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FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

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Books from the Society's Library may be borrowed from, and should be returned to, the Librarian, Dr M.E. Wilson, 33 Archery Rise, Neville's Cross, Durham, DH1 4LA.

EDITORIAL

Once again it falls to the Editor to appeal for articles for future issues of the Journal. Our membership has grown considerably since the last such appeal was made, so newer members should perhaps be reminded that a flow of interesting articles is necessary if the Journal - your Journal - is to continue to be acceptable to members. Members of longer standing will need no reminding that your Editor is convinced that everyone has a tale to tell, and judging by the conversations which take place in earnest little groups at all our meetings he is not mistaken. All that is now asked is that you put your favourite genealogical anecdote (how you finally pinned down greatgrandfather, why you are not Duke of Northumberland or even "Where I am stuck and why"). Do not worry if you are not used to writing such articles - the Editor is here to offer help and advice.

A gratifying response was received to the appeal in last July's Journal, for a "Strays' Secretary". As a result, Mrs M. Furness (member no. 70), of 41 Lindisfarne Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, has been given responsibility for collecting references to Northumberland and County Durham people, culled from Parish Registers, Monumental Inscriptions, Census Returns, etc., from elsewhere. Mrs Furness, who will be pleased to receive "stray" information from members, will put it all on file, where it will be available to help enquirers. To be really useful, however, her files must be well supplied with information, so it would help if anyone enquiring about possible strays made a point of supplying information from their own part of the country at the same time. Remember also to include the usual stamps for return postage (two international reply coupons from overseas members).

SECRETARY'S JOTTINGS

Durham County Record Office, at County Hall, Durham, is to close for alterations to their strong-rooms for about four weeks early in 1979. At the time of writing precise dates are not available so intending researchers are advised to contact the Record Office beforehand (telephone Durham 64411, ext. 253 or 474). Incidentally, Durham Record Office is now open every Wednesday evening from 6 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. (apart from the four week period mentioned above), but documents required at these evening sessions must be ordered 24 hours in advance. All three County Record Offices in our region now have regular evening openings - Tyne and Wear every Tuesday and Northumberland on the second and third Mondays of each month.

Durham County Record Office has some useful lists of their holdings, which are available free on postal or personal application:

- (1) Church of England parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials - February 1977;
- (2) ~~as above~~ - additional deposits;
- (3) transcripts and indices of Anglican registers and monumental inscriptions;
- (4) copies of nonconformist registers;
- (5) nonconformist records - September 1978; and
- (6) sources other than parish registers and census returns for the study of population.

There is a one-day family history conference on Saturday, 31 March, at Nottingham University, followed by a "gala dinner" in the evening and the AGM of the Federation of Family History Societies on the Sunday morning. Details are available from Nottingham Family History Society (11 Brampton Road, Stapleford, Notts.). The previous weekend (24/25 March) there is a conference of all the societies in North-West England at Whalley Abbey, Lancs. Details from Mr G. Pelling, 17 Sandown Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancs. BB4 6PL.

D. Le P. Webb

As I am sure all members of the Society are fully aware, genealogical research is a fascinating, interesting and educational pastime. I would suggest, however, that the research of paper work or records, although essential, should not be the end of it. It can be even more interesting to get out and see the places where the ancestors worked, lived or died.

Having done much research of records with the help of searchers nearer the places of my ancestors, my wife and I decided one year to take our motor caravan and visit North Yorkshire and Northumberland to see just what we could of my ancestors' homes and places of worship, my ancestors have been Storeys and Pybuses from Boulton on Swale, Middleton Tyas and Uckerby in North Yorkshire near Scotch Corner and also Swans from Woodhern, Lesbury and Alawick and Robsens from Alawick, Shilbottle and Alnmouth.

As a start we drove up to Middleton Tyas and found the Church where John Swan had married Ann Pybus in 1755. Then we went down a few miles to Boulton on Swale where the Storeys had worshipped and married into the Pybus family and between these two places, looked for Uckerby where the Storeys had had a Mill in the seventeenth century. We couldn't even find Uckerby, much less the Mill, although the village is marked on the map.



John Swan 1726-1817
From a very old Silhouette.

After going along the road which, according to the map, went through Uckerby, about six times, we asked a local if he knew if there was an Uckerby Mill. He said there wasn't one but he knew of an Uckerby Mill House Farm and it turned out to be a place we had passed six times!

We rather hesitantly knocked on the door and the farmer's wife, Mrs Raw, when she knew our mission, very generously gave her time to showing us over the house and showing us where the huge water wheel had worked, the sluice and the spillway and where the Mill Pond had been and also where the Mill stones had worked. They confirmed that the house was the one which had been once the Mill House but that over the intervening three hundred years it had been rebuilt and altered many times. Nevertheless it was an interesting and very rewarding discovery and a good start.

The Pybus family had been master masons at Middleton Tyas but we found no evidence of them although many of the very old cottages of stone may have been built by them.

We then went on northwards through Darlington where I had lived briefly before World War I, then Seaton Carew where I had lived during the first World War and experienced the bombardment of the Hartlepoons by German battle cruisers in 1914 and West Hartlepool where I had been born in 1907 and where my father had been a solicitor for many years and then on northwards through Newcastle to Woodhorn.

Woodhorn was where John Swan and Ann Pybus had gone to in 1755 after marrying at Middleton Tyas and where their first two children were born, at Lynfield House Farm. We found the farm to be still in operation though now owned by Alcan Industries and known to the locals as the Alcan Farm. Alcan Industries, whose large modern aluminium smelter dominates that area, had purchased the farm to demonstrate that Industry and Farming could exist side by side. They have indeed demonstrated this but it doesn't alter the fact that the huge smelting works and power station are both eyesores, although I have no doubt that the locals are grateful for the employment it provides in an area of declining mining activity.

The farmhouse looked to have been built around the 1800s but the outbuildings seemed to be of a much earlier period.

We speculated as to why the Swans had left there and gone to Lesbury about fifteen years later. Later research indicated that the estate had been owned by Lord Widdrington who had had to forfeit it as a punishment for having been active in the support of the house of Stuart. Subsequently the estate changed hands several times and perhaps the Swans may have felt somewhat insecure and sought a more secure life on the land of the Duke of Northumberland.

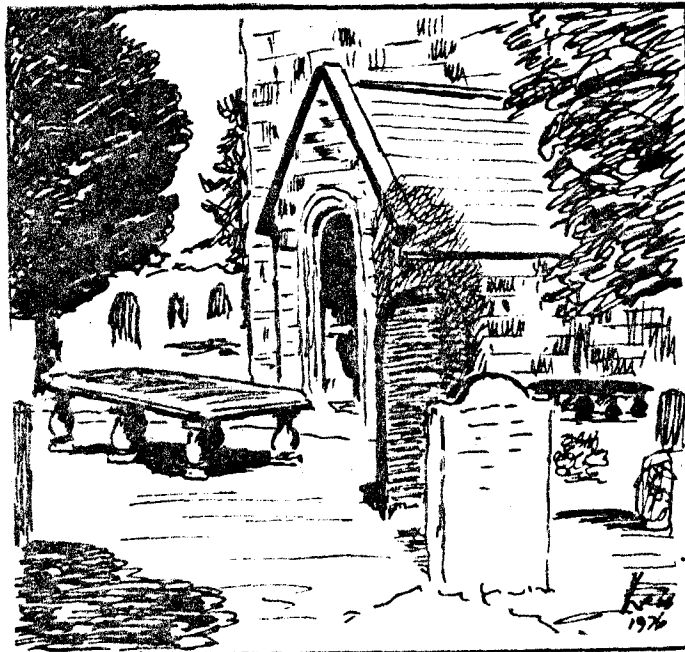
We then went further north, to Alnmouth, to see the house where my mother had been born and were able to find the owner who very kindly showed us over the house. We also met a Miss Ella Dodds who had been taught to play the violin by my great uncle, Mark Swan, and knew various anecdotes about the Robsons, who had been drapers there. One, Andrew Robson, who had been Relieving Officer and Churchwarden, was apparently also a bit of a village martinet.

A visit to the church was rewarded by finding that a Centenary Booklet had just been produced. This recorded that, pasted inside the cover of the earliest volume of Church Accounts, there was a list headed simply - "Belonging to the Alnmouth Church - one long duster, one mop, one zinc pail, one blacklead brush, one dustpan". The list was signed by Andrew Robson, Churchwarden.

It was this Andrew Robson's son, Thomas, who married my grandmother Jane Swan on 15th December 1868.

We then visited Lesbury Church and found the table stone which marked the graves of John Swan (1726-1817) and his wife Ann Pybus and also recorded that Ann had died aged 52 in 1784. Of their daughters, Mary had died in 1764, Elizabeth in 1775 and Ann in 1766. Also was recorded that Robert their son died at the age of 39 in 1803 and that John Swan the husband survived to the age of 91 and died in 1817. It also recorded that their son, Mark, lived to the age of 74 and died in 1830 and that Robert the son of Mark died in 1828 aged 32 and that Dorothy Swan (née Taylor), the wife of Mark, died on 28th April 1846 aged 86.

Nearby was a reddish coloured stone commemorating Jane, wife of Mark Swan (née Jane Lamb of Gateshead), who died in 1850 aged 44, their son John aged 7 who died on 12th March 1848, their daughter Alice aged 3 who died on 15th March and their daughter Anne who died on 24th March, all in the same year. Lastly was recorded the death of Mark, the father of this tragic family, who died on 19th April 1859 aged 62.



The Table Stone of John & Ann Swan
and
The Head Stone of Mark & Jane Swan
& the Tragic Trio. Lesbury Church

The death of Jane's three youngest kiddies from scarlet fever in the space of 12 days broke her heart. My grandmother (one of her other children) used to tell how her mother used to wander to the top of a nearby hill each day and sit there because she felt a little nearer to her little ones in Heaven, but this solace was not enough and, as the headstone records, she died at the age of 44.

In another part of Lesbury Church Yard we found the grave of Andrew Robson, the Church Warden of Alnmouth, who died in 1878 aged 72 and of his wife Ann (née Marshall) who died in 1874 aged 59. We puzzled as to why

they had been buried at Lesbury and not Alnmouth but eventually found that from 1806 until 1899 there was no graveyard in Alnmouth. A great gale in 1806 had washed away St. Waleric's churchyard and caused the River Alm to change its course, separating the site of the Church - still called Church Hill - from the mainland and silting up the harbour.

Near Andrew Robson's grave was that of his son Thomas who had died at the early age of 40 in 1881, leaving my grandmother to bring up three youngsters on her own. He died of heart trouble which was not improved by his liking for brandy, which I believe is still a favourite beverage in those parts!

My grandmother, Jane, in spite of losing her mother when she was 12, her younger brother and two sisters when she was 10 and her husband when they had only been married about twelve years, remained cheerful and without bitterness at life's cruelties. She left her home at "River Bank" in Alnmouth and set up a boarding house at "Lovaine House", Percy Street, Alnwick, and by this means brought up her three children, Mark, Ann (my mother) and Janet.

It was at "Lovaine House" that in 1897 a dashing young lawyer (just qualified) named Frank Webb, presented himself and asked for accommodation as he had just landed his first job with the solicitor Adam Douglas.

At that time Mark, the eldest child, had grown up and left home and Janet, the youngest, was also away from home earning her living as a school teacher. Ann, then aged about 26, was helping her mother to run the boarding house which at the time included a Parson and a Doctor.



*Lovaine House, Percy Street Alnwick
1898*

The result of my father's application (for it was he who was the hopeful lawyer) was successful and it was only a short time before Ann and Frank "fell for each other", for which happening I shall always be grateful as it

provided me with two wonderful parents. They were married at St. Michael's Church, Alnwick, in 1901 and, in spite of numerous trials and tribulations, lived happily ever after.

My grandmother lived to the ripe old age of 93 and died in Harrogate but my parents brought her back to Lesbury and laid her with her beloved Tom as the headstone records. The stone also records that the youngest, Janet, died in August 1956 at the age of 83.

Our wanderings continued and we went to look for the farm which John Swan had leased from the Duke of Northumberland in 1770. A copy of the lease is preserved with many others at Alnwick Castle. Mr David Graham of the Estate Office had told me that, what had been called Lesbury Farm in 1770 was now part of "Look Out" Farm. We soon found it up a lane off the Lesbury to Alnwick Road and made ourselves known to the occupants, two very delightful people, Mr and Mrs Hall, who were interested in our quest and showed us around. Mrs Hall recollected seeing something in the Lesbury church booklet about a Swan and showed us a copy which, sure enough, had a facsimile of a page from the Weekly Expense Account Sheet for the Poor House dated 26th December 1794 which was signed by John Richardson, Curate; John Swan and William Coulter. So here was proof that John Swan had been "a man of substance".

The present farm house is clearly not the original one, having been built around 1806, and Mr Hall reckoned that the early farm house had been built on higher ground nearby. The origin of the name "Look Out" was not known but may have been connected with smuggling which had been a favourite occupation of the people of Alnmouth.

The American Privateer, John Paul Jones loosed off a 68 lb. shot from his ship off Alnmouth in 1779. The shot just missed the old church of St. Waleric, bounced across several fields and hit a farm house. No one seems to know which farmhouse this was but Mr Hall showed me several cannon balls which he had found around the farm. We didn't bother to weigh them but none had the appearance of a 68 lb. shot!

On a nearby hill stood the modern lookout post in the shape of the RAF Radar Station at Boulmer, with its wagging and nodding scanners which indicate that man doesn't change all that much over the centuries - only his methods. Mr and Mrs Hall said they did their best to avoid looking out of the windows on that side of the house!

After thanking them for their very generous reception of two total strangers we went on to Alnwick where we saw the offices where my father had had his first job, the lodgings in which he and my mother had met and the church where they had married.

The lodgings, or at least the house in which my father had lodged - and a lovely house it was - was now owned by a Mrs Straughan, who pronounced her name "Stroffen" in place of the more usual "Strawn". She very kindly showed us the rooms where my father had lived for several years. We found that she was related to a John and Maggie Straughan who had farmed Bennington House Farm for years and with whom I and my mother stayed when I was a little boy some seventy years ago. This meant that we were in some way related, as the Bennington Straughans had been cousins of my mother, but we couldn't work out the connection and I was loth to bother her as she had recently had a stroke. The doctors had said she wouldn't walk again but she said they didn't know what they were talking about and proceeded to prove it as with the aid of a walking frame she was able to move about quite well and was certainly as bright as a button. I was quite certain that there was some family connection as every now and again, while talking to

her, I had a very distinct impression of my own beloved mother - something about the shape of the head and the way her hair grew on her temples and certainly her dogged courage.

Before turning south again we had a peep at Rennington House Farm and I noticed that the farm house itself appeared little changed in the seventy years since last I had seen it but the old stone outbuildings had been replaced by modern asbestos sheeted buildings, essential for modern equipment and methods but not so easy on the eye. We also had a look at Pepper Moor Farm, no longer operating as a separate farm but still possessing the original farm buildings in a lovely warm stone. This farm had also in the dim past been farmed by a Swan ancestor, as had Town Foot Farm, Lesbury, which, according to some old directories, had once borne the extraordinary name of 'Hungerup Farm'!

The whole holiday had been most rewarding. Visiting the places where the ancestors had lived, loved and died and meeting people who had known the more recent ones or had records of the more ancient ones seemed to bring names on a chart to life and put foliage on the bare branches of the family tree.

SEARCHING FOR PRISCILLA

D.G. Mason

My great-great-grandfather was born in Newbrough in 1810, the first son of William Mason and his wife Priscilla, daughter of Joseph Soppitt of Bywell parish. There was one other child of this marriage, a daughter Barbara born 1808, and the mother, Priscilla, died in 1811 aged 26, thus fixing her approximate year of birth at 1785.

All the above information was gleaned from the entries in the registers of the Parish of Warden and its chapelry of Newbrough, and it appeared at that time that to trace the mother's family of Soppitt would be an easy task, as I was given the name of her father - Joseph - and the parish of her nativity - Bywell, but things were not to be that easy.

My first step was to consult Boyd's Marriage Index for Northumberland, and this listed the following:

1776	Joseph Sopit	Barbara Crook	Shotley Banns
1776	Joseph Sopit	Phebe Ray	St. John Lee

Discounting the second of these in favour of the first because of the location and the christian name of the bride, I consulted the parish registers for Shotley, and located the following item in the Banns registers

"1776 July Joseph Soppitt of this parish and Barbara Crook of the parish of Ebchester"

After a quick run through the baptismal entries I found the following item:

"The registers of Joseph and Barbara Soppitts children who are of ye above profession (Anabaptists) and inhabitants chiefly of Whittonstall are as follows.

Joseph	their son	born	22nd January	1783
Edward	"	"	5th August	1787
John	"	"	26th April	1790
Jonathan	"	"	11th December	1793"

However, no Priscilla was found, so I extended the search to the neighbouring parishes but still with little success except that in the burial register for Whittonstall I found the burial of both Joseph and his wife Barbara in 1834 and the following marriage entry:

1829 May 16 John Richardson bachelor of this parish and
Barbara Mason spinster of the parish of Ovingham
witnesses Edward Soppitt and John Taylor

The will of my great-great-grandfather George Mason mentioned that his sister's married name was Barbara Richardson, so this seemed to confirm that this was the family I sought.

The next step was to examine the registers of the Baptist community, and amongst those of infant baptisms of the Baptist Church at Hamsterley, near Bishop Auckland, was the following list of children of Joseph and Barbara Soppitt of Whittonstall: 1776 Mary, 1778 Barbara, 1780 Matthew. Also listed were the children of a Matthew Soppit, also of Whittonstall, but still no baptism for Priscilla.

The next step I decided on was a visit to Whittonstall churchyard and there, just to the south of the church, were two Soppitt headstones, one to the memory of Joseph and Barbara Soppitt, giving their dates of death, and one giving those of their sons and one daughter but, as you may have guessed by now - no Priscilla.

Armed with all the information I had by now amassed regarding Joseph and his wife Barbara I next paid a visit to the Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic of Durham University to see if either of them had left a will and acknowledged the fact that they had had a daughter by the name of Priscilla. And yes - Joseph had left a will! He left his estate to his surviving children, but again no mention of Priscilla or her descendants.

At this point I started to think that possibly I was on the wrong tack and decided to investigate wills of other members of the Soppitt family. In the will of one William Soppitt of Shetley Grove, Lanchester (proved in 1822), I found one further clue; amongst the legacies were gifts to his brothers Joseph and Mathew Soppit, to his sister Priscilla, and to "the two children of Priscilla Soppit, deceased, daughter of Joseph Soppit". One of the executors of this will was Edward Soppitt of Whittonstall, farmer, so at last someone had remembered Priscilla.

If an uncle could remember Priscilla it seemed logical at this point that one of her assumed brothers or sisters might have done the same, and so I decided to see if any of them had left wills. Of the five sons of Joseph and Barbara Soppitt, Matthew had died in infancy, Joseph, according to the census, had left the area; only Jonathan, Edward and John had remained. Jonathan died in 1833, a year before his parents, without leaving a will; Edward died in 1863, leaving a will but, following what by now seemed to be the family tradition, made no mention of the descendants of his sister Priscilla; the last son, John, died unmarried in 1865 and very thoughtfully left a bequest to "my niece Barbara Richardson".

So at last, after what had been some three years research, I had found the confirmation I had been seeking. Priscilla was in fact the daughter of Joseph Soppit of Newlands, Whittonstall, by his wife Barbara Crook.

A.S. Angus

The 150th anniversary of the death of Thomas Bewick has recently been marked by a series of exhibitions and other events concerned with the life of the great Northumbrian wood engraver. These events have had a particular interest for me as a descendant of one of Bewick's lesser known apprentices.

My interest goes back to the 1920s when as a small boy I used to visit my grandparents' house in Tynemouth, where I was fascinated by a very lifelike heron which stood in a glass case on the landing. I was told that the heron had been stuffed by my grandmother's grandfather, whose name was John Laws, and that he had been a pupil of the famous Thomas Bewick. I also learnt that the Laws family had farmed for many years at Breckney Hill, near Heddon-on-the-Wall, and that many of them were buried in Heddon churchyard. The name Thomas Bewick did not mean much to me at the time, although there were portraits of him and examples of his work to be seen on the walls of my grandparents' house.

When I was a little older I occasionally went to study the fine collection of birds and their nests and eggs in the Hancock Museum at Newcastle. During one of these visits I was excited to find that some of the nests and eggs were marked as being from the collection of Mr John Laws of Breckney Hill, and being a keen birds-nester myself I had a strange feeling of sharing a common interest with my long dead ancestor.

Many years later, after the death of my grandparents, various items connected with John Laws came into the possession of my father. Among them was an album or scrap-book containing prints and sketches of heraldic devices, book-plates, letterheads, etc., which John Laws had presumably collected when he was an apprentice in Bewick's workshop. There was also a book of old newspaper cuttings dating back to the 1820s, and this contained an article which particularly intrigued me. It referred to a teacher named William Robson who taught at Cambo school before 1807 and who died in Worpeth in 1820. He had left a notebook containing a list of his pupils, and each name had a particular mark against it. The significance of the marks was explained in a rhyme which began

'Mongst all the subjects of my taws,
There's but one index plac'd,
And my first pupil, Master Laws,
Is with that honour grac'd.

The article implied that the list referred to Robson's pupils at Cambo, where he had been schoolmaster from about 1784 to 1807. Although John Laws was too old to have been at school during that period he must have had some reason for keeping the cutting, and so I wrote to the Northumberland Record Office to enquire whether anything was known of William Robson's notebook. It transpired that the original was still at Cambo school, but the NRO obtained a copy which I was able to inspect and it showed that the list of scholars actually went back to 13th May 1772, when John Laws was only seven, and moreover the name John Laws was 'grac'd' with an index. Added confirmation that it was the same John was provided by the fact that the names of his brothers Jonathan and Ralph and of his sister Elizabeth were also included in the list. This suggests that before going to Cambo William Robson must have taught at a school within a reasonable walking distance of Heddon, but I have not yet found out where it was.

Possibly the most interesting item belonging to John Laws was an account book or ledger which he kept from 1794 to 1844, after he had left Bewick's workshop and set up in business as a silver engraver on his own account. It gives details of work carried out for most of the well-known Newcastle silversmiths of the day, as well as for one or two other craftsmen such as gunsmiths and clockmakers. Interspersed among the accounts are notes concerning the management of the farm at Breckney Hill, for which he also seems to have been responsible after 1810, and occasional references to births, marriages and deaths in the family.

From information about the Laws family collected over a number of years I attempted to compile a comprehensive family tree, but difficulties arose because the same names occurred time and again even within the same generation and made positive identification almost impossible. I thought that perhaps my problems might be solved when I found that John Laws of Breckney Hill was included in the card index of the Society of Genealogists, and this led me to Hodgson's 'List of Pedigrees' in Newcastle City Library. The 'pedigree' did not help me with the family tree, but it did throw more light on the life of John Laws, for Hodgson had written:

John Laws of Breckney Hill near Hedden-on-the-Wall, a man of genius who carved some of the oak furniture preserved in Warkworth Castle, also an engraver on silver, some specimens of which were in the possession of Miss Hedley. Was a naturalist and went to America for the purpose of procuring certain birds' eggs.

This opened up new lines of enquiry, although so far without much result. I found that a considerable quantity of intricately carved oak furniture is still preserved at Warkworth Castle, in the Duke of Northumberland's private rooms, but nothing is known about its origin. The Miss Hedley referred to was Miss Hedley of Sunnyside, who was the source of Hodgson's information, and whose aunt married John Laws' brother-in-law, John Gilhepsy. In her will she left all her silver to her friend Mrs H.B. Farquharson of Edinburgh, but I do not know its present whereabouts. Nor have I been able to discover anything more about the expedition to America, although an examination of John Laws' ledger revealed that the entries are almost continuous from 1794 to 1844, with the exception of one gap between July 1801 and November 1802, and it must have been at this time, when he was 36 years old and unmarried, that he made the journey. It seems an unlikely adventure for a Northumbrian farmer to have undertaken in those days, when an Atlantic crossing took about four months, but after his return he appears to have settled down again at Breckney Hill. In May 1813, at the age of 48, he married Isabella Gilhepsy of Dalton Lodge, and in the next nine years they had four sons.

Up to this point in my researches I had not found out much about John Laws' apprenticeship apart from what is recounted in Bewick's 'Memoir':

Our first apprentice was John Laws, who was brought up as a silver engraver, & I think he never touched upon the Wood - his turn was directed to the ornamental & chiefly in the branch of what is called bright engraving & at this kind of work he excelled, & is perhaps the best at this day - with it he also follows the business of a farmer at "Hedden Laws", the place of his nativity. We greatly respected him for his honesty, sobriety, civil deportment & attention.

In the hope of learning more about this phase of his life I approached the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle and was given permission to examine the records of the Beilby/Bewick partnership. It was soon apparent that Bewick's

reference to him as 'our first apprentice' was misleading, and that he was actually preceded by David Martin, Abraham Hunter and John Bewick. The first two were presumably started by Ralph Beilby before Thomas Bewick became his partner in 1777. The actual date when John Laws started his apprenticeship is not recorded, but the account books show that he completed his time in March 1789, and continued in the workshop for another year as a journeyman. The normal term of apprenticeship was seven years, and it may therefore be assumed that he started in March 1782, shortly before his seventeenth birthday, and about the time that John Bewick left for London. For a short time it appears that John Laws was the only apprentice, but before the end of 1782 he was joined by John Johnson; there were normally also two pressmen employed in the workshop, as well as the two partners.

The variety of work undertaken in the workshop has been well described by Bewick in his 'Memoir', and there is no doubt that the apprentices would be employed on all kinds of tasks. The fact that John Laws became a highly skilled silver engraver suggests that Ralph Beilby may have played an important part in his training, even though in later life he was always known as a pupil of Thomas Bewick. There is also evidence that he was involved in copperplate engraving, and despite Bewick's remark that 'he never touched upon the wood' he seems to have acquired considerable skill as a carver of oak.

In 1787 a third apprentice joined them. This was John Johnson's more famous cousin Robert, who soon showed outstanding ability as an artist. Sadly both Johnsons died soon after completing their apprenticeships.

A letter written by John Bewick to his brother in September 1788 suggests that John Laws was considering joining Abraham Hunter, the former apprentice, as soon as he had finished his time, but he actually stayed with Beilby and Bewick until April 1790. There is no record of his activities between that date and 1794, when the ledger opens.

In spite of his responsibilities as a farmer and as a silver engraver it is evident that John Laws found time for other interests, particularly ornithology. He is mentioned twice in Hancock's 'Catalogue of the Birds of Northumberland and Durham', firstly in connection with the eggs of a Shag taken on the Farne Islands in 1820, and again with reference to an occasion when he picked up a Little Auk in a turnip field at Breckney Hill. On the visit to the Farne Islands he was accompanied by Mr E.R. Wingate, who was a friend of Bewick's and reputed to be the best bird-stuffer in Newcastle. John Laws was also an accomplished taxidermist, and the Hancock Collection included a Hen Harrier and two Golden Plovers stuffed by him. In the Supplement to Volume I of 'British Birds' Bewick acknowledges John Laws' assistance in supplying specimens of the Mountain Linnet.

When he died in 1844 the Newcastle Courant for 23rd August 1844 printed the following obituary:

Died on Wednesday, the 14th inst. at Breckney Hill, (which farm is now occupied by the fifth generation under Sir Matthew White Ridley, bart.,) in the 80th year of his age, Mr. John Laws, a celebrated engraver on silver, which he followed up, it is feared, with too great an application, until within a few months of his death. He was a pupil of the late Mr. T. Bewick, by whom he was much esteemed, and as a bright engraver stood at the head of his profession. The last specimen of his talents and skill was on a silver cream jug, richly ornamented with four different patterns, which an eminent artist on viewing declared that none in the district could have done it but himself. He was likewise an excellent carver on oak, and a good naturalist, and has left behind him a very choice and beautiful collection

of the nests and eggs of the British birds. His private character was that of a virtuous man, being humble, meek and mild, and was highly respected by a large circle of those who knew and valued his worth. He was strictly honourable in all his dealings, and to his family, friends and acquaintances there never was a more sincere or a kinder-hearted man than John Law.

HODGSON AND ORD - A HOME IN NILE STREET, SUNDERLAND, 1824-1879

A.J. Pain

There is a trite expression that it is the family in a house that makes a house a home. Recently I dealt with a property in Nile Street, Sunderland, now converted into offices but what a home it had been in its time.

Hannah Hodgson, then a widow, purchased the property in the early 1820s. The date of her death is not recorded but it must have been before 1838 for in that year the house was sold by the executors and devisees of her will (dated 5 June 1824). Her executors were her son William, a painter and glazier called John Vipond and her next door neighbour Thomas Pratt, a mason. The devisees under her Will were her children, her eldest being William, a cooper of Sunderland. Thereafter there followed Martha who married James Crosby a shipowner; Jane who married William Crosby the younger brother of James and also a shipowner; Isabella who married Thomas Wilson a master mariner; Elizabeth who married Robert Dixon of Hylton a potter; Hannah who married John Hay a ropemaker of Monkwearmouth but who died without issue and before her mother on 24 July 1834 (her husband John lived until 16 July 1871); and the youngest child, Richard, a Tallow Chandler of Sunderland. There was another child, John, but no details survive of him as he sold his share in his mother's estate to a chemist called John Mawson.

The house changed hands quickly, but in 1840 it was bought by Jacob Ord who was described then "of Bishopwearmouth, an officer in Her Majesty's Customs". Fordyce, writing in 1857 of the customs house in Sunderland, says: 'the foundation stone of the present building was laid on 1 March 1837. It is situate on the north side of High Street opposite the foot of Vine Street. The principal entrance on the south conducts into the Long Room: beneath it are the other offices to which a convenient access is obtained on the north side from the Quay. The business is conducted by a collector, a comptroller, four clerks in the Long Room, a clerk under the Merchant Seamen's Act, a landing surveyor, three searching landing and coast waiters and guagers three tide surveyors and officers of the coast guard.'

Quite what was Jacob's position the deeds do not say. One can conjecture that he moved to Sunderland from Newcastle soon after the opening of these spacious offices, for placed with the deeds are a series of certificates: first, a certificate referring to Jacob's marriage (he was even then described as an officer in customs), dated 19 November 1816 when he married Isabella Rogers at All Saints Church, Newcastle. On 13 February 1818 at St. Andrew's Church, Newcastle, William the eldest son of Jacob and Isabella was christened. There were three further children but their names do not survive with the papers.

On 26 July 1849 William (then an officer in Her Majesty's Customs and a bachelor) married Elizabeth Story of Moore Street, Bishopwearmouth, whose father was John Story a local painter and glazier. There were two children of this marriage: Sarah Isabella who was baptised on 3 July 1850 at St. Andrew's, Newcastle, and Emily Jane who was baptised at the same place on

19 March 1853. William died on 27 December 1853 aged 36 and was buried at Bishopwearmouth. His father was to die on 6 February 1855 but was buried in the General Cemetery at Newcastle.

The house must have been let to tenants thereafter for on 16 October 1875 at St. Peter's Church, Tynemouth, Sarah Isabella Ord, then of North Shields, married William Stainthorpe of Hexham, an auctioneer and widower. Sarah described her father as a "gentleman" on the marriage certificate.

In 1879 Emily Jane Ord of North Shields and Sarah Isabella Stainthorpe of Hexham sold the house in Nile Street and thereafter the deeds, whilst recording subsequent sales, give no insight into the families that lived there.

A TALE OF SERENDIPITY

Mrs J. Laing

When I started searching for information about the family of my great-great-grandfather, William Graham Carr, for many years a well-known chemist in Berwick-upon-Tweed, I very soon found the baptisms of five of his brothers and sisters, all older than him, in the Golden Square Presbyterian Register at the Public Record Office, but I still have not found any record of his birth or baptism. I was put in touch with another descendant of William Graham Carr, Walter Calvert Carr, who possessed family bible notes which placed him as having been born in 1803. In the 1841 Census there were other members of the Carr family living in two establishments in Marygate and these were finally identified from the Will of William Graham Carr's father, Robert Carr, the original druggist in the family, who was in possession of the druggist's shop in Marygate by 1806. So the family can finally be lined up like this:

		Robert CARR		m	Mary GRAHAM	
		1762-1844		1790	1769/70-1821	
(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)		
Magt	Hanna	Mary	Robert	John	Alex. Allan	Ann
Comrie	27.4.1793	15.8.1795	Dumble	6.2.1799	1811-1839	1820/1
11.1.1792	-		8.3.1795			-1844
-	23.1.1876			Wm. Graham	Jane	
8.12.1838	m. John			7.11.1803-	b.1815/6	
	MILLER			23.8.1882	m. Lt. James	
	both bur.			m. Jane R.	SIMPSON, R.N.	
	Cockburns-			AITCHISON		
	path			11.1.1803-		
				9.1.1879		
				of Glasgow		

For the last three members I have no record of baptism or birth (in spite of considerable help from the staff of Northumberland County Record Office), but the deaths of Alexander Allan and of Ann were noted in family records. Thanks to Mrs MacNaughton, the Rector's wife at Berwick, I have learnt of the MI to Robert Carr and his wife, Mary, but none of his children are recorded on it. The only other snippet of information was the date of Alexander's matriculation in Medicine at Edinburgh.

I obtained a death certificate for Alexander which recorded that he died on 20 December 1839, his brother William Graham being present. The cause of death was consumption and his age was 28. His profession was that of surgeon.

I probably would not have given him any more thought if I had not acquired the centenary volume of the History of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club and found mentioned as one of the first ten members a Dr Alexander A. Carr of Ayton, author of A History of Coldingham Priory. Was the name just a coincidence or did this indicate that there was more to find out about Alexander Allan? I made enquiries of the Librarian at Berwick Library, Miss Simpson, who took much trouble in checking the volumes of the Club's History but there was no record of an obituary.

I was unfamiliar with Alexander Allan Carr's History of Coldingham Priory although I had noticed at least one other history of the Priory. I therefore checked with the National Library of Scotland and learnt that it was an octavo volume of 328 pages with illustrations and extensive transcripts of records, published in 1836. There was no information about the author.

As he seemed to have some possible literary standing I wrote to the Newspaper Library and asked if an obituary had appeared in a Berwick newspaper on his death. There was no obituary but there was a death notice and I could obtain a photocopy of the page containing it for a small sum. As I had the death certificate I debated whether to bother but for some reason I did. When I received the copy I noted to my surprise that he had been a "Surgeon R.N.". I knew from Robert Carr's will that his daughter, Jane, was married to Lt. James Simpson, R.N. This had explained a Jane Simpson in her father's household in the 1841 Census.

So I turned my attention to the Royal Navy records by writing to the Naval Historical Library (who only hold printed sources), Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, and the Public Record Office (where I had an independent search made on my behalf). The results of my enquiries were that Alexander A. Carr was first appointed Assistant Surgeon R.N. on 15 April 1837, on the books of HMS Hastings, then ordered to join HMS Talavera at Lisbon which he did on 9 May 1837. Although the PRO holds a number of Surgeons' Journals they do not have any for HMS Talavera. His career aboard her was short-lived as he was discharged to the Naval Hospital at Malta with "profuse spitting of blood" by 8 February 1838 when a request was made for his replacement. A Medical Board examined him on 11 April² and reported that haemorrhaging had continued some time and he was now suffering from breathlessness. The Board pronounced him unfit for further active service and recommended he be returned to England before the summer heat of the Mediterranean set in.

On 17 June 1838 Alex. Carr addressed a petition³ to the Earl of Minto, First Lord of the Admiralty, to be considered for a post "in one of the home hospitals till my health be completely re-established" as he felt he was sufficiently recovered "having breathed my native air for some time". This letter mentioned that he had been indebted for his original appointment to the Earl's brother, Admiral George Elliot. This letter, now in the Public Record Office, was endorsed to the effect that he was to be given an appointment when a suitable opportunity offered.

He had been put on the books of HMS Howe, the flagship at Sheerness, from 1 March 1838, when presumably his successor, Mr John Tait, took over his post on the Talavera. He received a re-appointment to HMS Howe dated 1 November 1838 but I have no knowledge yet whether this was a real posting or merely a sinecure.

I had written to Edinburgh and to Durham in search of Alex. Carr's will before being successful with the Public Record Office. He signed his will on 18 April 1837 within a few days of his first appointment in the Royal Navy, naming his executors as a solicitor, George Knox of Hart Street, London, and his Navy agents, the Stilwell family, and leaving all his worldly possessions to his sister, Ann, whose death occurred within five years of his.

There was no doubt now that Alexander Allan Carr, Assistant Surgeon, E.N., was the younger brother of William Graham Carr, but I could not be sure that he was the author of The History of Coldingham Priory and one of the original members of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club. I could not imagine how I was to prove this. I decided I would check on his studies at Edinburgh University and wrote to the Librarian of the University mentioning the connection I was trying to prove though I doubted whether anything would come of it. I was therefore very excited by the reply from Miss Marjorie Robertson of the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Library.

Alex. Carr had apparently studied Chemistry 1827-28 and Medicine 1828-29 and Miss Robertson had kindly checked with the Librarian of the Royal Scottish College of Surgeons that he became a Licentiate of that College in 1830. Then he surprisingly returned to the University in 1836 to take classes in Military Surgery and in Surgery and Clinical Medicine.

Miss Robertson continued: "We have a copy in the Library of Carr's History of Coldingham Priory inscribed 'To Sir George Ballingall /Professor of Military Surgery/ - a small mark of respect from the author'. Comparing the writing in this dedication with the 1836 signature in the Matriculation Roll, it seems certain that they were both written by the same person".

It now seems as if I have always known the foregoing story of Alexander Allan Carr (many members will recognise this feeling) and I have to think carefully to recall the blank his name was to me three years ago. Of course I still do not know what he looked like, what his character was like and many details of his life; I can presume he was studious and possessed a certain grace of character that made him acceptable as one of the small number who made up the original Naturalists' Club as Dr Johnston, in whose house the idea of the Club was first mooted, welcomed as members those he called "clubbable men". Who knows if I will come across any more chance clues to his short life?

Foot-note: Much of this story would have remained unknown to me but for the kind help I have received from the staff of the many institutions to whom I sent my queries by post. The information from Crown-copyright records in the P.R.O. is given by permission of the Controller of HM Stationery Office.

1 P.R.O. Presbyterian Register for Golden Square, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

2 P.R.O., CAP.P.90 - 11.4.1838.

3 P.R.O., Pro.C318 - 17.6.1838.

TWO CENSUS STORIES

One of the workmen at a colliery situated a few miles north of Newcastle was completely nonplussed with the directions for filling up his census paper. So he took it to his neighbour, and said to him:- "Lyukah neor, Jim; gie's a hand wi' this confooded thing." Jim at once saw what was the matter. "Noo," he said, "ansor ma questions. Forst - Hoo aad are ye?" "Thorty-fower," was the reply. "Noo, as regards the hoose, what are ye?" "Oh! aa's the man." "Aa knaa that, but what aa want to knaa is - whe's the heed o' the hoose or the family?" "The wife, begox, the wife - not me, onnyway!"

Enumerator (at Tantobie, on the Monday after Census Day): "Got your paper filled up?" Jack: "Noa, aa hevvent had time." Enumerator: "Let me have it and I'll do it." Jack: "Aall reet, canny man." Enumerator: "How many slept under your roof last night?" Jack: "Nebody; we had a confinement!"

"North Country Lore and Legend", The Monthly Chronicle, July 1891, p.331.

CATHOLIC MARRIAGES

Catholics in England are at a great disadvantage when it comes to tracing their families. Many have hunted in vain in the indexes of Births, Marriages and Deaths. There is a long history of penal legislation that Catholics could not in conscience obey. But here we are concerned only with Marriages, and only those after 1837. An Act of 1836 brought Catholic parties much relief. Henceforth they could be married legally in their own chapels, though only in the presence of a civil registrar. The Registrar-General ruled that they could be married only in the registration district where one or other party lived, and this was a hardship in districts where there was as yet no Catholic chapel. Here, however, we are concerned only with London where this problem was not felt. Here the problem was largely financial. The vast majority of Catholics were Irish and most of them desperately poor. The registration fee was beyond their means and many were married clandestinely by their priests. Hence the special importance of Catholic marriage registers which often contain the only record of such marriages.

These registers are in Latin and many are difficult to read. There were no printed Catholic registers till 1856 except at some embassy chapels. Many poor Irish were illiterate or could write their names only in Irish characters. It was some time before English priests and the fair number of foreign priests who worked in London became familiar with the spelling of such names as Geoghegan and there were other anomalies. Latin christian names have to serve for many variants. Joanna is usually Jane but could be Joanna, Joan or Jean. A classical education will not teach you that Henrietta is the Latin for Harriet and Honora is as near as can be got to Norah. These are mere samples of the problems set by a slavish addiction to dog latin. The amount of information given varies from register to register and from priest to priest. The minimum is the date and the names of the parties, priest and witnesses. But most give the names of the fathers of groom and bride and some give the christian names of the mothers which are not on the civil certificates. Others give local addresses and/or the Irish county of origin.

Catholic Marriages has collected English abstracts of thousands of marriages in Catholic churches and chapels in central London from 1837 till about 1870. All this information is given in these abstracts with one exception. The witnesses so often prove to be the sacristan and his wife (the only people present who were literate?) that they are not normally given.

Catholic Marriages now offers its services to the disheartened searchers who have given up hope of finding that Tim Murphy who left Cork in rags and couldn't even sign his name. Had he a coat of arms? He hadn't a coat of any sort. His knowledge of English law was about equal to his respect for it. As long as he was married "in the eyes of the Church" his mind was at peace. He gave no thought to the weary searches of his great-grandchildren.

One-name lists have been prepared for Sullivan and Donovan - a method which enables the surname to be omitted from every entry, thus saving space. These lists give names of bride and groom and year of marriage. A copy of either may be obtained by sending a sae or 7p. stamp, and a copy of any entry on the list may be had for £1 from

Catholic Marriages,
9 Hyde Park Place, LONDON W2 2LJ.

Requests for other marriages are invited, provided they give the surnames of both parties and the marriage is likely to have been in central London, 1837-70. Further information is of course useful. Should the search prove unsuccessful the £1 search fee will be credited to the sender. Any profits will be devoted to the care and repair of the registers that have been so generously made accessible.

LOCALLY HELD COPIES OF CENSUS RETURNS

Mr J.S.W. Gibson is compiling a Directory of census copies held in libraries and record offices throughout the country and he has very kindly allowed this Society to publish the information which has been sent to him from this area. The original returns are of course held by the Public Record Office but there are quite a number of microfilm copies held locally, and details are given below. The information given is necessarily abbreviated.

Gateshead Library

Full details were given in the Journal of this Society, Vol. 2, No. 1, October 1976.

1841: Gateshead, Jarrow, S. Shields, Whickham and some surrounding areas in Co. Durham. Bedlington, N. Blyth, Choppington, Cambois and Sleekburn in Northumberland.

1851: Gateshead, Whickham, Chester-le-Street and surrounding areas. In addition to the microfilm, there is a xerox printout of the census, and there is a card index to heads of families for the area covered.

1861: Gateshead, Whickham, Ryton and surrounding areas.

1871: as 1861.

Sunderland Library

Details were given in the Journal, Vol. 2, No. 2, January 1977.

1841: Sunderland, Houghton-le-Spring, Washington.

1851, 1861 & 1871: Borough of Sunderland only.

A street index has been produced.

Durham County Record Office

The whole of Durham County for 1841, 1851, 1861 and 1871. There is a street index.

Also held is the 1841 census for Bedlingtonshire and the Norham and Islandshire areas of Northumberland which were part of County Durham until 1844 (Bedlington area, Tweedmouth, Holy Island, Norham, etc.). For 1851, 1861 and 1871, microfilms are also held for some parts of N. Yorkshire in the Middlesbrough and Barnard Castle areas.

Tyne and Wear County Record Office

1841, 1851, 1861 and 1871 for those areas of the "old" counties of Durham and Northumberland which now comprise Tyne and Wear County, including Sunderland, Gateshead, Newcastle, etc. There is a street index. Also some areas outside of Tyne and Wear, e.g. Morpeth (1841, 1851, 1871), Hexham (1841), Blyth (1851) and Chester-le-Street (1841, 1851, 1861, 1871).

Northumberland County Record Office

1841: the whole of Northumberland. Also Gateshead.

1851, 1861 & 1871: the whole of Northumberland.

North Tyneside Local Studies Centre, North Shields Central Library

1841, 1851, 1861 & 1871: Tynemouth, N. Shields, Wallsend, Longbenton.

Newcastle City Library

1841, 1851, 1861 & 1871: Newcastle. There is a street index on cards for 1841 and 1851, and a copy of the 1871 street index compiled by the PRO.

North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton

1851: N. Yorkshire and some adjacent areas (Bridlington, Darlington, Stockton and Teesdale).

Cleveland County Libraries & Archives Dept., Middlesbrough

1841, 1851, 1861 and 1871 for the "new" Cleveland county, including Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool, Redcar, Guisborough and some adjacent areas of North Yorkshire including Whitby.

1851: transcripts for Redcar and Kirkleatham.

Libraries at Hartlepool, Stockton and Redcar have copies for their own areas.

South Shields Library

1841, 1851, 1861 & 1871: S. Shields, Jarrow, Hebburn, Boldon, Cleadon and Whitburn.

TO TRACE OR NOT TO TRACE?

Mrs J. Crooks

Some time ago, my relatives told me that a lady by the name of Marion McQueen was related to us, but no-one seemed to know how, except that she belonged to one of the four daughters of William Cochrane and his wife Marion McQueen, who had left Scotland to arrive in New Zealand in January 1862.

It was said that Marion McQueen had lived in Palmerston, Otago, and then had gone to Raetahi, and later to somewhere else in the North Island. I asked every relative I met if they knew anything about Marion McQueen. The answer was "Yes. We have heard of her, but don't know where she came from, or where she went."

After three years of getting nowhere, I gave up my search for Marion, thinking that she must have been a talking point in family circles. Then one day, while looking through some church records, while on holiday in Palmerston, I spotted the following entry. "April 1892, Marion McQueen". This was the entry when Marion became a member of St. James Presbyterian Church. Underneath this entry was another. "Taken from membership Roll 4th November, 1896, as she left the district". This was quite a find, as now I had definite proof that Marion McQueen did indeed exist. I had no idea of her age, so any birth certificate at this stage was quite out of the question. Her parents were unknown to me nor the place of birth, Scotland or New Zealand, so I was quite happy that I had found she existed at all. Sometime later, I wished to solve another problem. There was conflict in the family, as to the place my great-great-grandfather, William Cochrane, and his wife Marion McQueen lived in New Zealand. Some said Palmerston, others, Shag Valley. I decided to try for a copy of his will. (If indeed one existed). It did. It was hand written in 1877, a short time before he died, and it confirmed that William Cochrane lived at Palmerston. Reading further, after this and that had been left to his beloved wife, Marion McQueen, he also left £50 to Marion McQueen, "the natural daughter of my daughter Mary, Mrs Matthew Todd of Shag Valley, on attaining full age". I looked blankly at this, as William Cochrane's mother was also Marion McQueen. However, on reading it again, I discovered to my joy that the Marion he referred to was the one I had been looking for, and she was my great aunt, as Mary and Matthew Todd were my great-grandparents. I now knew Marion McQueen was under the age of 21 years in 1877, so I decided to apply to the Registrar-General for a birth certificate, to find her age. This I did, and sure enough, one came back and recorded her birth as "MARIA McQUEEN COCHRANE born 17th March 1865, Palmerston". The letter accompanying the certificate referred to her as MARIA McQUEEN TODD, so what a mystery. I now have a great aunt with three names, or four. Marion McQueen as she was known, Maria McQueen Cochrane, Cochrane spelt wrong, Maria McQueen Todd and May McQueen, by a relative. She did not marry, and as I do not now know her real name, it would appear useless to try and trace a death certificate. Search concluded. - Or is it? To trace or not to trace? That is the question.

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

SOME FAMILY LINKS BETWEEN COUNTY DURHAM AND THE STATE OF IOWA IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

J. Rhodes

During the late 1840s and early 1850s there was a considerable movement of British immigrants into the new states of the American mid-West. Some of these were miners from the dales of western Durham, attracted to the lead region of the upper Mississippi, around GALENA, Illinois, MINERAL POINT, Wisconsin, and DUBUQUE, Iowa. Undoubtedly the prospects of familiar and abundant work amongst men of their own kind appealed to the immigrants in the first place, but it was their ultimate aim to buy farms on the edge of the prairies and become what they could never hope to be in England - independent land owners.

Amongst the County Durham settlers in the new state of Iowa at this time was a family group from Hamsterley, near Bishop Auckland, who kept up a regular correspondence with relatives at home for over thirty years. These letters now belong to a descendant, Mr Harold Stephenson of Bishop Auckland, who has kindly allowed me access to them.

The letters were written over the period 1852-1883 by a William MORRAS, formerly of Edgeknowle Farm, Hamsterley, and his two sisters, Mary Ann GREENWELL and Jane WILSON, from FAYETTE, Iowa, to another sister, Hannah HALL, of Monkfield Farm, Harperley Station, about six miles west of Bishop Auckland. Undoubtedly other letters were written as well but these have been lost.

The letters are of considerable historical interest, particularly to the Iowa State Historical Society, because MORRAS was one of the earliest settlers in Fayette County. Amongst other things they contain information about crossing the Atlantic in immigrant ships, early pioneering days in Iowa, the impact of the Civil War on the local community, Indians on the Oregon Trail, and the building of the railways across the prairies. MORRAS himself, in 1872, took his family still further west to Oregon, where he became a member of that state's House of Representatives, and where he died in 1887. The GREENWELLS and the WILSONS remained in Iowa, and a number of their descendants are still to be found there.

While there is a wealth of information in the correspondence there are a number of important gaps to be filled for the family historian. In the first place, who were these people?

The Bishops Transcripts of the St. Helen's, Auckland, and Hamsterley Registers, the 1841 and 1851 Census Enumerators' Books and the Hamsterley Baptist Chapel records provide information about the various families back into the eighteenth century. For instance the Morrasses were, it seems, small but respectable tenant farmers in the Toft Hill area of West Auckland, but with no long connection with any one holding there. Mary Ann Morras married George GREENWELL, a younger son of a substantial freeholder in Hamsterley. Jane married Christopher WILSON, a Stockton and Darlington Railway worker, and finally Hannah married John HALL, heir to Monkfield Farm, Hamsterley. His family were important members of the Hamsterley Baptist community and had lived at Monkfield since the seventeenth century.

In 1841 William Morras's widowed mother was tenant of Edgeknowle Farm, but by the time of the Tithe Apportionment of 1848 she was no longer there. This dispossession must have been the spur to William to seek his fortune in the American mid-West. A diary kept by his mother, now also in the possession of Mr Stephenson of Bishop Auckland, gives an outline of his

early experiences in America. In the summer of 1849 William set out with his friend, Thomas POWELL, a former shoemaker's apprentice, from Hamsterley for PORT HOPE, ONTARIO, Canada, where there were already links with the Hamsterley Baptist community. In Port Hope Fowell married a local girl, Margaret COOK, and settled down, but Morras found little opportunity for advancement there and in 1851 decided to move on to the booming lead mines around GALENA, Illinois. Here there were already many Englishmen from the northern Pennines who had saved sufficient to buy cheap land from the government. In 1852 he himself had enough funds to cross the Mississippi and purchase virgin land in what was then the west of Clayton County, Iowa.

From 1852 the letters themselves tell most of the story. Those from William Morras were written largely because in 1853 he raised a £52 loan from his brother-in-law, John Hall of Monkfield, to stock his farm. Until the loan was finally repaid in 1869 Morras kept up a regular correspondence with him. Unfortunately once the debt was paid his letters became more and more infrequent and the last one to survive is dated 1872. Once Morras had bought his farm he was joined in 1852 by his sister, Jane and her husband, Christopher Wilson. They had remained in England until after the death of old Mrs Morras. In 1856 Thomas Powell and some of his wife's Canadian family arrived in Fayette, and in the same year William's sister, Mary Ann, her husband George Greenwell and two children from Bishop Auckland came as well. Thereafter Jane Wilson and Mary Ann Greenwell entered the correspondence, and indeed the last letter to survive was written by Mary Ann to Hannah Hall in 1883. The progress of the families in the community, the births, marriages and deaths of their children, the final move of William Morras to Oregon in 1872 and his election to the Oregon House of Representatives are all fully recorded.

The second major question for the family historian is, what happened to these people after 1883? The death of Jane Wilson is recorded by her sister in a letter of 1872, but nothing else. In 1883 Mary Ann was commenting on her "old age creeping on", though in fact she did not die until 1896.

Fortunately subsequent enquiries in the USA have revealed much more. Firstly the History of Fayette County, Iowa (Chicago, 1878) confirms many of the details in the letters. Its biographical appendix also provides more precise information about the Powell, Wilson and Greenwell holdings, their wealth and status in the community and the second marriage of Christopher Wilson. The Oregon State Historical Society provided brief notes about the political career of William Morras in Representative Men of Oregon, and The History of Coos County, Oregon, shows that William Morras after becoming a saw-mill proprietor on the COQUILLE RIVER, died there in 1887. In 1898 his family were still there. In Fayette, through the local University, I have been put in contact with Mrs Joe Langerman, an amateur genealogist, who lives in the house built by George Greenwell. She has provided details from gravestones in Fayette. Through the Lions Club there I made contact with Edward L. Block, Clerk of the District Court, at West Union, who has in his custody much documentary evidence about the families down to the present day. Finally another History of Fayette County, published in 1976 to celebrate the American Bi-centenary, contains a photograph of some of Christopher Wilson's descendants about 1900, and details (unfortunately some not entirely accurate) of the Wilsons and Greenwells down to the present day.

There are still many questions to be answered, but already the letters from Fayette to Hamsterley have been greatly illuminated by diligent searches both in Britain and America in sources that might well be used by other family historians with "letters from America".

William Morris, senior, m Judith Dixon
 of Little Moor Place, 1820 d. 1852 at Toft Hill
 Toft Hill, and Edgeknowle,
 Hamsterley. d. 1834 at
 Hamsterley

Mary Ann	Hannah	Jane	William
b. 1821, Toft Hill	b. 1823, Toft Hill	b. 1824, Toft Hill	b. 1828 Toft
d. 1896, Fayette,	d. 1903, Hamsterley	d. 1872, Fayette,	Hill, d. 1887
Iowa	m. 1844 John Hall	Iowa	Coquille,
m. 1842 George	of Monkfield Farm,	m. 1846 Christo-	Oregon
Greenwell (b. 1818,	Hamsterley (b. 1821	pher Wilson (b. 1823	m. 1851?,
Hamsterley, d. 1901,	Hamsterley, d. 1912	Witten le Wear,	Elizabeth
Fayette, Iowa)	Hamsterley)	d. ? , m. (2),	Jacques, (b.
		1875, Rachel Davis	1832 in
		b. 1831 in "Wales",	"England",
		d. ?)	d. ?)

THE OCTOBER MEETING

METHODIST RECORDS AND THEIR VALUE IN YIELDING BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

G.E. Milburn

Mr Milburn, whose article on Methodist Records and the Genealogist appeared in Volume 2, Number 2, of this Journal, supplemented this information by giving a lively talk on some more general aspects of the subject. His talk was well illustrated by slides and by anecdotes, many coming from his own experiences.

A major complexity for anyone seeking to research a Methodist family is the number of different groupings into which Methodism split, and which gradually came together again to form the present-day Methodist church. Mr Milburn's explanation of these will help many members, as will his list of local sources for Methodist historical research, which we reproduce below.

A Brief List of Sources for Methodist Historical Research especially related to the North-East

1. The Methodist Church Archives

The John Rylands Library (Methodist archives collection), University Library, Oxford Road, Manchester. (This is the postal address; the Rylands library building is in Deansgate, Manchester.) This is the new repository for Methodist printed materials and archives (above the circuit level) - a vast collection of published and manuscript items including copies of the many Methodist magazines and newspapers, published from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.

2. County Record Offices

Tyne and Wear; Durham County; Northumberland; Cumbria (two centres at The Castle, Carlisle, and the County Hall, Kendal); North Yorkshire (Northallerton); and Cleveland (at 81 Borough Road, Middlesbrough).

All these have deposits (in some cases very considerable ones) of Methodist chapel and circuit archives, as well as related materials both manuscript and printed. Some of these are in process of being transferred between offices because of local government reorganisation.

3. Libraries

The central libraries in Newcastle, Gateshead, North Shields, South Shields, Sunderland, Durham City, Darlington, Stockton and Middlesbrough all contain materials relating to Methodism. Some of the collections are very extensive and include a lot of older materials. The bulk of this is printed, but there is also an archival collection at Gateshead Library relating to chapels and circuits in and near the town. Odd archival items occur elsewhere also.

The newspaper collections at these libraries are a fruitful source of information, as are the collections of Methodist chapel brochures and centenary publications.

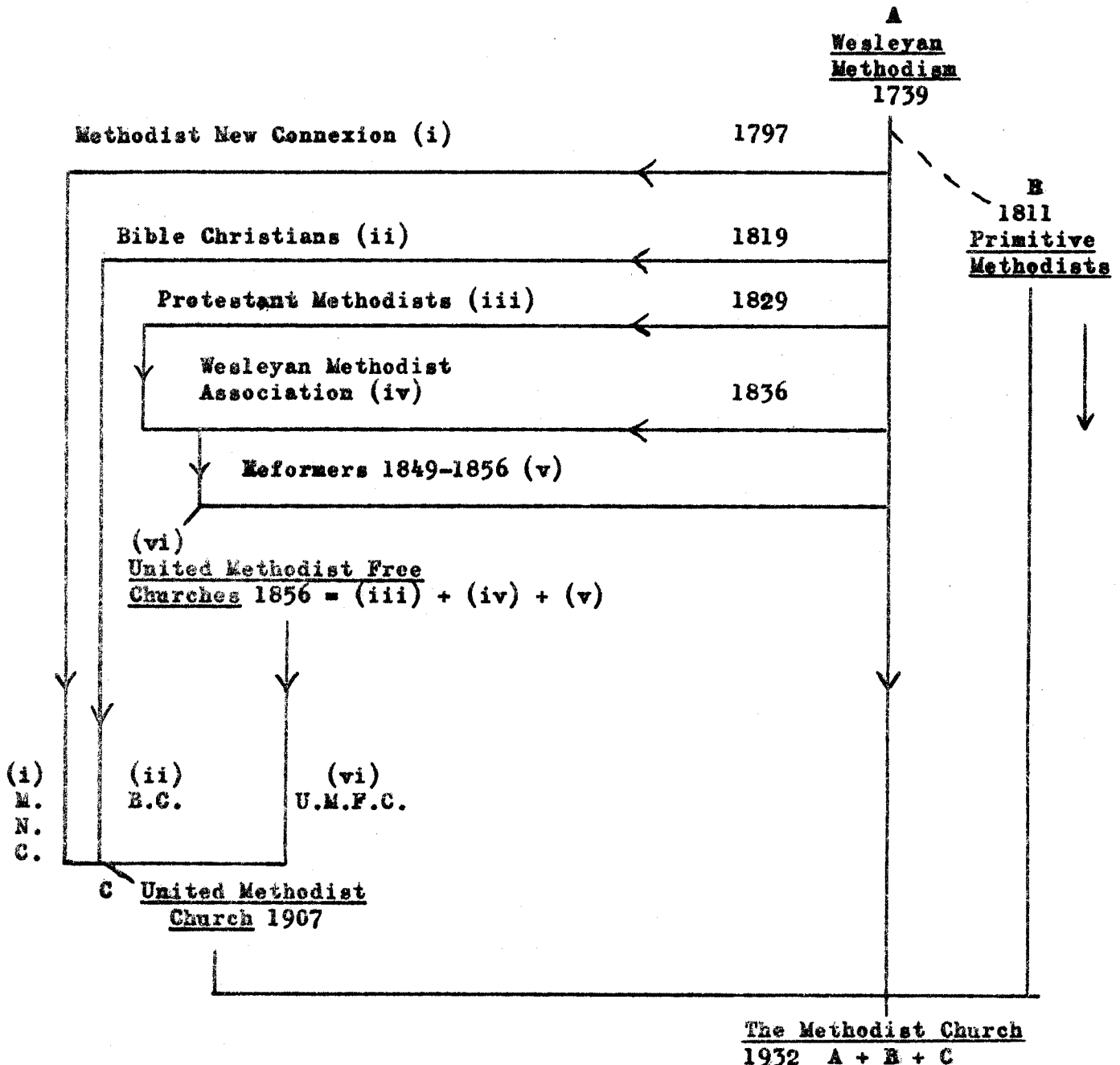
The Durham University and Dean and Chapter libraries contain a valuable collection of printed works of many kinds and including a full set of the Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, an extensive run of issues of the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, Minutes of the Wesleyan and United Methodist conferences, and various guides to Methodist ministers and circuits especially for the nineteenth century.

4. Some Useful Addresses

- 4.1 The Wesley Historical Society, North East Branch, Editor and Co-Secretary - G.E. Milburn, 8 Ashbrooke Mount, Sunderland. A Bulletin is produced twice a year (from 1962).
- 4.2 Cumbria Branch of the W.H.S. - the Editor is Mr John Burgess, 106 Lowry Hill Road, Carlisle.
- 4.3 The secretary of the National Wesley Historical Association is the Rev. John Shaw, 39 Fair Street, St. Columb Major, Cornwall.
The Editor (and ex-connexional Archivist) is the Rev. Dr. J.C. Bowmer, 1 Matfen Place, Gosforth, Newcastle.
- 4.4 The Secretary of the Society of Cirplanologists is Mr E.A. Rose, 26 Roe Cross Green, Mottram, Hyde, Cheshire.
- 4.5 The Methodist District Archivists are:
 - (a) The Newcastle District: Mrs S. Craig, 14 Carlton Road, Benton, Newcastle, NE12 8EE.
 - (b) The Darlington District: Mr T. Foster, "Thorntrees", Low Worsall, Yarm, N. Yorks.
- 4.6 Names and addresses of the ministers of the various Methodist circuits can be found in the current Minutes of Conference.
The Secretaries of the two northern districts are:
Darlington: Rev. P. Sutcliffe, The Methodist Manse, Stokesley, N.Yorks.
Newcastle: Rev. T. Mitchell, 67 Villa Real Road, Consett, Co. Durham.
- 4.7 The Connexional (i.e. national) Archivist of the Methodist Church is Mr William Leary, c/o Property Division, Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1TQ.
- 4.8 The Rev. S. Hatcher, 21 Clevedon Road, Glasgow, has a remarkable collection of printed items relevant to Primitive Methodism.
- 4.9 The Rev. Dr. C. Backerlegge, Wesley Manse, Brigg, Linca., is an authority on the United Methodists.

The Main Methodist Divisions and Re-Unions

Records belonging to the various branches of Methodism are likely to be found in our circuit safes; so, for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the by-ways of our history, it may be helpful to list these pre-union groupings. The main Methodist bodies are as follows:



Other minor bodies of the nineteenth century are not likely to be encountered but, for the record, these include the Tent Methodists, the Church Methodists and the Arminian Methodists. The Independent Methodists and the Wesleyan Reform Union still exist as separate denominations and they hold their own records.

Terminology differed very little from one Methodist body to another; but the following variations occur:

- (1) The U.M.F.C. used the term "Annual Assembly" for the "Conference".
- (2) The P.M.C. referred to their circuits as "Stations" and to their ministers as "Travelling Preachers".
- (3) The Bible Christians also spoke of "Travelling Preachers" and often used the term "Pastors" of their ministers. Unique among Methodist bodies, they had "Elders" with regular "Elders' Meetings". Chairmen of Districts were known as "Superintendents of Districts".

MEMBERS AND THEIR INTERESTS

Items for inclusion in this and the "Second Time Around" column should be sent to Mrs Anne Spendiff, 17 Augustus Drive, Bedlington, Northumberland. Entries for the next (April) issue of the Journal should reach Mrs Spendiff by 7th February. Please include your membership number when writing.

- 590 Mr G. WHALE, 39 Elgin Street, Gordon, N.S.W. 2072, Australia.
Mr Whale is interested in the Trotter and Cosser families, Presbyterians of N. Northumberland. He is trying to trace two marriages: that of John Trotter, a Master Mariner, and Elizabeth (possibly Ramsey) in about 1825; Elizabeth was born in Tweedmouth c.1806, and their children were named John, Robert Ramsay and Elizabeth; also, the marriage of James Cosser, who was born c. 1812, and Isabella Arnot, born c. 1811 in Lowick.
- 591 Mrs B.L. SLAUGHTER, 106 Westoe Road, S. Shields, NE33 3PF.
Would like the details of the birth of Mathew Knott, who married Ann Miller in 1866. He was said, in his children's baptism entry, to have come from Simonburn, although his family appear to have lived in Wallsend, but there is no trace of him in either place. The family appears to have had some connection with Charltons and one William Hamilton. Also, any information on the family of Leadbitter Knott, which was connected with the start of the nonconformist church in Hexham in 1756.
- 592 Mr E.L. DENNING, 6 Pellew Street, Sandringham, Victoria 3191, Australia.
Mr Denning would like to hear from anyone who has any information regarding the following people: George Shields, who was born in S. Shields in 1817 and married Jane Vardy, who was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1822. They had four children: Joseph (born 1854), Robert (born 1856), Andrew (born 1859) and Elizabeth (born 1863). Does anyone know of any connection between the family name of Shields and the town of S. Shields? Also, John Thompson who was born in Wigton in 1824 and married Margaret Foreman (born Berwick-on-Tweed 1831). They had five children: Dorothy (born 1853), William (born 1859), Joseph (born 1863), Peter (born 1867) and Sarah (born 1870). Both families lived in Jarrow High Street.
- 593 Miss K. CROWE, Flat 3, 12 Petherton Road, London N.5.
Interested in all references to the Schunter, Softley and Crowe families in the north-east.
- 594 Mr D. McINTOSH, 30 Woodlands, N. Shields, NE29 9JT.
Can anyone help with the birthplace of David McIntosh, who died in 1899 in Shieldfield, Newcastle, and was born somewhere in Scotland. He was a brass-finisher, and, later, a provision traveller. In 1867 he married Constance Paxton in the United Presbyterian Church, Blakett Street, Newcastle. His father, William, was deceased, and had been a baker, and one Christina McIntosh witnessed the wedding. There were four children of the marriage, all born in the 1870s: David James, Constance, Christina and John.
- 595 Mrs A. SHORE, 'Faraway', Blind Lane, Tamworth-in-Arden, Solihull, Warwickshire.
- 596 Miss S. BOYD, 1 Thornhill Terrace, Sunderland, SR2 7JL.
- 597 Mr H. HASWELL, 20 Horsley Vale, S. Shields, NE34 6JP.
- 598 Mr B. ROBINSON, 111 Falthorpe Av, Mowden Estate, Darlington, DL3 9XJ.
Seeking the baptism of William Robinson, hostman, son of Thomas Robinson, a gentleman of Newcastle. He was apprenticed in 1711, and married in 1717, and may have had some connection with the Ewbank family. Also, the baptism of George Craggs, a skinner, who was born c. 1806-8. He married in 1827 at Newcastle and his parents may have been John and Eleanor. Mr Robinson would like to hear, too, from members working on the Reed family of Stamfordham and Newcastle, and the Humphrey family of N. Durham, latterly of Usworth.

- 599 Mr J.M. STODHAM, 6 Southland Gardens, Shildon, Co. Durham.
- 600 Mr G. MATTHEWS, 7 Narboro Court, Manor Road, Romford, Essex. RM1 2TA.
- 601 Mrs V. SILVESTER, 72 Boston Gdns, Brentford, Mdx.
 interested in the Hodgson family of Woolhouse farm, Marwood, Barnard Castle, in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Hugh Hodgson and his wife, Margaret, were living at the farm when their sons were baptised in the 1770s. In 1772 a Hugh Hodgson married a Margaret Sidgwick (from Denton) in Winston, further down the Tees. If these two Hughs are the same, the Hodgsons can be traced back to Ralph and Jane, who married in about 1700, and there are connections with the Darnton, Brumwell and Harson families. Mrs Silvester is descended from a Margaret Hodgson, who married John Johnson, a warehouseman, in London. He is reputed to have originated in Barnard Castle, and his father, Anthony, was a mason.
- 602 Miss J. BELPH, 22 Agnew Road, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FX7 7BL.
- 603 Mrs R. CLARK, 31 Poynters Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU5 4SG.
 Researching Harriet Haydon, who was born on 29 April 1855 at South Moor House, Hylton. On her birth certificate her father is given as Michael Lidster, and her mother as Mary Haydon.
- 604 Mr J. NESBIT, 702 Jackson St, Reynoldsville, Pa 15851, USA.
 Mr Nesbit is interested in the names of Nesbit, Digby, Robinson, Howlett and Young, all of the Amble district of Northumberland. Specifically, can anyone help with the following: baptism and marriage of William Nesbit, son of John Nesbit and Isabella Robinson, who was born in the borders and married Eliza Ann Digby, daughter of Mathew Digby and Lucy Howlett, near Amble, c. 1878; marriage of Mathew Digby and Lucy Howlett in Amble about 1855; baptism of Thomas Wood Young c. 1869 near Broomhill, son of Thomas Young and Isabella Wood.
- 605 Mrs J. WALLS, 231 Drumry Road East, Drumchapel, Glasgow.
 Seeking information on George Strachan and Sarah Ridley, who were born in Bishop Auckland (1867/68) and West Auckland (1875/76) respectively. They were probably married in one of these parishes before moving to Thornaby-on-Tees before 1901. Their son, George, was born there in 1904. Is there any connection with the George Strachan who was a hairdresser and tobacconist in South Road, Bishop Auckland, in 1894?
- 606 Mrs V. STAMMERS, 18 Colin Close, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 8QD.
 Mrs Stammers is trying to trace the birthplace of a Scot, John Douglas, who was born in 1735 and was a keelman from a Jacobite family. He married Ann Coulson. Other families of interest are Kinnond and Ridley.
- 607 Mr C.R. HUMPHREY, 11 Dewsgreen, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 6DQ.
- 608 Mr J. HUMPHREY, 13 Rectory Terr, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 1YB.
- 609 Mr K. MCKENZIE, 31 Longmeadows, East Herrington, Sunderland, SR3 3SB.
 Seeking for the following: birth (Berwick-on-Tweed, c.1777), marriage, or children's births, of John Newcomb, Inspector of Weights and Measures, of Berwick-on-Tweed; birth of Jasper Kell, probably Tyneside, c. 1749; birth of Margaret Hottleston, probably Tyneside, c. 1790. Any information on the Metcalfs of Barnard Castle, Kells of Chester-le-Street, and Newcombs of Berwick-upon-Tweed, all in the 18th century, would be welcome.
- 610 Mr J.C. WITTY, 3 Leith Road, Darlington.
- 611 Mr P.E.H. MILLS-BISHOP, 50 Willow Tree Av, Gilesgate Moor, Durham.
- 612 Mr A.J. CARR, Morley Croft, Merry Leazes, Allendale Rd, Hexham.
 Mr Carr has sent the following list of interests: Carr of Great Barrington in the 18th century; Robson of Ingoe in the 17th and 18th centuries; Brown of Holystone in the 18th century; Burliston of Meldon in the 18th century; and Robertson and Henderson of Shields in the 19th century.
- 613 Prof. W.C. WONDERS, 6212-128 Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6H 3X3, Canada.

- 614 Mr E.S. MILLIGAN, 209 Guthrie, Alexandria, Virginia 22305, USA.
- 615 Mrs K. CRAIG, Flat 5, 17 Selwyn Rd, Epsom, Auckland 3, New Zealand.
Mrs Craig's grandparents, William Sanderson and Isabella Young, were both descended from families who were living in S. Shields in 1841, and, in the case of the Youngs, for some generations before that. Can anyone help with information on either of these families?
- 616 Mrs E.H. URSCHEL, 140 Devine Rd, San Antonio, Texas 78212, USA.
Interested in the family of Isabella Middleman, who was born on 16 April 1825, and probably brought up in the Church of England. She married James Hamilton (born 18 Oct. 1822 in Washington, Co. Durham), probably in 1847 in Washington. Their son, Walter, was born in England, but their other children were born in the USA.
- 617 Rev. D.G.F. HINGE, The Rectory, Etherley, Bishop Auckland, DL14 0HN.
- 618 Mrs E.M. GRAHAM, 45 Charles St, E. Brighton, Victoria 3187, Australia.
Mrs Graham would like to hear from anyone descended from James Chisholm (born c. 1796) and his wife, Elizabeth Smith (born c. 1796), who were living in Scremerston in 1841. She is also interested in Chisholms from Spital and the Berwick area, and Shorts from Spital. Does anyone know anything about a house in the Scremerston/Spital area, named Alladene Grange?
- 619 Mr S.G. MEYER, Box 968, Balboa, Panama Canal Zone.
- 620 Mrs F.L. BERRETT, 131 West 3rd South, Rexburg, Idaho 83440, USA.
Seeking information on the Lamph and Topping families during the early 1800s, from Newcastle, Gateshead, Spennymoor, Witton Park, Conside (Consett), Lanchester, Escomb and Workington (Cn). William Lamph and Ellen Lennon came to Newcastle from Ireland in about 1835, and died about 15 years later. William's son, John, was in the militia at Hartlepool. Eleanor Topping (or Thompson) had a child, Mary Elizabeth, in a workhouse in Gateshead. Mrs Berrett would like help with military and workhouse records for these two ancestors please.
- 621 Mrs J. BRAUN, 13010 Country Paso, San Antonio, Texas 78216, USA.
Richard Hails was a Methodist tailor who emigrated from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to the USA in 1843. His father, Robert (born 4 May 1785; died 1848) married Hannah Ayre (born 2 June 1785). Robert's father was William (died 1856), who married Isabella Walker (1758-1845), daughter of General John Walker. Information on the Walker and Ayre families would be welcome, and Mrs Braun promises to pay postage costs.
- 622 Mr S.J. CUTHBERTSON, 60 Velmead Rd, Fleet, Hants. GU13 9LS.
Interested in the Cuthbertson family of Northumberland, particularly Tynemouth, in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 623 Mrs M. TIPLADY, Greenlea, 116 Burnaby Drive, Ryton, NE40 3BN.
- 624 Mr H. RISCHMILLER, 65 Rosamond Road, Bedford, MK40 3UQ.
Trying to trace the marriages of two of the children of Frederick William Rischmiller, who came from Weibek, Germany, and eventually settled on Tyneside. His son, Frederick (born 1799/1800, died 1857), is said to have married Elizabeth Fairbridge in 1824. She was a cousin of George Stephenson and came from Felling. Mr Rischmiller would like to hear from anyone who can explain why he can find no trace of Fairbridges on S. Tyneside. Has anyone researched Stephenson's family? The second son, Henry (or Harry), called himself Miller, and married Sarah Robson of High Felling, but this marriage cannot be traced either.
- 625 Mr E.J. CLARK, 126 Danstan Tower, Killingworth, NE12 0TX.
- 626 Mr D.M. SQUIRE, 6 Downside Cresc, Ealing, London, W13 0BQ.
Would like any information on sources of Jewish genealogy in Sunderland, and particularly the marriage of Samuel Jacobs (about 1820), and the birth of his daughter Sarah at a similar date.

Also, any references to the name Stockburn in Co. Durham, and in particular any descendants of Richard Stockburn and Margaret Dinsdale, who were married at Winston in 1680.

- 627 Mr J.R.K. FENWICK, 19 Sanderling Lane, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria. Interested in Fenwicks of the Brancepeth area in the mid-18th century, especially the baptism of John Fenwick (possibly the son of Henry) in about 1756. Also, all references to the Craster Pringle family in the Chatton area of Northumberland. Mr Fenwick can offer some information on these.
- 628 Mr E.W. SHAPTO HILTON, The Bury, Flitwick Rd, Ampthill, Beds., MK45 2NP.
- 629 Mr E. BOWERS, 20 Brinkburn Av, Mayfield Glade, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 6TE.
- 630 Mrs D.C. SIMCO, 5 Bedford Road, Clapham, Bedford. Mrs Simco would like any references to Simcoe in Northumberland. In particular, is seeking birth, marriage and death details for Lyonel Simcoe, chaplain of St. James Chapel, Newcastle, in the 17th century; the birth c. 1670 of William Simcoe (possibly the son of Lyonel), William's marriage to Anne, daughter of Nathaniel Ellison, vicar of Newcastle, and the birth of their son John in 1710 and of any other children. Mrs Simco offers to help members with Bedfordshire interests.
- 631 Mr A.D. MOAT, 15 Nuns Moor Cresc, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 9BE.
- 632/3 Mr & Mrs J. DODDS, Hillside, Holywell Village, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear.

SECOND TIME AROUND

- 311 Mr W.F. BROUGH, Elkton, Florida 32033, USA. Mr Brough has recently spent some time in the north-east, but was disappointed not to find the origins of Thomas Brough, a Colliery Viewer at Longbenton. He married twice: to Francis Leaviss, and to Mary Embleton at Longbenton in 1813, when he was about 40. He has some connection with the Taylor family of Whitley Bay, but, as Mr Brough says, he may have come from anywhere.
- 415 Mrs M.M. PATTISON, 42 Wendan Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 7AF. Seeks the birth of John Adams, whose marriage to Ann Dobson Ord on 26 February 1831, is recorded at All Saints, Newcastle. Their son, John, was born in 1838, and married Agnes McGregor in 1857.
- 433 Mrs T.L. PERRY, 41 Otter Close, Bar Hill Village, Cambridge. Mrs Perry is looking for more details of three families: three Thomas Charltons each had a son, James, in the early 1840s; the first was an agent, married to Ann Newham. Their son James was born in June 1841 in Hartlepool. The second was a pitman, who married Ellen Leatham, and they had a son James in August 1842 in Cramlington, Blyth or Tynemouth. The last was a cooper (his father, Thomas, was also a cooper), married to Mary Ann Brown (whose father, James, was a mariner), and their son James was born in June 1844 in Westoe, S. Shields. Does anyone know anything about the children of the various James's, or the parents of the various Thomas's.
- 460 Mrs D. MACFARLANE, 10 Barley Mill Road, Bridge Hill, Consett, Co. Durham, DH8 8JP. Interested in the Carse family. Seeking details (particularly birthplace) of Thomas Carse, a blacksmith of Longframlington, who died in 1820, aged 72, and James Carse, born Boulmer, and aged 74 in 1861. Also, any information on the Laidler family of the Ellingham/Bamburgh area.

- 466 Miss J.L. BROOKS, Portis, Kansas 67474, USA.
Seeking information on Thomas Allen, who left England for the USA c. 1851/52, aged about 25. His wife was Mary Jane Burnell. Also information on John Allan (1819-67), who died in Durham. Will gladly correspond with others interested in Allan.
- 471 Mrs R. HUNTER, 3/34 Edward Av, St. Albans, Christchurch, New Zealand.
Still seeking information on her great-aunt Mary Anne or Emily Allison (died c. 1933), thought to have been a university lecturer. She never married and lived with a companion in Newcastle-on-Tyne or Durham. She was connected with a family from Northern Ireland, named Gledstone. The Allison family are said to have been piano makers.
- 476 Mrs F.H. OLD, RDI, Walton, New Zealand.
In an old birthday book of her great grandparents, Mrs Old has found an entry: "Mannah Dixon born 1st October 1879 Matfen. Lady Constance's last baby". Can any member throw any light on this? The greatgrandparents in question were Thomas Forster and Mary Ord, of Mexham. Information is also sought on Ann Wigham of Low House, Ninebanks, who married Henry Martin of Hasley well in 1769. Another interest is in Ord of Hale House, Rexham - Mrs Old has a gap in her Ord pedigree between 1699 and 1771.
- 493 Mr D.J. HALL, 41 Duncroft Av, Coundon, Coventry, W. Midlands, CV6 2EX.
Mr Hall has pointed out a couple of errors in his interests as they appeared in the April Journal and which he generously says probably resulted from his hasty handwriting. Although not attempting to disclaim responsibility entirely, the editor would remind members of the importance of making letters as legible as possible if the inevitable mistakes in transcription are to be minimised. Mr Hall is interested in Bowmer (not Boumer), and in the marriage of John Bowmer and Eleanor c. 1820, whose family were raised at Woodhorn.
- 499 Mr D.G. SWEATMAN, 10g Sidney Rd, Walton on Thomas, Surrey, KT12 2NB.
Seeks the birth and parents of George Sweatman, who married, aged 21, Jane Neville in 1812 in Sunderland. Also the birthplace and parents of Jane's father, John. A paper in the family's possession states: "John Nevill's Master and Mariner maketh Oath and saith that he was born on the 5th Day of August ... 1756 and now is in his forty second year of his Age. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. Sworn before me, one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace, the 22 Day of Nov. 1797. (---) Morley." Can any member suggest a reason for such a declaration being made? Finally, George Sweatman's son, Nevill Anderson, was buried, aged 4 months, in vault 54 in the cemetery adjoining Bethel Chapel, Villiers Street, Bishopwearmouth, belonging to the Protestant dissenters of the Independent or Congregational denomination. Does this cemetery still exist? Are the M.I.s recorded anywhere?
- 506 Mr J.B. JOHNSTONE, Ste. 307-6055 Vine St, Vancouver, B.C., V6M 4A3, Canada.
Researching the family of Morlidge in London in the 18th and 19th centuries, esp. Sam Morlidge, born 1815-1820, married c.1836/37. Also the Rawlinson family who lived in London in the 19th century and in Essex in the 18th & 19th; esp. the baptism of George Rawlinson (born 25 Sept. 1843, S. Ockendon, Essex) and the marriage of his parents, George and Elizabeth.
- 563 Mrs J. SMITH, 18 Westwood St, Pennant Hills, NSW 2120, Australia.
Mrs Smith would like to contact any descendants of the following marriages: in Allendale: Edward Coates & Tamar Brown (both of Ninebanks) 11 May 1833; Thomas Coates and Mgt Herdman (of Ninebanks) 12 Oct. 1869; in Ovingham: Jacob English (of Newburn) and Ann Hunter (of Ovingham) 22 May 1841; Michael Hunter (of Newburn) & Mary Stark (of Ovingham) 7 July 1810; Joseph Coates (of Allendale) & Sarah English (of Wylam) 10 Aug. 1861; in Newburn: Henry English (of Newburn) & Dinah Harle (of Slaley) 25 Feb. 1806;

Henry English (of Chollerton) and Elizabeth Wilson 20 June 1769. Does anyone know of a link between Captain James Cook's family and the Cook family of Wiltshire? Both families are said to be associated with the Wild family. Finally, is any member acquainted with the history of the Blenkinsopp estates in Northumberland? The estates passed to the Coulson family through an heiress, Jane, in 1727, and thence to the Coates family.

- 586 Mr J.H. GRANT, Pantiles, Main Street, Irton, Nr. Scarborough, N. Yorks. Mr Grant's interest is in the Grant family either in Ireland or on Tyneside, but the material he has found is rather contradictory. He has traced his Grants back to 1823 using the records of St. Cathbert's R.C. Church in N. Shields but there is no mention of them in the census reports. Can anyone suggest a solution?

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- 61 Mr T.L. GRAY, 115 Amberley Close, Woodrow South, Redditch, Worcestershire. (NOT as given in the October issue of the Journal.)
95 Mr P.K. BENNETT, 51 William Street, Boxhill, Victoria 3128, Australia.
230 Mr D.G. LINLEY, 19 Bridge Road, Ashton, Preston, Lancs., PR2 2SU.
483 Mr P. HENDRA, 285 Campkin Road, Cambridge.
539 Mrs S.K. JONES, Box 162, Pine Point, N.W.T., Canada, X0E 0W0.
551 Mr D. RHODES, 112 Priory Road, Liverpool, L4 2SH.

DEATH

- 131 Mr W.N. PHILIPSON of Newcastle. The Society would like to express its sympathy to Mr Philipson's family and friends.

OFFERS OF HELP

Mr R.L. Denning, member 592, 6 Pellew Street, Sandringham, Victoria 3191, Australia, whose interests are given on p. 55, offers help to anyone who may be researching Australian ancestors.

Mrs V. Silvester, member 601, 72 Boston Gardens, Brentford, Middlesex, would like to get in touch with any Durham resident who would be interested in participating in reciprocal research on a long term basis. She is prepared to undertake this type of research anywhere in London or Middlesex. Her interests are listed on p. 56.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Wednesday, January 17

Figures in a landscape - a historical geographer's view, Dr B. Roberts.
YMCA Building, Ellison Place, Newcastle, 7.15 p.m.

Wednesday, February 21

The Highland Clearances, Dr R. Campbell.
YMCA Building, Ellison Place, Newcastle, 7.15 p.m.

Wednesday, March 21

Visit to the Branch Genealogical Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Alexandra Road, Sunderland. Please meet there at 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 18

Workshop and display evening.
YMCA Building, Ellison Place, Newcastle, 7.15 p.m.

Wednesday, May 16

Advance notice of Annual General Meeting.
YMCA Building, Ellison Place, Newcastle, 7.15 p.m.