



WEST MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

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WEST MIDDLESEX FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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If you wish to contact any of the above people, please use the postal or email address shown. In all correspondence please mark your envelope WMFHS in the upper left-hand corner; if a reply is needed, a SAE must be enclosed. Members are asked to note that receipts are only sent by request, if return postage is included.

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FUTURE MEETINGS



The following talks have been arranged:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| 21 st December
2023 | <u>Christmas Special.</u>

We are inviting members to bring along stories of their “brick walls” and how they broke through them – or how they are still battling with them! | Members! |
| 18 th January
2024 | <u>Dating and Identifying Family History Photographs</u>

Dating your family history photos is an important step in the Photogenealogy process and can help you identify unknown people in the photos. This talk will provide a step-by-step strategy that will help you to estimate the date a photo was taken. Important clues to look out for will be highlighted and useful resources will be discussed. | Ann Larkham |
| 15 th February
2024 | <u>Ancestors on the Move: Finding elusive ancestors.</u>

Dr Janet Few shares her expertise on why our ancestors migrated and techniques we can use to track them down. | Dr Janet Few |
| 21 st March 2024 | <u>West Middlesex Family History AGM</u>
Talk to be confirmed | |

When and How We Meet

Our meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at St John's Centre, St John's Road, Isleworth, TW7 6RU. Members and guests can attend in person or via Zoom.

St John's Centre is fully accessible. A small carpark is adjacent to the Centre which is also close to a mainline railway station (Isleworth – South Western Railways) and is well-served by local buses. The H22 now also runs where 117 & 267 are shown.



To access the Zoom meeting, go to and click <http://www.west-middlesex-fhs.org.uk/content/meetings.aspx> which will take you to our **Meetings** page. Halfway down the page you will see the instruction **Start Zoom**. Click on this and it will take you to the **Meeting Registration** page where you can fill in your details as requested.

Members of Hillingdon FHS (www.hfhs.org.uk) and East Surrey FHS (www.eastsurreyfhs.org.uk) have an open invitation to join any of our Zoom meetings without charge and offer our members a reciprocal invitation.

Contributions and Advertisements

The WMFHS Journal is your magazine so contributions of all kinds are welcome, not to say necessary! Your contributions can be articles, cries for help, snippets of information, whatever you like.

Articles should be between 800 and 1200 words in length. Longer articles can be submitted but may have to be published in two parts depending on space. Formatting: please set the document out as an A5 document with normal margins and single line spacing.

They can be emailed or sent by post. The editor's postal address is to be found on the inside of the front cover.

Email: editor@west-middlesex-fhs.org.uk

If emailing an article, please submit any illustrations in a separate folder from the actual article.

If a quote or image is used that is not the author's own, the attribution must be given. If the attribution is not known, please state this.

Copy submission dates:

15th January, 15th April, 15th July and 15th October.

Advertisements

NB: We only accept advertisements relating to family history.

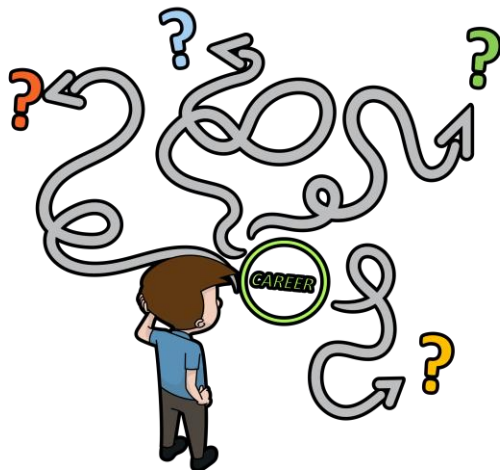
Rates:

Full page: £25 (members) £30 (non-members)

Half-page £10 (members) £15 (non-members)

Quarter-page £10 for both members and non-members.

Would you like help with your family history?



Since the pandemic, we have cancelled our monthly face-to-face Advice Sessions at Feltham Library and have now begun offering advice by email. This allows our more far-flung members to access help. Email us at advice@west-middlesex-fhs.org.uk with your query and give us an idea of what you want to achieve. If you prefer to make an enquiry by post, write to the Secretary (address on the inside cover of this Journal).

Other members may be able to help with your query. If you think putting your enquiry in the Journal may help, please ask us to do this. Replies can be directed to you through the advice email (see above) if you do not want your contact details published.

Please note: we do **not** offer a genealogical research service.

If you would like to use the services of a paid genealogical research agent, the best place to start is the Association of Genealogists and Researchers in Archives (www.agra.org.uk). They have a list of people who are trained and accredited and will help you interpret their findings.

Plea for help

We have a recent enquiry from Patricia Acock who sent us the photo below. It is the football team Acton Argyle for 1916-1917 and Patricia's grandfather is in the photo.? A quick check on *FindmyPast* revealed some newspaper articles from 1916-17, mentioning some of the team members. Does anyone know anything about the history of the team or suggest a further line of enquiry?





**You are cordially invited to the
West Middlesex Family History Society Christmas Party
Thursday 21st December at 7.30pm**

Our Christmas Party is a hybrid event as usual and we hope as many of you as possible will join in – either in person or remotely. Mince pies and mulled wine do not transmit well via Zoom but we have great hopes for the festive cheer.

This year we want to hear about your “brick walls”. How you broke them down or even how you are still banging your head against them.

Have any new resources – electronic or otherwise – helped you? Or are you doggedly going over old ground looking for things you might have missed?

If you would like to talk about your brick wall, please let the Secretary know asap!



Monthly Talks *Roland Bostock, Yvonne Masson, Ann Greene*



Introduction to DNA for Family Historians

August

Mia Bennett

This talk was a comprehensive introduction, and very well supported by a nine page handout providing much of the factual information relating to DNA testing. This handout is permanently available to members by selecting *Helpful Documents* from the *Members* tab on our website.

Mia covered:

- Why use DNA to help your research
- Types of DNA test
- Basics of DNA inheritance
- What you can learn from a DNA test
- Example of using DNA
- Choosing your DNA test

Why use DNA

All DNA testing comes with a public health warning. Test results will provide information on your biological parentage. There will be cases where assumed parents are not the biological parents, which in turn can derive from an illegitimate relationship, or perhaps an adoption that was kept secret within close family.

Setting those concerns aside, we all receive exactly 50% of our DNA from our mother, and 50% from our father. This translates into receiving an average of 25% of our DNA from each of our grandparents, but the percentages are not exact, and the further back we take it the more variation there will be from these averages. For instance we may share 30% of DNA with one uncle, but just 10% of DNA with another uncle. Sharing DNA with someone does of course mean that you have a shared ancestor, and one of your main follow-up activities after taking a DNA test will be attempting to identify those common ancestors for each person reported back to you as having some matching DNA.

Types of DNA

Most of your DNA is contained within the 46 chromosomes that exist in the nucleus of all your body cells. The chromosomes are formed as 23 pairs, with one half of each pair coming from each parent. One of these pairs is special as it determines the biological sex of the child, and is called the sex chromosome, whereas the remaining 22 pairs are called your 'autosomal' DNA. It is the DNA in the autosomal chromosomes that is used for autosomal DNA testing, which is by far the most common type of test. Surrounding each nucleus there is an area which holds your mitochondrial DNA. This is received entirely from your mother. The sex chromosomes are labelled X and Y; a male has one of each, females have two X chromosomes. So, it is whether you receive an X or a Y chromosome from your father that actually determines your own sex.

So, there are three types of DNA test: a Y chromosome test which provides information entirely from your male ancestry, a mitochondrial DNA test which provides information entirely from your maternal ancestry, and the most popular form of testing, an autosomal DNA test.

Basics of DNA inheritance

Going back to autosomal testing, its advantage is that matches can be found from all your ancestors, (4 grandparents, 8 gt grandparents, 16 gt gt grandparents etc), but this is also its limitation. Mia suggested that finding a common gt gt grandparent from a provided DNA match is quite realistic, but going back beyond that is becoming guesswork.

Inheritance of the Y chromosome is somewhat different. As that is entirely from the male line, it does not change except when a mutation occurs, which is relatively infrequently. Hence you can find a common male ancestor from dozens of generations back. Of course only males can take this test.

Mitochondrial testing for a common ancestor through the maternal lines also works over many generations, and it can be taken by both sexes, as we all have it.

What you can learn from a DNA test

The main result from taking a DNA test is that you will receive a list of DNA matches. In the case of an **Ancestry** test each match will be labelled as coming from Parent 1, Parent 2, or from both. Each person on the matches

list can be put into a group that you name, and you can then filter the full list of matches by any group of your choice. You can also filter by Parent 1, or 2 etc.

The matches list will give you a forecast of your relationship to the match, eg it may say “2nd – 3rd cousin”, and will give the shared centimorgan count for each match; the closer the relationship, the higher will be the centimorgan count. 10 centimorgans is considered to be the lowest count you should try to follow up. Anything less than that could be a match purely by chance.

Ancestry will also include in their match list if the match exists on a public linked **Ancestry** tree, and may also point to a predicted common ancestor.

Mia then talked of Shared matches. A shared match is when someone has a DNA match with you, and also with someone else on your match list. This then means that all three of you will share a common ancestor, thus helping a lot to identify who that ancestor may be.

Choosing your DNA test

You should have a clear understanding of why you want to take a test, which will also determine the actual type of test to take. The size of the vendor’s DNA database matters as it will translate into more or fewer people on the match list which is generated, and the potential of transferring the results of your test from one vendor to another is also significant.

The five main companies currently providing DNA tests are:

- **AncestryDNA**
- **MyHeritageDNA**
- **23andMe**
- **FamilyTreeDNA**
- **LivingDNA**

Of these **Ancestry** and **23andMe** do not accept test results administered by the other companies, so if you want to see results generated by **Ancestry** then you must take your test with **Ancestry**. The other three vendors will accept DNA results collected elsewhere and upload them to their own database.

For DNA tests, size matters. **Ancestry**, having a test database taken from about 21 million people is by far the largest, **23andMe** is next largest with a database of 12 million tests, then **MyHeritage** with 6 million, and **FamilyTreeDNA** with 2 million. **LivingDNA** is much the smallest with just

300,000 in their database. **FamilyTreeDNA** is the only one providing a Y chromosome test and also the mitochondrial DNA test.

Overall Mia's advice is to start by taking an **Ancestry** test; and if it does not produce the hoped for results then submit the test data already collected to **MyHeritageDNA**. Mia did then show a slide with costs for each of the vendors. That slide and more information than can be given here is available to members if they access the handout using the information given at the start of this write-up.

“Why I’m a Suffragist and not a Suffragette” Adele Emms

Adele began by explaining the difference between the two terms. The campaign for getting the vote for women started as far back as the 1860s, when the term Suffragist was coined, the term Suffragette not coming along until the 20th century. The two terms symbolised two different approaches to campaigning for women's suffrage, epitomised by two women **Millicent Fawcett**, 1847-1929 (*below left*) a leading Suffragist in the 19th and early 20th century, and **Emmeline Pankhurst**, 1858-1928 (*below right*), who became a leader of the Suffragettes in the early 20th century.



Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, 1837-1917, the sister of Millicent Fawcett, the first woman to qualify as a doctor and also became the first ever female Mayor in 1908, at **Aldeburgh, Suffolk**.

From the 1790s, there were female factory hands (in the cotton mills); the first women nurses appeared in the Crimea in the 1860s. Women could be teachers, school governors, Poor Law guardians – all of them valuable and respected occupations. But none of them could vote, while men could vote despite being drunkards or otherwise morally unfit.

Millicent Fawcett was a Suffragist: “I didn’t *become* a Suffragist – I always was one”. Both she and her sister married men who were firmly in favour of female suffrage. **Lydia Becker** (1827-90), another Suffragist, was denigrated in the Press etc. but was actually a very well educated woman who spoke to mixed audiences of men and women, at **Manchester’s** Free Trade Hall, at Mechanics’ Institutes, etc. and she became President of the **Manchester Society for Women’s Suffrage**. She was also an early influence on **Emmeline Pankhurst**.

The **National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS)** was founded in 1897 and encompassed a number of factions and groups. By 1914, it had 100,000 members. At that time “Words not Deeds” was the stance. But in 1905, influenced by the **Pankhursts**, a new militancy began. The term **Suffragette** was coined in 1906. Their chosen colours were white (purity), mauve (loyalty) and green (hope). In 1907 came the Mud March (it had been raining) which made quite an impression and in 1908, **Emmeline Pankhurst** founded the **WSPU**, the **Women’s Social and Political Union**. The stance now was “Deeds not Words”. A window-breaking campaign started affecting a lot of properties in **London**. 124 women appeared in court and **Mrs Pankhurst** herself got two months in prison. Her daughter **Christabel** decamped to France to coordinate the campaign from there; an action which was not popular with many people. By 1912, Suffragette action was becoming increasingly violent. (Pathé News has a free film online of the burnt house of an anti-Suffrage MP). **Lloyd George** when in opposition had been in favour of women’s suffrage, but changed his attitude when he became Prime Minister. In 1913 a bomb exploded at his house, followed by further bombings: outside the Bank of England, inside St Paul’s Cathedral, at railway stations where bombs were put under seats, and the Tea House at Kew Gardens was destroyed by fire. Public opinion hardened as the safety of ordinary people was being affected. Fuel was added to the fire when a **Velasquez** painting, the **Rokeby Venus**, in the **National Gallery** and the first picture to be acquired by the Art Fund and thus bought with public money

was slashed. Many Suffragists did not approve of this campaign, and non-militants broke away from the WSPU.

Muriel Matters (1877-1969), an **Australian** actress, is known as “the first woman to speak in the House of Commons”. Arriving from **Australia** in 1905, she could not believe women did not have the vote. She became involved in the **Women’s Freedom League** and heard **Millicent Fawcett** speak. In the **House of Commons** there was a **Ladies Gallery**, where lady visitors could listen as they sat behind a grille but were hidden from view. **Muriel** and two other women chained themselves to the grille in protest. It had to be removed with them still attached to it. During this procedure, she addressed the MPs below on the subject of women’s enfranchisement.

The term Suffragette came to symbolise the entire movement. Ironically however, many women who were Suffragists and would not have supported militant acts such as bombs or arson, could nevertheless have been jailed for such innocuous acts as holding posters in the street, or for speaking in public. It has been argued that the Suffragettes’ militant campaign was actually detrimental to the acceptance of Women’s Suffrage. Times and attitudes were beginning to change in the early 20th century, especially in view of the work performed by women to help the War effort during WWI.



Millicent Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst, the two protagonists of the Suffragist and Suffragette movements were finally honoured by statues.

Millicent Fawcett’s statue is in **London’s Parliament Square** (*left*)– the first statue of a woman to be erected there.

Emmeline Pankhurst’s (*right*) stands in **St Peter’s Square, Manchester**.



For anyone interested in finding out more, the main records of the women’s suffrage movement are at the **London School of Economics**, but local libraries may also have material for their local area as well as local newspapers.

Highwaymen, outlaws and Hounslow Heath James Marshall

Even today, Hounslow Heath seems a large open space, but 200 years ago it was even bigger. The Staines & Exeter road ran diagonally across it while the Bath & Bristol Road ran along the Northern edge through Cranford and Longford. Before the advent of railways and motor transport, the only method of moving around the country was coach or waggon or on foot. The mail coach running between 1787 and the 1840s provided a relatively speedy service for passengers and ran to a strict timetable.



Although it was only 12 miles west of **London**, **Hounslow Heath** was a dangerous place – the Badlands of **West London**. People preparing for a journey that would take them across the Heath would make their wills prior to setting off. A line of gibbets displayed the bodies of executed highwaymen to serve as a grisly warning. Gruesome as it was, people would come to gaze at the decaying corpses; touching a dead highwayman's hand was supposed to cure certain ills and even more grimly, a dead felon's severed hand could become a "Hand of Glory", a tool supposed to provide light to burglars.

The tradition of highwaymen began in the 17th century. A number of them were Royalist ex-soldiers. **Captain Hind** took up the profession after the end of the Civil War. Famed for his courtesy and generosity, he became a folk hero, a Robin Hood figure. He was hanged, drawn and quartered in 1652. Another famous one was **John "Mulled Sack" Cottington**. **Cottington** carried on a war of attrition against the Protectorate. One of his most famous

exploits was his robbing the Parliamentary Army's payroll waggon. Not all highwaymen were British – one of the most famous highwaymen of all time was a Frenchman, **Claude Duvall**. A romantic figure whose most celebrated exploit was taking only a portion of a gentleman's wealth after his wife granted the highwayman a dance. **Duvall** was executed in 1670 and buried at **St Paul's, Covent Garden**. But not all highwaymen were actually men. **Moll Cutpurse**, born **Mary Frith**, was the original of **Middleton and Dekker's Roaring Girl**, dressing in men's clothes, smoking a pipe, and jumping ship when her family tried to send her to **New England** in an attempt to reform her. Despite convictions for theft, being involved in prostitution and dressing indecently (i.e. in men's attire), **Moll** escaped execution, dying in her own bed in 1659 aged about 75.

Dick Turpin's association with **Hounslow Heath** is largely unproven. He operated mostly in **Epping Forest** and **North East London**.

Robbery by highwaymen and footpads was rife, largely because there was no regular police force. A police force would cost public money and that involved higher taxes, something no politician wanted to consider. In 1802, a lavender merchant **John Cole Steele** was set upon by two footpads, **John Holloway** and **Owen Haggerty** on Hounslow Heath and murdered. The culprits escaped detection for four years when a felon awaiting transportation gave them up, hoping to reduce his sentence. **Holloway** and **Haggerty** were hanged in 1807. At their execution, the crowd was so large that when they pressed forward thirty-one people were crushed to death and over forty more were injured. The findings of the inquest was instrumental in the banning of public executions.

At that time, magistrates "bought" the courts from the government and recouped their costs from the fines they levied. Thief-takers and bounty-hunters made a living from tracking down criminals and claiming the reward. **Sir Thomas De Veil** created a profitable business from the **Bow Street** court. He was succeeded by the novelist **Henry Fielding** and his blind half-brother **Sir John Fielding**, who between them reformed the court constabulary and set up the **Bow Street Runners**, a detective force who could be employed by the wealthy and the insurance companies to catch thieves. In 1798, another magistrate, **Patrick Colquhoun**, set up the **Marine Police** to reduce cargo theft in the docks. They swiftly became a disciplined and respected force and

within two years had become an official government force. The notion of a publicly-funded police force had taken root.

The dangers faced by the travelling public were now so great that in 1805 the government approached the **Bow Street Runners** and asked them to set up horse patrols to secure the main roads for a distance of 25 miles from **Charing Cross**. Retired cavalymen were employed for the job and given a horse, two pistols and a sabre. They were also supplied with a house and stabling for their horse. Two such cottages (much altered) still exist in Staines Road, Bedfont. The force was a major success. After four years of operation, the lines of gibbets were no longer needed and were dismantled. In 1816, the Bow Street Runners could report to Parliament that whole weeks would now pass with no robberies committed, whereas before as many as fifteen could be reported in a week. In 1829 the **Metropolitan Police** was formed and in 1836 the **Bow Street Horse Patrol** was absorbed into it. In 1838 the **Runners** and the **Thames River Police** were also absorbed. The age of the highwayman was over.

Hounslow Heath's fame however did not end with the highwayman. In 1784, General Roy set the baseline for the Ordnance Survey. Accurate mileage measurements were needed by the Army and so General Roy made the first accurate set of geodetic measurements over five miles of land on **Hounslow Heath**. So accurate were they that in 1997 when the measurements were checked using modern instruments, there was an error of less than four inches over the whole stretch.

Today although **Hounslow Heath** has shrunk in size, there is still a substantial area that is now a Nature Reserve. How did it escape development in the 20th and 21st centuries? It was in danger when the Enclosures of 1813-1819 took place. Common land in the parishes of **Heston** and **Isleworth** was enclosed and then shared out among local landowners. The previously open land that had provided such an excellent training ground for the Army since the 1790s was about to disappear. The Army took positive action by purchasing blocks of the re-allocated land from the **Commissioners**, ensuring that there would always be a large enough area for soldiers to drill, practice rifle firing and exercise their horses. Since the Army left, the land has remained open, becoming a Nature Reserve for the people of **Hounslow**.

The Heath expanded its repertoire in WWI when it became an aerodrome, where bi-plane pilots could train for aerial battle. After the war, it became London's first airport and in 1919 it was the starting point for the England to Australia Air Race. Of the seven pilots who started, only one finished the course. Captain Ross Macdonald Smith arrived twenty-eight days after beginning the flight.



Editor's Note:

*If you would like to learn more about the early days of the Army in Hounslow, there is a recent book by **Ed Harris**, detailing its history from the 1680's. It is available to buy online from the **Borough of Twickenham Local History Society** (www.botlhs.co.uk). Price £11 including post and packing.*

God's Acre in Chelsea: the Moravian story

Roland Bostock

God's Acre is a rather lovely term. Its origin is actually the German word *Gottessacker*, meaning Field of God. It has become the traditional name given to the burial grounds of the **Moravian Church**. But who are the **Moravians** and how come they have a significant burial ground in **Chelsea** (in our area of course)?

The early history of the Moravians

The **Moravian Church's** heritage can be traced back to 1457 in **Bohemian Crown** territory, including its crown lands of **Moravia** and **Silesia**, which saw the emergence of the **Hussite movement** against several practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church. However, its name is derived from some exiles who fled from **Bohemia** to **Saxony** in 1722 to escape persecution. In **Saxony**, **Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf** supported the **Moravians** and allowed them to found a new village called **Herrnhut** on his estates. **Herrnhut** remains the world headquarters for the **Moravian Church** to this day.

The **British Province**, as it is called, came into being following a visit to **London** in 1738 of **Peter Böhler** and three other **Moravians** from **Herrnhut**. They came into contact with young clergymen from **John Wesley's Oxford Holy Club**, including **Wesley** himself, and created a **Moravian** society in **London** of some 56 members. Too large to meet in any house the group hired a room at the head of one of the courts of **Fetter Lane**. **Fetter Lane** runs north from **Fleet Street** in central **London**. In contrast to the **London** of today, in those times **Fetter Lane** and its environs consisted of a network of busy streets fed by narrow winding alleys leading to small courts. From 1739 the London group was strong enough to set up **Moravian** societies in other parts of the country, but the **Fetter Lane** group was the undoubted stronghold for the church in England. The **Moravians** acquired land in and around **Fetter Lane**, and built themselves a chapel, the **Brethren's Chapel**, which became the centre for **Moravian** worship in **London** for the next 200 years.

There were disagreements on theological beliefs among the **Moravians** in **London**, and **John Wesley** left the Society in July 1740, together with almost all of the women in the **Moravian** congregation and many of the men too. **Wesley** formed his own community of **Methodists**. This exodus severely weakened the **Moravian Society** in **London** who appealed to their leadership in **Herrnhut** to take direct control in **London**. **Herrnhut** eventually sent help in March 1741 in the form of one **August Gottlieb Spangenberg**, with a party of 'labourers', as the church's full-time workers were called.

On the Continent and in **America** the **Moravians** had formed themselves into settlements of self-contained Christian villages. While this was not possible for the **London** group, they did nevertheless start to acquire property in and around **Fetter Lane** where the 'labourers' were able to live as a commune.

Like all **Moravian** congregations the **London** congregation was divided into 'choirs' (sections) of married men and women, single men, single women, widows and widowers, each led by its own Elder, Vice-Elder and Warden. The single men among **Spangenberg's** original party had their own house, and soon the new congregation's single brethren's choir decided to live together, as those in the **Continental Moravian** communities did. A Single Brethren's House was begun in the summer of 1744, a Single Sister's House was rented from 1749 and a Widow's House was also rented from 1750, all in the vicinity of **Fetter Lane**. The most important among the houses rented for communal purpose was **10 Nevill's Court**, a late 17th century town house which the **Moravians** rented from July 1744. The church's Deaths and Burials Register makes frequent reference to this building as the place where members of the congregation died or were born. It came to be known as the **Congregation House**. Further acquisitions followed and by 1753 the church had grown to a small settlement of **Moravians** in the centre of **London**.

Meantime, in 1750 **Count Zinzendorf** had purchased **Lindsey House** in **Chelsea**, and the adjoining **Beaufort Ground** intending that it become his residence in **England**, and the international headquarters of the **Moravian Church**, and he made significant renovations to the property. He had intended that **Beaufort Ground** become a **Moravian** settlement, and he named it **Sharon**. However, **Zinzendorf** returned to the **Continent** permanently in 1755, and having financial difficulties the projected settlement at **Sharon** never took place. **Zinzendorf** had also bought a stable

block with gardens adjoining **Beaufort Ground**. A chapel was built on the site of the stable block and the garden was laid out as a **Moravian** burial ground. As the **Moravians** had no burial ground in central London the site at **Chelsea** became the burial ground for the **Fetter Lane** congregation, the first burial taking place there in February 1751.

The **Moravian** community in and around **Fetter Lane** continued through to 1941, when it had the misfortune that the church and several nearby buildings used by the Moravians were destroyed by German bombing. Rather than rebuild a church in central London it was decided to headquarter the London congregation at the existing chapel at Chelsea which was renamed as the Fetter Lane Church of the Moravians.

How the Moravian Burial Ground came to our notice

British History Online is a useful resource for finding detail of ancient burial grounds in **Middlesex**, and it was there that I first came across mention of the **Moravian** burial ground in **Chelsea**. In fact their *Survey of London. Volume 11, Part IV* has an appendix ([follow this link if reading online](#)) which provides actual inscriptions from 69 memorials, and also the statement “The above represent only the inscriptions that were legible in 1913”, so I had limited hopes of what we might find legible in the burial ground today.



I was certainly intrigued, and used *Google Earth* to spy out the land in advance of actually visiting. The image here (*copyright: Google Earth*) clearly shows that the burial ground is square, and is also divided into four inner squares, and

that there are many gravestones there, in fact about 770.

Once I made contact with the church they referred me to their British headquarters, and their archivist, who resided at **Moravian Church House in Muswell Hill, North London**, and she was able to tell me that all burials that had taken place in **Chelsea** were recorded in a register that she had at **Muswell Hill**, and which I was very welcome to use. I knew very well that if we were to make a best effort to read the gravestones at **Chelsea**, knowing what was in the burials register would greatly help.

So the first part of the **Moravian** project became to digitise and put online all the burials recorded in their Deaths and Burials Register. Upon enquiry as to the size of this book I learned that there were just four burial entries per page, and once I saw the register the reason was clear. It was not just a burials register, but also recorded the date and place of birth, the parents, the date and place of death, and the burial detail as well. This led to my visiting **Muswell Hill** and photographing the 262 pages in the register, to be followed by the transcribing, and indexing, and then putting the burials onto our website, followed later by their being searchable on *Findmypast*, and whether searched from our website or from *Findmypast* the images of the register are also available, all written in beautiful copperplate handwriting.

The Burial Site at Chelsea

The site at **Chelsea** is known as **Moravian Close**. It consists of buildings at the North end, which include **Fetter Lane Chapel**, a broad terrace in front of the building, and the square burial ground, surrounded by trees on the other three sides, and a high brick wall all round the property. The wall is a Grade II listed structure. Beneath the trees at the South end there is an area known as The Gillick Pageant which includes a pergola, and a long Portland stone seat, some columns and a timber shield structure. This area was created by sculptors **Ernest and Mary Gillick** who came to **Chelsea** in 1903, and the timber shields were erected to commemorate the 500 years of history since **Sir Thomas More** created a great house at the site in 1520. The timber shields are for the families **More** (1520), **Paulet** (1535), **Fiennes** (1576), **Cecil** (1595), **Clinton-Gorges** (1599), **Cranfield** (1619), **Villiers** (1627), **Digby** (1674), **Somerset** (1682), and **Sloane** (1737).



As to the burial ground it is immediately clear that there are no headstones or crosses here, but all the gravestones are quite small ledger stones. The legibility of the stones is very varied. 145 of the stones are in high quality slate and are easily readable even when 200 years old. At the other extreme there were 274 ledger stones that were completely illegible, and often with the surface worn away. It was particularly helpful that not only did we have the information from the Burials Register, but the archivist at **Muswell Hill** was also able to provide us with a plan of the burial ground which included

the names and dates of all the deceased. There were some 60 stones where all we could read was the name on the stone, confirming what the plan indicated, and thereby being able to match the detail to the Burials Register.

The uniformity of the ledger stones can be compared to Quaker burial grounds where all the headstones have a rounded top and are completely uniform in character. The **Moravians** take a similar view to the Quakers, that we are all equal in death, and hence there should be no elaborate memorials. As with the Quakers the inscriptions do not start with "In loving memory of ...", but just give the name of the deceased, and when they died, and usually their age or their date of birth. Furthermore, the four quarters of the burial ground are designated to separate men from women (brothers from sisters in their language), and singles from marrieds. Thus, the north section holds unmarried sisters, the east section married sisters, the south section married brothers, and the west section unmarried brothers. In almost all cases there is just one deceased named on the gravestone.

Apart from the 770 ledger stones there are seven stone plaques on the wall of Beaufort Lodge, and there is one further ledger which is situated beneath the trees near the southern-most corner of the property.

Nunak the Inuit boy

The gravestone is for an **Inuit** boy called **Nunak**. **Nunak** was born an Eskimo in **Labrador**, and had been brought to **England** by **Moravian** missionaries in 1787. He clearly made a good impression on the **Moravians** for his “walk and conduct ... was truly pleasing and edifying, and much more like that of a Christian than the walk of most”. However, he had little resistance to European diseases, and while just 18 he contracted smallpox and died within a short time. His grave is placed outside the consecrated main burial ground as he had not yet been baptized at the

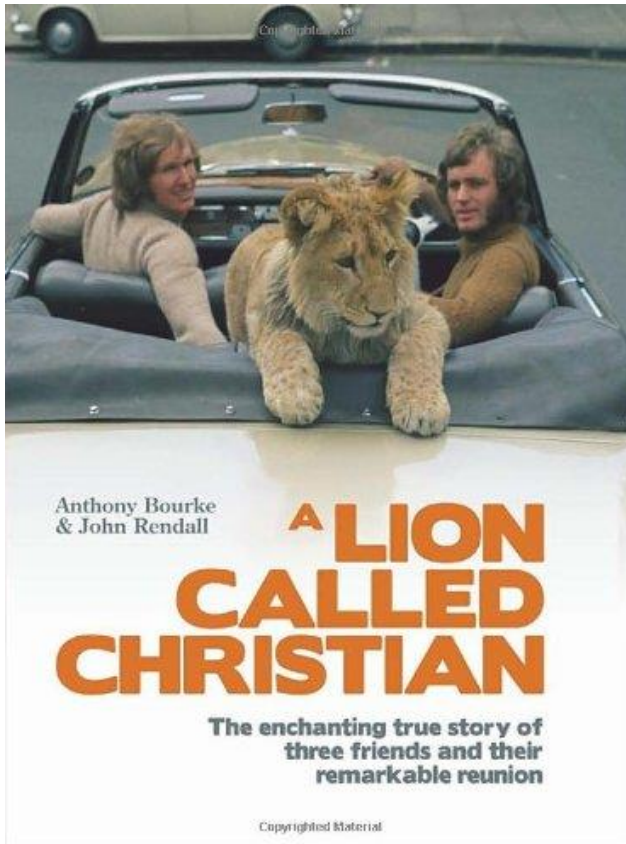


time of his death. The stone is in slate, and a good example of how the slate ledger stones have survived so well. There is also another **Inuit** grave, this one within the consecrated ground. **Sarah Abraha Uvloriak**. She had accompanied her parents to England where they were being exhibited in an ethnographic exposition. **Sarah** was the first of several **Inuit** to die while in **England**. She was 4 years old.

And also ... Christian the lion

While reading the gravestones at **Moravian Close** a number of locals came over to us to enquire what we were doing and to chat. On one occasion a local asked us if we knew about **Christian**, the lion, who used to be exercised at the burial ground. Of course we didn't, and the story was rather a surprise, but it was certainly true. As the gentleman told us, in the 1970s **John Rendall** and **Ace Berg**, who worked in '*Sophistocat*', a furniture shop on the **King's Road, Chelsea**, bought a lion cub from **Harrods**, which they called **Christian**. As **Christian** grew, they were allowed to exercise him in the Close it being completely enclosed and safe. However, the lion did of course grow, and when these two realised that he was too big to live in **London**, they were able

to return **Christian** to **Africa**. They went back on one occasion to see **Christian** in **Africa**. The lion still remembered them, even though he was now a wild lion, and with his own family. A happy note upon which to end.



WMFHS has another link with the Repair Shop (see Wendy Mott's article in our September issue)!

In June 2022, **Sue** and **John Cox** took along a diorama of a racecourse stand complete with figures. It had been created by **John's** grandfather, **John Henry Cox** who kept a butcher's shop in **Isleworth**. **John** had fond memories of the diorama from his childhood. It was now sadly battered and faded but he hoped that **The Repair Shop** team would be able to restore it to some of its former glory.

But as well as a family treasure, there was a mystery involved. **John** remembered being told that it was a representation of a racecourse planned for **Isleworth**. **The Isleworth Society** took up the baton and asked me to investigate the when and the where of the mysterious **Isleworth Racecourse**. **Hounslow Local Studies** provided me with access to their store of microfilmed newspapers. And here is what I found. The **Duke of Northumberland** had planned to create a racecourse in the 1930s. He presumably thought it would be a money-spinner as racing was as popular then as it is now and it could attract people from everywhere, boosting the local economy. The problem was working out where he planned to build it. The centre of **Isleworth** with its network of little streets and hemmed in by the **River Thames**, the **London Road** and the **Twickenham Road** would clearly be unsuitable unless he was planning wholesale demolition. Eventually, however, with the help of the **Local Studies** team and the **Hounslow Council Minutes**, the location was pinpointed. The Duke had planned to build it on his lands by the **Great West Road** between **Sion Lane** and **Quakers Lane**, near the then partially-completed **Northumberland Estate**.

The plan was shelved (we don't really know why) and **Isleworth** never got its racecourse, but **John's** grandfather's diorama received a wonderful restoration from **The Repair Shop** team. The episode is still available on BBC iPlayer – series 10, episode 6. Do watch it if you can. It's part of our **West Middlesex** history as well a family treasure.

Working in the Pelabon Factory, East Twickenham 1915-1918: some memories from my grandmother. Ellen Stuart



My grandmother, **Miriam Alice Cavelley**, was born in **Bethnal Green** in 1904 and spent her childhood in **Tottenham**. But when her mother died in October 1912, her father, unable to look after his four young daughters, sent them to stay with his late wife's sister **Annie** in **Isleworth**. **Annie** was by this time living with a blacksmith, **Joseph Simmons** at **20 Tolson Road** and Gran would walk from here along the river to the **Pelabon** factory when she worked there.

Gran was only 11 when she started work; she told me that she had passed the 'Labour Exam' and was deemed to have had enough education so she was sent out to work. It was a choice between going into service as her sisters did in the big houses on **Richmond Hill** or factory work. Gran didn't like the idea of being a servant so she opted for the factory. She told me a few of her memories from that time. On the morning of her first day there, her aunt showed her how to put her hair up like a woman, saying she was no longer a child now she was earning a wage. She was suddenly part of an adult world and listening to the older women's conversations on the way to and from work taught her a lot.

In January 1918, her father died and her aunt wouldn't let 13 year old **Miriam** go to his funeral, saying she needed her daily wage. Her co-workers asked

her why she looked so glum and when she said her father was being buried that day, they didn't believe her as why wouldn't she be at his funeral, and she wasn't even wearing black. When she got to the factory Miriam found some scraps of black material and tied it around her arm as a sign that she was in mourning.

I've read that **Pelabon** was a munitions factory but my grandmother worked in the part of the factory that was making sacks. At least that's what she believed at first. Most of the workers were Belgians and she couldn't understand their language so it was some time before she learnt that she was spending her days making shrouds for the soldiers dying on the battlefields of **Belgium** and **France**. She told me her hands and fingers were red raw at first from working with the coarse material but by the end of the war they were hard and calloused.

One day as **Miriam** was working as usual, a man ran into the big room and shouted something to the girls and women working there which made all the Belgians leap up, drop their work and rush outside. After a few minutes, Gran followed them and saw all the factory workers hugging each other, crying, laughing and cheering. This was, of course, Armistice Day, 1918.

I have two other connections to the **Pelabon** factory. As a teenager growing up in Isleworth, I would very often go ice-skating to the rink at **Richmond**, which of course was converted from some of the factory buildings. It was strange to think that when she was younger than her ice-skating granddaughter, **Miriam** had been employed in such hard work.

The other connection is much more recent. A good friend of mine, **Jane Marchese Robinson**, from **Devon**, where I now live, had a book published in November 2020 by Pen & Sword Publishers, called '*Seeking Sanctuary: A History of Refugees in Britain*'. **Jane**, whose own grandmother was a Belgian refugee, devotes a chapter to the Belgians who fled to safety in the First World War.

The “fine memorial” and complicated will of Susanna Thomas John Seaman

Harris wanted to get out at Hampton Church, to go and see Mrs. Thomas's tomb. "Who is Mrs. Thomas?" I asked. "How should I know?" replied Harris. "She's a lady that's got a funny tomb, and I want to see it."

Jerome K. Jerome. Three Men in a Boat (1889) Chapter 7

So who was Mrs Thomas? To begin with, the title of Mrs is confusing. The Mrs Thomas in question was single – Mrs at that time was just a contraction of Mistress, a courteous way of referring to or addressing any woman.



Susanna Thomas of Whitehall, Hampton, Middlesex was the daughter of **Sir Dalby Thomas**, a Caribbean merchant and Agent-General of **The Royal African Trading Company**¹ and his wife **Dorothy nee Chettle**. Her father died in 1711 in the **Gold Coast** (now **Ghana**). Her mother **Dorothy** died in Hampton in 1722. **Susanna** made her will on 10 March 1730². She died on 4th April 1731 and was buried at St Mary, Hampton. The burial register records that her *“fine monument is in a recess by the Vicar’s pew, She it was who built the Vicar’s good House . Memoria sua perpetua fiat”*.

In her will, **Susanna** asked to be buried in the same vault as her mother in the parish church at **Hampton**. Her will is intriguing and slightly idiosyncratic. She instructed her executors to erect a memorial to her mother and herself with a proper inscription. £200 was to be spent to complete it. The purchasing power of that £200 would be around £35,000 today. She never married and the main beneficiary was **Susanna Warren**, born in **Barbados** in 1726³. The property was considerable to judge from the following extract ‘... I give to... **Susanna Warren** all my diamonds...’. The phrase “all my diamonds” seems to indicate that there were a considerable number.

Three Trustees, **Thomas and Ann Archer** of **Whitehall**, and **Henry Archer** of the **Inner Temple** were to use the income from lands and property to provide funds for **Susanna Warren's** education. Once married, **Susanna Warren** would come into her inheritance; after her it would be inherited by her eldest son and after him by his heirs. **Susanna Thomas** was obviously a strong believer in primogeniture and keeping the family wealth together. But there is a caveat, **Susanna Warren** would only inherit if she obtained the consent of all three Trustees. If she married without their consent, she was to be disinherited completely and the money was to go to **George**, eldest son of the late **Edmund Penny**, a cousin. But here again was a condition – he must publicly declare himself to be a Protestant within 6 months of her death and to take communion at least once every 6 months. If he died or refused to make the declaration, the money was to go to his next eldest brother **Edmund** on the same condition.

There is a mystery here too – who was **Susanna Warren** and why did she inherit? She was only just 5 when her benefactress died and had presumably never met her. Were her parents (**Thomas** and **Susanna Warren**) known to the Thomas family? Unless someone takes up the investigation in **Barbados**, we shall probably never know

¹ *Wikipedia*

² *The National Archives PROB 11/644/91*

³ *Barbados Baptism 1637-1800, Ancestry*

MEMBERS' DISCOUNTS

Find My Past

In May 2016 the Society signed a new contract with the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS) relating to the terms under which we supply data to Find My Past. As part of this contract Find My Past has made available a discount of 15% on all new subscriptions, or Pay as You Go payments, taken out by our members. All you have to do is to enter the appropriate discount code as given below:

For Subscriptions the discount code is : *****

For Pay as You Go the discount code is : *****

These codes are valid up to the end of this year.

Forces War Records

The Society has arranged a useful discount for our members of 40% when you take out a subscription with Forces War Records. You should register your details with them by visiting www.forces-war-records.co.uk and going to their *Login/Register* page. The discount code is *****

PASSWORDS

Oct- Dec 2023 *****

Jan -Mar 2024 *****

West Middlesex Family History Society Matters

What's Missing?

The eagle-eyed reader will by this stage be shaking their heads, riffing through the Journal's pages and muttering "Where is it?".

"It" is of course your **Renewal of Subscription** form and you will either receive it by separate post in a few days or will find it in your emails. We took a different approach this year because we were beginning to doubt that anyone noticed the usual discreet insert tucked in the Journal.

We depend on your promptly received subscriptions to keep the Society going. It pays for the speakers' fees, for our Zoom licence, for the hire of St John's Centre, for our attendance at fairs, for the printing and distribution of the Journal, and for the replacement of equipment.

In case you haven't received your **Renewal of Subscription** form by post or email, you can download it from our webpage. Go to the **Members Area** and scroll down to **Subscription Renewal**. You can pay by Standing Order, bank transfer or cheque. However you pay - please, please include your Membership Number!

If you don't wish to renew your subscription, please tell Pat, our Membership Secretary. We are obliged by law to keep our membership lists up to date and to remove the data of people who wish to leave the Society.

This coming year, there will be no reminders. If your subscription has not been received by 31st January 2024, you will be deemed to have resigned.

You will also find a survey – don't panic, it's very brief! We really need to know your thoughts and feelings about the Society, the meetings and the Journal so please do fill it in!

West Middlesex Family History Society AGM

Members are advised that the next Annual General Meeting of the West Middlesex Family History Society will be held on:

Thursday 21st March 2024

at St John's Centre, St John's Road, Isleworth.

It will be a hybrid Zoom meeting.

The Agenda will be published in the March 2024 Journal

Members will be given advance notice of any change to these arrangements

New Members & Surname Interests

A warm welcome to our newest members.

Name	Membership Number	Address/Location
Ms F Bell	B354	Milton Keynes
Mr J Floodgate	F128	
Mr J Fry	F127	New Zealand
Mr S Weblin	W271	I.O.W.

Surname Interests

Surname Interests are a key part of the Society. Registering your names with us can lead to connections and sometimes a member being able to do research for you on the ground. If you think someone local may be able to help you, you can contact them directly (if they have included an email or other address) or via our Secretary secretary@west-middlesex-fhs.org.uk . Don't be shy!

We are sad to announce the death of
Claudette Durham
who died on 5th October 2023.

She had been a member for many years.

Family and Local History Fairs and Events

As usual, at this time of year, Family History Fairs are thin on the ground, but you can still check out the talks and events of our neighbouring family history societies.

East Surrey FHS and the **London Westminster and Middlesex FHS** both have interesting virtual options for 12th December at 8pm , so you could have a hard decision to make.

East Surrey (www.eastsurreyfhs.org.uk) are offering “Just a Family History Minute”. Members are invited to write a few words about their family and join in the festive fun. Don’t forget we have a reciprocal arrangement with them for talks!

London Westminster and Middlesex (www.lwmfhs.org.uk) are hosting “Christmas in the City” a talk by City of London Guide, Jill Finch, giving you a virtual taste of what goes on.

And if you want something different, don’t forget the lectures and courses offered by other institutions – Society of Genealogists, British Association for Local History and others. www.geneva.weald.org.uk gives you a massive calendar so you need never be bored again.

STOP PRESS!

The Society of Genealogists will be reopening in its new home at 40 Wharf Road, London N1 7GS in January 2024. But as an early Christmas present, members of the SOG can book visits between 13th and 22nd December.

Check their website www.sog.org.uk

West London Local History Conference.

**“By Hand and Eye:
Arts and Crafts in South and West London History”**

13th April 2024 9.30am - 4.30pm

Duke Street Church, Duke Street, Richmond

We are still in the planning stage but this year’s Conference will be an in-person event this year with no Zoom presence.

Among the talks planned are:
Bedford Park’s artistic community;
Private presses;
Richmond’s Arts and Crafts architecture;
Wallpapers;
The ceramics industry of Fulham;
The vitreous mosaics of Wandsworth.

Local and family history stalls will be present for browsing during the coffee and lunch breaks!

Tickets £15 will be available online through ticketsource.co.uk. Keep an eye on the websites and social media of your local history society or West Middlesex Family History Society (Facebook and Twitter) to make sure you don’t miss the release of tickets!

Indexes held by members

These indexes are intended as aids to research in the West Middlesex area. For Society members look-ups are free (please quote membership number), unless otherwise stated. For non-members there is a fee of £5. Please note that all enquirers must supply a SAE if a reply is required by post. If an email address is given, holders of the Index are happy to receive enquiries by email. Unless stated otherwise, cheques should be made payable to the holder of the index, not the WMFHS.

WEST MIDDLESEX FHS INDEXES

Roland Bostock, bostocr@blueyonder.co.uk

West Middlesex Monumental Inscriptions. Acton, Ashford, Cranford, Chiswick, Ealing, Feltham, Fulham (recorded 100 years ago), Hampton, Harlington, Hayes, Heston, Hillingdon, Hounslow (United Reformed), Norwood Green, Perivale, Staines, Teddington, Twickenham and Uxbridge.

West Middlesex Settlement Records. Chelsea, Ealing, Friern Barnet, Fulham, Hammersmith, New Brentford, Shepperton, Staines, Stanwell, Uxbridge.

PARISH RECORDS

Mrs. Margaret Cunnew, 25 Selkirk Road, Twickenham, TW2 6PS

Chiswick Parish Registers, St. Nicholas. Baptisms marriages burials 1813-1901.

Chiswick, 1801 Census

Ealing Parish Registers, St. Mary. Baptisms 1779-1868, marriages 1797-1857, burials 1813-1868.

Hanwell Parish Registers, St. Mary. Baptisms marriages burials, 1813-1855.

New Brentford Parish Registers, St. Lawrence. Baptisms marriages burials 1802-1837.

Old Brentford Parish Registers, St. George. Baptisms 1828-1881, marriages 1837-1881, burials 1828-1852.

G.R.O. Certificates. A number of original GRO birth, marriage and death certificates have been kindly donated to the Society by members and are available for purchase at a cost of £1 per certificate. Please check on Society website for current list. Cheques should be made payable to West Middlesex FHS and please include a sae.

Ms. Carol Sweetland, 36 Diamedes Avenue, Stanwell, Staines, TW19 7JB.

carol.sweetland@btinternet.com

Stanwell Parish Registers. Baptisms 1632-1906, marriages 1632-1926, burials 1632-1906. Also available on FreeREG. Name database 1632-1906.

MISCELLANEOUS INDEXES

Mr. A. Rice, 46 Park Way, Feltham, TW14 9DJ. secretary@feltham-history.org.uk

Feltham Index. An expanding collection of transcripts and indexes relating to the parish of Feltham. Donations welcome, payable to Feltham History Group.

Mr. Paul Barnfield, 258 Hanworth Road, Hounslow, TW3 3TY

paulbarnfield@hotmail.co.uk

Hampton Wick. Records of this village collected over 40 years of research.

Front Cover

Image: A highwayman holding up a traveller

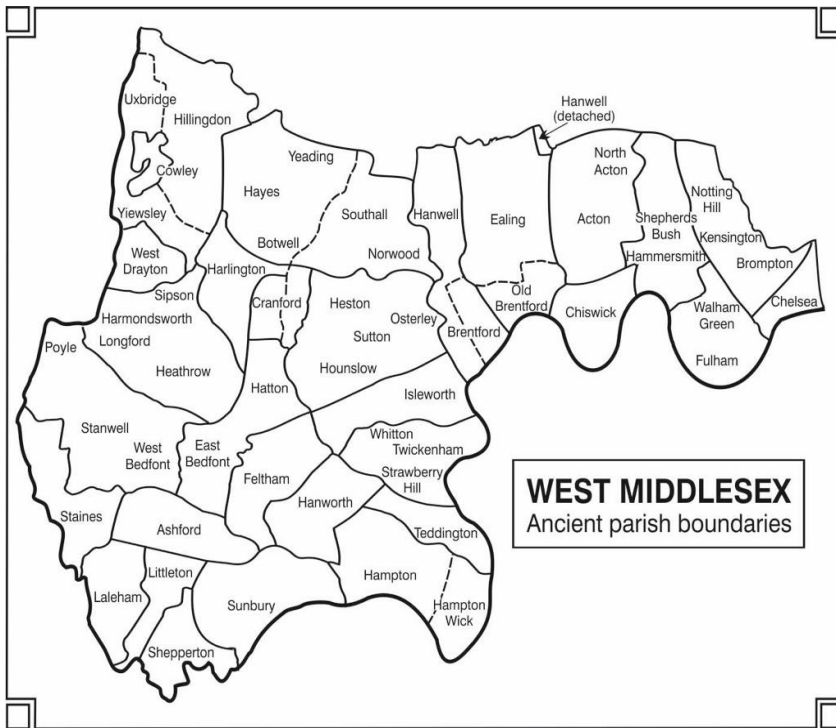
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West Middlesex Family History Society

Area of Interest

Acton, Ashford, East Bedfont, Chelsea, Chiswick, Cowley, Cranford, West Drayton, Ealing with Old Brentford, Feltham, Fulham, Hammersmith, Hampton, Hanwell with New Brentford, Hanworth, Harlington, Harmondsworth, Hayes with Norwood, Heston, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Isleworth, Kensington, Laleham, Littleton, Shepperton, Staines, Stanwell, Sunbury, Teddington, Twickenham and Uxbridge

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