



Pendle &  
Burnley

# The Gazette

Issue 71 July 2018

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## **PRACTICAL EVENINGS**

29th August & 31st October

We would welcome suggestions for topics for future meetings.

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## **Open Day Event**

**at**

**Colne Library**

**9.30 am - 12.30 pm**

**on 3rd November**

We will need helpers to assist people with their Family History,  
but we also need helpers  
to book people in etc.

## 2018 Programme

- 15th Aug "The Richardson Family of N. Birley,  
Bradford & Thornton-in-Craven"  
Derek Clabburn
- 29th Aug Practical Evening
- 19th Sept "The Double Identity of John Robinson of  
Colne"  
David Tildsley
- 17th Oct "WWI German Prisoners of War in Skipton"  
Anne Buckley
- 31st Oct Practical Evening
- 3rd Nov Open Day Event 9.30am – 12.30pm
- 21st Nov "About The Jam, Darling"  
Virginia Aighton
- 5th Dec Christmas Party  
Jack Hargreaves: Songs and Laughter

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GAZETTE – Editor – Arnold Slater

Articles for the October 2018 Gazette  
by the end of September 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

## About the name Curren by Rod Moorhouse.

In the April 2018 Gazette I was delighted to read Pat Dyson's article entitled, 'What's in a name'. I was particularly interested in her explanation of the use of surnames as second or even first names, particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and how these can sometimes help to trace our ancestry. The following is a complimentary article which outlines a research task and some further thoughts about the use of a surname and its introduction into my Moorhouse family line.

One of my great, great uncles was named Curren Moorhouse; a great uncle and two distant cousins were similarly named. I have often pondered over this unusual first name. It occurs more commonly as a surname so why was it chosen to name the third son of a farm labourer from Bradley? Was there a connection with local families with that particular surname?

On the Census Records and in Parish records there are several families surnamed Curren to be found living in and around Kildwick and in Bradley during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Harry Speight [1900], in writing about this district of Upper Wharfedale, Moorhouses and Currens frequently intermarried. It is quite possible that there were intermarriages perhaps between female Moorhouses and male Currens although to date I have not found any! In his '*Pedigree of Moorhouse*' Speight only records one such marriage, when, in around 1750, "*William of Skipton M.D. married Margaret daughter of Henry Curren, gent.*" This was confirmed recently when an online contact sent me this message, "*....I found the marriage between William Moorhouse and Margaret Curren that took place on 23 July 1754 in Kildwick. William was an Apothecary ....*" William of Skipton, MD [*or Apothecary?*] b. 1731 was the oldest son of Edward Moorhouse. Edwards's brother, John Moorhouse was the father of William Moorhouse b. 1725 [*my 4 x great grandfather*] and therefore William of Skipton and my William were first cousins. So one connection with my family line and the Currens it seems is via the aforementioned marriage of 1754. If it is true that there were no more Moorhouse/Curren marriages then why was it 70 years and two generations later before the Curren connection was acknowledged?

I began to wonder whether there was a more direct connection – someone closer to my great great grandparents, John and Alice Moorhouse who named their third son Currer.

Recently a family history friend reminded me that younger sons were occasionally named after male relatives on the female side of the family. A search of marriages and baptisms in the Parish of Kildwick soon provided some interesting information. According to marriage records Thomas and Ann Gill were married at Kildwick in about 1750. Later they had a daughter named Sarah, baptised in 1754 and then a son named Currer baptised in 1757. Sarah Gill married William Moorhouse and they became the parents of the above John Moorhouse whose third son Currer was, it seems, named after his great uncle, Currer Gill. This may explain why the name Currer came into my family but it raises yet another mystery – why was Currer Gill given this surname as a first name; so far I have not found any clues.

But who were these Currers who were titled as '*gents*'? Speight claims there were two main branches of the Currer family. William Currer lived in Wharfedale at Hollin Hall in the parish of Ilkley and Skipton from about 1540. In the next generation his son Henry purchased the manor of Kildwick in 1558. His other son continued to live at Hollin Hall. It appears that a later branch of the family lived in and around Skipton; Speight tells us there is a Currer vault in Skipton parish church. There is also an interesting connection with a great literary figure. Charlotte Bronte who lived at Howarth Parsonage in the mid 1800's used the name Currer Bell as a *nom de plume* in order to help publish her novels. According to an article from the Times Online entitled "The full Bronte" Marcus Binney suggests that she took the name Currer from the family who lived some six miles away at Kildwick Hall where in his words, "*....the arms of the squires of Howarth are impaled by those of Currer over the front door at Kildwick.....*" Interesting that Charlotte used Currer as a first name. Binney suggests that Charlotte was familiar with Kildwick Hall. He points out that the entrance and layout of the Hall matches the description of Heathcliff's house in *Wuthering Heights* – perhaps Charlotte had visited and knew the Currer family?

Transcriptions of both parish and diocesan records are a great source of information when searching for baptisms,

marriages and deaths in the 18th century. For parishes in West Yorkshire they seem to be quite exceptional – in other counties I understand they are far from complete. Researching in this period is quite challenging and stretches the imagination to the limits.

The smallest clue is worth pursuing but validation is often limited by the appalling condition and difficulty in reading some of the documents.

### **Sources used in writing this article.**

'Upper Wharfedale', Harry Speight, Elliott Stock, London, 1900  
[possibly a rare book]

Marcus Binney, 'The full Bronte', Times on line, 2004

Baptisms and Marriage records via 'Find my Past' and 'Ancestry' websites.

Member's trees on ancestry .com

***Addendum:** Since writing this article and after a careful search in Parish records and members trees on the Ancestry website I found the maiden name of Sarah and Currer Gill's mother. She was Ann Currer - the daughter of Hugh Currer and his wife Sarah Stirk. If these records are accurate then the adoption of the Currer surname as a Christian name in the Gill and the Moorhouse family line is explained.*

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### **Outvisit To Southfield Chapel** **Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Our May Outvisit was to Southfield Methodist Chapel and hamlet, just outside Nelson, which can be truly described as a hidden gem. A popular destination, 27 members made their way down the winding lane to the secluded hamlet to wait in the yard in front of the barn with the Chapel built above it. Fortunately it was a sunny afternoon and we were sheltered from the sneaky easterly wind which was still around then.

Our guide, Pat Frankland, took us into the Chapel, via a flight of stone steps, to enter at the side of the pulpit. Eight rows of wooden benches sloped upwards so the congregation looked down on the preacher. Once we were seated, Pat Frankland told us about the history of the Chapel. In 1500 the Sagar family, very influential in nearby Catlow, bought 2 acres of land in Southfield. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century they had become wealthy cloth merchants. Southfield House was built and nearby a row of 3-storey weaver's cottages, all now Grade II listed buildings.

William Sagar travelled widely, buying and selling cloth, and then he met John Wesley and was converted to Methodism. He funded the first Methodist Chapel to be built in Colne where John Wesley came to preach. Wesley also visited Southfield to stay with his friend William and to preach from the top of the stone steps at the side of Southfield House. William Sagar promised Wesley he would build a chapel at Southfield, so when the barn was built in 1797 a chapel was incorporated above it, though by that time John Wesley had died and never got to preach in it.

To this day a Sunday service is held at the Chapel, although it had to close for 6 months during the 1990's Foot and Mouth outbreak. But in the year 2000 the roof was found to be leaking and £20,000 was needed for extensive repair and refurbishment. This was completed in 2004. To help with fundraising Pat Frankland and Celia Smith embarked on their "Talk and Teas" strategy. While Pat enjoys giving the talks, Celia loves home-baking, and a splendid selection of her cakes were prettily displayed for us to enjoy. No wonder there was such an enthusiastic response to this visit. Not only did we get to appreciate this tranquil spot with its historical connections, but we got to sample the generous hospitality of Pat, Celia and their helpers.

Sylvia Marshall