

**Family History Research Group
Newsletters 41-45**

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Family History Research Group
Newsletter Forty-One



LEISURE TIME AND FUN

Janice



We have recently been looking at some of our photos to remind ourselves that we will be allowed to go places and do things we love doing. You might be wondering what the photo above has to do with me, but if you look carefully you will see my right hand holding a paddle. Over the years I have had many water based adventures, skied down several mountains, visited wonderful places and seen and done many amazing things. I am looking forward to what we will do in the future.

My life has been very different to that of my parents, they didn't have the money to travel to other countries. It wouldn't have crossed their minds to even dream of doing things I have done but I do know they had leisure time, went on holiday and had a lot of fun.

So, what might your ancestors have done to enjoy themselves?

THE AMAZING AUNTIE NELLIE

We have heard so much about Christine's talented auntie, she made wine (for medicinal purposes of course), made items out of wood and was prepared to do a turn at the church social. This week we discover that she was also a sports star.



Abbey Mill Ladies Cricket Team.

Auntie Nellie is sitting on the far right front row holding the bat.



A MEDAL WINNING GRANDFATHER

Diana Heaton



The photo is of Chorley Cycling Club outside the Rose and Crown Pub, Ulnes Walton, which I believe was taken in 1891. My Grandfather is in the centre of the photograph, with the penny-farthing bicycle that he assembled himself.

He was the son of a farmer, in Eccleston. In a wooden shed on the farm premises, he made and repaired bicycles in his spare time. My father told me that he had assembled, and put all the 'spokes' in himself.

You can see on the reverse of the medals, the date 9 July 1891, with the length of the races, and the outcome.



1 mile - 2nd Prize. and 2 miles - 3rd Prize.



Janice

A Brief History of Chorley Cycling Club

Reformed in 2011 Chorley Cycling Club was last active in the early 60s but with history of the club going as far back as the 1880s. Chorley Cycling Club is steadily growing in numbers and a new juniors section has been launched.

The club caters for all abilities. So whatever your interest, whether its social rides, racing, sportives or time trials then please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Chorley Cycling Club in the 1880s

Left to right W.M. Gillibrand, F. Bromley, T. Frier, J. Critchley (capt, A. Torrance,

K. Sargent, T. Radcliffe, J. Hoyle Brown, W. Berry, R. Birch, G. Hopkinson & T. Bromley.

Photo and text found on the club website

Did any of your ancestors' cycle either as a way of getting around, as a sport or as a leisure activity?

In the early 19th century working people had very little leisure time. However, things improved by the end of the century. In 1871 the Bank Holiday Act gave



workers a few paid holidays each year. Also in the 1870s some clerks and skilled workers began to have one week paid annual holiday. However, even at the end of the 19th century, most people had no paid holidays except bank holidays. In the early 19th century everyone had Sunday off. In the 1870s some skilled workers began to have Saturday afternoon off. In the 1890s most workers gained a half-day holiday on Saturday and the weekend was born. By the end of the 19th century, most people had more leisure time.

I wondered if the photo above was of a day at the races, (front right then clockwise - Mum, Auntie Mary, Auntie Annie and a friend. I love the hats!). When I scanned the picture and magnified the image, I could see more details and I now know exactly where they were. The letters LMSAC appear at the top of the steps (Leyland Motors Sports and Athletics Club), the girls are posing on the cricket pitch (the boundary line can be seen). They would have been in their teens dating the photo to the 1920s.

Behind the roof of the club building can be seen the vents of Leyland Motors South Works.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE



1. Who do you think these people are? (They have all been mentioned in previous newsletters).
2. When do you think the photo was taken? (Look at the clothes they are wearing.)
3. Where do you think the photo was taken? (I know that quite a few of you have been to this place).
4. What do you think they had been doing?

What did your ancestors do in their leisure time?

Did they go on holiday?

Can you remember your first holiday?

Family History Research Group

Newsletter Forty-Two



Anne Sheppard

MAKE DO AND MEND

I have never been one to “make do and mend” having grown up in the 1960s when this was an alien concept! The only thing I can remember as a child was hand knitted woollen vests which I had to wear in winter and also helping to make home-made rag rugs from cut up remnants of worn out clothes. My mother, on the other hand, had grown up at a time when “make do and mend” was the norm. In later years I can remember arguing with her as she resolutely darned socks which would have cost less than £1 to replace or insisted that her worn sheets should be turned “sides to middle” rather than replaced. Having grown up with the throwaway society it made no sense to me! But when I really listened as Mum reminisced about her childhood in the years of the Depression of the 1920s and 1930s I realised why she needed to make do and mend.

My grandfather, her father had had a good job as an engineer with Dick Kerrs in Preston (which later became English Electric and then British Aerospace). He had served an apprenticeship and was well thought of, earning a decent and regular wage. He and my grandmother had taken out a mortgage and bought a semi-detached house in Inkerman Street in Preston. When the Depression struck he lost his job in 1931 and there was very little safety net for those thrown out of work. My Mum remembered the Welfare Officer coming round and ordering that any furniture or items of value be sold before any financial help was forthcoming. This included the second hand piano which was bought so that my Mum, a musical child could learn to play. As a family they were more fortunate than some; my grandmother’s parents in Cornwall paid the mortgage as her father had a regular and secure job as a coastguard. They also sent regular food parcels but Mum remembered her mother claiming to have had her dinner when she put down food

on the table for her husband and children. She had not eaten. My grandfather tried to find any sort of work; he whitewashed people's yards for a small fee and, at one



stage, he was paid to clean the windows inside the spire of St Walburgh's church. To do this he had to sit on a plank of wood and hoist himself up and down using a rope.



No health and safety regulations then though he must have had a good head for heights!

On one occasion he heard of a job going in Southport and walked from Preston. By the time he got there the job had gone and he had worn out the soles of his shoes. He found an old car tyre and re soled his shoes with the rubber from the tyre and in due course the soles of both of his daughter's shoes. Mum remembered being mortified by her ugly thick soled shoes. My grandmother took a cleaning job and took in washing and somehow they got through until grandad got work again at the same company but Mum never forgot make do and mend and it became a lifelong habit which I, growing up in a time of relative abundance, I just didn't understand.

More stitching and mending...

Linda Mogg

The sewing box is an early example of plastic used to create a traditional work box which I believe my mother bought from a cousin in the early 1960s. She kept all her needles, cotton and darning equipment in it until she had to go into care in 2005.



On leaving school at 14, my mother attended a trade school in Manchester where they taught sewing. At 17 she left home and like her elder sister trained as a nurse. After I cleared my parent's house, I found a sampler and an incomplete book of her embroidery stitches. My mother didn't show them to me but she did say how much she disliked the sewing school! I now have the sampler framed and hanging in the bedroom.



Items from the sewing box, the wooden object in the top right-hand corner is a darning mushroom.

Joan

I remember learning to darn socks, first by pushing a wooden 'mushroom' into the heel.

I also remember my Mum 'turning' collars on Dad's shirts. This involved unpicking them, turning them over so that the worn edge was on the inside, then sewing them back into the shirt.

Boys at school had leather patches on the elbows of their blazers so that they didn't wear out.

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S MYSTERY PHOTO

Janice



Q. Who do you think these people are? (They have all been mentioned in previous newsletters).

A. From right to left - Dad, Auntie Annie, Uncle Bill (photo taken by Mum)

Q. When do you think the photo was taken? (Look at the clothes they are wearing)

A. Baggy trousers for men started to become fashionable in the mid 1920s but continued into the 1930s and beyond. I have the advantage of knowing that Auntie Annie was born in 1912, so I would date the photo to the early 1930s.

Q. Where do you think the photo was taken? (I know that quite a few of you have been to this place).

A. Again I have the advantage of being told, so I know that they were at Arnside. I am not sure if Dad had a car by then but it is a place once easy to get to on a train. It is also a place we were frequently taken to when we were children. Now that I have scanned in the photo, had a more careful look at the image and studied maps, I think I know exactly where they were. In my view the spot is just beyond the caravan site on the way out along the fore shore heading south to Black Stone Point. When allowed, which hopefully soon, we will go there again to check and perhaps take photo for a then and now comparison.

Q. What do you think they had been doing?

A. They had been fishing – I don't think they were very good at it judging by the size of the catch!

The link below will take you to a satellite image of the spot. Because it is on Google Maps you will be able to zoom out from the captured image so that you can see the wider area.

www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Arnside/@54.1934038,-2.8628285,426m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x487c9a46b01a8037:0xda8596faf3d5cada!8m2!3d54.203808!4d-2.832755

The earliest mention of the name Cornthwaite (my granny Brearey's maiden name) is in the church records of Warton and possibly explains why I am so drawn to the area. - www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Cornthwaite



The photo is of Andy, Andy's mum Margaret and my little mum, Nellie. She hated being called Nellie, the name everybody insisted on using and thought her given names of Martha Ellen were far more acceptable.

They are standing inside the ruins of Warton Old Rectory and the church of St. Oswald's built 1892 can be seen in the background.

[History of Warton Old Rectory | English Heritage \(english-heritage.org.uk\)](https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/warton-old-rectory/)

Warton is the village where my mum's birth was registered.

Family History Research Group Newsletter Forty-Three



OLD HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT

Christine

What is your oldest working piece of household equipment?

I recently spent the afternoon having tea and cake in Cousin Catherine's garden and she told me about her vacuum cleaner which still works.

It's a Hoover Senior and Catherine remembers her mother buying it at an auction in the early 60s, so it was second hand then. It has a cloth bag and the original bulb still lights up. She even has a spare belt but if that goes then she probably couldn't get hold of a new one.

She has been using it until quite recently but has now bought a cordless one.

When I tried looking it up on the internet, I came across some old slogans. I'm sure most of us remember 'It beats as it sweeps as it cleans'. Would you believe that came out in 1919!



Janice

Catherine's Hoover looks very like the one my mum used until the 1960s. It was old when I was very young and possibly dated back to the 1930s when she married. It could even have been in the house when she moved in with Dad and Granny Parr so could be even older.

Wednesday was half day closing in Leyland so after lunch Auntie Annie would turn up to help with the weekly big clean. Out would come dusters, brushes on long canes for the cobwebs, mops and many other items. My best plan was to stay out of the way because what happened next was a great cleaning frenzy. It wasn't a good idea to get in the way and the Hoover terrified me, I didn't like the light, the noise it made, or the way it sucked up everything lying in its path.

I used Mum's kitchen scales until well into the 21st century when I purchased a battery operated digital model. Unfortunately the thing ceased to function in the middle of a baking session, fortunately I hadn't disposed of the old scales so the cake was completed. I purchased a replacement for the broken digital version and Mum's still lives at the back of a cupboard for future emergencies. They bring back memories of me messing with bits of scrap pastry till they turned a strange colour while Mum made jam tarts. I then wondered why nobody wanted to eat my efforts.



The oldest electrical item I still have is the Singer sewing machine purchased by Mum for my 21st birthday. A couple of years ago it sadly went very wrong and the Singer shop in Southport I had relied on in the past had closed down. It was looking like I might need to buy a new machine. After inspecting the mechanism then watching a video on you tube, a replacement cog was purchased from the internet. Andy spent a Saturday morning carrying out a repair and the machine still works perfectly.

They really don't make things like they used to!

At the beginning of the article Christine asked the question - "What is your oldest working piece of household equipment?" I look forward to receiving some answers so I can share them with you all. Contributions welcome from all readers not just those who are members of our group. If you haven't got my email address you can make initial contact through the link on our web page.

Janice

Family History Research Group

Newsletter Forty-Four



RESCUING UNWANTED DIARIES

Anne Sheppard

When my Mum died in 2016 I inherited a small suitcase full of diaries. Having to clear her room at the residential Home as soon as possible, I did not have time to look at them but I have since discovered that it contained not only my mother's diaries dating back to the 1970s but also my grandmother's diaries from 1965. In her latter years my mother's diaries tended mostly to record the daily weather; useful to settle arguments in later years, but also when something of importance happened in the family. I had reason to be thankful when doing my family history I was able to find my uncle's visit from Australia in 1979 which I had completely forgotten about.

My grandma's diaries record her everyday life; what meals she made or cakes she baked, when she saw family and went to church and, yes, what the weather was like! She lived with her adult daughter, my aunt, her husband having died at the age of 64 in 1961. She lived until the age of 88 dying in 1984. My grandma and aunt often looked after my son when he was young as I worked full time and she always records this. She taught him to play bezique a rather complicated card game and the two of them would often play cards or dominoes. Both cheated dreadfully when they thought the other wasn't looking but this is not recorded in the diaries! The highlights every year record the visits to Cornwall, the county where she was born and they usually took my son with them, staying in my aunt's caravan. They got on very well and were very fond of each other which really comes over in the diaries. I really didn't know what to do with the diaries; it seemed wrong to just put them in the bin but they take up quite a lot of room. However, I watched a video talk by Irving Finkel for The Arts Society entitled Rescuing Unwanted Diaries and discovered that he has founded an archive to house the diaries of ordinary people. These will be

available as a resource for historians now and in the future. The archive is called The Great Diary Project and it is based at Bishopsgate Institute which is opposite Liverpool Street Station in London. They welcome diaries of ordinary people from anywhere and of any date. I know where these diaries will go when I die but I don't keep a diary myself!

THE MAN WHO SAVES LIVES

Janice

Irving Leonard **Finkel (born 1951)** is a **British philologist and Assyriologist**. He is currently the Assistant Keeper of Ancient Mesopotamian script, languages, and cultures in the Department of the Middle East in the British Museum, where he specializes in cuneiform inscriptions on tablets of clay from ancient Mesopotamia.



Early in the first lockdown Anne told me about the Arts Society and how their lectures were being made available online. Over the last twelve months I have watched many presentations but the one by Leonard Finkel on the rescuing and archiving diaries has probably been the most enjoyable. If you can find thirty minutes to watch the video I think you will find it thought provoking and will make you smile.

[Rescuing unwanted diaries! A Lecture by Irving Finkel - Bing video](#)

Family History Research Group Newsletter Forty-Five



EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY BUT WHAT STORY DOES THIS ONE TELL?

Janice

This is one of many old photos I inherited. When I first started researching my family history, I gathered together all the items left in my care by Auntie Annie and Mum and tried to make sense of what I had. I didn't know which of my relatives was in the photo but after drawing on memories from years ago, jumped to quite the wrong conclusions. It took some time for me to realise my mistake and get back on the right track.

I have given you some things to consider below but if you are thinking this could be a scene from a performance of something like HMS Pinafore, think again!



- Look at the clothes they are wearing.
- Consider the facial hair of some of the men.
- Can anyone identify the musical instrument?
- Where in the world do you think they might have been?
- The type of ship they are on might help you to date the photo
- What do you make the composition of the photo?

I would be really interested to know about the conclusions you come to, you may notice something I have missed. I would also like to know what the photography experts among you make of the photo. If you haven't got my email address you can contact me through our web link on the groups page of Mawdesley u3a website.

I might award a small prize to the person who sends in the best assessment of the photo, so zoom into the detail, look very carefully, and send in your entries.