchers to grapple with. For the purposes of genealogy, the most important unit is the parish. The whole of the British Isles is made up of parishes; there is nowhere on the map that is not part of a parish. These are an ecclesiastical construct. Historic parishes consisted of a church and its surrounding area. Since the Reformation in the sixteenth century, these were Anglican (Church of England) churches. As other denominations sprung up, they may have built places of worship within the Anglican parishes. The term 'parish registers', will normally mean the records of the Anglican church.

Villages frequently clustered round the parish (Anglican) church and would share the parish name. So, as is common, the parish of Tenterden in Kent contains the village of Tenterden and outlying farms and hamlets that were not part of the village of Tenterden but were nonetheless in Tenterden parish. As populations grew, one Anglican church in larger communities was insufficient, so more were built in towns, notably from the 1840s onwards. This created new ecclesiastical parishes, each with their own set of parish registers.

There are also civil parishes, which are political units, so slightly different. The records that family historians use will primarily be those of the ecclesiastical parishes, as described above.

Counties contain settlements of different sizes; note that a parish is not a settlement, just an ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Settlements have a hierarchy, based on size and facilities. At the top of the tree are the cities. These used to be places that had a cathedral but more recently, many new cities have been created using other criteria. Next are the towns. Historically, almost all the country was within fifteen miles of a town. This was considered a practical distance for walking to market. Modern postal addresses in the UK all include a town name. For example I have recently moved from one village to another. Bideford in Devon is the nearest town to both of these villages, so Bideford was part of my old address and is part of my new one. I do not and never have, lived in the town of Bideford. Some places that have Bideford as their postal address are up to twenty miles from the town itself.

Villages are smaller settlements that, until the early

twentieth century, would have been largely self-sufficient and able to provide most services that the inhabitants needed for their day to day needs. Hamlets are groups of a small number of dwellings that are too small to be a village and may have few, if any, services or facilities.

Don't forget that, just as we may do ourselves, our ancestors might give their nearest large settlement when asked for their place of origin. If we think no one will have heard of the little village where we live, we might answer with the town nearby. The further away we are from our place of origin, the more likely we are to do this. If I am close to my home and someone asks me where I live, I can safely give the village name, in the expectation that it will be somewhere that the enquirer has heard of. If I am being asked the same question when I am hundreds of miles from home, I will give the name of a larger settlement that I think will be meaningful.

Of course, our ancestors might be hazy about their birthplace, especially if they moved as very small children. Remember that baptisms did not always take place in the place of birth. Eldest children, for example, were not infrequently taken back to the mother's parish for baptism and indeed may have been born away from home, so that maternal relatives could help with the birth. I was recently researching a lady called Mary Rake (she actually also calls herself other things but that's not the point here). In different censuses her birthplace is listed as South Africa, Ireland and England. Add to this the fact that she married and had two children in India and you can see why she was difficult to track down. This is an extreme case but our ancestors are often inconsistent about their birthplace. It is important to look at as many sources as possible to see if there are alternatives that you might need to consider.

Even if you have a consistent birthplace, do you have the right one? There are numerous places called Newport in the UK, there is more than one St. Ives (and also a St Ive), several Bucklands and so on. One lady, living in Cornwall, claimed to have been born in Scotland. She was actually born at Scotland Farm, a few miles from the Cornish parish where she lived. Emigrants often replicated UK place names in their new abodes, so you may not even be in the right country.

There are other jurisdictions for family historians researching in the UK to get their heads around. The first of these that you are likely to encounter is the registration district. The registration of births, marriages and deaths began in 1837 in England and Wales, 1855 in Scotland and 1864 in Ireland (with the exception of non-Catholic marriages, which were registered from 1845). The process was administered locally by Superintendent Registrars who were in charge of an administrative area known as a registration district. This was usually a town and the surrounding rural area, although cities would contain



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several registration districts. Often the names are self-explanatory and are the town name. Sometimes these names are misleading; parts of Liverpool are in West Derby registration district for example. Liverpool is not and never has been, in Derbyshire. There have been some minor changes to registration district names and boundaries over the years, notably but not exclusively, in 1974. [See also <https://www.ukbmd.org.uk/reg/>]

Next there are poor law unions. These were set up in 1834, when the administration of poor relief was taken out of the hands of the parish. Initially, the registration districts used the same boundaries as poor law unions, so you would expect a poor law union to cover a town and the rural hinterland, or a smaller area in a very large settlement. Each poor law union had its own union workhouse. If your ancestors needed poor relief, they would be the responsibility of the workhouse that served the poor law union in which they lived. So knowing in which poor law union your ancestor resided is important if you want to look at workhouse records.

Ecclesiastical jurisdictions, recognised by the Church of England, are also important. Until 1858, English and Welsh wills were proved in a hierarchy of church courts. If you are looking for a will, you need to know which courts (there will be more than one) had jurisdiction in the place where your ancestor had property. This means becoming familiar with such things as archdeaconries and dioceses. There are also ecclesiastical courts known as peculiars, which tended to cover very small areas. This subject is too complex to cover in detail here but there are some helpful publications such as Jeremy Gibson's *Probate Jurisdictions: where to look for wills* and Phillimore's *Atlas of Parish Registers*, that will help.

In the Middle Ages, the main unit of local government was the manor and you may find manorial records into the eighteenth century and beyond. Manors are not the same as parishes, although some parishes and manors might share boundaries. If you want to research in these fascinating and useful manorial records, that may hold all sorts of clues and anecdotes about your ancestors, you need to know which manor they lived in. You then need to know the whereabouts of any surviving manorial records. The Manorial Documents Register, accessed via The National Archives website can help here <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/manor-search>.

I am afraid we are not done. Another term that you may encounter is townland. These are geographical areas that you are likely to come across in Ireland and Scotland but also in parts of northern England. I have ancestral connections to the parish of Thockrington in Northumberland. Within the parish of Thockrington are four townlands, one of which is also called Thockrington. When I decided to start a one-place study for Thockrington and had a quick look to see what sort of population I might be

dealing with, I mistakenly looked at the townland population and not that for the whole parish. In Ireland, the area covered by a townland was based on the ballyboe (baile bó), or cow townland. This was an area that was sufficient to rear a certain number of cows, so it was not a consistent size, as it would depend on the quality of the land.

A Hundred is yet another unit of government. Historically it was sufficient land to support a hundred families. If you are familiar with the terms used in the Domesday Book, you will know that places contained so many 'hides'. A hide supported one family, so one hundred hides was the equivalent of a Hundred. In the north of England you may find the term Ward used instead of Hundred and in areas of strong Danish settlement, notably the eastern counties, you can find wapentake used instead. A tithing was ten hides, or a tenth of a Hundred. You can see this term used in the heading for the English and Welsh 1861 census.

If you have urban ancestors, you may encounter boroughs. Historically, these were fortified towns that had been given the right to self-government in certain matters. In these instances, there may be borough records that you can consult, which will give you information about the administration of the town.

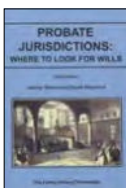
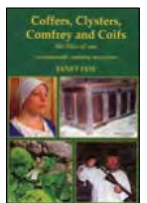
This is not an exhaustive guide to the jurisdictions you will contend with when searching for ancestors in the United Kingdom but it should at least make you aware that a sense of place is not straightforward. When our ancestors are elusive, it is very often because we are looking in the wrong place; we just need to be clear what we mean by a place.

About the author



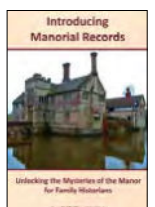
Janet Few is president of the Family History Federation. She is much involved in local family history societies, one-name societies and one-place projects. She is a popular speaker who also spends time as her alter ego, Mistress Agnes, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Visit: [//thehistoryinterpreter.wordpress.com/](http://thehistoryinterpreter.wordpress.com/)

Coffers, Cysters, Comfrey and Coifs by Janet Few explores life in the seventeenth century. Family History Books £12.95 + p&p.



As mentioned in Janet's article, *Probate Jurisdictions: where to look for wills* is also available. £5.50 + p&p.

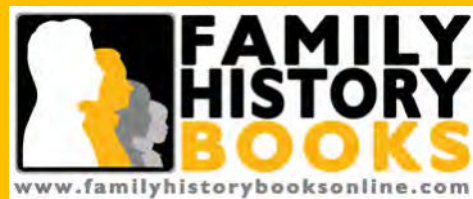
Readers may also like *Introducing Manorial Records* by Ian Waller. Published by Family History Books. £8.95 +p&p.





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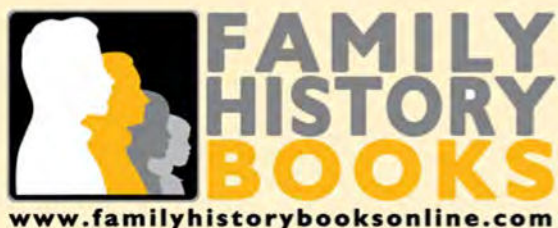
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Family History Societies



**Huddersfield and District
Family History Society**

Family and Local History Fair

Greenhead Masonic Hall

26 Greenhead Road, Huddersfield HD1 4EN



Saturday 26 October 2024

10am—4pm

Admission £5; children under 16 free

**Refreshments and free car parking
available**

Talks on family and local history topics

Ask the experts family history research service

**Exhibitors include family and local history societies,
books, maps, genealogy supplies, and more**

The venue is just off the ring road and only five minutes' walk from the railway station and bus station in the centre of Huddersfield

www.hdfhs.org.uk

<https://hdfhs.org.uk/the-family-history-fair/>

www.facebook.com/huddersfieldfamilyhistory/

Charity no: 702199

STOP PRESS

Australasian Federation of Family
History Organisations

AFFHO

2024 Family History Month

to be held in August across Australia and New Zealand

Full details:

<https://www.affho.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AFFHOFamilyHistoryMonth>

NextGENERATION

2024

Discoveries



**Society of
Genealogists**

NextGENERATION

Discoveries Conference

join in online on

Saturday 5 October

Jointly hosted by the **Family History Federation** and the **Society of Genealogists**, this is an exciting full-day online event spotlighting genealogists who are under the age of thirty-five.

The conference features **fifteen speakers** from around the world who will each present their unique research.

The day will culminate in a panel discussion. **Transitioning from Passion to Profession** will feature prominent experts in genealogy and family history who will share insights on carving out a successful career in this field, everything from academic pathways to researching and speaking.

Join us for an exciting line up of speakers who will share their innovative work, much of which reflects diverse cultures and national traditions.

For more information and to support the future of genealogy, visit the event page at

<https://members.sog.org.uk/>

[events/66141a9f1fce380008a49ebe/description](https://members.sog.org.uk/events/66141a9f1fce380008a49ebe/description)



NextGENERATION



**Society of
Genealogists**

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

Families in British India Society



FIBIS 25 YEARS CONFERENCE

The Conference will run from
10am on Friday 27 September
until
Sunday 29 September at 4pm

There are both residential and day booking options

The conference will be held at the
DoubleTree by Hilton Oxford Belfry
London Road, Milton Common, Thame, OX9 2JW

Join us to celebrate 25 years of FIBIS
and further your family history research!

Speakers and Workshops

1:1 Research Advice
Special Interests
Gala Dinner
and much more!



<https://www.fibis.org/25-years-conference>



Oxfordshire FHS

Family History Fair

Saturday 26th October

10am – 4pm

Free entry and free parking

Cherwell School (North),

Marston Ferry Road, Oxford, OX2 7EE



Wheelchair and child friendly

Get help with your research –
particularly in Oxfordshire
but also in other counties and countries

A variety of subject experts will be present,
browse and buy books, CDs, maps, postcards and
materials from specialist companies

Refreshments available (until 3:15 pm)

For more information including advice
on how to get to the fair visit:

www.ofhs.uk/fair2024

email: fair@ofhs.uk

Tel: OFHS Helpline: 01865 358151



Family History Societies



Essex Society for Family History

Fifty Year Anniversary Celebrations

Essex Society for Family History (ESFH) continues to celebrate its anniversary. The society is for everyone, young and old, with an interest in their family history - especially those with ancestors from Essex. The society aims to promote and encourage the public study of British family history, genealogy, heraldry and local history with particular reference to Essex and to promote the preservation and accessibility of archival material. It has a rich history of recording monumental inscriptions across the county's churchyards, preserving dedications to lost loved ones that would otherwise be lost to the ravages of weather and time.

Graveyards go digital: Rural Essex church brings family history firmly into the twenty-first century with cutting edge digital mapping software



Not content with its newsworthy position as the first church to create an authentic medieval doom painting in half a century, (*First parish church Doom painting in 500 years unveiled, the Telegraph, 11th May 2024*) St Mary's Church in Woodham Ferrers is now set to become the first church in Essex to make the fascinating stories of its churchyard publicly available to all.



The Pegasus backpack used for the GPS mapping is one of only two in the UK. Experts in burial surveying, AG Intl, have been commissioned to carry out specialist GPS mapping determining the exact location of each and every memorial both inside St Mary's church and outside in the churchyard. The results of this survey will be added to photographs of each

memorial in situ, along with scanned images of the corresponding burial register from the Essex Record Office – dating back some 500 years – to create a state-of-the-art interactive map that sets out every gravestone to scale and allows users to zoom in and out, discovering information and images relating to all the individuals who have been laid to rest at St Mary's since 1558.

This will include noteworthy individuals such as Cecily Sandys, wife of Archbishop of York, Edwin Sandys, whose elaborate Elizabethan memorial takes pride of place next to the altar inside the church.

St Mary's is being supported in this endeavour by the Essex Society for Family History as project partners. This is part of ESFH's ongoing programme of Fifty Year Anniversary celebrations. Andrea Hewitt of ESFH says "We are delighted

to join forces with St Mary's on this exciting opportunity to engage the general public with family history in a fresh and accessible way. As St Mary's is the first church in Essex to make such information freely available, we hope that the project will pave the way for other churches across the county as they investigate their own burial sites and the many fascinating stories waiting to be discovered."

The two organisations have also been joined by budding historians from neighbouring St Mary's school, who joined AG Intl GPS mapping expert Aaron in June to learn the intriguing ins and outs of the process and get up close and personal with the magnificent mapping backpack!

Year 5 and 6 pupils for St Mary's School, Woodham Ferrers assisted AG's mapping expert as he scanned the churchyard using the Pegasus backpack. Ava, who is in year 6, said " We were so curious about what we were going to find out. Aaron told us all about his job and it turns out he gets to go on amazing expeditions all over the country and has even scanned the graves of famous people like George Michael. It's incredible that there are only TWO Pegasus backpacks in the UK, and he gets to actually use one of them! The equipment was impressive."



The pupils will be returning for AG Intl's second visit to photograph the memorials in July before using their new-found knowledge to write content for a brand new exhibition to be held at the church in the autumn.

The next phase of the joint graveyard mapping project is to populate the digital record for each individual with further history on their life, family and background. St Mary's and ESFH welcome any further information or images you may be able to contribute regarding the individuals named on the memorials.

Essex Society for Family History

website:<https://www.esfh.org.uk/>

Facebook: @esfh1



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show— Northern Ireland

The show in Belfast will have a different “feel” to the previous shows. The North of Ireland FHS are aiming at attracting visitors who want to learn more about family history generally. The list of exhibitors keeps growing, so do keep an eye on their website (see front page).



They have a real crowd-puller with the DNA reveal for Tim McGarry (pictured).

Heritage Open Days

6—15 September 2024



Member organisations have been asked to provide brief details of their activities for this September’s *Heritage Open Days*. These events are free to attend! If you belong to a member group involved with HODs, do please make sure “they who promote” tell us about their activities.

We will bring you a selection of events in the August edition of the *Bulletin*.

Old Handwriting—plus Latin!

I thought a spider had jumped out of the inkpot and crawled over the document...

We all come across difficult-to-decipher writing, and not all of it can be classed as “old”. Some census enumerators needed lessons in clear writing. Many an incumbent watered the ink before attempting their ‘writing’!

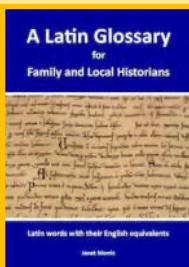


That said, there are some excellent guides around to help with old writing, but not when the spider ran over it! Available from Family History Books is [Examples of Handwriting 1550-1650](#)—well worth adding to your collection as it is a most practical guide. £5.95 + p&p.

Also available is [The Secretary Hand ABC Book](#) with copious illustrations from documents and of single letters. £5.50 + p&p.



Your next challenge is likely to be sorting out Latin. [A Latin Glossary for Family and Local Historians](#) is your must-have! It lists words in the form in which you are likely to encounter them. It has remained in print since 1989. This new edition features larger print size as some previous editions required a magnifying glass to read them. It also recommends a number of books for further reading on the subjects of Latin and old handwriting. £5.95 + p&p.



U3A PEAK DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE

PALACE HOTEL, BUXTON, DERBYSHIRE

SATURDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2024

SPEAKERS PLUS VARIOUS EXHIBITORS



DR COLIN CHAPMAN MA FSG -
“WAS YOUR ANCESTOR A CRIMINAL”



SIMON FOWLER -
“MAKING THE BEST USE OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES”



ANDREA HETHERINGTON -
“BRITISH WIDOWS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR”



IAN WALLER -
“READING OLD HANDWRITING”

TICKETS £30
INCLUDES BUFFET LUNCH, REFRESHMENTS
AND A FREE PRIZE DRAW



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[HTTPS://PEAKDISTRICTNETWORK.WIXSITE.COM/FAMILYHISTORY/ABOUT-5](https://peakdistrictnetwork.wixsite.com/familyhistory/about-5)



The bookstall will be at the U3A Peak District Family History Conference



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

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

admin@familyhistoryfederation.com



FAMILY HISTORY BOOKS

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

Don't forget to check the [legacy](#) section on the Family History Books online shop. There are some gems listed, many now in short supply (first come, first served). The guides of what is to be found where are sound—if it existed then, it exists now ... even if the archive has moved or amalgamated!

In addition to its [online shop](#) FHB can also be found at major live family history events around the country. 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

The REALLY USEFUL Family History Show

Live show

Belfast on 10 August

Please view www.fhf-reallyuseful.com for full details



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