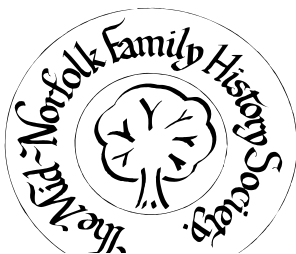


# News

Volume 6 Issue 6



# Letter

Spring 2012

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## FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

21 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	The Real Dad's Army by Neil Storey
18 <sup>th</sup> April 2012	Family Tree Maker by Mike Bollinger
16 <sup>th</sup> May 2012	Trade Union and Chartist Ancestors by Mark Crail

## **A few words from your Editor ...**

As I sit here on a cold January day it occurs to me that the weather is just perfect ..... now is a good time to write up some more of my family history. I am hoping to produce a booklet for each branch of the family, containing information, photographs and copy documents where applicable, I hope this will make it more readable than my file containing the bare facts and figures.

Thank you to everyone who sent in a contribution for the Newsletter, your articles are very much appreciated.

Please keep writing to me with your thoughts and ideas, your information might be the answer to someone else's question!

The next Members' Interests Directory is now being prepared and Denise and Roderic are asking members who wish to update their surname interests to inform them in writing (*address on back cover*), by the 1 April 2012, giving their name, membership number, surname interests to change, areas covered and the time period, so the new information may be included in the next interests directory.

**Format for Newsletter Contributions** .... Preferably typed using Microsoft Word or Works, or handwritten, then please either:

- email the file to me at [Familyhis@aol.com](mailto:Familyhis@aol.com) or
- post handwritten copy/CD/floppy disk, to me at the address on the back of the Newsletter

**Deadline for inclusion in the next Newsletter - 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

*Kate (Editor)*

## **LETS LOOK AT A CHURCH**

### **No.65 – St Margaret, Swannington**



Our article on St Andrew, Attlebridge mentioned the old pilgrim routes to Walsingham and St Margaret, Swannington is also one of the ‘Pilgrim Group of Churches’ which lie on the path taken by the medieval travellers from Norwich to the shrine of Our Lady. This was a road of great religious importance and such was its renown that the band of stars which marks the outer reaches of our galaxy that we call the Milky Way was once known as the ‘Walsingham Way’. Swannington, is a small, attractive village of leafy lanes with a stream running through it, hardly more than a hamlet really, and is split into two separate halves, Swannington proper, and nearby Upgate whose pond has a larger population of frogs and toads than the place has people. Although Swannington has no street lamps or gas supply and some properties are not connected to the sewers there is a fine village pump under a thatched roof shelter installed in 1888 by a local benefactor who also gave £300 to the parish, the interest from which was to maintain the pump with the residue going to the church. Swannington owes its place in history to the fact that it was here in August 1549 that the famous Norfolk revolutionary and champion of reform Robert Kett, on the run after the failure of the rebellion which bears his name, was discovered in a barn by a local man who recognising him turned him in for subsequent execution thus earning himself a reward of 20 shillings – somewhat less than Judas! The church is a fair sized building which serves as village hall and polling station among other things and a pamphlet displayed inside the entrance tells us something of its history. St Margaret’s dates largely from the late 13<sup>th</sup>

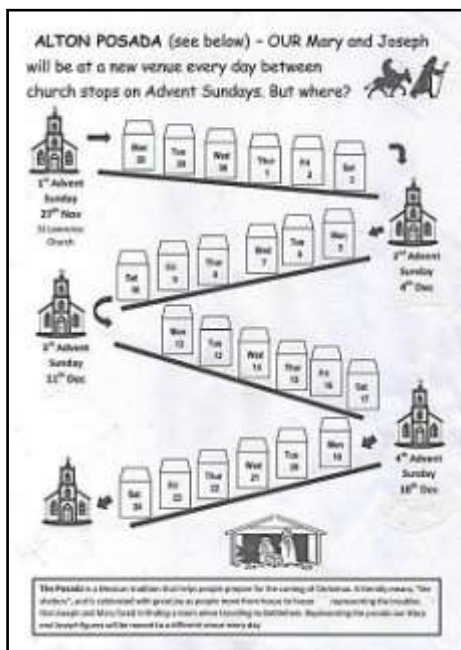
century but has benefitted, or suffered, from many changes over the years, the north doorway and part of the north chancel wall being perhaps the oldest extant features. Much of the building is built in rough flint which would once have been plastered over although the south porch has knapped flint and bears the legend 'S MARGARETA' at the base in honour of church's patron saint, Saint Margaret the Virgin, whose life is shown in sculptured scenes over the door. This Margaret, one of a number of saints so named, was also the patron saint of King's Lynn and a confidante of Joan of Arc. According to legend, she lived in Antioch and converting to Christianity was gobbled up by a dragon for her pains but somehow miraculously managed to escape from its belly. A happy ending for once although not for the dragon who collapsed and died no doubt with all the excitement. According to White, the church was re-pewed in 1848 (the benches have the ubiquitous poppyheads) and 'otherwise beautified and repaired, at considerable expense'. The rectors' list goes back to William de Whitwell circa 1260 and also includes Edmund Duncan who took up his post in 1630 but was 'sequestered for his loyalty to the king', Charles I, in 1643 and restored along with the monarchy in 1660 to serve a further two years. Duncan was a friend of the Metaphysical Poet George Herbert who when he died in 1633 bequeathed him his manuscripts which sold for enough money to build him a fine rectory. The Royal Arms of a later monarch, George II are found over the north door '*The gift of Jno Bladewell, 1762*' along with three hatchments of the same family. These were wooden boards carried at funerals painted with the arms of the deceased and later hung in the church. A Ladbroke sketch, seemingly compulsory in Norfolk churches, depicts the building in 1827 looking not much different from today although there seems to be some change to the windows in the tower and indeed, a photograph taken in 1898 shows what looks like extensive rebuilding of this part of the church. There is much richly coloured Victorian glass and one window commemorates Mary Anne Rogers who died in Canada at the tragically early age of 27 and whose remains were brought back for interment in the churchyard no doubt at some expense. If you like fonts, St Margaret's has two, the typical octagonal 13<sup>th</sup> century one albeit mounted on shafts from a later period and a small portable one for the housebound. We leave feeling that on the whole, St Margaret's is altogether a most comfortable and satisfying church which can be said to look back to more prosperous times.

The original registers are held at the Norfolk Record Office (Cat. Ref. PD 44) and comprise Baptisms 1540-1751 & 1813-2008, Marriages 1540-2008, Burials 1538-2000 and Banns 1754-1913. Microform copies are available covering the same dates. Archdeacon's and Bishop's transcripts start in 1600 and end in 1911 for Baptisms & Burials and 1837 for Marriages. The parish chest is quite small, comprising Tithe Apportionment & map 1843, Vestry Minute book 1858-1946, Settlement Certificates and Examinations 1718-1794, Bastardy Bonds and Orders 1737-1789 and Removal Orders covering the period from 1765 to 1772.

*Roderic & Denise Woodhouse*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT – THE POSADA

When my daughter, who lives at Alton in Hampshire, paid us a visit last November, she mentioned that she had foolishly offered to help with Alton's posada. Later, in return for being excused the inevitable shopping trip to Norwich, I perhaps equally foolishly, offered to produce 'something' for the project on my PC. What is a posada? That was my question too! Apparently, it is a Mexican tradition, whereby people visit other folk's homes during advent, identifying with the difficulties Joseph & Mary had in finding overnight accommodation during their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.



Alton's idea was, that on the four Sundays of Advent, a representative model of Joseph and Mary would to be placed in one of the churches. However, from Monday to Saturday, different shops and businesses in the town would provide the model with shelter for the night. My daughter's task was to produce a simple leaflet, which could be marked with the location where the figures were spotted. Our final masterpiece is shown here. A picture of the Methodist minister holding a copy appeared in the Alton press and it was reproduced in

their local church and school magazines.

Realistically, we did not expect many people to actually mark the sheet and it was probably not politically correct, to do something with such an obvious Christian association - but it may have just provided some of the youngsters, with a few thoughts as to the

meaning of the Christmas festival, beyond presents, food and the like.

The bible tells us that Joseph and Mary, with their donkey, made the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem to pay their taxes (a distance of approximately 70 miles as the crow flies). Today, payments would be simple, via a bank system, and such a journey, if it was made, would take a couple of hours and not involve any overnight stays. It is hard to imagine life in biblical times. Fortunately, our ancestries won't extend back that far, but we should try and put our family history into context with the time period. How would our 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> or even 20<sup>th</sup> century ancestor have paid their taxes, or made such a journey?

TFG

**NEW MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Member 615 – Mrs H Gxxxxxx, -----, -----, -----,  
---- --- (amended surname interests)

RAVEN Richard	Hockham/Breckles/Thompson NFK	1754 – 1785
RAVEN William/Mary	Hockham/Breckles/Thompson NFK	1779 – 1785
REEVE Ann	Hockham/Breckles/Thompson NFK	1720 – 1800
WARBY Sarah	Hockham/Breckles/Thompson NFK	1768 – 1785
WARBY William	Hockham/Breckles/Thompson NFK	1720 – 1800

Member 155 – Mrs M Dxxxxxx, -----, -----, -----,  
---- --- (new address)

**IMPORTANT – SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE**

If any member wishes to update their surname interests please would they inform the member's interests secretary in writing (address on back cover) by the 1 April 2012 giving their name, membership number, surname interests to change, areas covered and the time period, so the new information may be included in the next interests directory.

## YOUR LETTERS

Simon Amyes has emailed with the following information, and also written a very interesting article about his g/g/grandfather, Robert Hambling, which appears in this issue.

### **Looking for Photographs of Victorian East Dereham and the surrounding area?**

When looking for photographs of the site of my great great grandfather's business, Hambling & Son, in Norwich Street, Dereham I stumbled on the Klickr web pages of Sue White who is a Wayland Heritage Officer. Her website has a section "on Old Norfolk Postcards and Prints" which contains 310 images of photos, postcards etc. relating to East Dereham and can be found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/suewhite/collections>

Another online photo/postcard site, which covers the whole country, is Francis Frith. There are 50 images of East Dereham. [www.francisfrith.com/east-dereham/photos](http://www.francisfrith.com/east-dereham/photos).

Fen Print has 20 East Dereham photos online - [www.fenprint.com/norfolk/Norfolk Index](http://www.fenprint.com/norfolk/Norfolk_Index)

The Norfolk Library Service also has about 40 photos of East Dereham online at Picture Norfolk. To search go to [norlink.norfolk.gov.uk](http://norlink.norfolk.gov.uk) and click on Picture Norfolk in the menu on the left side of the screen. More photographs can be seen by a personal visit to the [Norfolk Heritage Centre](#), based at the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, at the Forum in Norwich.

Books with photos include: The Story of East Dereham by Ben Norton; Looking Back at Dereham by Mildred Cook; Dereham in the Great War by Terry Davy; Memories of Dereham by Mildred Cook & Terry Davy ; More Memories of Dereham by Mildred Cook & Terry Davy ; Dereham - Past and Present by Mildred Cook & Terry Davy.

If you would like to contact Simon his email address is ... [simonjga@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:simonjga@yahoo.co.uk)

## **MY GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER BUILT STEAM ENGINES**

In 1830, at the age of 27 years my great great grandfather Robert HAMBLING, a blacksmith by trade, moved with his wife Mary Anne (nee BUSKARD) and his elder brother Thomas, from Ilketshall St Andrew near Bungay to East Dereham to start a business in Silver Street, (subsequently renamed Pound Street, then Norwich Road and finally Norwich Street). By 1847 bill-heads show the Hambling brothers as iron and brass founders, millwrights, whitesmiths, bell-hangers, agricultural implement and machine manufacturers and general ironmongers. They also sold weights and measures and adjusted balances. The 1851 census shows the partners employed 19 men and 6 apprentices.

By 1853 the working relationship between Robert and Thomas seems to have broken down as the partnership was dissolved and the business put on the market in a “Peremptory Sale”. The sale notice in the Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette of 12 March 1853 shows that in addition to the iron works and offices, the partners owned St Nicholas House, then occupied by Miss SPENCE’s seminary for young ladies (this is now 31 Norwich Street, a late 18<sup>th</sup> century town house converted into flats), two adjacent houses where Thomas and Robert lived, (I believe these were 27 and 29 Norwich Street – now replaced by modern premises), the Misses WRIGHT’s house and the house, shop and warehouses of Benjamin ELSDEN, rope maker. The result of the sale was that Robert Hambling gained sole control of the Norwich Street business, whilst his brother Thomas started another iron works in competition in High Street, East Dereham. The 1861 census shows Robert Hambling employed 7 men and 6 boys, whilst Thomas employed 10 men. Thomas Hambling’s business ceased trading by 1868 (only Robert is mentioned in the Harrod directory of that year)

By 1863 Robert’s business had clearly expanded as his bill-heads also advertised the sale of threshing machines, portable steam engines and hot water apparatus for green houses etc., the repair of pumps and the hiring out of steam engines for thrashing. These steam engines were “portable” as they were hauled from place to place by horses, unlike the later self propelled traction engines.



Robert and Mary Anne Hambling had nine children: (1) Elizabeth, born 1829, married 1852 to William CHILVERS, millwright and engineer of Foulsham. (2) Mary Ann, born 1830, married 1857 to Henry WIGHTMAN, draper; his shop in Bungay is still trading. (FreeBMD and E Dereham Banns also show a marriage to John SENDALL in 1850). (3) Christianna, born 1835, married 1854 to William JOLLYE, draper of Walsham le Willows. (4) Her twin Anna Maria. Born 1835, married 1883 to Richard RIX, carrier and farmer of Foulsham. (5) Sarah born 1838, married 1863 to Isaac ROGERS/RODGERS, Wesleyan minister. (6) Julianna, born 1839 married 1867 to Jabez BAKER, draper of Hilgay. (7) Jeremiah born 1842, married 1866 to Mary Ann BUNN. (8) Jane Anna, born 1844, married 1865 to John Poucher WILSON, draper of St Ives Cambs. (My great grandparents). (9) Alfred, born 1847, married 1876 to Fanny ALLEN; he was a draper of Thrapstone, Northants.

Robert Hambling died in 1866 at the age of 64 and the business was continued by his son Jeremiah. Entries in trade directories suggest the business continued as before, with a prestigious Silver Medal awarded to Hambling and Son by the Norfolk Agricultural Association at the show held at Downham Market in 1868 “for improved steam engine thrashing machinery & good work”. He was granted a patent in 1869 for improvements to thrashing machines. I have a copy of a trade card that shows how the site looked in about 1868. It shows the buildings and agricultural machinery under construction or ready for sale, including steam engines, elevators and threshing machines.

Jeremiah HAMBLING died on 2 December 1875 aged only 33, followed by his mother, Mary Anne, the following year. His wife, also Mary Anne, moved to Thetford with her brother William.

In 1876 the business was sold to Charles MIDDLETON of Leeds for £3700. Middleton sold St Nicholas House to Dr SM HOPSON the following year. The 1881 census shows Middleton employed 19 men and 12 boys. However, in 1882 the iron works, together with the adjacent dwellings, was again sold by auction. The Sales Particulars (I have an original copy) refer to a double dwelling (one half occupied by Mr MIDDLETON, the other by Mr COGHILL) and a single dwelling (occupied by Mr ELLSDON, ropemaker), all presumably in a row adjacent to the previously sold St Nicholas House. I have no information

on the purchaser of the property or the machines etc. other than White's and Kelly's directories of 1883 which refer to RIX and WARD as engineers, millwrights, machinists, iron-founders and agricultural agents in Norwich Street. Trade directories show the RIX family continued to run businesses on the site until at least 1936, whilst a 1970-71 directory refers to Rix of Dereham, Vauxhall and Bedford dealers, at 27-29 Norwich Street. The Rix garage is visible in old postcards of Norwich Street.

### **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

I am always on the lookout for information on the Hambling business. I am hoping to find, one day, a rusting piece of Hambling machinery in a field!

Also does anyone have photographs of the old Rix Motors premises, behind 27-29 Norwich Street? Maps and aerial photographs I have seen suggest that the general layout of the site changed little from the time the Hamblings were there until 1988.

If you can help please email me at [simonjga@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:simonjga@yahoo.co.uk).

*Simon Amyes*

Are you researching the names **EVANS** or **YULL**? Sue has kindly given me a copy Death Certificate of Sophia Evans nee Yull died in 1914 aged 87 years at Lingwood Workhouse. If this relates to your research please email or write to me and I will pass on a copy.

*Kate (Ed)*



## **A WALK ROUND THE WIGGENHALLS**

On a recent mild autumnal afternoon, I wandered around the churches of Wickenhall St Germans, St Peters and St Mary the Virgin in search of family history information.

Three names on a roll of honour, and one legible gravestone, were positive results, and talking to a ‘local’ has now brought me in touch with an elderly lady (whose mother is noted in my studies), and I hope to visit her soon to talk face-to-face about her family.

I’m sure there must be a connection back in the early 1800s with a cluster of ‘Emms’ in the Wickenhall villages and my lot in the Dereham area – the latter of which I have extensively researched, mainly via the internet.

Yes – the internet has provided much valuable information, but the experiences of actually being in the environment of one’s ancestors is really a very pleasant rewarding way of discovering one’s past.

*Ms M Marshall*

## **FAR EAST WWII PRISONERS OF WAR (FEPOW)**

At the last society meeting of 2011 a member of the audience asked for advice on 'researching Far East prisoners of war'. Several members had advice to offer, but although members had suggestions, nothing was actually written down.

Subsequently, Sue Harris, who has actually done considerable research into the subject, provided us with the following:

.....

### **WWII – Far Eastern Prisoners of War**

When I first starting researching a Far Eastern Prisoner of War (FEPOW), who worked on the infamous Thailand – Burma Railway, I was told that I would never find out anything about his life after he was captured. This is not so.

When the war ended in the Far East, the FEPOWs, after their release, were given a questionnaire to complete. They were asked details of the camps they worked in, with dates and the name of the camp leaders. These questionnaires can be found at The National Archives (TNA) under reference WO344.

An index card completed by the Japanese for each FEPOW is also held by TNA under reference WO345. This is usually partially in Japanese. It may advise of details of where he was transferred and when and where he was released to the Allies.

The Thailand – Burma Railway Centre, Kanchanaburi, Thailand ([admin@tbrconline.com](mailto:admin@tbrconline.com)) is very helpful and will help you interpret the information you find. They offered to translate the Japanese on the index card for me and also gave me information about the camps mentioned in the questionnaire.

If your FEPOW was in the Royal Norfolks then more data can be found in the 'Britannia Journal', a half yearly magazine produced by them. I found information about my soldier's battalion in the journals dated between 1946 and 1950. The journals can be found at the Forum in Norwich. The volumes are not available for loan but you are able to view them upon request.

Another source of information is a charity called Children of Far Eastern Prisoners of War ([www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)). The website gives lots of information including a list of books written about or by FEPOWs. One difficulty is that the men did not stay in their battalions after capture so the list of camps shown on the questionnaire completed after the war is the only source of information as to where they were made to work between capture and release. If you have this information, together with dates, then it can be matched against data found in books that you read. I should warn you that these books do not make pleasant reading. It's a lengthy and time consuming process but it certainly is possible to gain a considerable amount of information, particularly if someone in your soldier's work camp has written a book.

There are many websites which can provide you with snippets of information which gradually build up to provide a fuller picture of the life a FEPOW experienced and, if you are lucky, about the soldier you are researching.

Currently I am trying to discover how the FEPOWs were found at the end of the war, as they were scattered about in work camps in several countries, many in the middle of a jungle. I have written to the International Red Cross to see if they are able to help. I have been told it will be about a year before I get a response.

The 15th February 2012 will mark the 70th anniversary of the capture of thousands of soldiers in Singapore by the Japanese. I feel strongly that we need to find all we can about the soldiers that lost

their youth, and in many cases their lives, working in atrocious conditions in the jungles of Burma and Thailand while suffering from malnutrition, tropical diseases and torture and seeing on a daily basis their friends die of illness, over work or being killed by their captors.

*Sue Harris*

.....

By coincidence, a few days later the December edition of Family Tree (FT) Magazine was published containing an article on the subject, that includes a couple more websites which may be useful:

**[www.mansell.com](http://www.mansell.com)** which aims to be a primary source of documentation

**[www.fepow-comunity.org.uk](http://www.fepow-comunity.org.uk)** which offers research tips and links to other sites

Brent Scoles sent details in, regarding a book by Dr Harold Churchill which he thought might help researchers: “Prisoners on the Kwai” which contains extracts from the memories of the author and those of other ex-prisoners, collected by Sue Palmer

Brent also identified another website **[www.far-eastern-heroes.org.uk](http://www.far-eastern-heroes.org.uk)** in which he discovered Arthur Steggles, who does not appear in Dr Churchill’s book, as he moved to Australia.

This simple question, invoked considerable interest. It would appear that there is a great deal of background information readily available to help FEPOW researchers, we even have five books in the society’s library.

**Footnote:** News Regarding World War One Prisoners of War.

Sue Harris mentions, in her FEPOW article above, that she had contacted the International Red Cross for information and again, the

same FT magazine mentioned above, informs us that the International Agency for Prisoners of War (1914 – 1919) has announced, that ‘due to pressures to complete its records digitisation for the 2014 centenary, public research and research requests have been suspended until further notice’. See:

**[www.irc.org/eng/resources/docements/misc/57/qgr.htm](http://www.irc.org/eng/resources/docements/misc/57/qgr.htm)**

*TFG*

## **NORFOLK ANNALS**

Norfolk Annals Vol 1 (1801-1850) & Vol 2 (1851-1900) were compiled by Charles Mackie in 1901. They are a chronological record of events that occurred in Norfolk during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are compiled from the files of the ‘Norfolk Chronicle’.

One of these books is available to borrow from the Norfolk library, the other is available to view at the Millenium library (The Forum) but for reference only. The books give you an understanding of what concerned people in those days, and tells you of events that occurred during your ancestors lives, and even the weather. Extremes of weather were common in those days and are not new to the 21<sup>st</sup> century despite what modern scientists suggest.

I was surprised to discover that these books are both available to read online. Although non fiction they can be found on [www.freefictionbooks.org](http://www.freefictionbooks.org) , each having approximately 500 pages with a full index at the back. They can easily be found by searching by author or book title. I hope some of you will find these books of interest and possibly helpful in your research.

*Sue Harris*

## FROM EASTON'S RECORDS OF BURIAL

Most of us don't bother checking entries in Burial registers but we should, as every so often the vicar takes it upon himself to record more than the bare facts. At Easton 1924 was a very good year for comments: Louis Caney aged 46 '*Weighs 20stone*'; Horace Dickerson aged 89: *Lived and died in the one house and slept out only thrice*; Christmas Nelson aged 90: '*Parish Clerk since Oct 11 1868*'

Far less humorous in 1914 the Easton's vicar recorded that Georgina Burrows '*Committed suicide by cutting her throat with her husband's razor*'

This is in addition to the more obvious information source - memorial inscriptions. I include the following – not for its content but for the comment at the end, added by Pat our Latin translator.

HIC DEPOSITAE SUNT MORTALITATIS RELIQUAE  
JOANNIS GOBBETJUNIORIS OBIIT 25<sup>TO</sup> DECEMBRIS 1674  
ANNOS NATUS 16 VIVIS DISCE MORI NULLI MORS  
PALLIDA PARCIT NUNC JUVENTUM RAPUIT MOX RAPIT  
ILLA SENEM HODIE MIHI CRAS TIBI

*Here are laid the mortal remains of John Gobbet junior, he died 25<sup>th</sup> December 1674 16 years of age. As you live, learn from nature, pale death spares no-one. Now it has carried away youth, later on it captures age. Today for me tomorrow for you*

**"Doing this certainly cheers you up!"**

TFG



## LIFE IN A VICTORIAN PRISON

Our November speaker was Mike Wabe, he spoke about life in a Victorian prison. Graham has given us a summary of the Victorian prison experience.

### Why were Victorian Prisons so tough?

Law and order was a major issue in Victorian Britain. Victorians were worried about the huge new cities that had grown up following the Industrial Revolution: how were the masses to be kept under control?

Offences went up from about 5,000 per year in 1800 to about 20,000 per year in 1840. They were firm believers in punishment for criminals, but faced a problem: what should the punishment be?

There were prisons. At this time were often in old buildings, such as castles etc. They tended to be damp, unhealthy, insanitary, over-crowded. All kinds of prisoners were mixed in together, as at Coldbath Fields, Clerkenwell -men, women, children, the insane, serious criminals, petty criminals, people awaiting trial, debtors.

Common punishments included **transportation** - sending the offender to America, Australia or Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) or **execution** - hundreds of offences carried the death penalty.

By the 1830s people were having doubts about both these punishments, and Australia was complaining that they did not want to be the dumping-ground for Britain's criminals.

The answer was prison: lots of new prisons were built - 90 were built or added to between 1842 and 1877. Many Victorian prisons are still in use today. The Victorians also had clear ideas about what these prisons should be like. They should be unpleasant places, so as to deter people from committing crimes. Once inside, prisoners had to be made to face up to their own faults, by keeping them in silence and making them do hard, boring work. Walking a **treadwheel**, **turning the crank** or **picking oakum** (separating strands of rope) were the most common forms of **hard labour**.

The work on the **treadwheel** was to hold on to a bar and walk up the

wheel. You did ten minutes on and five off, for eight hours, climbing the equivalent of over 8,000 feet in the process. You would have to turn the **crank** in your cell a set number of times to earn food. Unlike the treadmill, which was used to power machinery in the prison, the crank simply turned paddles in a box of sand.

You were not allowed to talk during these jobs. This was strictly enforced: the punishment book at Coldbath Fields records 11,624 offences against this rule in one year.

Each prison was run by the gaoler in his own way. He made up the rules. If you could pay, you could buy extra privileges, such as private rooms, better food, more visitors, keeping pets, letters going in and out, books to read etc. If you could not, the basic fare was grim. You even had to pay the gaoler to be let out when your sentence was finished.

In the 1840s a system of rules called "**The Separate System**" was tried. This was based on the belief that convicted criminals had to face up to themselves. Accordingly, they were kept on their own in their cells most of the time. When they were let out, to go to chapel or for exercise, they sat in special seats or wore special masks so that they couldn't even see, let alone talk to, another prisoner. Not surprisingly, many went mad under this system.

People wanted to reform prison for different reasons. Christian reformers felt that prisoners were God's creatures and deserved to be treated decently. Rational reformers believed that the purpose of prison was to punish and reform, not to kill prisoners with disease or teach them how to be better criminals.

By the 1860s opinion had changed. It was now believed that many criminals were habitual criminals and nothing would change them. They just had to be scared enough by prison never to offend again. The purpose of the silent system was to break convicts' wills by being kept in total silence and by long, pointless hard labour. **The Silent System** is associated with the 1865 Prisons Act and the Assistant Director of Prisons, Sir Edmund du Cane, who promised the public that prisoners would get "**Hard Labour, Hard Fare and Hard Board**".

Change took place again in 1902, when the treadwheel was banned.



Work on the treadwheel



Turning the crank

## INFORMATION FROM THE FEDERATION OF FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES

### GRO Number Change

The main public facing telephone number for the General Register Office (GRO) changed on 5 January 2012. Customers who previously contacted GRO via the 0845 603 7788 number will be asked to contact +44 (0) 300 123 1837. Telephone numbers beginning with 0300 are specially designated for use by public bodies and not-for-profit organisations. Calls to 0300 numbers are not free and should not be confused with 0800 numbers. It is hoped the number will be memorable for customers as civil registration was introduced in England and Wales in the year 1837.

### Unwanted Certificates

Most of us have purchased certificates hoping they will relate to our family history research and inevitably we end up with mistakes. Have you ever wondered what to do with them?

The BMD Certificate Exchange website lists those unwanted certificates looking for a new home. It is easy to use whether you're searching for a certificate or inputting the details of any you have. It currently has over 4,350 certificates listed.

There is also a sister site – Will Transcriptions Online - which has over 3,000 transcribed wills. Again, it is easy to use and you can search by surname or county. There are also a growing number of miscellaneous documents such as newspaper reports and apprenticeship indentures. Both of these websites are free to use and welcome more contributions.



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# Mid-Norfolk Family History Society

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