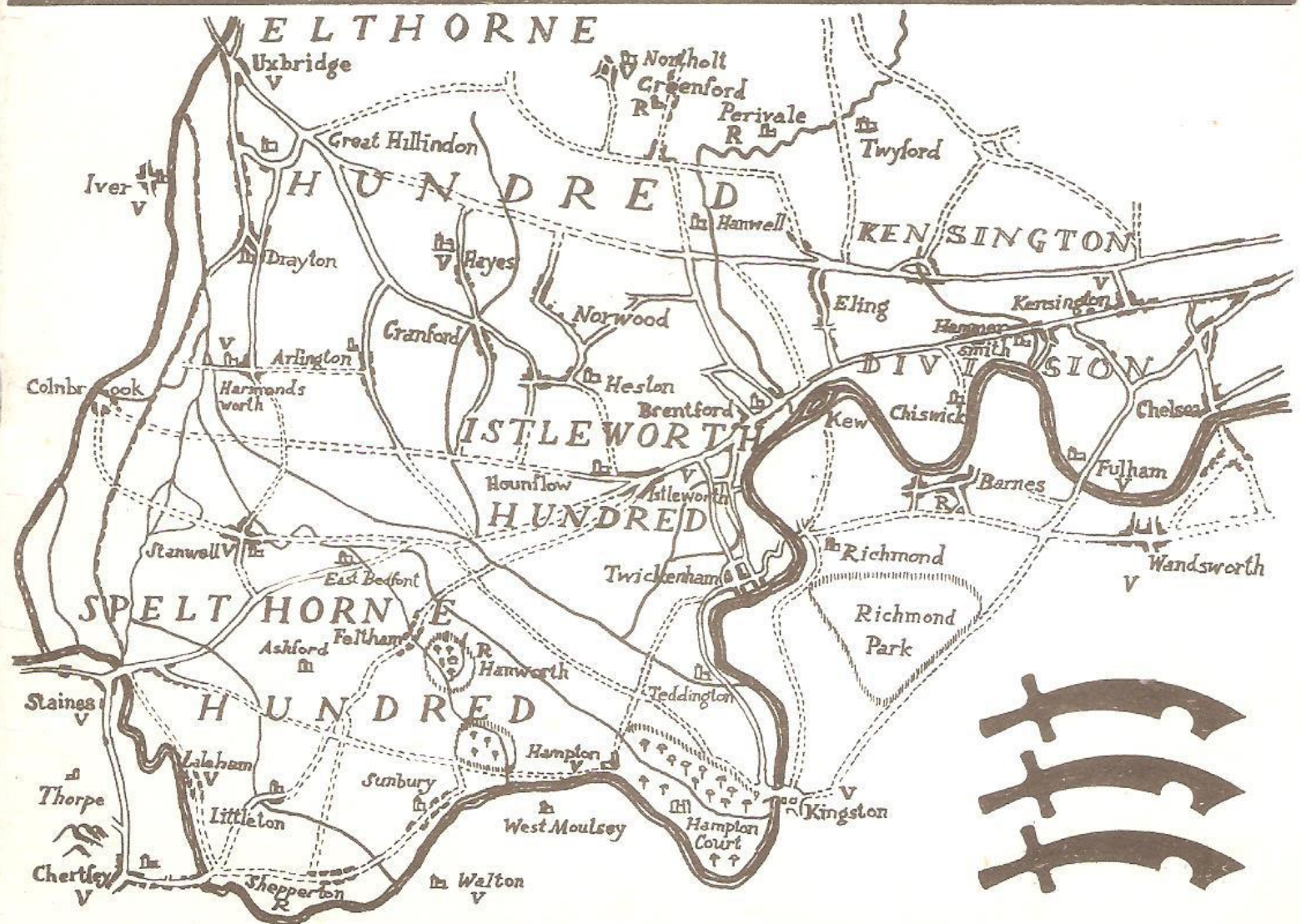


# West Middlesex Family History Society Journal

Vol 1 No 1

Winter 1978





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### Addresses for Correspondence:

Correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary, Mrs. Brenda Chart, 80 Park Drive, Acton, London W3, other than membership enquiries and subscriptions which should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Mrs. Rhona Ward, 29 Ernest Gardens, Chiswick, London W5. Journal contributions which should be sent to the Editor, Robert Cook, 105 Portland Road, London W11 4LN, or correspondence in connection with particular projects as indicated in the Journal.

Articles in the Journal do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editor and the Committee, and must not be reproduced without permission.

# Chairman's Message

Researching one's family history has been described by many as a most rewarding and absorbing hobby. I recall the time I delved through the parish chest in the little Somerset church of Oaks; I pulled out the earliest parish register, blew off the dust and after a brief search found what I had been years looking for, the baptism of my ancestor Robert Hawkings. The immense feeling of achievement is indescribable. Of course, for every success there are perhaps a dozen failures: those ancestors who don't appear to be recorded anywhere. Yet we can never be sure, having searched all the obvious sources we may wrongly conclude that no record exists.

A genealogist once wrote to me, "... for sixteen years I've searched for his place of birth; I've given up..." So, well armed with some details of his ancestor I tried a source apparently unknown to the gentleman. Within twenty minutes of searching, I had found "his" birth place.

In the last few years "new" sources have come to light and as time passes more material, unknown to us now, will become available for our research. Every family historian should keep an eye open for such material and report his findings to his society. Don't assume because you use it, that every other historian knows of its existence.

Our society is fortunate in being on the "doorstep" of the Public Record Offices which house all manner of national records, and St. Catherine's House, the repository of the records of the Registrar General. The local records of Middlesex are also nearby at the Middlesex Record Office, Westminster, and those for Greater London at County Hall.

The Guildhall Library in the City holds a large collection of printed works for the family historian, including an almost complete set of trade directories for the whole of England and Wales. Their archives department holds original documents relating to the city including many parish registers of city churches.

A great deal of the material members use has been compiled and indexed by enthusiastic amateurs. Almost every parish register transcript has been prepared by volunteers. Although thousands have been copied, many more thousands still await transcribing and indexing. Many rapidly decaying gravestones have been copied, but there is still a large volume of work awaiting.

Tombstones can often reveal information which simply doesn't appear elsewhere, yet they are rapidly eroding and many churchyards and cemeteries are being cleared without the monumental inscriptions being recorded. During summer months next year, we plan to commence copying the tombstones in our area. Your help is needed.

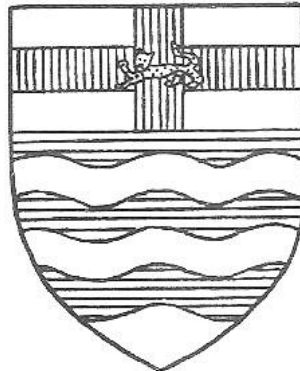
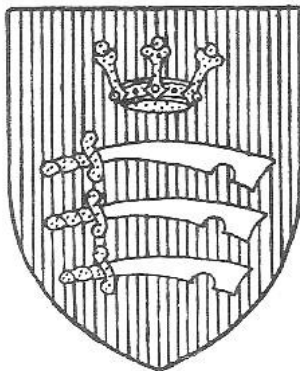
Our Society is not just concerned with West Middlesex, but aims to assist all family historians wherever their ancestors came from providing this involves British sources and records.

Because of the large area covered by the ancient county of Middlesex and the vast population here today, several family history societies have appeared in this area. We plan to arrange a co-ordinating team to liaise with each of the other Middlesex societies. In this way each society will be informed of all project work, such as transcribing of parish registers and copying of tombstones. It is hoped too, that indexes of such work as marriages and census records will be one joint venture with one central index.

May I wish each member every success with their research, good luck and happy hunting.

## A WEST MIDDLESEX ARMORY

We hope to scatter some coats of arms in odd corners of the Journal. If you come across one, whether personal or corporate, with a West Middlesex connection, please let the editor have a blazon for future use.



<p>MIDDLESEX COUNTY COUNCIL 1889-1965 Granted 7 November 1910</p>	<p>LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL 1889-1965 Granted 29 July 1914</p>	<p>GREATER LONDON COUNCIL 1964- Granted 1 September 1965</p>
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## ***News & Events***

### OUR NEIGHBOURING SOCIETIES

The list below shows the five other Family History Societies now functioning in the Greater London area. All but East Surrey were inaugurated in July 1978 at the same time as our own society. Membership details may be obtained (enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope, please) from the addresses indicated.

- Central Middlesex Family History Society: D. E. Williams  
17 Northwick Avenue,  
Kenton,  
Middlesex HA3 0AA
- North Middlesex Family History Society: Miss G. Watson  
38 Churston Gardens,  
New Southgate,  
London N11 2NL
- East of London Family History Society: Dr. P. Ferdinando  
25 Repton Gardens,  
Gidea Park,  
Romford, Essex
- North West Kent Family History Society: Mrs. C. T. Drakes  
57 Cleanthus Road,  
Shooters Hill,  
London SE18 3DF
- East Surrey Family History Society: Mrs. H. Dixon  
Court Farm Lodge,  
1 Eastway,  
Epsom, Surrey

Like our own society, all these have affiliated, or applied to affiliate, to the Federation of Family History Societies. A full list of affiliated societies throughout the country may be obtained on application (with stamped addressed envelope, please) to the General Secretary of the Federation:

C. R. Chapman  
The Drovers,  
Cambridge,  
Gloucestershire GL2 7AN

### TITLE OF THE JOURNAL

This issue of the Journal is published without any specific title, but the Committee favour using one if an appropriate title can be found, bearing in mind that it should be simple without misleading someone seeing it in a library catalogue as to our objects or area of interest. If you have any bright ideas, let us know. A year's free membership of the Society will be awarded to any entry which the Committee decides to adopt for use. Entries should be sent to the Secretary by 31 January 1979 please.

### FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

Our monthly meetings are now fixed to take place regularly on the second Friday of each month (except Bank Holidays) at 7.30 pm in Hounslow Manor School. For the meeting room please enter by the Prince Regent Road entrance, off Hounslow High Street. The nearest underground station is Hounslow Central, and car parking can be found in Holloway Street. The forthcoming programme is as follows:

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 8 December 1978 | Eileen Stage will speak on County Record Offices and their records |
| 12 January 1979 | Chris Watts will speak on Tracing Army Ancestors                   |
| 9 February 1979 | Problems & Queries evening   |

The programme for meetings on the following dates will be announced later:

9 March 1979, 20 April (note third Friday to avoid Bank Holiday), 11 May, 8 June, and 13 July.

### WHERE TO STAY ON THE ARCHIVE TRAIL

The Federation of Family History Societies has drawn up a list of its members who are prepared to provide reasonably priced overnight accommodation in various parts of the country for visitors to record repositories. If you are planning any trips, our Secretary, Brenda Chart, can provide you with details at any of our meetings.

### SAVING LEGAL ARCHIVES

One of our committee members, Chris Watts, caused some discussion by his letter in The Times of 25 September 1978 on legal archives, a major field of records which have as yet received little public concern for their fate. He drew attention to official records falling out of their proper custody by District Court Registries, and of other records indifferently kept or destroyed by the legal profession. His suggestions drew support from a number of quarters, but the financial burden if solicitors had to introduce better arrangements themselves was pointed out.

### THE BUTLER DYNASTY

The Times of 24 July 1978 used the occasion of Lord Butler's retirement as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, for an interesting account by Ian Bradley, of the association of his forebears with Oxford and Cambridge. This began in 1794 when George Butler, grandson of the town crier of Rye, became Senior Wrangler at Cambridge. At least twelve of his descendants were fellows of Oxbridge colleges, one of them, the husband of Josephine Butler the feminist, another the contemporary psephologist Dr. David Butler, as well as including a Dean of Peterborough and a Dean of Gloucester, two headmasters of Harrow and one of Haileybury, several professors, and two Masters of Trinity.

### NATIONAL PEDIGREE INDEX

This has been established by the Society of Genealogists in order to build up an index of pedigrees researched or being researched, which cover at least three generations in the male line, resident in the British Isles. The index will record on simple slips the surname, period, and locality, and special features such as continuity of occupation, religious denomination, or unusual Christian names, plus the name and address of the compiler or repository of the pedigree. A search in the index will cost £1 per surname, per county, refundable if the result is negative. But it costs nothing to register pedigree slips in the index, and obviously the usefulness of the index depends on growing numbers of people who have researched pedigrees notifying the fact to the index. Only brief details are required for the index, not the pedigrees themselves. Applications for a search, or for the slips on which to record pedigree holdings should be made (with stamped addressed envelope please) to the:

**National Pedigree Index, c/o Society of Genealogists, 37 Harrington Gardens, London SW7 4JX**

### COURSES ON FAMILY HISTORY

We have received details of a number of courses taking place during the winter months. Chris Watts, of our Society, is giving a course at Sunbury College on Thursday evenings at 7.30 pm starting on 11 January 1979. This will concentrate on sources for tracing ancestors back to 1837, and will last for five weeks initially. Phone him for further details - **Ashford (Middx) 51485**

### FAMILY HISTORY SERVICES

Have a number of residential weekend courses at Fittleworth, near Chichester, Sussex.

Beginners: 1 - 3 Dec 1978; and 1- 3 Jun 1979

The Poor and their Records (16-19c): 2 - 4 March 1979

The cost per head including tuition, accommodation and food is from £16.50 for each course. Further details from:

**Family History Society, 45 Falcon Crescent, Flitwick, Bedfordshire**

### THE INSTITUTE OF HERALDIC & GENEALOGICAL STUDIES

Has several courses of classes on Saturdays 10.30 - 16.30 at  
**Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7HT**

Heraldry & History: various dates Nov 1978 - Mar 1979

Family History: various dates Sep 1978 - Mar 1979

Genealogical Research & Method: various dates Sep 1978 - Feb 1979

Palaeography for the Genealogist: various dates Oct 1978 - Feb 1979

The course fee is £12.50, or £3.50 for a day session, further details may be obtained from:

**The Registrar of the Institute, Northgate, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1BA**



**CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
WEST MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

1. TITLE The name of the organisation shall be the West Middlesex Family History Society.
  
2. OBJECTS The objects of the Society shall be:
  - (a) To bring together those interested in family history and genealogy, primarily in West Middlesex and West London.
  - (b) To help co-ordinate research and transcription of records within our area.
  - (c) To carry out such other activities as are relevant to a family history society.
  
3. MEMBERS There shall be three categories of members as follows:
  - (a) Individual membership
  - (b) Family membership
  - (c) Corporate membershipThe membership list shall be available to any member on request.
  
4. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
  - (a) The Executive Committee shall consist of a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, together with not less than two other committee members.
  - (b) The Executive Committee shall administer the affairs of the Society and shall meet at least four times in each year and shall determine the rules and procedures to govern its own meetings. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of three of its members.
  - (c) The Secretary of the Executive Committee shall circulate with the agenda for the Annual General Meeting a list of candidates proposed for election to the Executive Committee. The names of proposed candidates must be submitted to the Secretary of the Executive Committee so as to arrive not less than fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting. If there are more candidates than vacancies on the Executive Committee the Chairman shall appoint two scrutineers to hold a ballot and shall announce the result at the end of the meeting. If there are fewer candidates than vacancies, further nominations may be accepted at the meeting, at the discretion of the Chairman.
  - (d) Minutes of the proceedings of the Executive Committee shall be taken by the Secretary and entered in the Minute Book. They shall be confirmed at the next relevant meeting and signed by the Chairman as correct.
  - (e) All elected members of the Executive Committee shall retire each year but shall be eligible for re-election. No individual shall continue on the Executive Committee for more than three consecutive years; such an individual may however, be re-elected after the lapse of one year.
  - (f) If any elected member of the Executive Committee shall be unable to complete his or her full term of office, the said Committee may co-opt any other eligible person to serve until the next Annual General Meeting.

(g) The Executive Committee may appoint annually sub-committees, either ad hoc or permanently, which under the authority and with the approval of the Executive Committee shall be empowered to deal with particular questions. The Executive Committee may nominate such persons as they consider appropriate, including persons not members of the Executive Committee.

(h) The Executive Committee shall lay down the form and manner in which candidates shall apply for membership of the Society.

(i) The Executive Committee shall be empowered to elect Honorary Members of the Society.

## 5. SUBSCRIPTIONS

(a) The Executive Committee shall from time to time determine the annual subscriptions for each category of membership which shall be subject to confirmation at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting called under Section 8.

(b) Any member who is six months in arrears with their subscription shall be notified by the Treasurer. If the said member is still in arrears after twelve months, he or she will automatically cease to be a member of the Society.

## 6. FINANCE

(a) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for the administration of the Society's funds. The Executive Committee shall have power to invest funds in Trustee Securities or to place them on deposit or loan with financial institutions approved at the Annual General Meeting, or to hold them in a current account in a clearing bank or to invest funds in freehold or leasehold property. The Executive shall not however, raise loans or mortgages chargeable on the funds or properties of the Society without the express approval of an Annual General meeting.

(b) Two members of the Executive Committee, one being the Treasurer or his appointed deputy, shall sign all cheques and other documents governing the finances of the Society.

(c) The Treasurer shall keep a regular account of all receipts and payments in a manner approved by the Executive Committee and shall present to each meeting of the Executive Committee an interim statement showing the current state of the Society's finances.

(d) The income and property of the Society wheresoever derived shall be applied solely to the promotion of the objects of the Society as set forth in the Constitution and no part thereof shall be transferred to any person without the approval of the Executive Committee.

(e) No payment shall be made from the Society's funds to any individual member of the Society except as payment for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on the Society's business and with the approval of the Executive Committee.

(f) The Society's financial year shall end on 30 September. The audited accounts shall be submitted to the Executive Committee at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting.

(g) Two Honorary Auditors shall be appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

(h) Individual members of the Executive Committee must declare any personal financial interest in any matter under discussion and shall not vote on the matter in question.

#### 7. THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting shall be held at such time and such place as shall be decided by the Executive Committee. The business of the Annual General Meeting shall be to:

- (a) Receive reports on activities of the past year from the Chairman.
- (b) May elect a Patron, President and/or Vice-President.
- (c) Receive and approve the audited accounts of the Society.
- (d) Elect officers and other members of the Executive Committee of the Society.
- (e) Transact any other business on the agenda.

#### 8. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Executive Committee shall have the power to call an Extraordinary General Meeting and shall be bound to do so within twenty-eight days of receiving notice in writing specifying the business and signed by not less than one third of the membership for the time being of the Society. The business to be transacted must appear on the agenda and no other business may be discussed.

#### 9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution can be altered or amended only at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society and then only if the proposed alteration or amendment receives two thirds of the votes of members of the society present at the meeting.

#### 10. RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Any member who wishes to withdraw from the Society shall give notice in writing to the Secretary of the Executive Committee.

#### 11. EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

If the conduct of a member shall be judged such as gravely to damage the welfare of the Society as a whole then a full meeting of the Executive Committee may expel the member concerned. The member shall have the right to appeal against this decision at the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting, at which he or she shall have the right to speak but not to vote. The motion for expulsion must be carried by two thirds of the members of the Society present at the relevant meeting.

#### 12. DISSOLUTION OF THE SOCIETY

A motion for the dissolution of the Society may be submitted to the Executive Committee three months before the Annual General Meeting or in accordance with the rules governing an Extraordinary General Meeting. The motion shall be passed if it receives two thirds of the votes cast by members of the Society present

at the relevant meeting. If and when such a motion shall have been passed, so much of the assets of the Society shall be realised as may be necessary to discharge all liabilities of the Society. Any remaining assets shall be transferred or given as the meeting may direct. The meeting shall decide to whom to present the archives, records, library and similar materials owned by the Society at the time of its dissolution.

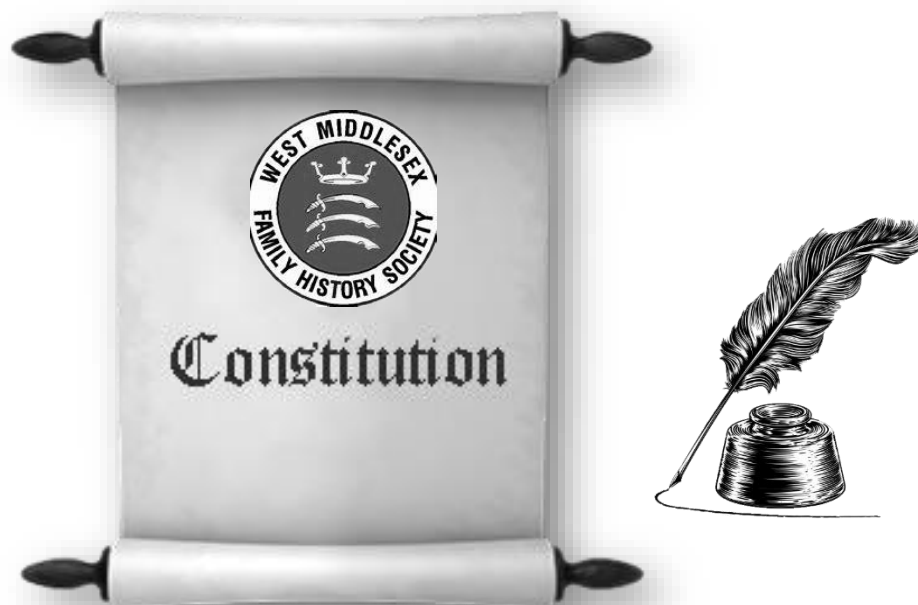
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The rates of subscription for the various categories of membership referred to in Section 3 were set at the following levels by resolution of the Inaugural Meeting on 19 July 1978:

Individual Membership £4 per annum

Family Membership £6 per annum

Corporate Membership £4 per annum



# **The Functions of a Family History Society**

*Edited record of the address given at the Inaugural Meeting on 19 July 1978 by John L. Rayment, Chairman of the Essex Family History Society*

It would be of interest to examine the relationship between genealogy and family history. Genealogy has been described as the bare bones of the historical development of a family. It has been called academic, even narrow. Family history is described variously as fleshing out those bones, putting the leaves on the family tree, or as genealogy plus environment. There are differences between the two approaches, but they are essentially the same. There are beginners who regard themselves as genealogists; equally some of the leaders in the field describe their work as family history.

In the past this branch of history has been of particular interest to social classes from the top downwards - but not very far down. Genealogy and heraldry were closely involved with social levels. As democratic ideas evolved, awareness grew that we all had roots, that humble beginnings were worth looking for, that there were high and low spots in all pedigrees. More recently has come the knowledge that some accepted pedigrees were unacceptable. A great deal of root-pruning has been done in the name of respectability.

Genealogical researchers once tended to beaver away on their own, benefiting slowly from their own experience, and even more slowly from that of others. The writing-up of a family history inevitably comes at the end of research, and so may never get written up at all, much less published. Thus, we come to the first function of a family history society. Communication is, in my view, the most important. We all have some information, and want more. Someone else may have it. We can therefore help each other. Communication is fundamental to all other functions of a family history society.

Most of the records you will use have been compiled by enthusiastic amateurs. These folk have taken primary records, ancient, faded, often in Latin, often almost indecipherable, and they have translated, transcribed, and indexed what is after all part of history. History is often spoken of as an abstract thing, but this cannot be so. Like children, history is being conceived all the time. If it is not recorded, then it is in a sense aborted and will have no life.

It is essential that a family history society should not become a cosy collection of people researching their own background exclusively. A family history society has a duty not just to its present members, but to collect and preserve all it can for

the future. A London family history society is in a unique position. The opportunities are immense. I hope you will rise to the occasion.

There are in formation five London family history societies, and the East Surrey Society already flourishing. It would be worth while in due course, I think, to form a committee representing these six, a London Region Committee to co-ordinate their activities within the Federation. Boundaries of activity between these six must never become a source of disagreement. There is enough work for all and to spare.

That brings me to another point. It must not be genealogy versus family history, and more important never the Society of Genealogists versus the Federation of Family History Societies. The two approaches are complementary. There will always be a need for a central society to which we can turn for authoritative answers. It is our anchor and our inspiration. But in today's scene with 17,500 people, thousands of them beginners, eagerly embracing our favourite subject, there must be a coverage of local societies. Your society may be autonomous, but it should never become isolated.

Family history is about people and places; local history is about places and people, a difference of viewpoint only. Seek out your neighbouring societies of all kinds and co-operate with them. They may have Monumental Inscription records, parish register transcripts, or census analysis which interests you. We are not the only people to use these records. It does not matter who does work in the record rescue field, provided it is done and the results are available. By the same token make copies of your own work available to others.

The strength of a society lies partly in its members and partly in its committee. If the members do not contribute thought or effort, you may become moribund. If you do some transcribing or indexing, you will be adding to the information we all need. Your own family researches may seem more important. But remember, every time you find a parish register un-transcribed, a will not extracted, or a gravestone destroyed uncopied, then in theory it is your fault because you have done nothing about it. Offer some of your time to these projects. Your committee should see the tasks are well organised. Some who are willing may not be mobile. To these the provision of photocopies means you can transcribe in your own home. If you are unskilled at reading early handwriting, start with the later parts and work backwards as your skill develops.

If you participate you will benefit present and future genealogy, increase your own knowledge, and gain in stature. You may develop a special subject. Everybody is an expert on something, even if it is only your own bit of family. Try and make occasional contributions to your society's journal. It does not have to be a learned article. It can be a short paragraph, or an odd entry in a parish register.

Those who have sometimes deplored the unhelpfulness of the county council, or the bishop, may take heart. Provided you have good ambassadors it is surprising what you can achieve. In Essex, we made contact with the Church about recording MI's. We told the diocesan registry we wanted to preserve historical material on memorials. We would make a scale plan and an index and give a copy to the parish. Can you help us? They did, and they do. We are told in good time of every faculty concerning gravestones, and about redundancies. One of our members with natural history interests showed concern about our scrubbing lichens from gravestones. So, we explained what we wanted to do to the British Lichens Society. They replied very cordially, that provided we kept the area of scrubbing to a minimum and used only clean water, they had no objection. With matters like access to national archives or search fees, a letter from your society will carry more weight than one from an individual. As a team you can attempt projects beyond the reach of an individual. If you make a good job of your projects, and don't make yourself a nuisance - well, a little bit of a nuisance but not objectionable - you become a voice for the family historian in your area and a body to be reckoned with.

To become a useful society, you will need to increase your membership. When we circulated you, names were taken from those joining the Society of Genealogists since 1975. You should not, I think, restrict your membership in any way. A mixed membership and the interaction of different skills and experience will enrich you all. Because you will attract beginners all the time, encourage your experienced members to contribute to your programmes of beginners' lectures.

The recording of Monumental Inscriptions is the most urgent task for the family historian today, because they are all being cleared or corroding away. The Federation has started a five-year programme to copy all surviving uncopied inscriptions in the country. There are three booklets on the subject. Jeremy Jones's "How to Record a Churchyard" is really intended for the archaeologist and not suitable for us. Dr. White's "Monuments and their Inscriptions" published by the Society of Genealogists is extremely useful. But I can't resist recommending my own booklet "Notes on the Recording of Monumental

Inscriptions". The second edition - it sounds good, doesn't it? - should be out soon, published by the Federation at 35p (50p post free).

There are many other tasks for your society. I think you need a survey of your members' interests, not only genealogical but others which may be useful. Search out your local companies; they may have archives. Make a library survey; what are their holdings on records of interest? Then there are lists of deeds, changes in street names. All this is the sort of information you want to find out. This is where family history is more embroidered than plain genealogy.

So here we are, a body of people whose pleasure it is to expose in public our obsession with our ancestors. We need to communicate. I hope I have communicated to you some of my enthusiasm. Having been involved in raising one family history society, the Essex, it gives me great pleasure to be in at the start of another. May I wish you good fortune, and may you build a great future and a great past.

# WMFHS





# **A Brief Guide to Tracing Your Family Tree**

by Michael J. and Christopher T. Watts

This note is intended to be a concise guide to assist the beginner in getting started on tracing his own family tree. The main material available to the searcher has been grouped into three categories - if you ever plan to trace your family further, attack Number 1 now; you can always leave numbers 2 and 3 until later.

- (1) Your own and family documents (and photographs) and family memories.
- (2) Primary Sources: Birth, Marriage & Death Certificates; Census; Parish Registers.
- (3) Ancillary Sources for the 19th Century: Wills; Directories; Cemeteries.

## **1. FAMILY DOCUMENTS AND MEMORIES**

The first vital step is to contact all living relatives, particularly those of “mature years”, in order to collect as much material as possible. Borrow or copy down all the documents you can, and note down all the biographical material and anecdotes you can from older relatives; see if someone has already traced a tree; it’s time-consuming enough (even if it has the fun of a never-ending crossword-puzzle) without duplicating effort. Besides, personal memories are far more extensive than official records; although the former may not be precisely accurate, dates can always (and should) be checked. Photographs, diaries, notebooks - all sorts of personal material can be interesting in themselves, and very useful for starting off a family tree search.

## **2. PRIMARY SOURCES**

Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates

Civil Registration started in July 1837. Registers are now kept by the local Superintendent Registrar, and a copy sent to London, to “Somerset House” (now St. Catherine’s House - for address see below). At St. Catherine’s House there are separate indexes to Birth, Marriage and Death for the whole of England and Wales, for every quarter of each year from 1837. First obtain all the certificates you can from relatives; for instance, your father’s birth certificate may date from 1900 or before and it will give your grandfather’s name and grandmother’s maiden name, also an address. Next, you need the marriage certificate of these grandparents; if you already know where they were married, get this certificate from the local Superintendent Registrar (address in the phone book) where the event took place. If you don’t know the precise date, you should try to estimate it within three years either way before approaching the Registrar - to do this you need to know the approximate date of birth of your father’s eldest brother or sister.

The marriage certificate of your grand-parents dates from, say, 1875 and it gives the full names of your grandparents, their ages, residences and, most important, their fathers names and occupations. Now you can aim to find your grandfather's birth certificate - Thomas Watts (in our case) was 22 when he married in 1875 so look for a birth in 1853; of course his death certificate also indicates his year of birth - he died aged 75 in 1928, so you could also calculate 1853 for his year of birth; otherwise try to get to St Catherine's House, London, search the indexes yourself and ask for a certificate to be sent to you. (This is £3.50 cheaper than writing to St Catherine's House and asking them to search for you.)

Now you know your great-grandfather's name - James Watts; grandfather's name Thomas Watts, born 1853; you know the town or village they lived in, and you possibly know a street; also, you should have names of sisters and brothers of your grandfather. The next step is to make use of all these pieces of information to find your family in the Census Returns. Don't stop at 1853 of course! You keep tracing back as far as you can, to about 1837, if possible. It is expensive to buy certificates nowadays, so you will probably keep it to a minimum.

#### Census Returns of 1841, 1851, 1861 and 1871

Census have been taken of the population since 1801; the information is confidential for 100 years. From 1801 to 1831, heads were counted; in 1841 names were recorded, in family groups, by village or town; in 1851, 1861 and 1871 however - and this is vital to the genealogist - place of birth was recorded too.

The Census Returns are at the Public Record Office in London and many City or Town Libraries have copies for that town and the surrounding area, in a Local History Section. You can get a reader's ticket free from the PRO, after obtaining and completing an application form.

To use the Census Returns, you need to know the family names (James Watts, mariner; wife Margaret; children Catherine, Thomas (b-1853), Mary Anne, John, James and Robert), and an address. If the family was in a small village, of a few hundred people, that is sufficient; you will find them in ¼ hour. If they were in a small town, of a few thousand, it will take longer, because the Census is arranged by streets, and the streets crop up in a rather random order. If they were in a large town or city, you must know the street name, and even then, quite a painstaking search is needed however, London and several other cities do have street indexes at the PRO for the 1851 and 1871 Censuses.

Eventually, after much searching, you locate James Watts and his family in the 1871 Census; James was aged 48, and his birthplace is given as Happisburgh in Norfolk; now one can proceed to the Parish Registers of Happisburgh, and look for James's baptism in 1823.

### Parish Registers

The next step is to look for the baptism of James Watts in Happisburgh in 1823; you should also have his marriage certificate, say about 1845-50, and this will give his father's name. If the Christian name is a common one, there may be more than one baptism about that date, and the parents' names are needed to distinguish which one you want.

Parish Registers were started in 1538, but most survive only from 1597; copies were also made and sent to the bishop, (Bishop's Transcripts). The chances are that you will find the Parish Registers still with the incumbent of the church, while the Bishop's Transcripts are at the County Record Office or Archives. Many registers have been deposited at Record Offices too, and copies have been made by local Historical or Genealogical Societies. You will need to enquire in your own County or Region as to what is available. Remember that the incumbent is entitled to considerable fees for searches in his registers - be generous to those who have cared for details which your ancestors omitted to record; most clerics will reach an agreement as to fees, however it may be cheaper to search elsewhere first, and then verify your finds in the original register.

You will be very lucky if you find your ancestors lived in one parish from the early 19th century back to the 16th century - what IS likely, is that they moved from one parish to another within a small area. Accordingly, you will need to search in the records of adjacent parishes. If your family was of non-conformist tendencies, the registers you seek will probably be in the Public Record Office (Chancery Lane); Methodist, Baptist and many other registers prior to 1837 have been deposited there.

### 3. ANCILLARY SOURCES

In parallel with the main route described above, there are auxiliary sources for the 19th and early 20th centuries, which will help to get you started, and also fill out your family tree as broadly as possible.

#### Wills

From 1858, wills have been proved in the High Court, Probate Division (now the Family Division), whereas before that date they were proved by the Church. The indexes to wills are annual ones, and are kept at several Probate Registries throughout the country. They may be consulted free of charge, and provide a very useful source of information in themselves; if you know approximately when a relative died, and reckon that he or she left a will, then you can soon trace his date of death. Copies of all wills are kept, and may be seen for 10p each, at the Principal Probate Registry in Somerset House; alternatively, you can order a copy of the original will from the Registry which proved the will. From it you will find out many details of family relationships. Not everyone left a will, of course, but many

did by 1910-1920, so this can be a good way of getting going. It is fairly inexpensive also!

### Directories

If your ancestors lived in a large town or city at the turn of the century, they were almost certainly listed in a Directory. (e.g. Kelly's, Slater's or Ward's). These have become less common nowadays, but you will find a good stock of Directories for your ancestor's town, in the Reference Library of that town. This can be a good way of finding possible addresses to look for in the Census Returns. (Again, it is very cheap!)

### Cemeteries

Do not sound especially attractive, but cemetery records and inscriptions on gravestones can be very useful. If you know when an ancestor died, either from family records or from a search at St. Catherine's House or in the will indexes, you can write to the local Cemetery Superintendent, who will advise you if the burial took place there, and he may be able to give details of other family burials in the same plot. You will need to visit the Cemetery to note down any inscription, and these may even give a date and place of birth, if you are very lucky!

## 4. FURTHER WORK

Be warned - this hobby, though fascinating, is never-ending! You can make of it what you wish - trace your own name as far as you can, or trace the other lines of your family too. There are many different records which exist, both for the 19th century and earlier. There are extensive records for soldiers, seamen (naval and merchant), clergy, doctors, lawyers and many trades - also for apprentices. Wills are preserved back to the 14th century in some cases. You will need to refer to some good genealogical guide for further searching.

**The Society of Genealogists**, 37 Harrington Gardens, London SW7 4JX, has a good library, where non-members may search, on payment of a fee, for a half-day or whole-day. This library includes copies of a great many parish registers and monumental inscriptions. Other useful addresses are:

**Public Record Office, Chancery Lane**, London WC2 1LR, holds the Census Returns (actually in a nearby building in Portugal Street) and the Non-Parochial Registers together with all the legal records.

**Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew**, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU, has all the records of more modern government departments including Army, Navy, Merchant Navy and Apprenticeship records.

**General Register Office, St. Catherine's House**, 10 Kingsway, London WC2B 6JB. (Certificates by post now cost an iniquitous £6.00; they are £2.50 if applied for in person; they are also £2.50 at a Superintendent Registrar's, by person or by post.)

**Principal Registry, Family Division**, High Court of Justice, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LP holds the indexes to, and copies of, all wills proved since 1858.

A different set of addresses apply if your ancestors strayed out of England and Wales (e.g. to Scotland).

#### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

How to Trace Your Ancestors	Meda Mander
Tracing Your Ancestors	A. J. Camp
Genealogy for Beginners	A. J. Willis
In Search of Ancestry	G. K. Hamilton-Edwards
Your Family Tree	David Iredale
Enjoying Archives	David Iredale
Wills & their Whereabouts (1974)	A. J. Camp
Wills and Where to Find Them	J. S. Gibson
The Parish Chest	W. E. Tate



## *Research*

Transcription and Indexing -  
The Society's Task

by V. E. Gale



Amongst the objects of any Family History Society (and our Constitution, printed elsewhere in this Journal refers specifically to it) is the transcription and indexing of records which are vital to all our researches. We have all used indexes and copies of original records and know how valuable they are; in return for the work of those others who made those copies and indexes, we must be prepared to do our share and put something back for the benefit of future family historians.

There are so many records waiting to be transcribed and listed - settlement certificates, bastardy orders, prisoners transported to the penal colonies - those of us who have done some all have our favourite projects and the Society will encourage anyone to do whatever they regard as their pet project.

On a more mundane level though, there are some records which are key search areas and for which the Society should have a programme of copying, listing and indexing. They are these:

1. An Index to Marriages from the commencement of the registers to 1837. This ideally should cover the whole county to complete the work started by the late Mr. Percival Boyd, which can be consulted at the Society of Genealogists.
2. Parish Registers generally, 1813 to 1837. So often, registers previously copied go only to 1812. These transcriptions must be brought up to 1837 when Civil Registration started.
3. Census Records. Whilst these are easily accessible at the Public Records Office (and often at Public Libraries as well) an Index to Names would be invaluable - particularly in a densely populated county like Middlesex.
4. Monumental Inscriptions. A most urgent task is the recording of all memorials in all churchyards, burial grounds and cemeteries in our area. Whilst all the other records I have referred to are in safe custody (or are likely to be soon) and so will still be there for us to consult in the years to come, the memorials that our ancestors raised to their departed loved ones are fast disappearing - the ravages of weather, vandals, and parochial church councils clearing their graveyards to save on upkeep costs are all taking their toll of these valuable records.
5. Strays. These are the records that we all come across from time to time of someone (not necessarily the subject of our search) who appears out of

geographical context of the record being examined. Thus, when we find in a Middlesex Parish Register an entry like “A.B. of (say) Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey married C.D., spinster of this parish” we have found in the bridegroom, A.B., a Surrey Stray. There is an arrangement amongst Family History Societies to interchange notes of these Strays as they are found and the receiving Society then publishes them in its Journal and sets up an Index, which over the years builds up into a useful tool to locate elusive ancestors who moved from their ‘home’ territory.

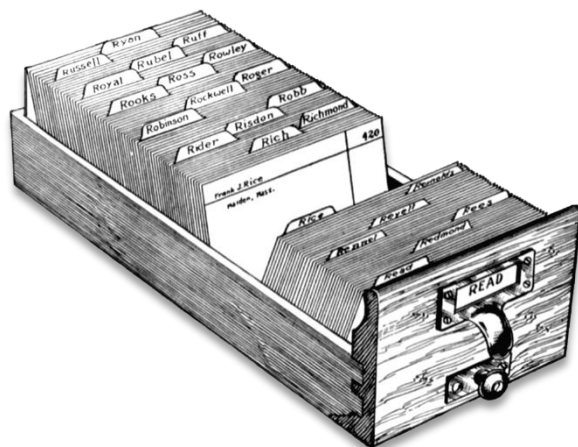
Of all these projects, the most pressing is clearly the copying of Monumental Inscriptions (MI’s). The Federation of Family History Societies (of which we are now a member) has set a target of five years for the task to be completed for the whole country - and one of those years is now gone! We must play our part in our county and it is to be hoped that individual members or groups of members will cooperate in surveying and copying MI’s in their own localities. More on this later.

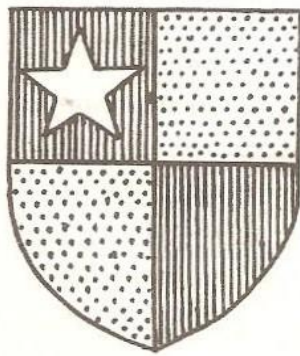
Having assumed responsibility for coordinating the Society’s effort in its transcription and indexing work, I am anxious to find out what has already been done so as to avoid duplication. Anyone who has any information on the subject is invited to write to me (V. E. Gale, 53 Liberty Lane, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey KT15 1NQ) or let me have a note at one of our meetings. In this way we can start to assess the size of the task before us and draw up a programme.

Additionally, if anyone finds any Strays, do let me have a note of them (the full entry and an indication of the record in which it was found) so that we can join in the “exchange” arrangement that I have referred to and set up our own index.

Finally, I should be grateful for any information that any member has, concerning indexes or transcriptions in Public Libraries or private hands, or on which members are currently working.

Further notes will follow on the results of this preliminary enquiry in later issues of the Journal.





<p>de VERE Earl of Oxford 12C - 1702  (see page 23)</p>	<p>RICH Earl of Holland 1624 Baron Kensington 1622 - 1721</p>	<p>ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON 1899 - 1965 Granted 23 May 1901</p>
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#### WEST MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY AREA OF INTEREST

As stated elsewhere in the journal, our interests are family history and genealogy in general, but Middlesex records in particular as far as sources are concerned. Where strictly parochial matters are concerned, we see our particular area of interest as covering the following parishes of the ancient county of Middlesex: Acton, Ashford, East Bedfont, Chelsea, Chiswick, Cowley, Cranford, West Drayton, Ealing, Feltham, Fulham, Greenford, Hampton, Hanwell with Brentford, Hanworth, Harlington, Harmondsworth, Hayes with Norwood, Hammersmith, Heston with Hounslow, Hillingdon with Uxbridge, Isleworth, Kensington, Laleham, Littleton, Perivale, Shepperton, Staines, Stanwell, Sunbury, Teddington, and Twickenham



# Topography

## KENSINGTON

by Robert Cook



This ancient parish of Middlesex lies about four miles west of London, separated from the Thames to the south by Chelsea, with which it now forms a Greater London Borough. Its population history reflects four stages of development.

Rural Village - There was a Domesday population of 26 economically active males, perhaps just over 100 people in all, in the year 1086. The early parish registers suggest a population of about 300 in 1540, and this had risen to about 2,000 in the 1680s. Kensington began as a Saxon settlement, and there was a church existing by the time of Domesday, although much of the area was still wooded. From the twelfth century until 1539 the church of St Mary Abbots and the manor of Abbots Kensington were held by the Abbey of Abingdon, Berkshire.

The remaining manors of Earls Court, Notting Barns and West Town were held for much of the medieval period by the de Veres, Earls of Oxford. Probate jurisdiction was with the Archdeaconry Court of Middlesex. Two tax assessment lists for 1649 and 1653, showing landowners and also some names of tenants, have survived among private papers in the Bodleian.

Kensington Library has copies of these, as well as a transcript of probate inventories 1672-1734, and also of the parish registers (starting 1539 and still with the incumbent). The last show the principal long-settled families in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to have been Arnold, Bush, Butler, Finch, Freeman, Gotobed, Harding, Hill, Ilford, Peacock, Rich, Rowbery and Taylor. But such names become less easy to identify as the population became both larger and more mobile, and Kensington entered its second phase.

Rural Parish dominated by London - From 2,000 in the 1680s, population rose to 8,680 in 1801 and 26,834 in 1841. The proximity and influence of London made its effect in two ways. First, the area was already becoming a fashionable rural retreat in the early seventeenth century, centred on Holland House, seat of the Earls of Holland who held the principal manors from that time.

The manorial court rolls of Abbots Kensington (1575-1932) and Earls Court (1554-1856) are in Kensington Library. There were other great houses in the area, although it was nothing to compare with the “village of palaces” that was Chelsea. A parish charity school existed from 1645. The fashionable influx continued, particularly after William III acquired Kensington Palace in 1689. This attracted a certain aristocratic settlement around Kensington village, later to be called “the old court suburb”.

At the same time London also affected the agricultural economy. The land had earlier been enclosed, and was increasingly turned over to market gardening to supply the London market, and was also exploited for sand and gravel for building in the metropolis. The growth of population led to the subdivision of the ancient parish to produce by 1837, the new ecclesiastical parishes of Holy Trinity Brompton (1829, registers with the incumbent) and St. Barnabas, Addison Road (1829). There were also at least half a dozen early dissenting congregations (Unitarian, Independent 1793, Roman Catholic 1811, Wesleyan Methodist 1818, Baptist 1823, and Presbyterian) Population then took off more rapidly as Kensington entered its third phase.

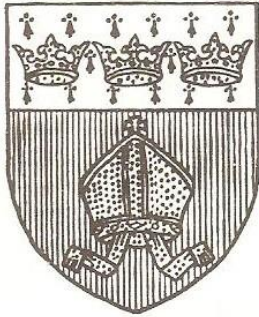
Western Suburb of London - Population rose to 44,053 in 1851 and 175,686 in 1921. From the second quarter of the nineteenth century until the first world war, almost the whole area was built up residentially and became physically joined to London. Building embraced aristocratic town residences only a little less fashionable than Mayfair and Belgravia. In Brompton and South Kensington, extensive middle-class villas encouraged by the extension of underground railways from the city. The area was to become very much a “blue-plaque” zone with many famous residents in the nineteenth century.

There was also a very high number of domestic servants; more than one household in four employed a servant in 1891, and there were many mews dwellings. There were also substantial areas of working-class housing in Notting Dale and around Portobello Road. Some was failed speculative building, subdivided and let out, creating a legacy of poor housing in some parts. Numerous little industries were established, like the various carpet cleaning works in North Kensington. During the process of building, some transient “shanty towns” appeared and were then superseded, accommodating in their time building, construction, and railway labourers, and the notorious “Piggeries and Potteries” of Notting Dale. These made the bricks and chimney pots which eventually drove the pig-keepers from North Kensington, and covered the market gardens of South Kensington with stuccoed terraces and museums.

Two major cemeteries were opened, at Kensal Green (General Cemetery Company 1833) and Brompton Road (West of London & Westminster Cemetery 1839). Several local newspapers were published from the mid-nineteenth century (copies in Kensington Library). The Vestry was replaced by the Metropolitan Borough of Kensington in 1899 and renamed the Royal Borough in 1901.

There had long been some foreigners, Dutch and then Hanoverians and others, in the court suburb. Now the poorer housing areas attracted waves of immigrants, from elsewhere in Britain, from Ireland, and from central and eastern Europe. Eventually a number of synagogues and foreign churches were established - Russian, Serbian, Armenian etc. But after the first world war population stabilised, and even declined slightly, marking a fourth stage in development.

Inner London area - Gradually, but particularly in the last generation, the residential suburb has become part of the expanding central area of London itself. Some of the few remaining open spaces were filled with public buildings and exhibition halls. Houses gave way to offices, embassies and hotels. Retail shops gave way to department stores, luxury trades, entertainments and catering. Substantial residential areas remain, but the transient and cosmopolitan make-up of the population has increased enormously.



ROYAL BOROUGH  
OF KENSINGTON AND  
CHELSEA  
Granted  
10 December 1965

In 1961 the population was 171,272 of whom more than a third were born outside Great Britain. There were some 12,000 from Ireland, 22,000 from the Commonwealth (including about 4,000 from India and Pakistan and over 5,000 from the Caribbean), 22,000 from foreign countries (including some 2,000 from Poland, 1,400 from Spain, and over 1,000 from Russia}.

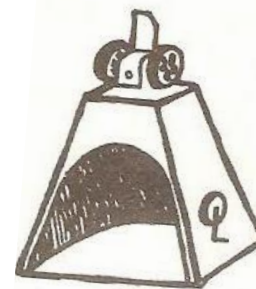
The total included more than 5,000 who were simply visitors or tourists. Most residents work elsewhere in London, mainly the City and West End, and the largest single employer locally is the Royal Borough Council.



## ***Aids to Research***

REGISTRATION DISTRICT REFERENCE  
NUMBERS  
at the General Registry Office

by V. E. Gale



At our recent meeting at West Drayton Public Library, some discussion took place concerning the obscurity of some of the Registration District names which occur in the General Registry Indexes of Births, Marriages and Deaths and most of us will know how disconcerting it can be when searching the Indexes, looking for a name in a geographical area with which we are not acquainted, to find a promising entry registered in a district, the name of which is completely unfamiliar.

What is perhaps generally not known is that there is a clue to the county in the first part of the reference number which follows the name of the Registration District in the Index. This number, it will be recalled, is in the form of either a Roman numeral (in the earlier years) or an Arabic number with a letter suffix (after 1851). A full list of these references is set out below.

### 1837 – 1851

I, II, III	-	London, Middlesex
IV	-	London, Surrey
V	-	Kent
VI	-	Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire
VII	-	Sussex, Hampshire
VIII	-	Wiltshire, Hampshire, Dorsetshire
IX	-	Cornwall, Devon
X	-	Devon, Somerset
XI	-	Somerset, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire
XII	-	Essex, Suffolk
XIII	-	Norfolk, Suffolk
XIV	-	Lincolnshire, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire
XV	-	Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire
XVI	-	Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire
XVII	-	Staffordshire
XVIII	-	Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire
XIX	-	Derbyshire, Cheshire, Flintshire
XX	-	Lancashire
XXI	-	Yorkshire, Lancashire
XXII	-	Yorkshire
XXIII	-	Yorkshire

- XXIV - Yorkshire, Durham
- XXV - Westmorland, Northumberland, Cumberland, Lancashire
- XXVI - Shropshire, Radnor, Pembrokeshire, Monmouth, Carmarthenshire, Brecon, Herefordshire, Glamorganshire
- XXVII - Montgomery, Merioneth, Anglesey, Caernarvon, Cardigan, Denbigh, Flint

After 1851

- 1a,b,c - London, Middlesex
- 1d - London, Kent, Surrey
- 2a - Surrey, Kent
- 2b - Sussex, Hampshire
- 2c - Berkshire, Hampshire
- 3a - Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Middlesex
- 3b - Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire, Suffolk
- 4a - Essex, Suffolk
- 4b - Norfolk
- 5a - Wiltshire, Dorset
- 5b - Devon
- 5c - Cornwall, Somerset
- 6a - Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire
- 6b - Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire
- 6c - Worcestershire, Warwickshire
- 6d - Warwickshire
- 7a - Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Rutland
- 7b - Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire
- 8a - Cheshire
- 8b,c,d,e - Lancashire
- 9a,b,c,d - Yorkshire
- 10a - Durham
- 10b - Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland
- 11a - Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, Monmouth, Pembrokeshire
- 11b - Anglesey, Brecon, Caernarvon, Cardigan, Denbigh, Flint, Montgomery, Merioneth, Radnor

# Editorial

The first issue of the West Middlesex Family History Society journal requires some words of introduction. With nearly a hundred contemporaries already in the field, some of them long-established, it may seem a very well-tilled field which we venture to enter. Our aim, however, is not to trespass but to find our own particular furrow, namely a slice of one of the most populous conurbations in the industrialised world. Nearly a million people live in it; a million people whose genetic ancestors, seven generations ago, must have numbered 128 million - more than the population of Britain, almost more than the population of Europe at the time. Nearly all of them, we may be sure, dwelt in the small settlements of that agricultural “world we have lost”, a world which, where it is not already lost, is today rapidly disappearing throughout the entire globe.

As our journal issues proceed, I hope they will build up a body of information, both topographical and resourceful, which will be of help to the genealogical researcher whose investigations bring him or her to the West Middlesex area. At the same time, I hope the journal will act as a forum for discussion, advice, and communication for all those interested in family history who live in our area, wherever their own researches take them.

In this first issue we record the formation of our society and reproduce its provisional constitution. John Rayment’s inaugural address sets out the kind of objects a society such as ours will hope to achieve. Then there are contributions on the society’s research programme, a topographical article, and items on techniques and aids to research. All these I hope to continue, covering different aspects and places.

In future editions I also hope to have some family histories, documents with genealogical content, results of our research, and articles on particular research sources, and on historical demography and history of the family. In addition, I hope there will always be plenty of news on events and developments in the genealogical world, and details of recent books, as well as notes, queries and correspondence.

Your contributions will be welcome. In particular our next issue may be an appropriate place to produce our first list of members’ research interests, so please let me know the details - the surname being researched, location or county, and an indication of the date range.



**WEST MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**  
(including West London)

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