

FAMILY STORIES BY SUBJECT

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Here are some notes by subject heading based on my research.

Death

The farm was a dangerous place to grow up. If the guns didn't get you, there were plenty other hazards which might. There was copper poisoning, where your eyes turned a spectacular colour before death – this happened to a young girl who found a contaminated bowl of cider. There was the awful death of Willie Bryant: from scalds after tumbling into a boiler full of swill. Or Peter Padfield, tossed remorselessly by an infuriated cow. On the whole, the work was exhausting and there was little time for a break. Many men died (probably from heart failure) during the course of work on the farm: returning from market, in the chicken run, or in the case of William Whittock (1837), taking dinner out to an attractive female worker in the hayfield. There were other public places too, where you might meet your end. In my family, these were a lunatic asylum, the theatre and the pub. The hard drinker was only 34. Then there were deaths from choking, from stray gunshots and even by electrocution (in the South China Sea). The Padfields in particular suffered a series of brutal deaths from items which are less likely to kill us today: Cows (they had horns then), Measles and Coal hole.

*At such an hour as ye think not*¹. Next, Albert Martin, timber merchant, 43, made a foolish decision to race the gig thirty miles across country after his mother's funeral to be back before his baby daughter woke up. He developed pneumonia on the way back and quickly realised he was going to die, among his first activities being to make his will. Brothers Matthew and W T Creed were pondering on their mortality in 1903. The younger brother remembers that their grandmother's life was cut short at 85, as she fell down the stairs, so 'Cheer up and put your trust in God', concluding, with these odd words, that they would live many more years, being only in their sixties. They both died the next year, W T during a matinée performance in Drury Lane. T J M Lowry was a successful dentist and had married a German woman. But he threw himself out of a hotel window in London the following year, totally in despair over money worries. He was only 26. I wish he had *said*, offered the surviving aunt.

Is there any truth in the existence of the spirit world? "My grandmother was a great believer in the spirit world", writes Geoff Norris, "and often told the story of how, on the day before the telegram arrived announcing brother Jim's death [in the Great War], his photograph slid slowly, very slowly down the wall. There's spooky for you. When I was about 12 years old or so, I was with her on a District Line train from Hornchurch, where we lived, when a woman sitting opposite kept staring at her – then came across and said 'I have a message from Alfred. He says you must beware of stairs.' Alfred, of course was my deceased grandfather and this episode caused great agitation. A week or so later my grandmother fell down the stairs at the station and broke a hip. Sarah [herself] lived into her nineties."

A terrible thing it is to die. If the preceding examples do not convince you of the merits of staying alive, it is worth imagining the situation that occurred in Towednack in 1679. Jane Painter lay unburied for a year and a half, until 1680, when a vicar could be found to read the service. In Australia burials were often delayed due to the great heat – the ground was simply too hard to dig. Not so in Salford, where a world away, in the 1880s, relatives would stand around the grave of the recently deceased to ward off body snatchers, who were waiting for an opportunity to steal any valuables and sell the bodies for anatomical studies.

Education

Education was important if one wanted to get on in life. Then as now, not being able to sign one's name or read aloud would bar you from many callings. I give an example later on, though, where illiteracy presented no obstacle in a Suffolk village. My great-grandmother's ability to guess the weight of the cake at well-to-do Hertfordshire social functions came from being able to guess the weight of the offal in an inner-city Salford grocer's store. Polite applause greeted her winning guess but the owners of the gloved hands would not have been regular customers at the family grocers – not they, buyer of broken biscuits or half-cigarettes. Astonishingly, the children were given opportunities in addition to helping out at the store, training as a pupil teacher, a theatre sister and as a milliner. In more moneyed areas businessmen might give their young relatives a start in life. Joseph Carline favoured his

¹ Matthew XXIV 44. Oft quoted on tombstones

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ne'er-do-well grandson Charles over the others, while Joseph Padfield was able to start a coal-carrying trade with five pounds from his uncle Isaac, with which he bought two horses and a cart. For many though, there was no helping hand up, just the fruits of one's effort and dedication. My grandfather was the son of Irish immigrants, born in Stockwell 1902. He was a bright child, pushed by his father, a draper's assistant who in later years read and re-read Homer's *Iliad*. This father took him to the park where they would together go through the dictionary learning new words. This attitude was also typical of the Methodist community in Wales who had great respect for learning. They saw it as a way out of the mines. So much so that when William Phillips went to visit his wife's cousin in Wales, she was on record as saying (about some fact he couldn't recall) 'Fancy you not knowing that! And you a teacher!' I met Doris Hanney (born 1902 in Swansea) who told me that her family fought hard for her to go to school. In the end her grandfather deeded his house to his daughter as it was necessary to own a property in the area for Doris to get a place. Then there were those who had an opportunity and could not take it up. Winifred Jenkins had a scholarship for a grammar school in London but was not allowed to go, her family saying that 'it's not for the likes of us'. She ended up a clerk in an opticians and although she was cheerful about it, regretted the curtailing of her education. You see there was usually an embarrassment of poor cousins to remind people what would happen if you didn't get a trade or education. . . . Sometimes you can see exactly what your ancestors learnt. My great-grandfather Creed recalls mastering his ABC and the recitation of the catechism in the 1880s. Then I have the grammar book used by Joseph Haine in 1823. Printed in Edinburgh, it is full of charming Scottish expressions and their Anglicised (bowdlerised) equivalents of which only the most absurd is the rendition of 'he was an honestlike man' as 'he was a tall, good-looking man'. I'm thrilled to learn that my height already gets me halfway towards honesty. A good-looking family member attended the Canadian 'Confederation Conference' in 1864 in Quebec. She is flatteringly portrayed in *A People's History*. The character would clearly mince you in the fields of literature, astronomy and most certainly in politics. She had been to school and it showed. One observer described her: "well educated, well informed and as sharp as needles." In contrast, no-one could do anything with the Bond boys of Ditcheat, Somerset who were sharp as suet pudding. They were by turns 'hopelessly dull', 'a disgrace to my school', or pleading guilty to the most inept crimes. It is nonetheless a naughty treat to read of their behaviour and wish one had the nerve to have behaved similarly. Happily it was not necessary to be able to read and write to succeed in life. The village midwife of Ilketshall St Margaret, mother of 13 children, kept the pub and owned several other properties in the village including the Post Office despite being illiterate. But she slipped up when her son emigrated to Australia. Not realising that he would be making the long journey by sea she begged him not to go fishing, as he had in Lowestoft as a boy with his brothers. Jack in fact may have kept his promise - he went straight to work on a farm in rural Queensland upon his arrival there aged seventeen.

Education as a prison. Tick tock went the clock in the darkened library as the three Olver children studied the classics once again. They saw little of their mother, an invalid; their father, a Church of England priest, having the responsibility of their upbringing. It was whispered that he had been a real spendthrift in his youth, but it was a severe house where the children grew up. In their thirties they finally found they could live as they pleased. Cyril sired an illegitimate son while Aletheia worked among the women of Borneo until the Japanese invasion.

Farming today and yesterday

Young Jack had come from a family of erstwhile Somerset cheese-makers. There was no excuse for abandoning the craft for part of the year. If the cheese would not 'cheddar' in the winter, why, you made Caerphilly! Jack never forgot the taste of his parents' Cheddar cheese. When he came to live in the Blackmore Vale the only thing to do was to start up a cheese company, promoting the area. It's a nice name but my it's awful flat. Now when you think of the Vale you think of cheese and greenness. Not for the Tizzards the daily grind of cheese-making. Their passion was horses. The Tizzard family had farmed without event in the village of Milborne Port, Somerset, for four generations. In 1997 one of the family soared to the heights when he rode the Grand National age 17. We are a real racing family says his cousin Charlotte in 'Point to Point'². . . Farming in the nineteenth century was a fraught

² Pointtopoint.co.uk. Weatherbys Group Ltd, Wellingborough, 2003.

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business, with a huge fluctuation in wheat prices and much of the country still owned by absentee landlords. The landlord of Marston Bigot regularly careered through his tenants' farms at the head of the hunt. John Haine therefore left the area, moving east to Acton where he could supply same-day milk for the large population nearby. His grandchildren came back to the Westcountry a century later. Another farm abandoned was Manor Farm Stourpaine. Victor Duffett records what a bitter loss it was for his father Ted when the farm was sold by the estate, in about 1925. Staggeringly, five whole villages had to be sold to pay the death duties of the two Lords Portman who had died within a year of each other. Ted Duffett never really recovered from this blow. . . . A good farm would be remembered by children as they entered into old age. Paddy Court remembered the farm at Stourpaine so strongly she wrote to Victor Duffett 70 years later with remembered delight at the childhood holidays spent there. Horace Godfrey (19) helped his uncle move to a new farm in Kent in 1931. On arrival he was left to milk the thirty-odd cows by hand: it took four hours. Early next morning Horace had to find the cows in a pitch-dark park full of banks, hollows, rushes and woodland. But Horace, when 78, recalled the distant farm move with so much pleasure in his voice. Towards the end of the trip he had a ride around the neighbourhood with his uncle in the smart carriage with the trotting horse – a magnificent creature entirely dark chestnut except for four white feet. Horace took the train home and cycled the last few miles, having had, and I can hear him saying this, "what to me then, was *the experience of a lifetime*".

Backfill

You think you know your ancestors, but try another source. I'd never have figured this lot out without the newspapers: Thomas Hutchins, silversmith, used a specially constructed tricycle for longer journeys after his stair disaster in childhood. When he was twenty, he had married Charlotte Bond of Ditcheat. For once the children were interesting and not the usual "hopelessly dull" Bonds (a disgrace to my school), thank goodness. The middle girl married in Ireland 1890, attired in a travelling costume of crimson cloth trimmed with feathers and osprey. She and her groom received costly presents over £100 and left under showers of rice to a honeymoon in south-west Ireland. At the next wedding, the best man was Alfred Warren. Two months later Alfred married the third sister Lena and took her off to South Africa. One can imagine Mrs Bowgen winking at farmer Read at the funeral of her husband – the newspapers tells us that he was present. They were wed four years later: "Aunt Bowgie marries her toyboy" wrote a relative in her diary, 1915. . . . The death of Joseph down an old coalhole – opened during the night – is a memorable part of his brother's Padfield Family Journal. With a sigh we drew a line under Joseph as yet another careless bearer of the Padfield genes. Beyond this story lay another, which I'd not considered being so pre-occupied with the coalhole. Shortly after his death, his wife gave birth to a boy. The boy has had an alarming amount of time to do with just as he pleases, and we have, to our embarrassment, remained in ignorance of him. His descendants have put their stamp all over history in the last 150 years. There was the owner of the Quayside Café who died on the south coast age 28, a gentleman farmer farming slap-bang in the middle of East Somerset (my supposed speciality).

London family history – having a butchers

I first started researching London family history eight years ago when I found that Grandmother Creed (who fell down the stairs) had a nephew named James Scott Boyce, born in Somerset. To my delight I found him in my favourite research tool, the probate indexes. The indexes listed his name, year of death and where he was living at the time – in this case, London! Many of my relatives lived in London in the twentieth century, but very few in Victorian times. Getting an address for Boyce was not hard, thanks to the directories at the Guildhall library. He was listed as a meat salesman, and in 1868 was living at Offord Road, now in the Barnsbury conservation area. You can walk down the streets they lived. I particularly liked walking through the old Caledonian Road cattle market which must have been the corner-stone of their world. For many years James and his brother Francis (a butcher) lived just a few streets away. From James's arrival in the 1830s, probably by coach, the family spread. Brothers, sons, nephews: a dairyman in Camden Town (can you imagine!), a printer in Southwark, a 'bus conductor in Camberwell. Through their eyes one can see London grow as 1900 approached. Sarah Jenkins, a granddaughter, was born the daughter of a plasterer and granddaughter of a meat salesman in a shared house in Barnsbury. Sarah married a gas-lamp lighter and later lived at the other end of Upper Street,

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in Rawstorne Buildings. Her daughter worked for an opticians prior to her marriage. She had had a scholarship for grammar school but was not allowed to go, her family saying that 'it's not for the likes of us'. The daughter married her Rawstorne Buildings neighbour in 1927 at St Mark's Church in Myddelton Square and went to live in a new house in Hornchurch, Essex, part of the Islington slum clearance project. Other family members moved out to Little Ilford. Corresponding with descendants has given me a feel of how all-engulfing London is. 170 years have now passed since the sons of the village butcher came here and oh, what a huge number of experiences and ways of life they found here. I've been able to share them through 'having a butchers' at the Boyces. Here's a look at the city in 1900. In this year my great-grandfather took his minister's exams. After the tests he went to visit the sights of London, Madame Tussaud's and so on. It was roasting. It was so hot, cab horses were falling in the street through the heat.

Long memories

One can hear stories straight from the nineteenth century by talking to people with good memories. Cornelius Martin enchanted the younger residents of Castle Cary with his articles about the 1850s. Writing during World War Two he could recall the great cold as the soldiers came back from the Crimea, more than eighty years before. "Oh, it be cawld enough to skin a dog!" they said. It is worth adding, about Cornelius, that he at all costs avoided mention of his inebriated relatives. It is therefore amusing to note that he had in his youth managed to tolerate a job working for a wine merchants in Glastonbury. This experience really tipped him over the edge and he became a strict teetotaler, and to some an insufferable zealot. . . I love calling in on people and hearing them talk. Sometimes I feel I can't contribute much but it doesn't matter. When people are talking about those from the past it is so astonishing – suddenly one is thinking about events which are right on the border of our collective memory. . . Emma Bowden recalled the Mexican nursery rhymes she had been taught at the silver mines in Pachuca as a child and sang them to her own grandchildren seventy years later. On the return to England she had gotten lost in the crowds at Southampton, prattling in Spanish to the milling people until a catch by her sister's arm had her rejoining the others.

Marriage

When it comes to marriage, in the time we're talking about, everybody did it. We make the same assumptions that we do today, that the child of a married woman is her husband's. I even delighted my grandfather by telling him that both his grandmothers were pregnant by the time they reached the altar, in the 1860s or thereabouts. There were various options available to girls on the family tree. They could stay at home and look after the parents until one of them, or her, died; set up a boarding-house with a legacy, or move in with a family member. They could take a position as housekeeper to an established family (and marry the father?) or secure a position in service in the nearest town. This nearly always netted you a husband. There were more adventurous types in the tree who went off unmarried to the US or Canada and found suitable men over there. When you are looking for a specific marriage you will nearly always find it, or perhaps establish proof that the couple were never married. Just remember that many folk got married in towns – for privacy, for show or for a treat. Bath, Bristol or even London were the Victorian equivalents of Disneyland for my Somerset family. One woman, Sarah Clare, seems to have enjoyed the wedding more than the daily grind of married life: the third marriage lasted just a week as we'll see. This lady married three times on the same day, but several years apart. She delayed the third wedding so long that by the time 25 May actually came around she only had a week to live. Still, I suppose, she stuck to her principles. Another stubborn woman just would not budge on the issue of religion. She was Church of England. When John Hoskins wanted his sons to be brought up in the Methodist way, Mrs Hoskins simply took the remaining children, her daughters, off to service each Sunday at the parish church. A neat solution perhaps, but a shame a better compromise couldn't have been reached. When it came to matters immortal, Mrs Hoskins got her way. The couple lie buried in the Church of England graveyard, indeed they do, side by side. A few parishes away, the register entry for the marriage of Benjamin Kingston and Ellen Maidment begs an explanation. The groom, 64, had married the teenage granddaughter of his housekeeper. A few years passed by and Kingston died leaving his young wife his property, and, surprisingly, also two children. But look out for the marriage of the grieving widow to the nineteen year-old boy next door a matter of months later. The marriage took place in Bristol, far from flapping tongues. With a sigh I note that when the Kingston daughter

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turned sixteen she straight-away married a fifty-year-old man, carpenter in the neighbouring village. Marriage was not an option for Daisy Maidment when she fell pregnant. She emigrated to New South Wales in November 1911 aged 22, with her daughter. She eventually married but was fundamentally unhappy in Australia, having been cast out of the family, for no particular reason as far as I can tell. She did enjoy getting letters from her sister in England, which isn't much consolation. It was far more common for women to marry the relevant man when they discovered a child was due. I did come across one cousin who tore up her birth certificate when she learnt that her conception had taken place *before* her parents' marriage, but in fact there are many examples of this. One woman had the brass nerve to roll up the aisle, three days shy of childbirth, in February 1810. For the men there were sacrifices too. Samuel Davis took up baking as a condition of his marriage to the postmaster's daughter. He was never much good at it and returned to dairying after a few years.

Gloving philanthropy, travel, and the marrying of Polly

This chapter starts with a letter sent from a coffee plantation in the Port Royal Mountains, Jamaica in 1853. Polly Martin was sitting at home in her mother's smart drawing room in Woolwich when her brother-in-law's words reached her. Lowry, trying his luck as a mine agent, gallantly offered to find a husband for Polly, "to turn *mademoiselle* into *madame*" if she and her sister would come out too. She would meet many nice people, he said. However, Polly had no need of brother Lowry's help to meet a suitable bridegroom: the field was far wider in London. Polly did not fancy the life of her sister, Mrs Lowry, sewing for the Dorcas group in Cornwall while her husband sent money home from overseas. The very next year Polly married the heir to the Allcroft & Dent gloving empire, J D Allcroft, Esquire. His estate grew to over half-a-million pounds and he accumulated considerable lands in Shropshire. The church he founded at St Martin's, Gospel Oak, is noted by a journalist of *The Times* as being one of the thousand best churches in England. It was founded by Allcroft as a memorial to his late wife – Polly. Yes Polly, I'm afraid, never got to enjoy the Allcroft money, rare honour though it was to have a church built in her memory. She died age 25 leaving no children. One hundred and forty years later the Allcroft dynasty at Stokesay Court came to a close in 1994 with the sale of Mr and Mrs H J Allcroft's Edwardian travel souvenirs to a total value of \$3 million.

Methodism

My mother's parents both had strong Methodist backgrounds, from the mining districts of the South-West and of South Wales. A hundred years ago ordinary Methodists were invited to contribute to the Million Guinea Fund, a project to honour the centenary of Wesley's death. A great new Central Hall would be built at Westminster. You can read the signatures of those who gave their guinea in the historic rolls. One elderly relative was very much moved by the many familiar names recorded in the Castle Cary Circuit, long gone, including his father, uncles, aunts and grandparents. The spreading of the Gospel took my relatives to many parts of the globe and to some tough audiences. Persuading people to think beyond the everyday has never been easy: what do you say to a community which has lost almost all its sons, as my great-grandfather found himself with in Accrington in 1922? His brother had died in France, also a Minister, and we have a postcard from him, from Demerara, the sugar islands, 1905, a glorious picture and the words: "New super arrival. Getting on well. No time to write. Nearly dying for want of rest, Edwin." A friendly face from England would have been an enormous boon. I recently discovered the 'daddy' of all missionaries in our family, whose roll-call of workplaces from 1828 to 1865 has one astonished at his endurance: Jamaica, Barbados, Belize and Sierra Leone. I have been lucky enough to find a record of his life and it does not disappoint³. Today, few Methodists remain in our family and it is hard to imagine a teenage ancestor preaching to the miners or to think that religion sustained whole communities, when, materially, they had very little. The first Methodists in my family were converted during the lifetime of John Wesley. Wesley visited the mining district of Somerset some 23 times and there were many Methodist society meetings. In 1784, our ancestor, Joseph Padfield, a young man, coal-carrier at Holcombe, experienced conversion while at his uncle's prayer meeting. Joseph rose six-foot high with the chair at which he had knelt, and throwing it at the cottage ceiling shouted "Uncle I am glorified!" Uncle said "Hush, Joseph,

³ In Belize it was said that 'no Missionary but he had been able to long endure'.

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hush! Thee will soon know better than that!" However, "I was made very happy and went on my way rejoicing", recorded the convert. I do enjoy this story. By 1893, Methodism had grown enormously⁴ and a new building was being constructed in Holcombe as the old chapel was too small. The last of the Padfields in the village told of me of the final services in that old chapel. The galleries were full, and everyone present remembered those tremendous days. A meal followed, they called it an *agapae* (non-sexual) love feast. Nora added that it was found, by her grandfather and others, that the galleries had completely rotted through, and they said prayers in thanks for a major disaster having been avoided.

Migration

In life there are push factors and pull factors. This is particularly the case with migration. The work might dry up, you might make life too hot for yourself at home by committing a misdemeanour – push factors. Similarly logging companies might advertise for workers in your local paper, a friend or cousin might write from the New World with details of opportunities out there – pull factors. A surprising number of my relatives stayed in England through the events of the last 200 years, wars, farming catastrophes, the stock market crash, political interference, the break-up of rural communities. At school I learnt of the urbanisation and the second-wave. The second of these describes the phenomenon of people leaving the urban centres of industry, 'returning' to the countryside for a lower cost of living and better quality of life. The second-wave in no way matches the vast numbers pulled by the urban magnets in the nineteenth century. And yet, when I spoke to one of the second-wave, living in Wells, Somerset but very much a Londoner, she was sceptical that her family originated in the Westcountry saying 'oh but everyone I know [in the area] comes from London'. I cannot estimate the percentage of children, on average, say, who emigrated. It tended to be all or nothing. In the 1830s for example, as many as a dozen of my relatives left Somerset for North America, often after hearing favourable reports from those who had gone out before. Today, every family historian will find relatives living in a Commonwealth country, and you should be prepared for them to have their own history, different from yours. You will decide whether you want to explore the history of these cousins outside the UK. The US connection emerged only five years ago and there is no controlling where those Somerset genes will turn up. Around this time our new American cousins toured ancestral Somerset with a few of us English. We ate at 'The Highwayman', so-called as the inn was on the site of the gibbet on the Fosse where highwaymen formerly swung. After dark we called in at an out-of-the-way church, down a windy lane. The ruins of the old church were eerie in the dark. This was where the Symes children had been baptised before their extraordinary lives overseas, all such a long time ago. For a moment in the darkness we remembered Mrs Symes's decision to take the remainder of her family to the US and give them a better life. "I suppose next Spring you will have Mrs Symes and her family over with you," wrote a neighbour in 1836, "They are going to have a sale and will sell their stock and hay and grass." But not everyone was impressed with foreign parts. Cary Look gave a poor account of his travels to Ohio to his neighbours in Somerset, saying he would not go through it again for five hundred pounds and Mrs Maby and her husband were very much against any more of their children going out to America after their daughter left. Even in cases where whole families went overseas there were instances where individuals stayed behind. In my family there were two cases where the eldest daughters refused to join their siblings and widowed parent in a block emigration. Sarah chose not to go to North America (she was by this time married) while, later, her cousin Elizabeth Davis would have none of the talk about Australia (opting instead for Wales). I ought to mention Australia, as we have spent a bit of time on North America. A young man had been persuaded to go out to Victoria by James Austin, an agent who could find jobs for many when they arrived. 'Watch out for sharks' yelled Austin as my relative set sail, referring to the rogues who would prey on naive arrivals at the ports. It might have been more appropriate had he yelled 'watch out for rabbits': the Austins being the family who introduced this large-scale pest to the island two years later. This young man did very well, kept meticulous stock records and built up a successful breeding stud at Willaura. We had a fiery member of our library team who would bombast visiting Australians as soon as they opened their mouths. "Well, yes, I could hear your chains rattling", she interrupted, leaving their probable convict ancestry very much hanging in the air, before a word had been exchanged.

⁴ There was at least a four-fold increase in the number of chapels in England since 1784. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1911.

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In my family, though, Australia was a destination of choice, perhaps for convicts but certainly for Cornish miners and Somerset sheep farmers. Elizabeth Tabor had a wonderful wardrobe of clothes made for her when she was a child in Somerset. I see a huge contrast between this luxury and the deaths of her children who had emigrated to Australia. Alice Tabor lived in Perth where she found despair, having lost her children and taken up drinking. She died age 32. Three years later her brother Albert passed away returning home with cancer from the Australian goldfields.

Neighbours

Sometimes good neighbours become good friends. It was a source of regret to the Creed children that their mother had died after spending thirty years in lunatic asylums following a quarrel with the neighbours. An earlier Mrs Creed had somewhat better relations with her neighbour, a parchment-maker. Tom Norris married his neighbour in the next-door property at Rawstone Buildings, London and soon after moved to Hornchurch. In 1931 the kindly neighbours in London arranged for the Norrises' one-eyed pregnant dog to be returned from Islington (whither it had strayed) to Hornchurch where it reluctantly produced a litter of two puppies. It might have planned for more puppies, but it didn't rate Hornchurch at all. The unusual name of Alexander appeared in the Creed family of Baltonsborough but nowhere else in the area. The explanation eventually came that he was named in honour of his parents' neighbour – Admiral Alexander Hood of Butleigh. . . In Ohio, Sarah Cook and Frankie Haine were both friends and neighbours. They turned twenty-one together, the very same day. They went down to the great scales at the mill and found they had only a few pounds difference in weight. This is a favourite scene, from Frankie's diary. It was three months after Sarah's brother had been killed in the Civil War.

Knowledge by internet and its predecessors

Record offices will shortly be obliged to respond to customer enquiries within 20 working days of receipt under the Freedom of Information Act – record offices, which have the records of most parishes in their area on indefinite loan. Today you can visit these records, view the census returns and consult the civil registration indexes, all on a Saturday. One need not have served in the same regiment as the archivist, prepared letters of introduction or ironed a morning suit. To resolve some enquiries one needn't visit these archives at all. A whole host of material came tumbling out of the internet the last time I looked. I wanted to know more about Sarah (married name unknown) born 1873 in Barnsbury, Islington. Within an embarrassingly short time I was round the house of her grandson in Surrey enjoying fish fingers, old photographs and delectable stories – having topped up my internet adventures with a few moments' research at the Family Records Centre. We live in a world where information can be obtained very quickly, time period and distance no problem. When transactions take longer than 20 seconds we become impatient (what this says about the quality of our interaction with each other is another topic). Now imagine a world where it takes you two days to cross the Westcountry, and six weeks to cross the Atlantic. Clocks in Cornwall are more than fifteen minutes behind the Great Clock of Westminster and family history data was broadly kept in the parish where the event occurred. Education for all had only recently been introduced. Is it not remarkable that families stayed in touch and often provided us with such a rich heritage? You may well have internet access but unless you have visited your ancestral area or read some first-hand accounts of your ancestors you may constantly be imposing twenty-first century values on your relatives and never understanding what their lives were like. *I do not really enjoy finding things on the internet. As a mathematical conundrum or exercise in logic it is satisfying though hardly as good a use for these skills as playing the stock market or researching a decent holiday. How lovely instead to hear stories, for the first or thirty-first time, from within the family.* On the same note, I would not go to my older relatives for Reuters-style accuracy about times gone by. My great-grandfather's memoirs show that he knew little of his family history beyond his first cousins, though they were fairly numerous one must allow. I now know an extraordinary amount about his forebears going back another seven generations, having had the luxury of consulting vital records centrally at the county archives and in London, later using the internet to verify particulars at the click of a mouse button. Family recollections may be inaccurate or sparse when it comes to specifics, but there is no substitute for them. My grandmother made some notes about her family which have turned up twenty years or more after her death. They are hugely significant for emotional reasons, even if they do omit many facts (such as her uncle's

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death in a lunatic asylum): I am glad to have them. My grandfather was the last of his generation and recalls best those relatives close in age to himself. When I talk to him, I may have more precise facts to hand about these personalities than he does, but the difference is *he knew them*. To my mind, living relatives are a better source of background information than of hard-and-fast particulars – who can you remember from your childhood, what did they look like, what did they wear? It took me several years to work out the relationship of a family called Jenkins. I had the original lead from Grandpa plus the story, should I ever need it, of the family car running over one of the chickens when they arrived at the Jenkins's farm. Indeed, misrecollection can sometimes be your friend. The early years of my lone Norfolk ranger, Ellen, were shrouded in mystery as we did not know in which tiny Norfolk village she was then living. I should not have located the village at all but her younger brother (who was later disowned), got his place of birth muddled with where he grew up, in a later census, and this led me to the parish of South Lopham. Ellen Smith is to be found living there, aged seven, in the census of 1861.

Family rumours – short on reality

Everyone loves a flower, but unfortunately the family of Samuel Flowers, horse castrator, were not quite so pretty, even if one daughter bore the sonoric name of Rosamond Flowers Phoenix. Considering Samuel's vocation, it is ironic he had quite so many (seven) daughters. My great-grandmother unwisely spun stories of the family's titled origins which make the truth as it emerges all the more embarrassing – disregard for marriage laws, poverty, alcoholism, wife-beating and illegitimacy. It is hard to reconcile this with the hushed tones with which we were supposed to revere the family. Aunt Martha sloped off to Soho which even then was a byword for the worst kinds of iniquity. She had a cab driver with whom she was very familiar, and as soon as the first husband left the scene, she married him, renting a room off Portobello Road for the occasion. This suited the couple very well indeed, I believe they each fancied the other's property. We are told that the first husband (an artist's colour grinder) had 'gone off to Melbourne', but I am concerned that aunty Martha and the cabbie may simply have dumped him into the river Thames. He was not much missed. The one thing which the family really did have was modest build, and William Page (of Utah) knew how to use it. He was a pocket-sized rider on the fabled "Pony Express" which brought Abe Lincoln's inaugural speech to the West, 1861. Aged eighteen, Page, an Englishman, was travelling with a handcart company from Iowa City to Utah, his parents having preferred him journey to Zion than go to the war in the Crimea. The company had been delayed a month and were using green timber which shrunk ominously during the long trek south. They were caught in an exposed area near the Platte River when snowstorms struck in October, two weeks' short of Salt Lake. Hundreds sheltered in a meagre hollow with a few ounces of flour daily. Page gave his ration away. He was so hungry that, one night, he soaked a pair of buffalo moccasins to remove the hair, boiled them and ate the broth he had made. Relief came three weeks' later, and, after recovering, Page began his work in Utah. His wife taught him to read by the light of the sagebrush fire. They raised eleven children and his work riding for the Pony Express is remembered in the family even today. We have on the whole forgotten the other matters.

Travel and independence

The beauty of the twentieth century was that one could really go off and do one's own thing. The train service was excellent – you could set your watch by it. Women were no longer chattels of their husband (as they had been until the Married Women's Act of 1882), and were on their way towards getting the vote. As a servant, attending a regional hiring fair, you might well end up in another part of the country altogether. Former neighbours stayed in touch and it would be a pleasure arranging a visit, perhaps once a year, to the countryside. Memories could well survive from the early years of the century as might other paraphernalia, photographs, postcards or letters. One relative who took advantage of her single status and entrepreneurial skill was Daisy Skinner; or, 'I opened the door and who should be there but Daisy Skinner' as she is described in a letter by her aunt. Daisy kept a hotel in Bexhill. My grandmother recalls leaving the bath running for hours there when she was young and visiting. In later years Daisy was a bit dotty. She insisted that her niece have a good dose of 'TNT' to get rid of her cold, and on the same theme of high explosives she talked of the council and their new terrorist housing – we think she meant 'tenement housing'. The Lowrys went somewhat further afield. They were an adventurous lot, attending the ear-boring

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ceremony of the ex-princesses of Burma in 1914. Being deaf, Mr and Mrs Lowrys' ears were every bit as ornamental as the princesses', I can't help but think.

Many young men went off to fight in the Army: the second Boer Campaign began in 1899 and the Great War in 1914. Something caused 'Uncle Vic' Heaver to get his age short by three years at his army medical in 1915, perhaps the intimate medical inspections? One youth was recorded as having a mole on the left side of his foreskin (or was it a four on the left side of his moleskin?). Ted Britten on the other hand bulked out his age to escape Dad and to fight in the Boer War. He ended up in Canada a long way from his autocratic father. Another young blood with a cantankerous parent was Sam Portch. When he joined the Wiltshire Yeomanry he too determined to fight the Boers. He took his own horse plus one of his father's all the way to South Africa. Dad was furious. . . I am missing an awful lot of relatives who appear in the census or in the family bible and then nothing further is known of them. I have tentatively identified some as 'black sheep' but haven't managed to catch them at it, as it were, except this one gentleman, Richard Arthur Bowgen. He had a huge variety of jobs but stayed in Grantham after his second marriage. (There were three in total.) His third wife Betsy escaped with her daughter to Chesterfield after he beat her once too often, and she survived him. Bowgen never altered his will and continued his jumpy career as tobacconist hairdresser publican and musician in Grantham until his death. As a tragic follow-up his daughter had a brief marriage to Mr Banner, a chemist who had an accidental overdose. He had evidently used the prussic acid within his store as a regular pick-me-up. Not to be recommended!

Light relief

There are several diaries in the family, from reading which one could conclude that life was planned, was a duty and was lived very strictly. It is reassuring to read of examples where our predecessors didn't get it right, or behaved in a way we might recognise. John Hoskins, farmer and cheese-maker, built a house to his specifications and neglected to include steps leading up to the front door. The house must have become habitable as ten children were born inside it. The author Fay Weldon was a later resident – we suspect she might have complained about the lack of steps too. Mrs Martin (Miriam) looks a tough, no-nonsense, character from her photograph but we know from her granddaughter that when she visited the family in Gillingham she hid under the stairs during thunderstorms. Thunderstorms needn't be particularly deadly, many of us rather like them, but, in fact, a sudden storm did kill a member of the family: her son Albert, who, rushing home to his baby daughter in the pouring rain after Miriam's funeral, died of pneumonia eleven days later. William Worner was remembered as a flighty character. He had a grocery business in Somerset, then took his whole family off to Chile, and back again, on a whim. He never settled anywhere for long. The faulty behaviour here was on the part of his uncles, who sent him to school in place of any of their bright nieces, a choice that can best be described as 'brave'.

Money, glamour and cheese

When Ann Dunkerton wanted to shoot to fame in 1839, she had a skill up her sleeve. She was the best cheese-maker in the village. Indeed her enterprises are still recalled today, as at 25, she had the whole management of making the West Pennard Cheese, an eleven-hundredweight monster, the newspapers congratulating her bridegroom on his choice – 'this fortunate young farmer has obtained a high honour'. A century later, my relatives had to develop considerably more sophisticated stunts to make their presence felt. Luckily, the American Mildred Francis had gotten richer with each husband. Accompanied by number two, the Buffalo millionaire, her automobile pulled up in her home town of Morrision, Swansea in the 1930s, loaded with gifts of American candy. This visit was long remembered in the town and so, one may well ask, 'Who needed Catherine Zeta Jones?'. Speaking of wealth, the Boyces were pleased when their son James Scott Boyce received a legacy from his elderly relative James Scott. The canny parents deployed the same tactic again and named their next child Francis after yet another relative with money and no sons, uncle Francis Scott. However, their plan failed to materialise into a juicy windfall as Mr F Scott decided to remarry aged 60 and start a family, so young Francis Scott Boyce had to make his own way in the world. . . My great-grandfather Albert Creed and his eight siblings grew up without a breadwinner in a dairyman's cottage. Therefore at fourteen he was sent to be apprentice at a large shop, 'London House', in Castle Donington, known to the family's minister through its strong Methodist connections. He remained there for four years and this is what he recorded.

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"The huge shop was the biggest place I had been in. It was lit by gaslight, which I had never even seen before. As youngest apprentice, I began at the bottom: sweeping the floors, washing the windows, cleaning currants, raisins and sultanas; learning to wrap up sugar, tea and so forth. Very few things came ready wrapped and it was a work of art." Albert was fortunate to secure such a position, though it left him little time to study for his vocation, the Methodist ministry, which came later.

The role of women

Family history would be a dull pursuit were it not for the women within it. Bearers of tradition, of children, of different surnames. If you are researching a rare name, chances are you will know what happened to all the men in the family. You will find those who strayed overseas or founded their own business fairly readily, perhaps by searching for an hour on Google? The Padfields in my family have been thoroughly researched by a veritable pack of wolves. Each reference has been sniffed over by several other researchers hungry for data. Joseph Padfield was born a few weeks after his father was killed by falling down an old coal hole which had opened during the night. He grew up and fathered four daughters. As they were women, they were no longer Padfields and thus their histories had not been so easily pursued. Charlotte was a dairymaid who married a miller (water & steam), settled on the Mendips and had a large family despite marrying late, and died age 88 at the home of her youngest child in Bristol; Ellen in later life married a farmer in a feudal village on the Fosse; Jane and Mary were, respectively, the mistresses of the Queen's Arms Hotel by Swindon Railway Station and of a coaching inn on Watling Street west of Cannock. These are varied lives and took considerably more effort to pinpoint than a Google search, though the net did help. It seems a wicked chance that so much of life for women was a gamble. It depended on your husband's personality and whether he was a good worker or spent every evening at the pub. Martha Tucker's husband Riddle looked out for her. As she said herself in 1775, Riddle "is a very good husband to me as ever step on England ground." Her old friend Sarah Dawe added, "for if her finger did but ache, he would go and call a doctor for her". This would not have been cheap. Martha was in fact led rather a dance by her husband, who would not stick at anything for long. He would not raise another man's child, so her daughter had to stay behind in Somerset when he struck out for London 'where malice, rapine, accident conspire' in 1752. They eventually returned to Somerset. . . Gladys Haine was described by her brother-in-law as "the only woman [he knew] who could feed a baby, read a book and stir a saucepan at the same time". This was not from choice – Gladys's husband was often out of work and ill; he had diabetes. As for Jane Haine, when she married William Cole she would soon be packing marriage, emigration and childbirth into just three months, May-July 1887. Too much, surely! My favourite tale of 'strong women' is my great-grandmother doing another evening shift at the family grocery in West Worsley Street, Salford in the 1890s. A man came into the shop, an ex-soldier or a warehouse labourer who had lost his job through drunkenness. "I'm a desperate man, give me bread", he said, thrusting a knife towards the woman behind the counter. My great-grandmother snatched a carving knife and held it near his face. "Two can play at that game", she hissed. . . . When a mother dies the heritage can be lost. Nance Airey wrote the words 'New Era' in her diary when her father remarried to the unpopular Mrs Illingworth. (I am reminded of this whenever I walk past the New Era takeaway shop on my way to work.) Marjorie Gibson was never left alone with her father after his remarriage and had no opportunity to enquire about aspects of her background, or to speak of her mother. Looking through the family album with my aunt we saw a picture of a young girl with her bicycle on a hilly street in Salford. We realised she must be cousin Edith who had later died leaving four small children. When we sent her youngest child a copy of this photograph, she confirmed that this was indeed her mother, whose picture she had never seen.

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FAMILY STORIES BY SUBJECT

DEATH

Copper poisoning. Maud Davis died young (c 1875) from copper poisoning from cider that had dripped into a copper bowl. Source: letter from Nicholas Brown

Death from scalds. Willie Bryant (c 1872- 1885). Source: conversation with Nora James, 1994. He was in the yard when his father asked him to run and get the reaping hook hung over the boiler. Willie could not quite reach, the top of the boiler gave way, and he went in up to his knees in scalding swill. He then died, two weeks later. His mother wouldn't leave him throughout this time. He wanted to hear "Sweet Jesu meek and mild", and his mother couldn't bear to hear it sung after that. Willie is buried at the Old Church-in-the-Woods, Holcombe.

Death returning from market. Frank N Flower (1850-1917). Source: Probate Indexes 1917.

Death in the chicken run. Hugh F Hoskins (1864-1924). Source: *Langport Herald* obituary 1924.

Death in the hayfield. William Whittock (1776-Aug 1837) died carrying out dinner to Ann Oram. Source: letter from Thomas or Joseph Haine 1837 to their sister in Ohio.

Death in lunatic asylum. William H Carline (1877-1918). Source: Death Certificate.

Death in the theatre. William T Creed (1839-1904), at a matinée performance in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Source: Probate Indexes 1904 and *Hendon Times* obituary 1904.

Death in a public house. Richard W B Creed (1857-1891) of Hilfield near Cerne Abbas "died in the pub with many debts". Source: notes by niece Phyllis Blease provided by her daughter Julia Meeres.

Deaths from choking. Alice S Garland (1861-1911) on a fishbone in Southampton. Source: email from descendant Alison Hargreaves. Joshua Harrison (1838-1904) on his false teeth while sitting on a plank cutting up tobacco during his lunch-break, Windermere: source *The Lakes Chronicle and Reporter* obituary 1904.

Death from gunshots. James Davis (c 1858-1878) died from tetanus after losing his thumb while scaring rooks on a farm in Titchfield Hampshire. Source: letter from Nicholas Brown and King's School Bruton year book. Uriah Parsons (1823-1887), Lord of the Manor of Charlton Horethorne, died when his nephew's loaded gun went off after they returned from shooting. Source: *Western Gazette* 1887. Mary Bowden (1867-1878) died when her brother fired a stray gunshot (in Cornwall); source: letter from Jenny Richards and local newspaper report.

Death from electrocution. Leonard Carline (1900-1926), accidentally electrocuted at sea on a submarine near Hong Kong. Source: Hong Kong newspaper report, copy passed to me by nephew Tom Carline. Richard Rodda (1837-1875), died Swansea Hospital. A gunshot wound hit his leg as a boy of sixteen in Cornwall⁵. Twenty years later the limb had to be amputated and he died as a result. Source: Death Certificate.

Death of Peter Padfield (1857). Source: Padfield Family Journal. Peter's sister Elizabeth became mentally retarded owing to an attack of measles in childhood, while his brother Joseph (1802-1835) fell down an old coal-hole which had opened during the night when stepping out of the garden door to go milking.

Death of Albert J C Martin (1856-1900). Source: will of Albert J C Martin (1900), plus conversation with Cornelius James Martin.

Falling down the stairs. Martha Creed (c 1784-1868). Death date and place. Source: Memorial Card in possession of Pat Cotton; Burial Entry in West Bradley Parish

⁵ Poaching?

FAMILY STORIES BY SUBJECT

Register. Circumstances of death, falling down the stairs. Source: letter by W T Creed to his brother in New Zealand (1903). The last of the family in the house, Plot Street, West Bradley, was Martha's great-grandson George Maidment (1911-2002) Death of Thomas Martin "Tim" Lowry (c 1875-1938), from food poisoning after returning home by cargo boat to take a last look at the West African coast. Sir Bernard Spilsbury was the coroner⁶. Source: newspaper cutting kept in the family, provided by Jane d'Arcy. Family belief that he was poisoned by his African cook. Source: letter from Rosemary Edmonds.

Death of Thomas J M Lowry (1913-1939), son of TML. Marriage to a German woman and death date. Source: GRO indexes. Occupation as dentist in Exeter. Source: Grant of Probate for Thomas Martin Lowry (1938). Circumstances of death. Source: letter from Rosemary Edmonds.

The spirit world. Verbatim email from Geoff Norris 2003.

Delayed burial at Towednack. Source: Burial Entry in Towednack Parish Register, details provided in an email by Kathie Weigel.

Body-snatchers in Salford. Conversation with Dermot Walsh about his grandmother (Henrietta Carline)'s upbringing.

EDUCATION

Weight of the cake. Henrietta Carline (1875-1963). Conversation with her granddaughter Jane Harwood.

Training opportunities. Source: letter from Henrietta Carline's daughter Gwen Arnall. Favoured grandson. Source: will of Joseph Carline (1856). This will was not proven but the testator leaves his grandson several houses formerly bequeathed to other relatives. Source: will in family possession. Charles lost several good jobs due to wine and women. Source: letter from Gwen Arnall.

Starting in business as a coal-carrier. Source: Padfield Family Journal.

Child of Irish immigrants. David P Walsh (1902-1989). Source: conversation with his son Dermot Walsh.

Welsh attitude to learning. Source: conversations with Bill Francis and Gwyn Lewis. 'Fancy you not knowing that'. Source: conversation with William Phillips's daughter, Barbara Vanstone.

Going to school. Doris Hanney (b 1902). Source: conversation with Doris, Mrs Prosser-Evans.

Scholarship for grammar school. Winifred Jenkins (1900-1995). Source: conversation with her son Geoff Norris 2004.

Learning his ABC. Albert H Creed (1881-1963). Source: *Story of My Life* by Albert Haine Creed.

Mercy Coles's education. Mercy kept a diary of the Quebec Conference, 1864. Source: National Archives of Canada website 2003. Well educated, well informed and as sharp as needles. This was a quote by George Brown, leader of the Conference to his wife, and actually described several of the Coles sisters, with whom he'd dined shortly beforehand. Mercy was portrayed in *A People's History* Episode Eight, the Road to Union, 2001. Source: CBC website 2003.

The Bond boys of Ditchat. Source: school log book (years 1877-1882) as cited by Di Clements in her book about the village. Charles Bond breaking-in to a neighbour's house. Source: *Wells Journal* 1890. Charles Bond pleaded guilty at the Winter Assizes in Taunton. He was released 'due to his previous good character'.

⁶ From the Agatha Christie novels.

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Village midwife. Harriet Blowers (1850-1934). Source: letter from her granddaughter Gwen Aitken. Jack Blowers's arrival in Queensland. Source: immigration papers provided by Tony and Mary Felgate.
Education of the Olvers. Source: *A Memoir* by Hattie Board (1946) except Cyril's illegitimate son. Source: letter from his grandson A S Olver.

FARMING TODAY AND YESTERDAY

Blackmore Vale Cheese Company. Source: adapted from conversation with Jack Highnam (b 1912).
Tizzard family and racing. Source: *Point to Point* 2003.
Farming in the nineteenth century. See *A History of English Farming*, C S Orwin 1949.
John Haine, Marston Bigot, Acton. Source: letter from John Haine's grandson Denis Haine.
Loss of Manor Farm, Stourpaine. Source: *Down Memory Lane* by Victor Duffett.
Paddy Court's recollections of this farm. Source: letter from Mary Francis stating that my letter to Paddy had resulted in her writing to Victor.
The move from Bathampton to Bilsington 1931. Source: tape-recorded memories of Horace Godfrey (c 1912-1998) provided by his cousin Kingsley Padfield.

HELP FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

Hutchins family in the newspaper. Thomas Hutchins's specially constructed tricycle. Source: *Shepton Mallet Journal* obituary 1901. The three weddings. Source: *Shepton Mallet Journal* 1890 and 1894.
Auntie Bowgie marrying her toyboy. Source: local newspaper obituary for W R Bowgen 1911 and diary of Lucy Blowers 1915.

LONDON

London. James Scott Boyce (1806-1875). Stephen Boyce (1810) was a dairyman in Camden in 1851 census; Charles Boyce (1876) was a printer's machine minder in Southwark in 1901 census; George Boyce (1878) was an omnibus conductor in Camberwell in 1901 census.
Walking the streets of London 1900. Source: *Story of My Life* by Albert Haine Creed (1881-1963).

LONG MEMORIES

The cold of the Crimea. *Castle Cary Parish Magazine* 1940s as transcribed by Marian Squibb. (Cornelius Martin had retired to Boscombe by this time.) Transcript and previous occupation as wine merchant provided by Cornelius James Martin.
Arrival of Emma Bowden (1852-1933) in England. Bowden family history by her granddaughter Gwen Broad.

MARRIAGE

Pregnant on marriage. Jane Harris (1859) age 21 and Margaret Shugg (1869) age 22, both in Swansea. Both bore sons within six months.
Married on the same day (25 May), three times. Sarah Clare (c 1770-1842) in 1813, 1819 and 1842. Source: Marriage Entries in Ditchheat and Castle Cary Parish Registers. She was buried five days after her last wedding. Source: Burial Entry in Castle Cary Parish Register. This event was also mentioned in a letter from Sarah Maby (1842) to her sister in Ohio

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Quarrel about worshipping. John Hoskins (1827-1903) of East Compton and his wife Mary (1824-1904). Source: conversation with Judy Tibbotts and gravestone in Pilton Parish Churchyard.

Marriages of Benjamin Kingston (1794- May 1865) and Ellen Maidment. Source: Marriage Entry (1858) in East Pennard Parish Register. Remarriage of widow and age of second husband. Source: GRO Marriage Index (1865) and 1871 census return for East Pennard. Marriage of Louisa Kingston and Alfred Read. Source: GRO Marriage Index (1877) and 1881 census for Baltonsborough.

The 1851 census for Huxham, East Pennard shows: Benjamin Kingston 50, farmer 32 acres with Edith Pike; George Pike 13, Ellen Maidment 10, Liza Ann Maidment 3. Daisy Maidment (1889). Elopement, birth of daughter and emigration. Source: information from daughter Judy Neilson provided by Alan Davis.

Tearing up of birth certificate. Muriel Davies (1910-1985). Source: information from nephew Roger Timmis.

Marrying three days before childbirth. Anna Whittock (1785-1825). Marriage date (22 Feb) and birth of daughter (25 Feb). Source: Marriage and Baptism Entries in Ditchheat Parish Register (1810).

Change of occupation of Samuel Davis, married the youngest daughter of Henstridge's first postmaster in 1882. Source: letter from Nicholas Brown.

GLOVING PHILANTHROPY, TRAVEL, AND THE MARRYING OF POLLY

Letter from Henry Lowry (1810-1861), Port Royal Mountains, Jamaica, which mentions 'Grandma Martin's [smart drawing room] at Woolwich'. Source: original letter (1853) in family possession. Mrs Lowry sewed for the Dorcas circle. Source: Diaries of Maria Martin (1813-1891), later Mrs Lowry.

Biography of John Derby Allcroft (1822-1893). Source: *The Dictionary of Business Biography*, D J Jeremy, and C Shaw (editors) and Grant of Probate (1893). Sale of contents of Stokesay Court. Source: Sotheby's Catalogue (1994).

Mr H J Allcroft took to globe-trotting, finding himself unsuited to the business world. Source: *The Dictionary of Business Biography* and Sotheby's Catalogue (1994)

METHODISM

Methodist residents of Castle Cary. Source: The Historic Roll of Westminster Central Hall (1898-1904).

Missionary. James Edney (1800-1865). Source: Hill's Arrangement and Family Tale No.47 by R Neil Peters.

Preaching to the miners in his teens. Source: funeral oration of Thomas Martin (1780-1866) provided by Jane d'Arcy.

Throwing chair in the air. Joseph Padfield (1761-1833) of Holcombe. Source: Padfield Family Journal written in the 1860s by his son Benjamin.

Last services in the old chapel at Holcombe (1893). Source: letter from and conversation with Nora James (1915-1998) of Holcombe. Her paternal grandfather was a builder in the village in the 1890s.

MIGRATION

'Everyone I know comes from London'. Source: telephone conversation with Pamela Manuel.

A dozen relatives left Somerset for North America. Married: Stephen Symes (1832), Mercy Coles (1833), Richard Dunkerton (1834), Thomas Creed (1837), William Symes and his mother Elizabeth (1837). Unmarried: Matthew Creed (1834), William

FAMILY STORIES BY SUBJECT

Haine (1835), Henry and John Whittock (c 1836). Source: *Passenger Emigration Lists*, Filby and Meyer except Mercy Coles (source: *Canadian Dictionary of Biography*).

Next Spring you will have Mrs Symes and family over with you. Source: letter from Joseph (or Thomas) Haine (1811-1882) to his sister in Ohio (1836).

Cary Look and Mrs Maby's opinions of North America. Source: letters from the Haine siblings and Sarah Maby to their sister in Ohio.

Not going abroad. Sarah Mullins (1812-1879) of East Pennard and Elizabeth Davis (1820) of Maperton remained in Great Britain while their siblings emigrated in 1837 and 1852, respectively. Sarah had been married to a yeoman farmer for three years. Elizabeth married a wealthy father about the same time as her father's emigration, and her father's name is given as a blank on the marriage certificate.

The Austin family. Source: pioneer books about Victoria, Australia.

The Millears of Wanganella. Source: Milliar Book 1878-1978.

Wardrobe of clothes. Source: will of Elizabeth Tabor's surviving child, Lillian Augusta Tabor (c 1864-1941).

Deaths of Alice and Albert Tabor. Source: letter from niece Rachael Maidment, Australian Vital Records Index (Western Australia) and Welchman family book by Bernard Welchman.

NEIGHBOURS

Quarrel with the neighbours. Ann Amelia Creed (c 1808- 1884). Source: patient's case notes D/H/MEN 17/2/1, Somerset County Archives. Occupation dressmaker. Lively disposition, good temper and industrious. Amelia transferred from Wells to Portsea Island lunatic asylum. Her husband, a builder, remarried.

Creed adultery case. Source: Creed contra Creed quarter sessions records 1719 and 1720. The parties: Thomas Creed; Mary Creed his wife and Emanuel Webb, parchment maker – all of North Barrow. "Mrs Creed and Webb kept company in a scandalous manner." The servants kept watch on the couple by the moonlight shining in the Kitching window, and so the case came to court. The couple married a year or two later which implies that Thomas Creed had died. The parish registers for this period have not survived. It is strongly suspected that the Creeds of West Pennard descend from Thomas's brother Richard.

The Norrises and their dog. Source: conversation with their son Geoff Norris (2004) who was born five days after the litter.

The name Alexander. In family notes, Alexander Creed (1825-1899) is described as the godson of Alexander Hood. This may be true but the milder 'named in honour of' is used here. Source: notes by granddaughter Lilian S Green (1907-1984), provided by her cousin Thomas Green.

Weighing at the mill. Source: diary of Frances Haine (1842-1911) of Bloomfield, Ohio.

KNOWLEDGE BY INTERNET AND ITS PREDECESSORS

Internet discovery. A combination of freebmd and the 1901 census convinced me that Sarah Ann Broad (1873) belonged to this family in 1901: Alfred Jenkins gas-lamp lighter Hampstead district, his wife Sarah (27) and daughter Winifred (11 months). The marriage of Winifred and birth of her eldest son were easily found and the son appeared in the online telephone directory for a nearby town. There were nonetheless several possibilities for error in these assumptions but when I wrote to the grandson he had proof of his relationship to Sarah Ann Broad.

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Great-grandfather's memoirs. Source: *Story of My Life* by Albert Haine Creed (1881-1963).

Place of birth muddle. Arthur Smith (born 1857 Mulbarton) gives his birthplace as 'South Lopham' in the 1901 census for Bermondsey. He had left Mulbarton as an infant so the mistake is excusable.

FAMILY RUMOURS

The Flowers family. Samuel Flowers (b 1786-1791, d 1858), castrator and surgeon, Wymondham. His daughters Rosamond (1821-1880) married secondly John Phoenix of West Tibenham; Martha (1814-1887) married secondly Thomas Dobinson, carman at St John the Evangelist, Ladbroke Grove 1865. The business was in Horse and Dolphin Yard, Macclesfield Street, Soho, with a house nearby. Dobinson's will, proved 1877 states: "I appoint my wife or reputed wife Martha (to whom I was married as Martha Winning Widow), and whose former husband James Winning went to Melbourne about twenty years ago and is supposed to be dead, but his death has not been proved, to be sole Executrix of this my will." Winning's occupation (colour grinder) given on his marriage certificate (1839) and in 1851 census for Soho.

William Page's emigration to the United States. William Page (1838-1893). Source: his son's recollections provided by Dorothy Paul.

TRAVEL AND INDEPENDENCE

Daisy Skinner (1876-1971). Mentioned in her aunt's letter. Source: letter by Ellen Lowry (1853-1941) to her daughter. TNT and terrorist housing. Source: letter from her niece Audrey Hatch.

Ear-boring ceremony. Attended by H Newton Lowry (1879-1932) and his wife, Grace Okie Lefevre. Source: copy of invitation, I believe from Mary Lintott, provided by Jane d'Arcy. 'Their Highnesses The Ex-King and Ex-Queen of Burma request the honour of the presence of [Mr & Mrs H. N. Lowry] at the Ear-Boring Ceremony of the Princesses at the Palace on March 5th 1914. R.S.V.P. to Political Officer Ratnagiri.' Deafness of the Lowrys. Source: will of Newton's mother Jemima Lowry, his 'affliction bravely borne'; his obituary, provided by Jane d'Arcy; conversation with Mary Lintott.

Wrong ages in the Army. H Victor S Heaver (b 1888) joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force and gave his year of birth as 1891. Source, for this and the inspection details: Attestation Paper, Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force (1915). E J Britten (1877-1966) lying about his age to fight in the Boer War. Source: information provided by his niece Joan Nutt.

Taking father's horse to South Africa. Samuel H C Portch (c 1871-1951), then farming at Stanton St Bernard. Source: conversation with his niece Audrey Gordon. The life of Richard A Bowgen (c 1853-1916). Source: his will, trade directories for Grantham, *Illustrated Police Gazette* (1902) for the details of the separation, the census (and GRO Marriage Index) for details of his three marriages. Death of his son-in-law, Harold E R Banner (c 1872-1913). Source: *Grantham Journal* 1913.

LIGHT RELIEF

Failing to include steps leading to front door. John Hoskins (1827-1903) of Orchardleigh, East Compton. Source: conversation with Judy Tibbotts.

Hiding under the stairs. Miriam Martin (1814-1900) had a special place reserved for her under the stairs at her son's house in Gillingham in the eventuality of a

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thunderstorm. Source: recollections of her granddaughter Ella Martin (b 1888 Gillingham, d 1985), provided in a letter from Cornelius James Martin.
Death of Albert J C Martin (1856-1900). Source: conversation with Cornelius James Martin.
Education of William Indoe Worner (c 1850-c1914), and his visit to Chile. Source: conversation with his granddaughter Margery Puddy.

MONEY, GLAMOUR AND CHEESE

The West Pennard Cheese. Ann Dunkerton (b 1814)'s role in the enterprise is stated in the *Salisbury & Winchester Journal* 25 Feb 1843 "Married Feby, 16th, at W Pennard, _____ Mr Henry Sims, eldest son of Mr David Sims yeoman of Shepton Montague, to Miss Ann Dunkerton, eldest daughter of the late Mr Samuel Dunkerton, yeoman of the former place. The fortunate young farmer has obtained a high honour, the fair bride being the person who had the whole management of making the celebrated West Pennard cheese." Source: *Castle Cary Visitor* 1907. I like to think of George Tubb, boiler-maker's mate in Southampton, and Elizabeth West, wife of a carriage driver in Surbiton going about their ordinary lives in 1907. I suspect they had no idea of their grandmother's prowess – she died when her children were small. The full story of the cheese. A huge cheese was made in West Pennard in June 1839. The Queen had been presented with a large brown loaf shortly before and the farmers of West Pennard concluded that bread and no cheese was hardly fitting fare for Her Majesty. A committee was formed and every farmer patriotically consented to help. The milk of some 737 cows was collected. A press capable of giving a pressure of 40 tons was specially made by a Glastonbury blacksmith. The "follower" was five inches of mahogany carved with oak, laurel leaves and the royal arms. The best cheesemaker in the parish was selected to make the cheese on Friday 28 June 1839. Some 25 dairymaids assisted. Cannon were fired before 5am indicating that something important was about to take place. For five days in September the royal cheese was exhibited to the public – a mighty mountain of curd standing on a platform. The Queen graciously received a deputation from the village but gave them to understand that she preferred old cheese to new. Squabbles broke out, exhibition fees were lost. The giant unwanted cheese was neglected. The local farmers gave themselves the names of the Marquess of Sticklinch, Duke of Woodlands, and Lord East Street, these being hamlet names in the parish – but the giant unwanted cheese was neglected.

Source: 'The Wonderful Cheese of West Pennard, and a follower', in *The Somerset Year Book 1928*.

The bringing of candy to Morriston. Mildred Francis McGuire (1896-1982) married Thomas B Lockwood (1873-1947), Buffalo attorney, litterateur, financier in 1934.

The visit to Swansea. Source: conversation with her cousin Bill Francis.

The Scott legacies. Source: Estate Duty Entry for the Estate of James Scott (1809). James's brother Francis Scott married aged about sixty (1820) and three children arrived before his death seven years later. Consequently James Scott Boyce (b 1806) received a legacy while Francis Scott Boyce (b 1814) did not.

The shop at Castle Donington. Albert Creed arrived age fourteen in 1895 and left in 1899. Source: *Story of My Life* by Albert Haine Creed.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Falling down an old coal hole. Joseph Padfield (1802-1835). His son was born around this time and baptised a few weeks later. Source: Padfield Family Journal and

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Baptismal Entry in Holcombe Parish Register. Information on the four Padfield sisters. Source: census entries, GRO Marriage Indexes, trade directories for Somerset and the Probate Indexes 1937.

Testimony about Reginald 'Riddle' Tucker (c1723-1775). Source: booklet produced at his trial, 1775. He was hung at Wells 28 August 1775, three days after his trial and two months after the murder of his wife.

The full details. Whit Thursday 8 June 1775. Miriam Tucker had promised to dine with Old Mrs Pounsett of Cole. She left as the clock was striking eleven. Her mother tried to call her back to eat a bit of bread and butter. The Tuckers were in the kitchen, waiting for their early meal of Roast Pork - Martha planned to take tea with Melliar Perry at Ansford Inn, and Tucker to help shear at Farmer Coxes, Hatspen. (The murder then took place.) Tucker stated he left home for Perrys at noon. It's said he washed his shirt at Nine Wells. He walked the mile to Hatspen, arriving hot, sweating and wet "You look as if you had done work for four or five men" said Mrs Elizabeth Perry. Tucker said to Perry he had just dined on damned stinking pork, and hoped not to do so again. One witness (Hodson) said that Tucker had asked him a few days before, "What is the reason for the love a man had for a woman falling off and dwindling away?" Melliar Perry's appointment for tea not having been kept, she left the Inn about one o'clock to look for Martha. Mrs Troakes lived opposite Tucker's, by the church, and saw the gardener Cary call at noon, and later Melliar Perry call at the door in the afternoon. Tucker himself later knocked on the door and shouted across to Troakes if she had seen Martha, she hadn't. Tucker disappeared to Sobieski's to look. He gained entrance to the house at the window and uttered "Lord have mercy on us", calling to Mrs Troakes. Cary the gardener could not get in at noon. He saw Mrs Troakes and her daughter sitting in the churchyard that warm day. He had some cucumber plants which he left for the family. The Coroner began his inquiries at Ansford Inn on the Saturday. Tucker's coat was presented. Tucker cried out when this was produced in court. The waistcoat had been recently washed, it was full of creases and damp. He could not be certain the blood was not bullocks' or horses'. Galpin pointed out that although there were only traces of blood on the coat, much could have been removed if washed immediately in cold water, as he offered to demonstrate. Goodson found a 14lb sledgehammer with a yard handle. Mrs Gore who did cleaning for the Tuckers told the court the tubwater by the backdoor was discoloured (red) and she thought it too filthy to clean with. Tucker exclaimed to Mr Perry of Hatspen: "I am ruined. I am ruined. I shall be hanged. I shall be hanged. If I die, I hope you will be guardian to my daughter, Mr Perry." Thomas Speed said that he had helped Tucker make cider a whole day, and Mrs Tucker had failed to prepare a meal and Tucker had hit her with his fist. Tucker often wore two shirts in one day that hot summer, and had to stay in bed while his family washed and dried them.

Source: booklet produced at his trial, 1775.

Malice, murder, accident conspire. Source: quote by Dr Johnson.

Feeding a baby, reading a book and stirring a saucepan, Gladys Haine (1898-1976) as described by Charles Bullard. Source: information provided by Hanna Nicholas.

Marriage, emigration and childbirth. Jane Haine (1857-1937). Marriage 3 May 1887 West Camel Somerset. Eldest daughter born 24 Jul 1887 Queensland. Source: Marriage Entry in West Camel Parish Register and Queensland Birth Index.

Give me bread. Henrietta Carline (1875-1963) often worked an evening shift in the family grocers. Source: conversation with Dermot Walsh.

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New Era. Annie Maria Airey 'Nance' (1862-1931) wrote this after her father's remarriage to Jane Illingworth in Windermere 1883. Her mother had died two years previously. Source: information from Nance's Diary provided by Roger Timmis. Not left alone with father. Marjorie Gibson (1910-1999). Source: conversation with Marjorie Gibson.