



FAMILY HISTORY FEDERATION
Supporting the Family History Community for Fifty Years

REALLY USEFUL Bulletin

No 51

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Welcome to this edition of the *Really Useful Bulletin* for 2024
inside find...

Lead article this month is *An Introduction to Jewish Genealogy—part 2*
plus news from local FHS and from the Federation

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An Introduction to Jewish Genealogy—part 2

How the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain can help

by Leigh Dworkin, chair of JGSGB

In part 1 of this Introduction to Jewish Genealogy, we covered traditional, word of mouth sources, then progressed to typical genealogical records such as birth, marriage, death and census which often have a Jewish twist. Atypical genealogical records, specific to the Jewish condition, are to be considered. Specific Jewish genealogical records do exist and are next to consider, followed by those records from the old country, from which your ancestors hailed. Contrary to popular belief, these were not all destroyed and can be a goldmine of information. Thinking laterally, having exhausted research in the UK – the new country – research in sister new countries can pay dividends, where research of siblings of your ancestors who ended up elsewhere, such as the USA, is valuable. Finally, DNA Research is the new frontier and works quite well for Jewish ancestors too.

Jewish Genealogical Records

These do exist and they are many and varied, including Ketubot (plural of Ketubah) or Jewish marriage certificates, marriage authorisations, burial authorisations, articles and reports in the Jewish press, tombstone inscriptions, Yad Vashem Pages of Testimony and early synagogue records.

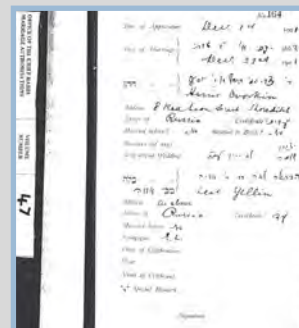
Ketubot are ornate certificates of marriage written in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. The main genealogical information is the Hebrew names of the bride and groom including patronymics—the fathers' names of the bride and groom. There is no central repository for these but if you are lucky they will have been passed down in the family. I have my parents' and grandparents' ketubot and would dearly love to find those of my great-grandparents.



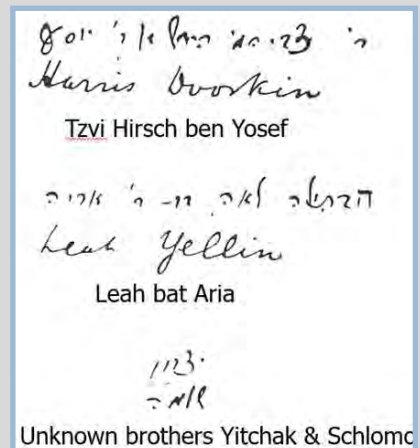
Two ketubot for the author's grandparents and parents – from the family collection

In order to marry as an Orthodox Jew in the UK, you need an authorisation to do so by the Chief Rabbi. These records are kept by the Office of the Chief Rabbi, which is part of the United Synagogue, although he represents other bodies such as the Federation of Synagogues too. There are some religious reasons why two Jews are not permitted to be married such as a Cohen (hereditary member of the priestly caste) not being able to marry a divorcee. The authorisation includes the name of the groom and bride in English and Hebrew, including patronymics, and genealogically exciting are the “Native of...” field and the Brother’s List. The Native of field tells us where the groom and bride are from which can be a town or village, but unfortunately can be blank or just say “Russia”. The list of the groom’s unmarried brothers is noted (along with whether they will attend the wedding) because if the groom were to die then one of the brother’s is expected to marry the widow in what is termed a “Levirate” marriage. Although this is not enforced, the brother’s list is still noted and is great for genealogists.

In the example of Harris Dworkin and Leah Yellin below, we see that Harris’s father is Joseph, Leah’s father is Aria, but disappointingly they are both from Russia rather than anything more specific; but the two brothers of the groom, Yitchak and Schlomo, were completely unknown to the family. Subsequent research has tracked these individuals down as Jake Dworkin and Sam Devorkin who went to the USA creating large families completely unaware of their British relatives.



Marriage authorisation and its translation for Harris Dworkin and Leah Yellin – from the United Synagogue’s Office of the Chief Rabbi



Unknown brothers Yitchak & Schlomo

In other parts of my family, the Native of field can be very specific. However, I have been searching for “Kovasgow” or “Kovarosko” somewhere in Russia for the last thirty

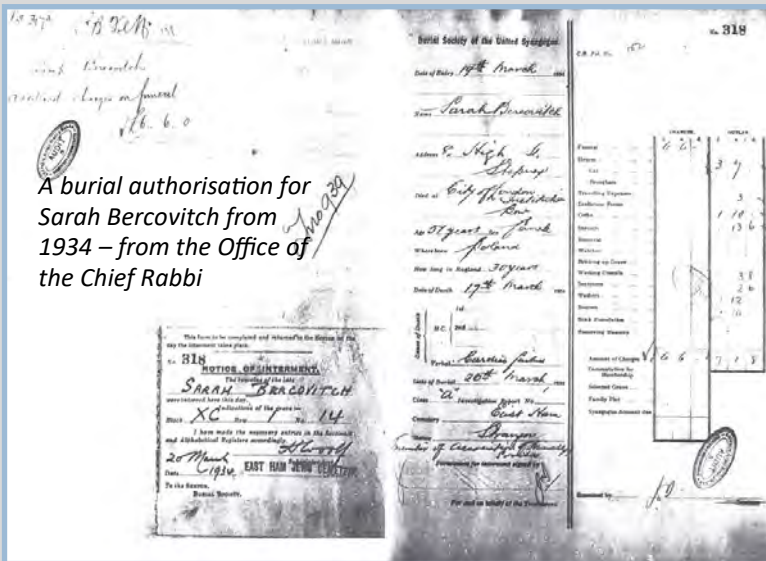


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years, trying to find the original home town of my Feinstein and Stoller lines, based on this field on Hyman F and Jessie S's marriage authorisation.

While you did not have to ask the Chief Rabbi's permission to die as a Jew, you did to be buried as one. Burial authorisations are kept at the Office of the Chief Rabbi too, but only cover burials by synagogues affiliated with the United Synagogue.

This record includes information such as the country of origin and is usually better than just "Russia" and includes "Poland" or "Lithuania" if you are lucky. In addition, the number of years the individual had been in the country before death is noted, allowing the year of entry to be estimated. Sometimes, the Hebrew name of the deceased is also noted. You have to remember that the quality of the data is only as good as the informant, so typically when the first great-grandparent dies, the spouse is the informant and the information is accurate. But when the second great-grandparent dies, one of the children will be the informant and the accuracy of information can diminish.



A burial authorisation for Sarah Bercovitch from 1934 – from the Office of the Chief Rabbi

In some instances, the lack of a tombstone tells you more about the times, such as the example of Harris and Leah's son Davey who died as a baby during the First World War or Harris and Leah's granddaughter Lorraine who died aged two during the Second World War. She was buried in an unmarked grave with two other unrelated infants because the authorities were afraid that they would run out of space in the cemeteries due to the Blitz.

Finally, for those Jews that lost family during the Holocaust, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has an online database of "pages of testimony", which try to replace death certificates for those murdered by the Nazis. Although the information is incomplete, it is the best attempt by the survivors to memorialise the six million dead. My family were mostly in England by the turn of the twentieth century having fled the pogroms, but some more distant family members perished during the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. For example, my great-grandmother's sister's second husband stayed behind in Poland when she went to join her sons in America, and his death at the atrocity in Jedwabne is noted in a page of testimony at Yad Vashem. This infamous incident in 1942 is when all of the Jews of Jedwabne were rounded up in a barn which was set alight by members of the local Polish community.

Date of death:	תאריך המוות:	Country:	מדינה:	Region:	מחוז:	Place of death:	מקום המוות:
1942		LOMZA		BIALYSTOK		JEDWABNE	
Circumstances of death:							סיבות המוות:
COLLECTED THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN AND BURNED THEM ALIVE							

Excerpt for a Yad Vashem Page of Testimony for Moses Greengrass

Old Country Jewish Genealogical Records

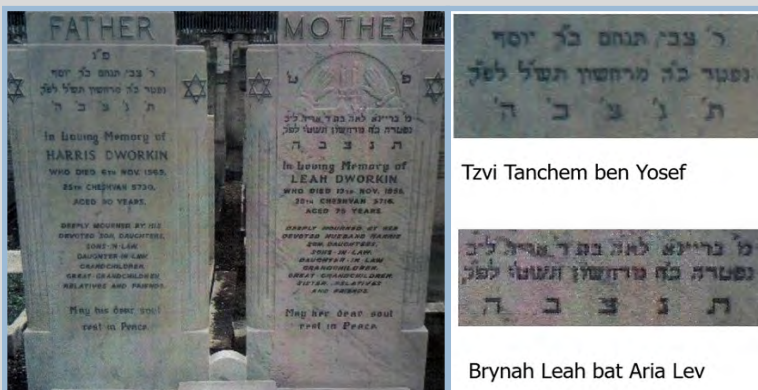
Contrary to popular belief these were not all destroyed, and it can be quite straightforward to find these in several Eastern European countries such as Poland and Lithuania. The indexes to the available records are searchable on country-specific websites such as jri-poland, Litvak SIG and Geshet Galica for Poland, Lithuania and Austrian Poland respectively. Belarus is harder because the records exist but have not been digitised.

We saw Barney Burke's naturalisation details previously, but here is the index to his birth certificate from 1902, available at jri-poland:

	BERKOWICZ	Gersz	1901	M	40	VI
						107
View Image	BERKOWICZ	Ber	1902	B	183	VI
						109

Ber Berkowicz's birth record index from jri-poland

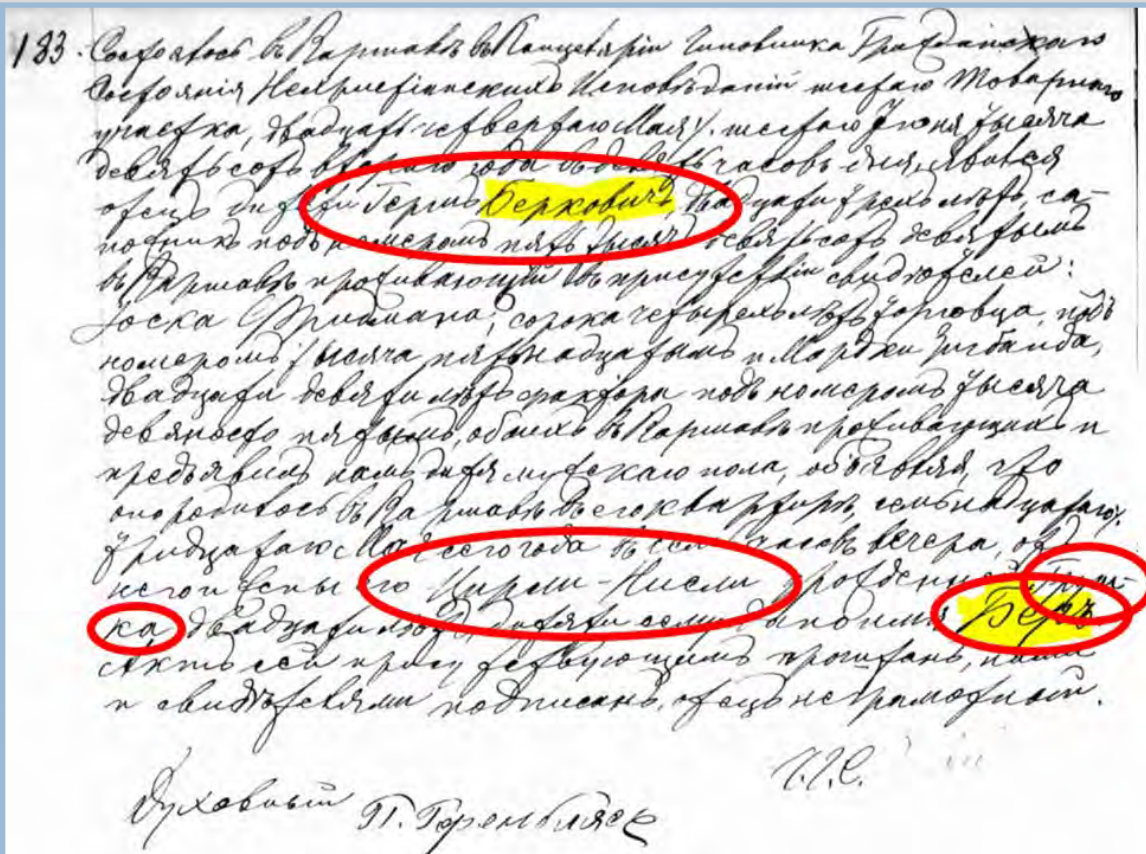
Jewish tombstones provide valuable information as the Hebrew name almost always includes a patronymic, allowing you to go back one more generation if other records have not informed you of this:



Harris and Leah Dworkin's tombstones from Streatham Jewish Cemetery



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about your heritage this way. For example, in America many more immigrants naturalised and the passenger lists of people going into New York (Ellis Island and Castle Garden) - as well as other ports - have been beautifully preserved. New York marriage certificates similarly include the names of both parents including mother's maiden names. Other unique records such as Social Security Number application forms also can include exact places of origin for both parents of the applicant, even when in the old country.

Ber Berkowicz's birth record image from the Polish State Archives (PSA)

Clicking [View Image](#) brings up the original Polish birth record from Warsaw, written in Russian in Cyrillic script as shown above.

The important names have been encircled in red, but for the non-Russian readers such a document may be sent off to JewishGen's Viewmate facility or to the Facebook Group called Genealogical Translations, where a free translation is provided by volunteers.

Posted On	Response (Click name to send email)
7/20/2015 12:29 AM	Alexandra Piletski : Ber was born May 30 (Russian calendar May 17), registered June 6 (Russian May 24) 1902. Parents Gersh Berkovich, shoemaker, 23 residing in Warsaw under #5909 and Tsyriya Nislya nee Grusha, 20

Ber Berkowicz's birth record translation from JewishGen ViewMate

Sister New Country Genealogical Records

The idea is simple here, that if you have exhausted your research in the UK, then it is possible that a sibling of your ancestor went to a country that has more extensive records, such as the USA or South Africa. Such siblings have the same parents and grandparents as your ancestor, and you may be able to find out a lot more

DNA Research – The New Frontier? (or is that Artificial Intelligence?)

While many Jews take DNA tests to help with their genealogical research, the rules are somewhat different. In particular, the ethnicity estimates are usually unsurprising when if you are told, like me, that you are 99% Eastern European Jewish. This is the least scientific part of DNA testing anyway, but it does look like the testing companies may allow better segmentation going forward. It really is just telling you about the makeup of those companies' reference populations.

The hard science which does not lie is the list of DNA matches. However, Jewish populations like the Roma or Travellers are endogamous (meaning there have been a lot of historic cousin marriages) and this typically means that this list of cousins will be enormous and you may not recognise anyone! But over time situations might become clearer. I have thousands of cousins and some of my matches are becoming known to me, especially when I buy the tests for my mother, brother, uncle and other close relatives. However, the estimated relationships tend to be wrong due to the endogamy so a fourth or fifth cousin may show up as a second or third cousin, and not many of us have a complete list of our fifth cousins with whom we share a triple-great-grandparent.

Conclusion

The world of Jewish Genealogy is fascinating. Many different categories of records detailed here exist and are available through the usual paid genealogy sites (Ancestry, Findmypast, MyHeritage) or free genealogy



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sites (FamilySearch, JewishGen) not forgetting specialist sites such as the Polish State Archives, jri-poland and LitvakSIG. That is just the tip of the iceberg if you are prepared to visit physical archives such as The National Archives in Kew or country specific archives in Germany or Eastern Europe. By learning about your ancestors, you will take in the history and geography and new languages of the countries where you are really from, and by that I mean the lands of your ancestors and not just the country where you happen to have been born.

The best way to get help on your journey into Jewish genealogy is to join the JGSGB. Please do so.

Useful links

General Register Office (GRO) - Official information on births, marriages, civil partnerships and deaths at www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/

Ancestry: www.ancestry.co.uk/

Find My Past: www.findmypast.co.uk/home

Historic Marriage Records - United Synagogue (theus.org.uk) at <https://theus.org.uk/what-we-do/heritage/marriage-certificate-search/>

Jedwabne pogrom - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jedwabne_pogrom

Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center <https://www.yadvashem.org/>

JRI-Poland - Preserving Jewish Records of Poland at <https://www.jri-poland.org/>

Lithuanian-Jewish Special Interest Group at <https://www.litvaksig.org/>

Gesher Galicia | Researching Jewish roots in the former Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia, now Poland and Ukraine at <https://www.geshergalicia.org/>

Home - Szukaj w Archiwach at https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/en/strona_glowna

ViewMate - Home (jewishgen.org) at <https://www.jewishgen.org/ViewMate/>

Genealogical Translations | Groups | Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GenealogicalTranslations>

About the author

Leigh Dworkin is a professional genealogist, running *Your Kin by Dworkin*, see <https://www.yourkin.co.uk>. He has been chairman of the JGSGB since May 2016. Genealogically speaking, he considers himself to be five-eighths Polish, quarter Lithuanian and one-eighth Belarusian, judging by his great-grandparents' nationalities, which is far more interesting and exotic than being just an Essex lad.



Visit: www.jsgsb.org.uk/

Creating Memories

It is that time of year when those in the family history community who love to cook are busy baking traditional cakes and puddings. How many of you are using hand-me-down recipes? There is discussion on *Bluesky* and in other places about food, recipes and the memories and nostalgia they arouse.

On Stir-up Sunday my great-grandmother's Christmas pudding recipe comes out. I think of the women who have used this including those with whom I have shared it over the decades. I only knew great-gran (known as Poor Nana due to her bad legs!) when I was a child and she was in her eighties. However, some of her recipes live on.

Why not create a collection of your recipes, whether handed down to you or your own favourites, and then pass them on together with the stories around them. For those who like a proper Christmas pud here is my handed-down recipe. The weights are UK imperial—I have never felt the need to convert them to metric! Make and enjoy! *Ed.*

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 oz grated carrot | ½ lb suet |
| 1 eating apple—grated | ½ lb sugar |
| 2 tablespoon brandy | 1 tablespoon black treacle |
| 4 tablespoons warm milk | 4 oz candid peel—chopped |
| 4 oz golden syrup | 4 oz currants |
| 1 lb fresh breadcrumbs | 4 oz sultanas |
| 1 teaspoon ground ginger | 1lb raisins |
| 1 teaspoon salt | 1 large egg, beaten |
| 1 teaspoon mixed spice | <i>You may prefer to use half</i> |
| ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon | <i>the quantities.</i> |

I use soft dark brown sugar and omit the black treacle; and 1¾ lb mixed dried fruit for simplicity.

Mix everything together in large bowl. Cover and leave in cool place overnight. Mix well. Pack mixture into lightly greased basins. Cover with a circle of greaseproof paper and firmly tie a double layer of foil over the basin. Place on a trivet in pan of boiling water. Simmer gently for 6-8 hrs depending on size of basin. Top up water as needed. You may be able to do this in a slow cooker - do NOT use a pressure cooker!

When cooked, store till Christmas in cool place.



Family History Societies



Bradford Family History Society

Heritage Project

Reading Calderdale’s excellent article on workhouse records in the May edition of the Really Useful Bulletin, we thought we should let everyone know about our delve into Bradford’s Poor Law Union Workhouse records.

Back in 2023 Bradford FHS requested a grant from Bradford Council and the Heritage Fund to enable us to add a database to our website and fund a project to transcribe records to add to that database. We believed having such a database was the way forward for us rather than selling books or CDS full of information.

The project started in Summer 2023 and took longer than expected to complete but it was worth the wait.

To start with we had to agree with Bradford Libraries and West Yorkshire Archives that we could transcribe records and add them to our website in our members’ only area. Getting permission was not straightforward, but working with everyone involved we finally signed the appropriate agreements. Our website provider, Beachshore, was lined up and we eventually agreed to link our website to ‘Name & Place’ website where our database would be held. We also had several transcribers lined up to start work. Transcribers attended a half-day course held by West Yorkshire Archives on understanding the archives, what they hold and the best way to handle documents. So by the autumn of 2023 we were ready.

Whilst the database was being set up, we looked at our first set of records – Bradford Poor Law Union records.

Admissions	1857-1860	Ref BU6/1/1
Discharges	1857-1860	Ref BU6/1/1
Baptisms	1912-1916	Ref BU6/2/4
Births	1838-1853	Ref BU6/2/1
Deaths	1838-1853	Ref BU6/2/1
Punishment Records	1888-1914	Ref BU6/5/1 & BU6/5/2

We photographed everything and sent the photographs to the transcribers. Once transcribed, the results were then sent to someone else, together with photographs, to be checked. As we had over 500 photographs and hundreds of entries to transcribe, this process took some time. Finally, we went back to the original documents to check anything where the photographs were less than perfect.

As part of receiving the Heritage Lottery Fund grant, we agreed to publicise the project and show the public what we had achieved. So, on 30th November 2023 at Bradford

Local Studies Library we held a lunchtime lecture on the subject, sharing some of the stories we found amongst the documents.

Although the dates of the records are very limited, they are the only ones from these types of records that have survived. The Bradford Poor law Union Workhouse minute books (which we also have permission to transcribe) exist for far more many decades but are really hard to transcribe into a format for the database. We still need to decide how to do these.

The West Yorkshire Archives also received all the photographs taken and a complete set of transcribed records for their use. So non-Bradford FHS members have access to the data via West Yorkshire Archives (Bradford).

What do the records show and what can our members see? They can search by name and see how many times a particular person was admitted and left the workhouse during the 1857-60. Many individuals came and went on a regular basis. You can see why the person entered the workhouse – an abandoned wife, a woman who had a husband who was a soldier, was someone who was sick or elderly. Individuals left to live with aunts or uncles, brothers or spouses or were removed to another poor law union. The list of births and deaths (1838-1853) sometimes showed the age at death and the cause—the earlier ones before death certificates were issued. My favourites are the punishment books which show mainly adult inmates breaking the workhouse rules. The common reasons were absconding, drunkenness and men trying to gain access to the women’s quarters.

The records can add to our understanding of our ancestors lives and point us to other records or lines of research that may also add to their stories. But these records are underused, mainly because they are not online and not indexed. By putting the details on our database we are opening up these records to our members who do not live in Bradford or are unable to visit West Yorkshire Archives in person.

The end result is a database that not only holds the workhouse records but where Bradford FHS can add other records in the years to come. Such as church records, monumental inscriptions, school records and many others.

Sue Steel (Chairman)

Email: Chairman@bradfordfhs.org.uk

Visit: www.bradfordfhs.org.uk





Family History Societies



Diss Family History Group

The Diss Family History Group's Christmas Quiz is now available to anyone to have a go at. This quiz is primarily for entertainment but also to encourage people to use and familiarise themselves with the web pages. This is the first time we have tried this online so hope it is a success.

All the answers to this quiz can be found in the DFHG web pages and also possibly in the Tharston Past pages.

<https://www.tharston-past.info/DFHG/>

<https://www.tharston-past.info/DFHG/quiz24.html>

On the homepage for the DFHG is a link to the quiz. This should appear in a separate window or page. You can switch between the this and the website to look for answers for the questions, find the answer and then add it to the quiz sheet.

You can download a copy of the quiz - two possibilities: use this to record all your answers before doing the quiz online or complete it and email it to b.morley@btinternet.com

Please make sure you say who you are, your email address and if you are a member of DFHG. Other family members can individually try the quiz; when submitting make sure you give the DFHG member's name and who is completing it, eg: Nigel (son Abraham), and give the DFHG member's email address.

When you have completed as many questions as you can, click on *submit quiz*. When finished, just close the page.

The member of the DFHG with the highest score (drawn if a tie) will receive a prize. This will normally be given out at the Christmas party meeting but if you are unable to attend, arrangements will be made to get it to you. For non-members, we will email you your score.

Closing date for the online quiz is 15 December. If you complete the paper copy of the quiz, please post it to B.Morley, Thwaites, Fersfield, Diss, IP22 2FF to arrive by 12 December.



Oxfordshire

Family History Society

Oxfordshire Family History Society (OFHS) launched its Big Oxfordshire Names Database (BOND) in September and has issued new releases to augment the data and search facilities in October and the latest release due in early November 2024.

BOND is a name-rich data source of anyone who left their mark in Oxfordshire with search facilities which will bring to light ancestors across multiple sources previously all held separately. It is available to members of the society. The data covers including the November release:

- ⇒ Parish Registers transcriptions : Baptisms (to 31st December 1924), Marriages and Banns (to 31st December 1944), and Burials across over 52 parishes.
- ⇒ Monumental Inscriptions (MIs) - with images of the monument/gravestones and plans of the cemetery to help identify the exact plot.
- ⇒ Surnames - Developed from hundreds of books/lists containing Oxfordshire names dating from the medieval period to the 20th century. 153,729 lines of this reference data is in BOND.
- ⇒ Surname variants specifically created with an Oxfordshire bent, and goes beyond a standard "sounds-like" option.
- ⇒ More parishes and MIs will be added over the next couple of months and as soon as data is ready from our transcribing volunteers it will be published in BOND.
- ⇒ Further sources including War Memorials, Wills and Quarter Sessions are on their way to add to the BOND database.

From our website (www.ofhs.uk) there are interactive maps of Oxfordshire indicating the coverage of the data available in BOND.





Family History Societies



Fenland Family History Society

Out and About

Founded in 2001 to promote and encourage the study of family, local and social history, the Fenland FHS has a whole range of display material.

If you know of an event that we could attend, please let us know. We will help with research for family history from anywhere in the world but can offer resources with particular reference to persons having lived in, or having been associated with, the historical area now known as the Fens (north Cambridgeshire, south Lincolnshire and west Norfolk).

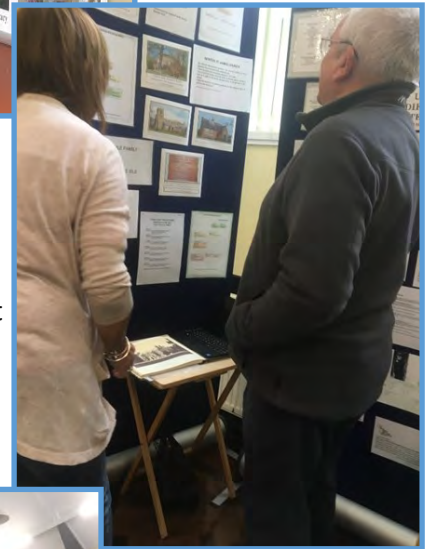
Any promotion of family history that is of interest to visitors and helps promote genealogy and our Society is of benefit.

Back in September the Society took some displays to Octavia Hill's Birthplace House as part of Heritage Open Days in Wisbech. One was on Wisbech families, the other traced members the Hill Family (including a common medieval ancestor linking Octavia and the late Princess Diana).

Earlier, in the summer, we took our displays to the Newton-in-the-Isle Summer Fete. A display about Newton families and the history of the village hall (which had been the local school) garnered a great deal of interest from those attending.



We did have a little trouble assisting the visitor seen below – we eventually surmised that his father was a tin can and his mother a galvanised bucket.



If you have an activity or wish us to join you at an event where we can help promote family history, please get in touch.

[Images as provided]

Call Bridget Hunter on 01945 587723
or email secretary@fenlandfhs.org.uk



Family History Societies



Sussex Family History Group

After more than four years work, the SFHG has just jointly published a 200-year-old farming diary with the collaboration of the Sussex Record Society (SRS).



When the diary arrived on my doorstep during the lockdown in 2020 we had no idea exactly what we had; indeed no one did, Nicholas Oxley's handwriting in the main diaries was not straightforward—there was no punctuation at all!

So one of our members (Madeline Cole) and I took over eight months to transcribe the two diaries, with the help of our Facebook members, who received daily enquiries from me.

The diary was kept from 1814-1817 (not all of 1817) and then irregularly from 1821-1823 and outlines the goings-on at Great Bucksteep Farm in Sussex. We have over 1,500 individual days.

Nicholas tells us the workers' names, the field names, what they did and who visited. He complains bitterly about the weather in 1816—now known as The Year with no Summer. The bad weather was a result of the eruption of the volcano Tambora on 10 April 1815 which made a huge impact worldwide.

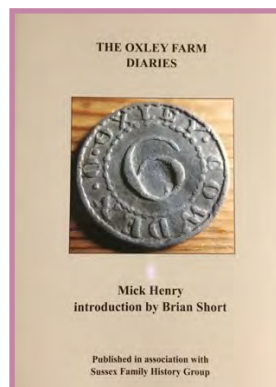
So, the Sussex Family History Group put up the first two years of the diary (1814-15) on our website and one of our members, (Brian Cutler) who saw it happened to be a member of the SRS and realised its potential.

In November 2024 the whole diary was published by the SRS, much to the delight of Paul Oxley, the owner of the diaries.

I feel this is the kind of unique collaboration FHS should be looking for in the future to establish their important role in family history.

Mick Henry (Chair SFHG)

Website: <https://www.sfhg.uk/home>



For informed HELP and ADVICE



Join your local FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Explore Your Genealogy

www.exploreyourgenealogy.co.uk
www.parishchest.com
www.familyhistoryfederation.com
www.fhf-reallyuseful.com
www.familyhistorybooksonline.com



Supporting Member Societies

The Federation makes considerable effort to promote all its member societies whether they are in UK, abroad or specialist ones. This takes place at all manner of live events as well as online and in print.

The above is the new advert for the 2025 *Family Tree* magazine's annual handbook—inside front cover where readers cannot, hopefully, miss seeing it!

Each year the *Really Useful Leaflet* listing all members is produced and available free at many events around the country. It can be read online www.familyhistoryfederation.com/really-useful-leaflet

Societies are encouraged to provide articles up to 500 words for this *Bulletin* to promote themselves and encourage people to join and support their work.

Members are also provided with access to the Federation website where they can add information on upcoming talks and events:

www.familyhistoryfederation.com/news-and-events

Do encourage your local group to get involved—and if not already members do join in!



Really Useful Bulletin

BLUESKY—the basics

You may have come across 'Bluesky' - a new social media platform. It is growing rapidly and has gained around one million new sign-ups a day during November to now number over twenty million accounts. It has been particularly strongly adopted in Britain, though it is run and owned as a US public benefit corporation. Its use is expanding worldwide

Bluesky is an alternative to X (formerly Twitter) and looks similar. Indeed, former Twitter personnel were involved in building it. Many people and organisations have joined the site including many family historians and, at the time of writing, there are also genealogy organisations including the Society of Genealogists, Register of Professional Genealogists, Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives and Findmypast (though the latter aren't actively using it yet). Family history societies are also beginning to join the platform. Of course, the Federation is there too!

Here are the basics of how it works for those thinking of using the platform.

You sign up for an account for free using an email and password. You can then set up a profile with a little about yourself (or your society) with a name, profile picture and short bio. From here you can follow accounts that interest you, post, comment, repost and like your favourite things. With this it is possible to engage with a wide range of people, or simply curate a feed of information about the things you are interested in.

notifications, a homepage and so on. The main home feed allows you to see posts from people you follow, or to 'discover' things the algorithm thinks you might like.

One of the novel things on Bluesky is the 'starter pack'. These are sets of accounts selected on a theme (for example, family history societies) by a person. People can be added or removed from these by the person who set up the starter pack. Packs can be shared so that other people can easily find accounts along particular themes. In this way it is possible to quickly build up your social network by finding accounts that interest you.



The Federation's 'Family History Societies' Starter Pack

There are other things that can be done on Bluesky to add to the experience and get more out of it but this is how most people are using it. Don't worry if you don't know how everything works—we are all figuring this out too. Like many social media platforms most is 'bonus' i.e. nice but not necessary. These basics are the most important things you need to know.

As with all social media there is much to consider for best use such as timing posts, use of images and links and building social networks—a future Bulletin article. For now, explore Bluesky for yourself and for your society to see if it is a good fit. It seems here to stay as part of the social media landscape. If you are joining then be sure to follow the Federation! @federationfhs.bsky.social

<https://bsky.app/profile/federationfhs.bsky.social>

Joe Saunders

Joe Saunders is a freelance historical researcher and tutor. He runs social media accounts for genealogy organisations including the Family History Federation, Pharos Tutors and AGRA. He also hosts the Federation's [Really Useful Podcast](#).



The FHF's home feed with a post from President Janet Few



The Federation profile with tool bar to the left. The most important icons are the house for the home feed, magnifier for search, bell for notifications and the speech bubble for chat.

Bluesky looks similar to other social media sites many of you will be familiar with. Visually, a tool bar to the left of the page shows everything you might expect - search,



Family History Books

New books launched!

INTRODUCING HEALTH CARE IN TIMES PAST - *How our ancestors coped with illness and death*

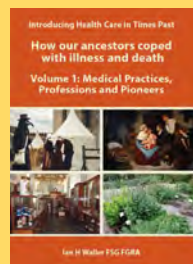
Family History Books, the publishing section of the Family History Federation, has launched a four-volume set of books which will fascinate all family, local and social historians. The work has been created through many years of detailed research by author Ian Waller, FSG, FGRA, drawing on sources far and wide. Ian is a retired professional genealogist who is currently education officer and vice-chairman of the Family History Federation.

In this series, the life and times of our ancestors and their health care is revealed. It is an immense topic and this series provides a comprehensive chronicle about illness and health care from cradle to grave.

The underlying themes are how our ancestors dealt with their own health and how the medics coped with each new disease or epidemic that came along. We learn what our ancestors did when they were ill - where did they go for help...who treated them...and how. The fables and folklore behind early medicine are exposed as well as myths and traditions which lived on for decades. The everyday hazards of life in bygone days are explained plus the author paints a vivid picture of the various difficulties faced and overcome by our forebears and medics alike.

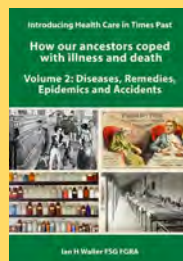
We are introduced to doctors and surgeons; pharmacists, apothecaries and quacks; barber-surgeons, dentists and medical specialists; nurses and midwives; pioneers, medical researchers, inventors and by no means least, medical volunteers and charities. We visit their places of work including the temporary ones in time of war.

The four volumes are:



Vol. 1: Medical Practices, Professions and Pioneers—describes how medicine evolved through the centuries. It discusses various medicinal practices by *wise women and witches* in medieval times through to *quacks, apothecaries* and then how health care became more prioritised and organised with trained

doctors, nurses and others. There are chapters on different kinds of hospitals from almshouses and poor law infirmaries to the more modern hospitals of today. It also discusses some famous medical pioneers and developments in health care from very basic medical equipment to vaccinations and penicillin.



Vol. 2: Diseases, Remedies, Epidemics and Accidents—covers diseases through the centuries in some detail ranging from *evil spirits in the head* in medieval times, various epidemics and hereditary diseases to childhood disorders. The section on accidents at work covers agricultural work to the Industrial

Revolution and much more. This volume also examines some unusual cures and remedies, especially those in earlier times, and uncovers some myths and folklore too.

Vol. 3: Births, Deaths, Funerals and Mental Illness—is all about birth, death and

funerals. It covers how our ancestors dealt with childbirth centuries ago from basic care in medieval times to Victorian trends – and includes some odd superstitions about childbirth too. As sure as night follows day, death follows birth and the causes of death are examined in detail in this volume. This volume includes extensive details about funerals and how they have changed over the years. The volume ends by discussing the asylum system and how our ancestors dealt with mental illnesses.



Vol. 4: Military Medical Care—covers all aspects of medical care in the military from the Crusades in the twelfth century, the Battle of Agincourt, the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars through to the extensive care dealing with casualties in both world wars. The methods of transporting the wounded in the war zones are examined including the various military and volunteer groups that were involved such as naval nursing, volunteer aid detachments, the British Red Cross and many others. There are also extensive details of medicine, health care and surgery at sea. This volume ends with the transition to the NHS and details about the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

Each volume is over 170 pages in length, A5 format, and, if sold separately, cost £12.95 each. Use the offer on our front cover TODAY and get a bargain for your Christmas reading!

Visit [Family History Books Online](http://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com)



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation



Seminar invitation

YOUR FUTURE, OUR FUTURE: Serving the family history community TOGETHER



Saturday 15 February 2025

10am – 4pm

Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission, City Road, London EC1Y 1AU

In 2017 the Family History Federation (FHF) hosted a *Family History Society of the Future* seminar. This in turn generated a series of regional *Next Steps* workshops for family history society leaders. Then came the 2020 Covid pandemic and everything changed. Sometimes, but not always, for the better!

Today, the family history community has settled into a 'new normal'. Again we need to establish:

- ◇ how things are progressing within societies and/or groups
- ◇ where we want to be in the future
- ◇ how we can bridge the gap between the two.

And most importantly from a Federation viewpoint, we need to establish how the FHF can help *your* organisation achieve your short and long-term goals.

Do you have a role within a family history society? Do you help run a self-help group? Is your organisation doing so well that you would be willing to share the what, when and how you do it? Or is it struggling so much that you are unsure about what to do for the best? Most likely, it will be a combination of the two! Maybe you have ideas and suggestions that you feel would help things progress, but thus far no one has been prepared to listen to them? Or perhaps you have a proposal which would best be implemented nationally rather than locally?

If so, we **need** you to speak out. We **want** to hear your views, be they supportive or critical. And yes, you did read that correctly - we especially **value** honest contributions from critical friends!

We need to understand what role you envisage for the Family History Federation over the next five years. We already do much to support both family history societies and individual family historians, but we honestly feel the need to do more. Please help us make the best possible choices by telling us what you think, then work with us to make it all possible.

Can you commit to joining us on Saturday 15 February either as an individual or as a society representative? Please email Debbie admin@familyhistoryfederation.com to register your interest, and we'll take it from there.

**THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO HELP INFLUENCE THE
FUTURE OF FAMILY HISTORY IN THE UK**



Really Useful Bulletin

News from the Federation

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The National Archives at Kew has a user advisory group consisting of volunteers who represent various user groups such as independent researchers, online users, family historians, genealogists, academic researchers, and so on.

The group has a dual responsibility. Firstly, it is the responsibility of the representatives to inform and update their group on news from the TNA. This may be details of projects, funding, national archive strategies and future displays. Secondly, the representatives make commitments to consult with the group they represent and feed their opinions and observations back to meetings.

I have recently joined this group representing family history researchers and online users.

This is your chance to have your say. Your input is vital. Do you have experiences with using TNA that you would like mentioned? Do you have queries that you would raised? Do you have recommendations for online accessibility? Or would you like to see certain records online?

The next meeting is March 2025. Please do get in touch and make your views known.

Sadie McMullon,

FHF Archive Liaison Officer [email—see right]

LET'S HEAR ABOUT LOCAL ARCHIVE PROJECTS

In my role as the FHF Archives Liaison Officer, one of my aims, with your help, is to ensure that members of family history societies are made aware of 'name-rich' projects that are taking place in their area, and where possible to assist archives in making progress with these projects.

How many times have you wished you had known your local archives had transcribed a certain document? How often have you heard that your local archive does not have resources to transcribe or index a set of documents?

Here is your chance to make this wish a reality.

Do you have connections with local archives or museums or local history groups?

Could you be the valuable link between the Family History Federation, the archives and family historians?

If you would like more information about this great opportunity to play a valuable role in the family history community, I would love to hear from you.

Please contact Sadie McMullon,

FHF Archives Liaison Officer

archives.liaison@familyhistoryfederation.com

Dorset Family History Society
in partnership with Devon Family History Society
and the Family History Federation

South West FHF Really Useful Family History Show

Save the date!

Saturday 29 March 2025

Kinson Community Centre (Pelhams Park), Millhams Road
Kinson, Bournemouth BH10 7LH 10am-4pm



- Free entrance
- Free parking
- Knowledgeable speakers
- Family History Societies
- Local History Societies
- Commercial exhibitors
- Meet the experts
- Refreshments
- Raffle



Visit our website to see updates and for more information
<https://www.dorsetfhs.org.uk/events-activities/family-history-day/>



Christmas is coming!

Next month our lead article will feature pantomime!

We will have some surprises!

Santa will have a few goodies in his sack for *Bulletin* readers!





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

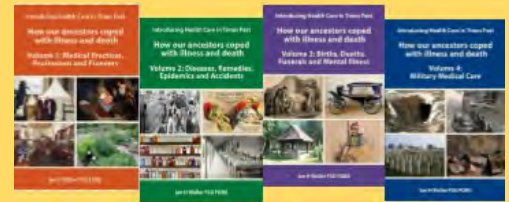
www.familyhistorybooksonline.com

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

The latest publications are featured in this edition of the



Bulletin. **Don't miss out on the special launch offer!**

In addition to its [online shop](http://www.familyhistorybooksonline.com) 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 South-West

29 March—Kinson, near Bournemouth

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



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