



Pendle & Burnley  
Branch

# The Gazette

Issue 65 January 2017

[www.lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk](http://www.lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk)

## Branch AGM 15th March

The nomination sheet will be available at the January and February meetings for you to propose and/or second the nominees proposed by the Committee.

Period	Official	Nominee
1 year	Chairman	Mike Smith
1 year	Vice Chairman	Pat Dyson
1 year	Programme Secretary	Sylvia Marshall
2 years	Treasurer	Janet Knowles
2 years	Librarian	Margaret Heap
2 years	Minute Secretary	Margaret Heap
2 years	Committee Member	Mary Jackson
2 years	Committee Member	Geoffrey Riley
2 years	Committee Member	Arlene Naylor

-----oo000oo-----

## 2017 Subscriptions

It would help the Society Membership Secretary if you could pay your subscriptions (which are the same as last year) as soon as possible.

A renewal form was in the November journal or you can renew online through the Society's online shop at:

[www.lfhhs.org/index.php](http://www.lfhhs.org/index.php)

## 2017 Programme

15th Feb	"Catholic Priests in the Family" Kate Hurst
15th Mar	A.G.M.
29th Mar	Practical Evening topic to be announced
19th Apr	"Tales From My Family History" June Weaver
17th May	Outvisit to Newchurch
31st May	Practical Evening topic to be announced
21st June	"Wills and Probate Records" David Lambert
19th July	Coach Trip to Newby Hall
16th Aug	"The History of Lancaster Castle" Graham Kemp
30th Aug	Practical Evening topic to be announced
20th Sept	"The Liverpool Cowkeepers" Dave Joy
18th Oct	"And in Flew Enza" Tony Foster
15th Nov	"WWI talk" (topic to be chosen) Richard Wimpenny
29th Nov	Practical Evening topic to be announced
6th Dec	Christmas Party (By Ticket Only)

## QUERY CORNER

### **James ROBINSON (1831 – 1900)**

Susan P. Moss is descended from ROBINSONs who lived in the Whalley/Colne/Nelson area of Lancashire. She has traced her ancestors back to a James ROBINSON (1831-1900) who married Betty BROWN (DRIVER) (1845-1917). She understands that James's father was William ROBINSON (1811 - ?) who married a Sarah BAILEY (1811- ?).

However she is having problems tracing details of William's parents and further back – too much choice! She wonders if she has made a false link somewhere. Can anyone help please?

Secondly, there appear to be very few descendants from the marriage of the James ROBINSON (1831-1900) mentioned above, consequently she is not in touch with any "current generation" Robinsons! Possible siblings of James are: Mary (b 1833), John (b 1836) and Susan (b 1840). They may have married and have descendants alive today. Susan would love to be in touch with any ROBINSONs from this lineage and/or members of the BROWN and DRIVER families who have connections by marriage.

### **Mary Teresa POLLARD, maiden name KEELEY (1860 – 1937)**

A request for information on Mary's descendants, my wife is Mary's grand daughter. Mary lived most of her life in Colne, she was born in Dublin and her family moved to Manchester 1860's. Mary married Joseph William Pollard in Colne in 1878, they had four children, all born in Colne, Annie, Hartley, Arthur and my wife's father, Frank, who was born in 1899. The POLLARDs lived at various addresses in Colne, namely, Crawshaw, Colne Lane and lastly, Essex St.

We have never seen a photograph of Mary, we are hoping that one of her descendants may still have one and that they would be willing to contact us.

**GAZETTE** – Editor – Arnold Slater

Articles for the **April 2017 Gazette**  
by the **end of March** please.

Please send articles to Editor at [lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk](mailto:lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk) or  
by post to the Editor,  
c/o 6 Sussex Street, Barnoldswick, Lancashire BB18 5DS

-----oo000oo-----

**Branch Contacts:**

**Family History Queries**

Jean Ingham email: [enquiry@lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk)

**Secretary**

Arnold Slater email: [secretary@lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk)

**Branch Website**

[www.lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk](http://www.lfhhs-pendleandburnley.org.uk)

-----oo000oo-----

**DROP-IN FAMILY HISTORY HELP SESSIONS**

**will be held at Colne Library on the following dates:**

**February 22nd**

**March 22nd**

**10 am to 12 noon**

**Volunteers welcome**

There but for the grace of God .... by Rod Moorhouse

Recently I was searching for information on the 1851 census. Towards the end of an unfruitful session and for no particular reason I entered the commonest name in my family tree, John Moorhouse. To my surprise a John Moorhouse was immediately found. Born in 1777 and now around 74 years old he was living in the Skipton Workhouse together with about 80 other men, women and children.

With a slight feeling of disdain I immediately dismissed him out of hand with the thought that he could not possibly be part of my family. Perhaps I had spent too much time during last winter writing about ancestral Moorhouses who had prospered but eventually the situation of this John Moorhouse made me stop and consider his situation more carefully.

Extreme poverty is in fact part of my heritage. In some biographical notes left by my great grandfather James, he states that his father, John Moorhouse who had lived in Bradley, "..... came to Skipton about 1825 ... took a house somewhere back of Newmarket St, now called "Clubhouses", a very poor locality....." According to photographic information from the Rowley collection online [<http://www.rowleycollection.co.uk>] these dwellings and possibly others nearby, were built in short terraces often without backyards and with very little frontage. It is likely everyone shared the water supply, toilet facilities and refuse middens. They were built by the Tradesmen's Sick Club in the early 19th century.

According to James, his father John had worked on the land for sixpence a day and in the winter had been a hand weaver. Perhaps a decrease in the demand for hand woven cloth forced him to seek work in the town – in his words, '..... The whole family of us came to Skipton in search of work....' John had a large family; James states that there were fifteen children. Four were born in Bradley and of the eleven born in Skipton only six survived to reach adult age. Census information suggests that some of the children worked but the family was always poor. James recalls, '.....We were so poor that for the morning meal we had water meal porridge, all of us eating out of the same pot and black bread....'

This brief account of the plight of my great, great grandfather and his family is not atypical. Many people in Yorkshire and Lancashire found themselves in similar circumstances at that time. Friedrich Engels made a detailed study of this phenomenon. In the introduction to his book entitled, 'The condition of the working class in England' written around 1840, Engels describes a process which had started towards the end of the eighteenth century, '....Before the introduction of machinery the spinning and weaving of raw materials was carried on in the working man's home. Wife and daughter spun the yarn the father wove..... These weaver families lived in the country in the neighbourhood of the towns and could get on fairly well with their wages.....' Engels explains how the introduction of water and steam powered machinery into the weaving trade caused a rapid expansion in the population of those towns which had access to the necessary resources to build and to power large cotton mills. The demand for manufactured goods was growing due to an expansion in the population and the growth of exports to the Empire. As time went on the handloom weavers could not compete with the manufacturers so they were forced out of work. Many were drawn into ever more crowded living conditions in the towns with the hope or promise of work and a more prosperous living. In Engels words, '....The rapid extension of manufacturing demanded hands, wages rose and troops of workmen migrated from the agricultural districts to the towns....'

In the case of my relatives moving to the town did not necessarily solve the family's problems. I am not sure whether John Moorhouse did find much work; the 1851 census describes him as a 'retired labourer'. However, he may have been more concerned about opportunities for his children. Again according to his son James some of them worked in the local spinning mills but the hours were long and the pay very meagre, '..... We worked from 6 a.m. till 8p.m. Saturday 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. .... My wages were 1/11 per week [10p]. However, there was no long term guarantee of work and by the age of 19 [around 1929] my great grandfather James lost his job, '..... Owing to the introduction of new machinery I was thrown out of work along with others'.....

So what of John Moorhouse in the Workhouse? Who was he? Presumably he had no job, no home, no regular income and possibly no family? Was he a victim of the move from the countryside to the industrialised town? I recently tried to find out a bit more about him; sometimes information can be found in the

Admissions and Discharges records which were kept at workhouses. After emailing Skipton Library to ask if any such local records still exist I received a very prompt reply from the Archivist which in part stated that, '.... The sad news is that nearly all of the papers relating to Skipton Union Workhouse were lost in the 1970s.....' The few certain facts are that at some point in his life he was admitted to Skipton Union Workhouse where he worked as a labourer in return for shelter, food and clothing.

The plight of the two Johns serves to remind me how tenuous life was at that time. John Moorhouse of Bradley, my great, great grandfather, was clearly very poor but managed to avoid absolute poverty with the aid of his children – evidence to support this notion can be found in the census records. The other John Moorhouse apparently had no such support and consequently lost his independence. He eventually died a pauper, possibly in the mid 1850's.

Reference: 'The condition of the working class in England',  
Freidrich Engels, Oxford University press, 2009

-----ooOOOoo-----

## A DEADLY COLOUR

Whilst working as volunteers for the LancashireBMD project, the team from Pendle and Burnley branch of LFHHS came across many instances when the cause of death was given as "Visitation of God". Not one that you would find on a death certificate today, but in Victorian times it was used when an obvious cause of death could not be ascertained.

As we are all well aware, our family history research has shown that hardly any family was spared the heart-break of the deaths of babies and young children, mostly from the usual childhood illnesses such as scarlet fever, diphtheria and measles, etc. However, should we now be considering another cause with more sinister connotations in cases of unexplained deaths?

The Victorians were noted for their wallpapers, in particular those with intricate patterns created by people such as William Morris.

A favourite colour was green which was also very fashionable. Not only was it a trend to be found in wallpaper and paint, but ladies would choose it for their dresses, and gentlemen for their waistcoats and cravats. Unfortunately, green dye was produced with the use of arsenic - a deadly poison. It was easily absorbed into the bloodstream after very little exposure. In 1879 there was panic across the country when it was discovered that lickable postage stamps were coloured with arsenical dyes, and not just green. Victorian Britain ate vegetables sprayed with arsenic insecticides and meat from animals dipped in arsenic as a fly deterrent.

But it was the wallpaper and paint which probably caused the most unexplained deaths, particularly amongst the very young, the elderly and infirm. Even though adults and children slept in the same room, it was quite often only the children who were affected. This frequently puzzled the doctors at the time, but later studies showed that a healthy adult had a higher level of protein in their diet and were able to cope with a higher level of arsenic in their system.

Obviously, we will never know exactly how our ancestors decorated their homes, although some houses retained their original wallpapers and paints until well into the twentieth century; nor what colours they chose for their clothes as only the rich could afford to have their portraits painted, and photographs were produced in black and white.

Maybe it was not a mysterious visitation which brought death in the night, but the absorption of the deadly poison lurking on the walls.

Want to find out more? A new book has just been published by Thames & Hudson and The National Archives, Kew entitled *Bitten by Witch Fever: Wallpaper & Arsenic in the Victorian Home\** by Lucinda Hawksley.

Details : [thamesandhudson.com](http://thamesandhudson.com)

Submitted by Margaret Heap