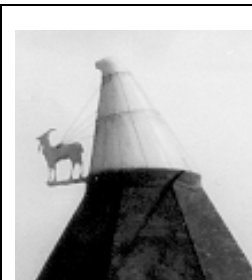


*Burton & District Family History Society Newsletter

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Editor's Comments

Your Editor hopes that you all had a good summer break with plenty of opportunities for family history research. If you did, regardless of whether the research was successful or not, please consider writing a few lines about it for inclusion in a future Newsletter. There were some articles and notices in the July 2016 Newsletter that are still applicable, so they have not been repeated here. Please note that there are two very interesting speakers for the next two months and then in December it will be time for our Christmas Social and raffle which is always a fun occasion.

July 20th 2016 Meeting Summary

Alice and her sisters: Seeing our Ancestors' Families as they saw them. Speaker: Simon Pawley

Another family history research project that resulted from a folder falling on Simon's head! Simon already knew of William Pawley, woolcomber but knew nothing about him until he read the Pawley family letters found in the folder which provided fleeting but tantalising glimpses into the family. One requested Robert Wright to support and maintain William and his wife Alice (Wright) in their old age. Obviously Alice and Robert were related but how? By

careful detective work Simon managed to piece together family relationships between Robert Wright, William Pawley, John Walk, James Lee and Thomas and Bett Wale nee Pawley. James Lee married a Quaker and unusually his children including eight daughters were all baptised as Quakers. His second marriage was to Sarah Wright, probably a relative of Alice Wright. In 1798 William wrote a letter to the Wright family, a document allowing the Horseguards grazing land in Bedfordshire is witnessed by John Walk Quartermaster. Simon found John Walk in the Muster Lists who was commissioned as a Corporal in the 1st Troop of Horse Guards (the Royal Body Guards). In one letter John Walk writes that his father is expected to be superannuated and research showed that his father is Edward Walk a mast maker who married Ruth. After John's retirement Edward settled with James Lee in Queen's Norton where burial records show deaths for James Lee (1823), Sarah Lee (1820), John Walk (1792), Ruth Walk (1825) and Edward Walk (1805).

The letters indicate that all these people were related. Simon noticed that the letters were often addressed to Dear Brother and Sister indicating an in-law relationship. Baptisms of Joseph and Elizabeth Wright, children

mentioned in the letters. A baptism for Robert Wright in 1768 does not indicate an illegitimate birth but in the same year William Pawley married Alice Wright. Robert was charged with supporting his uncle and aunt William and Alice Pawley and it seems likely that the couple who did not have any children brought up Robert). This family were connected by a group of sisters who never lost touch. The men writing the letters were husbands of the Wright sisters and family connections were determined by women. Sarah Wright married James Lee, John Walk married Ruth Wright, William Pawley married Alice Wright, and Elizabeth Wright married Mr Haynes.

Simon asked at the start of the talk, "How do we know what we know, and do we really know it all?" His talk showed us that we understand less than we think we do.

The (Cannock) Chase through Time (17th September 2016)
(Staffs and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service and the VCH Study Day)

The history of the Chase is a balance archaeology, environment and documentary history. Detail is difficult to establish because of tree and heather cover but recent LIDOR research shows the extent of the mining industry across its landscape as well as other archaeological remains from Iron Age barrows, lead mining bell pits, evidence for squatter settlements and the WW1 Brocton camp site. Dr Chris Harrison expanded on the theme looking at the 16th century iron industry during which 54,000 acres of woodland were cleared and 20,000 acres of waste were created between Cannock and Rugeley. There were rights to gather small timber and larger wood for cottage repair and some 26,000 sheep grazing made a large environmental impact. There was also illegal hunting and poaching. In the 16th century bloomeries produced high quality wrought iron but in small quantities. Later furnace processes produced large quantities of cast iron that had to be further refined in forges to produce very profitable

wrought and bar iron. But the process also involved large amounts of wood from pollarded trees grown over seven year regeneration, to produce charcoal and highly skilled probably 'immigrant labour' from other parts of Britain. The iron came from the Black Country as charcoal quickly turns to dust when it is moved. The Crown took over the Paget ironworks in 1553; in 1597 there was a commission of enquiry and in 1611 it was reported that the woods were totally wasted and in 1680, Plot reported that most of the woods had been destroyed and replaced by ling.

Ann Stones from Leicester University told us about the Leicestershire Charnwood Roots Project which has resulted in 30 oral histories, 3 community digs (with finds from flints, pottery and modern artefacts), 4,000 database entries and working with local schools within the National Curriculum. In 2015 there was a Heritage Festival. The three main areas are Precambrian, Bradgate and Beacon Hill, was this area a barrier to cultural interaction and is wasteland marginal? Did early settlers avoid these marginal places – there are few Domesday Book Entries. A 1754 perambulation of the forest showed 2 concentric areas of settlement: to the NW, places with Old English names and to the SW, places with Middle English names. The four boundaries of the forest became routeways and in 1702 the establishment of an Augustinian Priory at Ulverscroft, Medieval castles, markets and Fairs, slate workings at Groby, coal mining at Coleorton and limestone mining in the east of the forest, pasture land and as many as 15 deer parks. Place names reflect woodland, clearance, pasture but no evidence of mystical or spooky names. LIDOR surveys show 38-58% earlier landscape use, medieval cultivation, different but not marginal.

Nigel Tringham summarised what is already known about the chase or forest of Needwood, its history and rights claimed by surrounding villagers. In 1086 there were no settlements except for Agardsley which became

Newborough. Was Needwood purely a hunting area with fallow deer confined to its parks? Poaching increased especially around St Bartholomew's and the Virgin Mary's Feast Days at Tutbury and Abbots Bromley. Landowners gave venison away to local gentry. From 1400, land was gradually leased by leading villagers and timber collection, pasturing, feeding pigs, growing crops and bonfire wood collection was allowed. The forest became Crown property and in 1655 a petition to Cromwell called for the land to be allocated fairly to commoners but may never have happened six acres were allowed per village. Lists for some areas are missing. There was consequently a lot of discontent and the process collapsed after Cromwell's death.

Future meetings:

October 19th: Things You Might Not Know About Staffordshire – speaker: Alan Lewis

Our Secretary says: "I hope that Alan can tell us things we don't know about East Staffs, the forgotten quarter over the Pennines and the River Trent."

November 16th: Flying at the City of Bass – speaker: Richard Farman

Richard has been involved with the old postcard books of Burton. This talk should emphasise how important Burton was considered to be in the 19th century.

December 14th Christmas Social and Raffle.

Please note that all meetings, including Members' Evenings, are open to visitors.