

Meeting Report – November 2024

‘A Person Known to the Authorities’, ‘Atlantic Crossing’ and ‘More Census Surprises’

Our first Tuesday meeting started with a welcome to Tom Phillips and Tom & Fiona Weston, and Terry G sorting out the technical challenges. Andy W took the lead on our presentations, featuring his 3x great grandfather, Edmund Davey, **A Person Known to the Authorities**.

Andy said, So, why am I telling you about Edmund? Well, in our Harry met Sally series of stories, I told the meeting about my father and mother, that's George Whalley and Marion Davey and how they met, here in Knutsford and ultimately married.

At that time in 1942, George was a policeman and in order for Marion to marry him, she had to get references as to her character and be approved by the Chief Constable of Cheshire. She needed to be a non-villain and I said it was a good job her 2x Great Grandfather was not mentioned. Why you ask?

Well, here are extracts from Edmund's obituary in the Sussex Express –

“In remembrance of the late Edmund Davey who died at Rottingden, Sussex, January 14th 1859, aged 77 years.

He was one of those remarkable individuals that are to be met with in nearly every village throughout England and the history of his life and character would almost fill a volume. He was the only survivor of a family of 9 children, who all died young of consumption.

In his early life he was a notorious smuggler, and on one occasion was apprehended (with several accomplices) and fined £5000, which was compromised by the payment of as many hundreds.

He was the Caleb Quotem of the village and during his career has followed various occupations: Butcher, Fisherman, Bathing Man, Barber, Pork Butcher, House Agent, Farmer and Gardener, which latter business he zealously attended to within 3 days of his death.

He was a keen sportsman. He had a most tenacious memory and remembered any event of importance during the past half century.

His manners were blunt, his disposition good, and his temper amiable. He was a very early riser and in balmy summer time might be seen smoking his pipe between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning.

He had a cheerful word and pleasant smile for everyone, who will miss him. The writer of this short memoir will remember many cheerful hours spent in his society which will form an agreeable retrospect for many future years.

Mr Davey has been married upwards of 50 years and his widow survives him, though in such an enfeebled state, it is almost an impossibility she can outlive him many days. Peace to his remains. Sussex Express”.

A number of points arise from this obituary _

1. He died in Rottingden – I know this to be Rottingdean in Sussex, so I think it is a spelling mistake, unless maybe locals referred to it that way? His death certificate records the correct spelling.
2. Caleb Quotem – never heard this expression before this, my guess as to meaning would be “know it all” either said kindly or unkindly. Anyway, I looked up the definition and it is “Parish clerk/Jack of all Trades” – so his various jobs would confirm this use of phrase.
3. His wife (Elizabeth) - impossible to outlive him by many days – well, she did not die until February 1862, so outlived him by 3 years, over 1100 days.
4. One of Edmund’s occupations was a Pork Butcher and one of his children, a William Davey, came north via Lymm to Knutsford and in 1851 married a Mobberley girl, Mary Bradbury, here in Knutsford. In subsequent years he is referred to as a Pork Butcher here on Princess Street.
5. I estimate Edmund was born around 1782 and if he was apprehended by the authorities in his early life as a smuggler, I am going to guess that to be around 25 years old. So, it would be about 1807 when he paid the £500 fine to stay out of prison. In today’s money (2024) that is over £54000!! So we can conclude that smuggling on the South coast was rather lucrative.

Edmund’s gravestone is in the churchyard of St Margaret’s Church in Rottingdean. It took me two visits to find it, but with pictorial help from our family and from the vicar there, I know I’ve found the right one. It has been weathered to such an extent that the names etc cannot be read, but I have felt the surface and I can definitely make out the Davey name on it. A photo of the gravestone’s inscription, taken by a distant relative some years ago, is more legible and confirms that it is Edmund’s last resting place.

Peace to his remains, Andrew Whalley 19/11/2024.

Next, Terry G had an Irish tale of woe: **‘Criminality in Ireland’**

“Researching a friend’s family history, I came across a sad little tale.

Anne was a young woman living in Holyhead at the end of the 19th century. She met a Corporal in the East York Regiment, name of William. In 1894 their son William was born and registered in Holyhead. Between 1895 and 1896 the Regiment was stationed in Tipperary Barracks. Anne had obviously travelled with William because further children were born the first being Edward in 1895 at Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare. In 1896, William and Anne married in Naas, Co. Kildare

James Martin was born in 1897 at Curragh camp and Hannah in 1900 on Spike Island in Cork Harbour, used as a garrison for the British army and as a prison. William was posted to South Africa where he died on February 2nd 1901 in an area west of Bloemfontein. His next-of-kin was his widow, Anne; she was paid his outstanding wages £1 17/11 plus a gratuity of £5 (possibly on 24th February 1902).

Anne appears in subsequent census records (1901 and 1911) with her children. She is in Templemore, Co. Tipperary and is a domestic servant.

On 5th March 1913 Anne appeared in the Petty Sessions Court before M Hornibrook RM, Capt. A Cardew DL and Dr. G Mitchell (Justices), Tipperary. Her address was Barrack Street, Templemore. The complainant was Sir John Cardon Bt. JP DL of The Abbey, Templemore. Anne was charged with "having parts of tress in possession not having come lawfully by same". Specifically, "that on the 22nd February 1913 at Barrack Street, Templemore, Co. Tipperary part of a tree, sapling, shrub or underwood the property of the complainant and being of the value of 5/- was found in her possession or on her premises with her knowledge she not having come lawfully by the same"

The verdict at that time was "add on applicant of court to 19th March"

With her in court on that day were 2 other defendants; Patrick Hennessey and Bessie Barrett, both of Barrack Street, Templemore. They were charged with the same offence but only had timber to the value of 1/-.

On 19th March Anne, Patrick and Bessie were back in court, this time appearing before Capt. A Cardew DL, Dr. G Mitchell and James Finn (Justices) to "account for timber in possession". This time there were witnesses against all 3 of the accused; Joseph Maker, [Aidyte] McLennon RIC and Johan Kelly. Anne was corrected and ordered to pay a fine of 1/- with 5/- for compensation and 1/6 in costs (totalling 7/6), in default to be imprisoned in Cork Female Prison for 7 days without hard labour unless said sums be sooner paid.

Patrick was ordered to pay a fine of 1/- and compensation of 1/- and 1/6 in costs (totalling 3/6), in default to be imprisoned in Limerick Prison for 7 days without hard labour unless said sums be sooner paid.

Bessie was ordered to pay a fine of 1/- and compensation of 1/- and 1/6 in costs (totalling 3/6), in default to be imprisoned in Cork Female Prison for 7 days without hard labour unless said sums be sooner paid.

The total amount Anne was ordered to pay was 7/6.... Doesn't sound like a lot, but a typical weekly wage for an unskilled labourer in Dublin at the time was 18/-. Anne died aged 52 on 23rd December 1925 in Barrack Street, Templemore. She was recorded as a widow and housekeeper and died of apoplexy (3 months) and heart failure (10 days).

Such a tough life."

Next, an **Atlantic Crossing** story. Mark B continued the saga of his Bath forebears, this time featuring Walter Bath, son of George Bath, the coachman, of whom we learned about a few months ago.

Walter applied to join two different police forces in the early years of the 20th century. Whilst waiting for his applications to be processed, he jumped at the chance to join the Mounties, and was shortly posted to Regina, Saskatchewan, from 1905-1915. Then, he was transferred from the Canadian Signal Company in Calgary to the U.K. arriving in 1916. In April, he met up with his Lincolnshire childhood sweetheart Alice; they married in Sidcup. He became Lance Corporal in the Canadian Engineers, and after the Armistice, back to the U.K. and discharged in Buxton. Then, back to Canada, this time to Maple Creek, a small settlement in Saskatchewan. Alice joined him on his allotted acres, handed out by the

Government, to her dismay and horror, and swiftly ended the rural idyll Alice imagined. Their first child was delivered by a First Nation local, they survived the harsh brutality of a Canadian winter and by 1923, the family were disembarking in Liverpool, whence they made for Scunthorpe, to stay at Uncle Arthur's. Walter got a job in the steelworks. The culture shock of backwater wintry Midwest Canada affected their marriage.

Mary B started a discussion on how to find a **Missing Person**, an ancestor who was successful in business, had a comfortable life, left home one morning in his slippers and was never, it seems, seen again. Tricia P tried to assist with pointers to record sources. Ultimately, Mary feels that he 'died in a ditch' soon after his disappearance, never to be found.

Roger B rounded off the meeting with a '**Census Surprises**' feature, which morphed into '**Persons Known to the Authorities**', ending in a very long ocean voyage for some of the characters.

First a preamble, giving examples of pre-1841 census records. The 1776 'census' of Wetherby is a comprehensive account of all Heads of Households who lived there, their occupations and their ages. No addresses, no wider family details. It was a schedule drawn up for the Duke of Devonshire, who owned Wetherby (!) and it was the task of his 'Perpetual Curate', the Rev. Richard Kay, to complete it, because the Duke was to put it up for sale, which he did. Moving on the national census returns, there are (or could be) census records held in county archives and the like, for 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831. These do not have the detail of 1841, and you would be lucky to find transcribed and indexed records, but it's worth asking. Roger had discovered the transcribed 1801, 1821 & 1831 census returns for Spofforth, presented as 'An Account of the Population of the Township of Spofforth in the Wapentake of Claro and in the County of York March 1801, 1821, 1831'. The 1811 records are missing. This is an example of what may be out there, good luck you're your researches. The Spofforth example is held by West Yorkshire Archive Service in Morley.

The starting point of the main story is the 1841 census in Longton, North Staffs. Eight families of ancestors lived in the area, which was dominated by the pottery industry and coal mining. The 1841 General Election sparked violent protest from the mob. There is a Chartist back story here. Unrest began in the 1790s, a time of trade recession, rising prices, increased unemployment, misery for the underclasses – combined with the fear of invasion from the French, and its revolution. Local volunteer defence forces were set up, to protect the nation from Napoleon and, more immediately, the discontented populace at home.

2nd May 1800 *Birmingham Gazette* reported that cavalry and infantry were called out to quieten riots in Lane End, now in the centre of the town of Longton. There was further rioting in September, by the Lane End potters and miners. Volunteer groups were called out again, and 17th Light Dragoons were billeted in Lane End for weeks. In 1832, 1837, 1839 there were serious outbreaks of further mob violence.

In 1839, The reading of the Riot Act took place, at Lane End. In the General Election of 1841, the disenfranchised, or rather the un-enfranchised non-voters attacked the conservative candidates in Longton. Chartism was a nationwide movement, but in some localities it had a violent aspect to it. Communal rioting was triggered by events – an election, pressure of bad harvests, down turn in trade. Then things turned nasty, in 1842.

Thomas Cooper was a popular radical preacher, but a pacifist. He preached in Longton 15th July 1842. Thousands heard his 'Thou shalt do no murder' sermon on Crown Bank, Hanley, later that day. He was clearly a man of peace. His pleas for gentleness and forgiveness went unheeded. His timing was unfortunate. Colliers' wages were being reduced by the coalmasters, there were 4,000-5,000 colliers out of work. Coal reserves dried up, then the potbanks had to shut down through lack of coal, so potters were out of work. The *Bolton Chronicle* reported that the area was 'steeped to the very neck in Radical Dissent'. The rioters went crazy.

Several publicans offered alcohol to the rioters in exchange for protection. Mr Wynne and his neighbours were able to buy off the mob with money payments. Dr Vale, Rector of Longton, was unable to stop the rioters breaking into his rectory cellar, carrying away his liquor, burning his furniture and books, then his house. Trentham Police Station was gutted. The mob returned to Hanley, prior to the violence in Burslem market place next day, significantly, the anniversary of Peterloo.

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The scene moved on, to Stafford Assizes. The punishments handed down to seven of the rioters' ringleaders was 21 years transportation to Australia. Many others were charged and convicted, with lesser sentences, but nevertheless draconian prison terms for almost all. No more is heard of Longton as a hotbed of unrest. Trade picked up, the Chartists achieved some of their democratic objectives, and philanthropists emerged to encourage self-improvement for working class men. Enough was done to head off further chaotic episodes.

Conclusion: That knowing the context of the lives of ancestors gives those pages in the census returns whole new meaning, in a previously unimagined way. That the hardship of day to day life, the exploitation, the infant mortality, the terrifying dangers of childbirth, the catastrophic impact of unemployment, all of this, in Longton between 1790 and 1842, was the backdrop to the additional nightmare of sporadic violent uprising. That the memory of Peterloo, 23 years earlier, still resonated so powerfully with the following generation.

Next time: what was it like for the enumerators who recorded the 1841 census, given the extraordinary unrest and the levels of mistrust – to put it mildly – of authority?