

# BYGONE TIMES



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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INC.

DEC  
2009

NORTH OF ENGLAND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP NEWSLETTER

## FOURTH MEETING FOR 2009

13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 10.00am

Topic: – Disasters

## MEETING DATES FOR 2010 –For your diary.

Held quarterly in Unit 4, WAGS, May Street, Bayswater, at 10:00am on the second Sunday of March, June, September and December, viz: 14<sup>th</sup> March; 13<sup>th</sup> June; 12<sup>th</sup> September; 12<sup>th</sup> December.

Convenor – Pauline Pryer

Newsletter Editor - Myra Tomkinson

## AREAS OF INTEREST

Cheshire, Cumberland, Derbyshire, Durham, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Westmorland and Yorkshire.

## NOTIFICATION OF CHANGED EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you wish to continue receiving *Bygone Times*, kindly ensure we have your most recent email address.

## NOTICES

WAGS website at [www.wags.org.au](http://www.wags.org.au)

Information to be notified to WAGS members should be forwarded to the following people:

The Editor – *Western Ancestor*

Myra Tomkinson – WAGS web page

Karen Tregenza, WAGS Secretary.

## THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pauline Pryer as current Convenor, to contributors, including speakers and participants at meetings, those who forwarded research information, web site addresses and who helped get this quarter's magazine completed by the due date.

## DEADLINES FOR TYPED ARTICLES

Last working day February, May, August and November. Contributions welcome!

## COPYRIGHT

It is not the intention of this Bulletin, the editor and the people within the group, known as the North of England Special Interest Group to breach any copyright laws and should we unwittingly do so then we will apologise and will issue a statement to this effect. Whilst all due care and attention to detail will be taken, errors do occur.

**Contributions are welcomed** - this is your newsletter and your opportunity to share your genealogy journey. Because the newsletter is registered with an ISSN Number, copies are lodged with the State Library for future researchers. Imagine your descendant's joy at finding your work in your words in years to come.

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**STOP PRESS!**

Bring along your lunch and geni research as WAGS Library will be open **SECOND** and **FOURTH** Sundays:

**SUNDAY OPENING 1pm - 5pm 2010**

### 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY EVENTS:

All the special events have happened. Could someone who went on the escorted walk around Fremantle or Karrakatta Cemetery share their experience with us at our meeting?

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS** - As well as the Computer SIG and our own North of England group, if you have interests in other areas you can also attend the meetings of the London and Home Counties; South Australian; Victorian; Convict, Irish; Scottish; Enrolled Pensioner Guards; South Western European and the Swan River Pioneers groups. You may not immediately receive the clues you need for your personal research but perseverance will reward you with many tips as well as a good morning or afternoon tea.

**WAGS COURSES** - Further your knowledge by attending one of the excellent courses presented by WAGS Education group - see the December edition of *Western Ancestor* for further details - it will be out soon. Payment at the time of booking is essential. If you want to learn more about a particular aspect of genealogical research you can suggest a course.

### INTERESTING WEB SITES and TIPS

**KEEP WATCHING THE WAGS WEBSITE, CHECKOUT THE NEW LINKS.**

[www.wags.org.au](http://www.wags.org.au)

[www.westallswar.org](http://www.westallswar.org)

Details and a database of names of those killed during an Air Raid on Saturday May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1941 on Wilkinson's Lemonade factory in North Shields. It suffered a direct hit from a lone German raider. 107 people were killed. It was the worst bombing incident in NE England during World War II.

[www.bunnyvillage.org.uk](http://www.bunnyvillage.org.uk)

Where is Bunny? 7 miles south of the City of Nottingham. This site lists baptism records from 1715-1899, marriage records for 1556-1899. Burials from 1715-1899, churchyard inscriptions, and census returns 1841-1901. Wonderful information for anyone with a relative in this area.

[www.mining-memorabilia.co.uk](http://www.mining-memorabilia.co.uk)

Many links to other sites, one is a list of mining disasters 1700-1979

**Minutes of the WAGS Computer Interest Group meetings are available on the WAGS website**

The Computer Interest Group meets every second Saturday of each calendar month at 11am in Unit 4. Contribution of a gold coin donation goes towards purchase of resources.

### GENEALOGICAL JOURNALS - ARTICLES

Once journals have been bound they are available for us to borrow for a two week period. This year's issues are in the magazine boxes on the Library shelves (centre block).

### DATES and TOPICS FOR 2010

**To be confirmed at our December meeting.**

### WAGS SNIPPETS

**CHECK THE WAGS WEBSITE FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS.**

[www.wags.org.au](http://www.wags.org.au)

Latest events and news are posted on the WAGS website.

- Shake your Family Tree day - 23 Feb 2010 - at National Archives in East Vic Park. I'm going to a meeting at the NAA tomorrow and might find out the start and finish times then.
- We are still looking for an editor of *Western Ancestor* - can anyone help? Can anyone contribute an article - email to [westernancestor@wags.org.au](mailto:westernancestor@wags.org.au)
- SLWA has launched Our Page in History - information at <http://ourpageinhistory.org>
- Please remember to take note of the parking regulations notice posted in Unit 4. The Bayswater Ranger has advised us not to park on each side of the road or on the brow of May Street if we want to avoid a parking infringement notice.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF WILLS

**From a presentation by John Creer at the North of England Special Interest Group on 28 September 2003 and reviewed on 13 Sept 2009.**

My interest in Wills, in particular Manx Wills, developed out of necessity. Three years of research into my Manx Ancestors had come to a halt at about 1760 when I could not identify the parents of my ggg grandfather Philip Creer who had married an Ann Clucas in 1788 in the Manx parish of German. By 2001 my family tree went back six generations from my children. Following the discovery of some very useful information from Wills I can now boast a family tree reaching back ten generations from my children.

Research into "Wills" should more correctly be referred to as "Probate Records", since the entire Court transactions can reveal more than the Will alone. The Will, of course, forms part of the Probate Records.

If, in fact, a person dies without preparing a Will (that is, intestate), a "Decree" can be made to the court by a close family member, and these can sometimes be almost as informative as a traditional Will.

I currently have a collection of 160 Wills and Decrees, mainly from the Isle of Man, ranging from 1673 to 1912. They are predominantly of persons with the surname of Creer, or close derivatives such as Crear, Creere and McCreere. They include Wills of females who changed their name through marriage, as well as some Wills of the spouses of Creers. I rarely pass up a Will if it mentions my surname somewhere in its content. You never know when a small snippet of information is just what you need to make a connection between individuals.

I must admit to being fairly fortunate in my research of Manx Genealogy. A fellow researcher, Brian Lawson, has created an index of Manx Wills and has made them available on the Isle of Man Family History Society website at [www.iomfhs.im](http://www.iomfhs.im), (go to "Research" and then "Index of Wills and Decrees 1630 -1920". From this index I have been able to extract all the Creer Wills that may be of interest to me, and along with several other researchers of Creer Family History we are working through the 364 Creer Wills identified in the index.

Prior to Wills becoming under the control of Civil Registration (in the Isle of Man) in the 1880s, Wills were processed by two Church Courts. One group of Wills are termed Archdeaconal Wills since they were processed in a court presided over by the then current Archdeacon. The second group of Wills are termed Episcopalean Wills. These Wills were processed in a court presided over by the Vicar General. There were no real differences between these two courts. The two courts seemed to move around the Island once or twice a year processing Wills as required. The index of Wills on Brian Lawson's website records the persons name and parish as well as which court the Will was processed in and the year. The purpose of the court is generally to grant "probate" to the Executor or Executrix nominated in the Will. However in other cases the Presiding Officer must sort out the validity of the Will, handle claims made by persons not mentioned in the Will and the case of someone wishing to relinquish their executor role etc.

The index of Manx Wills refers me to an LDS film no. In order to borrow a film, I visit my local LDS Family History Centre and place an order and pay the current fee of \$6. When the film arrives, about 6 weeks later, I never ceased to be amazed that I am able to view records filmed about 50 years ago of Wills that might be 200 years old.

Each Will generally provides a piece of information about our ancestor. As you read the Will you can get an impression of the relationships between the Testator (the persons whose wishes are reflected in the Will) and the various benefactors mentioned in the Will.

I have learnt from reading many Wills that 200 years ago many Wills were prepared by a third party (someone skilled in writing), they are often prepared within a few days of the persons death and burial records usually confirm that the deceased is buried one or two days later.

The following is a transcription of a Will of a John Creer from the Manx parish of Braddan who died in 1781 and

whose Will was granted probate by an Archdeaconal Court in 1782:

Will of John Creer of the Parish of Braddan, Isle of Man – 1782

In the name of God Amen, I John Creere of the Parish of Kirk Braddan, being of sound mind and memory, do make this my last will and testament in the manner following:

I commend my Soul to God and my Body to a Christian Burial.

I leave and bequeath to my son Robert ten shillings and four Ewes.

I leave to my son William five shillings.

I leave to my son James an Ewe and a Yearling.

I leave to my son Patrick an Ewe Yearling, and to the said Patrick's son, John, an Ewe Yearling.

I leave to my son John Creere two shillings

I leave to my Daughter Margaret Carneen two shillings

I leave and bequeath to my Daughter Mary Corkill five shillings.

I give and bequeath to my loving Wife Jane Creere als Cannell whom I likewise constitute and appoint to be the Executrix of this my last Will and Testament, all the residue and remainder of my Goods and Chattels with all other properties of what kind so-ever, to me appertaining, to be possessed by her.

I leave also to the Witnesses here of a shilling a piece.

To all other claimers I leave sixpence.

In Witness whereof I have hereunto put my Mark to my Name this 26<sup>th</sup> Day of December 1781.

Witnesses present

John Creere

my X mark

Wm Killey

John Creere Junr. his X mark

Whereas John Creere of Algare in the parish of KK Braddan lately deceased and left his wife Jane Creere als Cannell sole Executrix to his Last Will and Testament, bearing dates the 26<sup>th</sup> Dec 1781. Be it therefore known to all men by these present that the said Jane Creer als Cannell have given, granted, bargained and sold unto Patrick Creer my son, all my Right, Title and property in and unto the afores. Will and Testament and all Goods and Chattels specified and comprised therein, both moveable and immovable, quick and dead, of what kindsoever they be of, to have and to hold to the said Patrick Creere and his assignees, to him and their own proper use and behoof forever, for the consideration and upon condition following (Viz.) that the said Patrick Creer shall well and truly content and pay or cause to be contented and paid, all Debts whatsoever incumbent on the said Goods, and also shall pay and perform, all the Gifts and legacies which are ordained and appointed

by the said Will and Testament. In witness where  
of I have hereunto caused my Name and Mark to  
be subscribed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May 1782  
Signed and delivered Jane Creere Als  
Cannell my X Mk  
in presence of  
Wm Killey  
John Creere his mark

At a Chapter Court holden at KK Braddan  
June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1782

Wm Killey and John Creer the submitting  
witness to the ??? Deed of Gift deposed  
on the holy Evangelist that Jane Creer duly  
executed the same

Before us Chas Crebbins  
Wm Clucas

At a Chapter Court holden at KK Braddan June  
3<sup>rd</sup> 1782

Jane Creer the Exor within named having  
transferred her right to the ???ship to her son  
Patrick as appears by the annexed Deed of Gift  
The said Patrick Creer is thereupon sworn Exor  
in Court in form of Law and hath given pledge  
for the payment of Debts and Legacies namely

### **Robt Kelly and Wm Killey both of KK Braddan**

Probatum Est

Signature illegible

*Transcribed by John A Creer 28 May 2002  
Source: LDS Film 0106228*

These Court records, including the Will, have been transcribed from a copy of the original document recorded on LDS film no. 0106228. The format followed in copying the original document follows general rules for transcribing such documents, generally the original document is faithfully reproduced carrying forward the original spelling and punctuation. One line of writing on the original document represents one line on the transcribed document. Unreadable words and letters are represented by question marks. Best guesses can be put in square brackets.

I would then normally extract the family information available from the Will and create a small section of a family tree. I would suggest doing this in a particular colour pen or pencil. I then research other records, such as births and christenings from IGI, burial records, monumental inscriptions and census data etc to fill in much of the information not contained in the Will or court proceedings. I recommend adding this detail to the family tree using a different coloured pen.

In some cases this can produce quite a detailed section of a family tree covering two or three generations. When you find a series of Wills of a father, his sons and grandsons you can find yourself with basis of quite an extensive family tree.

Some Wills can be quite difficult to decipher, given that they can be prepared in an unfamiliar script, using old English terms and expressions, unusual formations of letters, often with spelling inconsistencies and quite frequently on poor or damaged paper. In many cases, however, persistence will pay off and you will usually be able to extract the messages that your ancestor has tried to pass down to you.

I hope you will find research into Wills and Decrees as valuable as I have.

John M Creer, 1 October 2003.  
(Revised 15 September 2009)

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### **The Usefulness of Wills**

Thanks to Al Jones for the following:

Wills (=Wills and Testaments) have the major advantage over most other primary sources used in Family History of being accurate. Censuses are subject to both errors and the inclusion of deliberately misleading information. Baptisms do not necessarily reveal the true father, and of course Marriages have problems with ages and the status of either bride or groom.

The most obvious value of Wills is in the naming of children and other legatees who are often other family members. In this respect the Wills of bachelors and spinsters can be very useful as the legatees are often nephews and nieces.

There are other less obvious contributions that Wills can make when studying a particular family line. I can illustrate this with the Woodward line in my family tree. My great grandmother was a Sarah Woodward (who moved to Liverpool and married a William Alexander Jones, my great grandfather). Her father Henry Woodward (1818-1870) was a Butcher by trade and he came from a long line of Yeoman Farmers in Staffordshire. Examining the Parish records for the village of Checkley and later Cheadle I established that Henry's father was William (1780-1837) who was the eldest son of another Henry (1748-1814). The latter Henry had a total of 12 children and like many in the family left a Will. Fortunately the Wills for Staffordshire before 1858 have been indexed by the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry Society ([www.bmsg.org](http://www.bmsg.org)). The original Wills are deposited in the Lichfield Records office.

I obtained copies of all the Woodward Wills of my particular Woodward line (at most there appear to have been two Woodward families in Checkley since the 17<sup>th</sup> C). It is usual for the eldest son in each generation to inherit the farm (leased from the land owner on a renewable lease) from his father.

However this did not apply to William Woodward, instead the farm passed to John Woodward the next in line after William. As a result, William's son Henry became a butcher. Why did this happen?

William married twice. He had daughters by his first wife and Henry was born to his second wife. In his Will William leaves various personal items to Henry and £50 to set himself up in his business. There was no sign of any farm to be passed on. Had William fallen out with his father Henry?

Henry senior died in 1814 and this was 4 years before Henry (1818-1870) was born. In the wording of Henry's Will quoted below it is clear that William would normally have inherited the farm. However when the Henry's Will was drawn up William was a widower with only three daughters and he had not yet married his second wife Ann Malkin. As a result Henry by-passed William and left the farm to the next in line, John, who had nine children, two boys and seven girls.

Henry (1818-1870) used his £50 to apprentice himself to a butcher in Congleton, Cheshire and there met and married Sarah Yates (nee Cooper), my great great grandmother.

Extracts from the Wills of Henry Woodward and his eldest son William Woodward

**Henry Woodward b. 1748 d 1814 Will proved 21 Oct 1814**

*"...Item I Give and Devise to my son William and his Male Heir all that my Estate at Beamhurst aforesaid Subject to the following Legacies and the above names Annuity to my wife – viz and for want of a Male Heir I Give and Devise the Estate to my son John Woodward and his Heirs and Assigns for ever – and for want of a Male Heir of my son William I wish the Children of my son William and Ann his late wife\* to have one Hundred Pound each paid to them at the death of my son William..."*

**William Woodward b.1780 d.1837 Will proved 26 Oct 1837**

*"..... I do give and bequeath unto my son Henry Woodward, that I had by my last wife Ann Malkin, all my wearing apparel of every description together with one of my Fowling pieces and a further sum of Fifty Pounds of lawful money to set him up in his business, as soon as he may necessarily want it, which said sum of Fifty Pounds I do order and direct to be deducted out of his principal share, hereafter named, so that his share may be no more than equal to and with, his half sisters hereafter named ....."*

Although Wills are in themselves accurate they do not always clarify relationships. John Woodward referred to above had nine children and in his Will he fails to name any of them, simply referring to my nine children. Again in Wills involving lots of nephews, nieces etc it is not necessarily clear to whom the nephews and nieces are related.

Another source of information can clarify these relationships and add other information about relatives of the Will maker. In 1796 a new Tax was introduced in the form of Death Duties levied on Estates over a minimum amount. This did not affect very many deceased Estates at first but in a relatively short number of years the Tax was extended to more and more Estates so that by 1837 almost all Estates had Death Duties levied on them.

\*Hannah Horobin

Death Duties will be covered in the next issue of *Bygone Times*.

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### **And another Wills story from Barbara Daniels ...**

My need to find my only "Smith" relative living in Australia seemed like a fantasy. The little we knew of him was his name – Tom Smith (my late dad called him Uncle Tom); he lived in Brisbane, Queensland, and was born in Warrington, England. Though never knowing who he was, Mum always muttered "he was not your dad's uncle and you'll never find him!"

My search began with the death records that showed he died in 1941 in Brisbane. The death certificate told me he was born and married in Warrington, and married again in Brisbane, his father's name, and that he was survived by one child from his first marriage – Alice 55yrs. Death certificates, however, are only as reliable as the person supplying the information. I had now hit a 'brick wall'.

The Electoral Roll told me he lived at the same address for thirty years. A Will search at the Queensland State Archives located his Will. He had left his estate to his two children, William Smith and Alice Morrison. From William I traced his son, John Stenhouse Smith. From John I've been able to trace his living children.

The Will was the valuable and reliable document which enabled me to further my research and find the relatives in Brisbane.

My dad's grandfather was the first son of James Smith's first marriage. James was also the father of Thomas (Tom). Tom was the first child of James Smith's second marriage.

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### **NESIG - Summary of Meeting held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

PRESENT: - Twenty people including one Visitor attended the meeting and four apologies were received.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> June 2009. A summary of the last meeting's proceedings is incorporated in the September 2009 edition of *Bygone Times*. The NESIG file containing

a copy of the full minutes was available at the meeting.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance of funds as at 12 September 2009 were \$257.15 (Plus today's donations). It was agreed to sit on the money for a while. Members were invited to submit suggestions for the purchase of relevant resources.

#### INWARDS CORRESPONDENCE:

- Email from WAGS President, re the successful Open Day on 9<sup>th</sup> August and thanking volunteers who had supported and assisted.
- Email from Myra conveying advice from Pat de Haer about the lost/damaged 1851 Manchester census – details can be viewed on the Manchester Family History Society's website [www.mlfhs.org.uk](http://www.mlfhs.org.uk) Not all suburbs have been recovered. Also, an earlier email from Pat indicated that she had found the following web site in September Family History Monthly page 15, 'North of England Newspaper Archive' at [www.n-e-n-a.co.uk](http://www.n-e-n-a.co.uk) Pat said it seems an excellent site with an item for Local Newspapers and Family History. The site is from University of Teesside

OUTWARDS CORRESPONDENCE: Nil

#### NEW BUSINESS/OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

- There is a Genealogists Survey on the WAGS website.
- Two events organised as part of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations: Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October – escorted walk through historical sections of Fremantle and Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November Karrakatta Cemetery,
- Michael Gandy's talk at the State Library on 29<sup>th</sup> August was well attended greatly enjoyed.
- The WAGS Special Interest Group AGM took place Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September. Convenors of the SIGs gave brief reports followed by a general discussion. Chris Loudon also explained the reasons for the delay in making all WAGS CDs available on the computers. In addition to the lack of volunteers with appropriate computing experience/knowledge, the task has proven to be considerably more complex than first anticipated. The Library Computers are not all the same (we have a couple of different Operating Systems), and some of the CD's have particular Operating System requirements as well, particularly the older ones. Consequently, before uploading the CD's on the Server every CD has to be closely examined for format, and content. In addition, the interface which is being developed for the New Library System is far more complex and time consuming than had been anticipated. We are also undertaking our Library Computer hardware upgrades, and need to be sure that the data CD's work in the new environment. Chris emphasised that he is not involved with

- microfiche and other resources which he understands are being dealt with as soon as possible.
- WAGS new website received Highly Commended under the Design criteria from the Federation of Family History Societies (FFHS).
- Sadly, Ron Sutton and Rika Erickson recently passed away. Ron was an honoured member of the Enrolled Pensioner Guards and Rika was a well known author, highly respected for genealogical research see [www.slwa.wa.gov.au/erickson/index](http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/erickson/index) and [wikipedia.org/wiki/Rica\\_Erickson](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Rica_Erickson) for more information on Rika's life.
- WAGS had a successful Open Day on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August as part of Family History Week which will be repeated next year.
- To celebrate WA Week another Open Day will take place on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October between 10am and 3pm, hosted by the Convict; Enrolled Pensioner Guards and the Swan River Pioneers.
- Yvonne Black, who was introduced at the SIG yesterday, has been appointed as the new Volunteers' Co-ordinator. Yvonne handed out Volunteer Feedback Forms. She will use the information from completed forms to compile a list of volunteers and their roles within WAGS and also to work out how best she can support current volunteers as well as attract more.
- WAGS is looking for a new Editor for *Western Ancestor* and a Liaison Officer.

#### MEMBERS QUERIES/COMMENTS

Around the table, members were invited to ask for advice and comment on their research:

- Sheila Maughan advised she had received the long awaited book *The Life & Letters of James Renwick* from Birmingham, Alabama, containing the letters of her martyred ancestor who was hung as a young man for his religious beliefs.
- Wendy Brown told the story of when she was searching for her Brown ancestors in the tiny village of South Charlton in Northumberland and was directed to the former blacksmith in the village. He and his wife were retired but his family had been blacksmiths there since the 1770's. As her Brown was a smith and was born in South Charlton, she thought this couple may know of the family. They didn't know of any Browns in the village. After she had arrived home in Australia, her research revealed that her Brown's mother had been a Nicholson and it was the Nicholson's who had lived in the village (the father was a smith from Scotland). She wrote and asked them if they knew of the Nicholson's. They wrote back and said yes, the wife had nursed the last two Nicholson's in the village. In addition, and quite unasked, they transcribed all the Nicholson headstones for her and sent them to her in a letter which said, in part ...."a pond was where the churchyard is now. No one wants

- to be buried where the pond was because the graves fill with water".
- Pauline read three short newspaper articles related to the North of England.

#### TODAY'S TOPIC – Wills.

With the aid of a projector, John Creer gave an excellent and informative presentation on the benefit of obtaining family Wills. Al Jones commented that in addition, records of Death/Estate Duties were also useful in tracking extended family members. (For our benefit, John, Al and Barbara have sent in written articles which are included in this edition of *BT*). For Estate Duty see [www.nationalarchivist.com](http://www.nationalarchivist.com) (Pay site) and for Wills (1384 to 1858 [www.documentsonline.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.documentsonline.nationalarchives.gov.uk) (Copies may be ordered) See also *The Family Tree Detective; A manual for tracing your ancestors in England and Wales* by Colin D. Rogers (there is a copy in the WAGS Library and it can be purchased or ordered from WAGS Bookshop or online via Manchester University Press).

Some comments made during the discussion included:

- Most Wills were hand written, often not by the Testator and some had extensive Codicils which provide more information on family members.
- Land Title Deeds also very important source.
- Films for many Wills can be obtained from the LDS.
- From 1858, all British Wills were registered.
- Prior to 1858 Wills were dealt with by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury or the Prerogative Court of York.
- County Record Offices may also have copies of Wills and/or Estate Duty documents.
- WAGS holds indexes of Probate and Admons on microfiche in Unit 6.
- It is most important to name your children when making your Will.
- It is possible to trace current generations from a Will.

#### NEW MEMBERS/VISITORS INTERESTS

Maureen Green was a Visitor who had attended the 9<sup>th</sup> August Open Day and was keen to learn how to trace more of her ancestors.

The meeting closed at 11.30pm and people were invited to pursue their research and discuss 'brick walls' in Units 5/6.

**NEXT MEETING:** 10am Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December – Topic: DISASTERS (Units 5/6 will be open between 1pm and 5pm so bring your lunch and take the opportunity to do your research).

**BOOKS** – What have **you** been reading? If you have come across a particularly helpful and/or interesting book **please** let us know.

As much as I love listening to ABC Classic (FM 97.7) when I am driving, in recent months I have fallen into the habit of borrowing audio books on CD from the library. Last week I listened to **1215 The Year of Magna Carta** by Danny Danziger & John Gillingham ISBN 0 7540 9481 2. It seems that the version of Magna Carta King John signed at Runnymede was not the final one. Talk about schemes and intrigues!

John Gillingham also wrote **Wars of the Roses** which I must get hold of.

Niall Ferguson is the author of several books including **The Ascent of Money** which became a TV series broadcast on ABC a few months ago. If you are still puzzled by the shenanigans of high flying investors, Fannie Mae / Freddie Mac and the sub-prime mortgage collapse as well as the tightening of credit facilities in the 1970s, then you will learn a lot from this book. If you missed it, perhaps the programme will be repeated before too long.

Perhaps of greater relevance to genealogists is Niall's **Empire – How Britain Made the Modern World** – Once vast swathes of the globe were coloured imperial red and Britannia ruled not just the waves, but the prairies of America, the plains of Asia, the jungles of Africa and the deserts of Arabia. Just how did a small, rainy island in the North Atlantic achieve all this? And why did the empire on which the sun literally never set finally decline and fall? Niall Ferguson's acclaimed *Empire* brilliantly unfolds the imperial story in all its splendours and its miseries, showing how a gang of buccaneers and gold-diggers planted the seed of the biggest empire in all history – and set the world on the road to modernity.

**Encyclopedia of Natural Disasters** by Lee Davis includes lots of details on

- Avalanches and Landslides
- Earthquakes
- Famines and Droughts
- Floods
- Plagues and Epidemics
- Cyclones
- Hurricanes
- Icestorms and Snowstorms
- Tornadoes
- Typhoons
- Storms
- Volcanic Eruptions and Natural Explosions

and will be available at our next meeting.

WAGS library holds books on all genealogical topics, a search on ALICE should reveal the location of any topic you wish to know more about. If you've hit a brickwall it is always good to read something more of your ancestors' times. Also, WAGS bookshop offers an excellent selection of genealogy books at very competitive prices and if the one you want is not on the shelves you can order it.

ALICE is now capable of recording loans and returns electronically – a lot of hard work over many hours by Judy Ballantyne has gone into making this process available. Judy also kindly provided a list of all the books available relevant to North of England research and this will be available at the next meeting.

Book Reviews that appear in *Western Ancestor* are written by WAGS own expert researchers and are well worth reading - you never know, one of them may help you break through that brick wall!

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## WORDS FROM THE CONVENOR

### Convenors Report for December Meeting

It is nearly that time of the year when some of us may make New Year resolutions. Including perhaps planning what we might achieve next year with our family research. Many have stops and starts with their research, perhaps having a good run for a while then hitting the 'brickwalls' that abound on our journey, if it was all so easy with only a click of the computer or the reading of a book we would soon lose interest. The pathway of our research takes us all along different roads. Christmas is the time of the year of getting together with family and friends, of having a change of routine. Perhaps some of us get a chance of sitting back and listening to the chatter of much younger or older members of our families. With thoughts of perhaps how Christmas was for some of our family long, long ago.

Whatever you do over the holiday period, enjoy this special time of the year. Best wishes to all our members of the NESIG for a Happy Christmas and a New Year filled with successful research.

Pauline Pryer  
Convenor

## Sonnet for Christmas

by Judith Wright

From Collected Poems 1942 – 1985

I saw our golden years on a black gale,  
our time of love spilt in the furious dust.  
“O we are winter-caught, and we must fail,”  
said the dark dream, “and time is overcast.”  
--And woke into the night; but you were there,  
and small as seed in the wild dark we lay.  
Small as a seed under the gulfs of air  
is set the stubborn heart that waits for day.  
I saw our love the root that holds the vine  
in the enduring earth, that can reply,  
“Nothing shall die unless for me it die.  
Murder and hate and love alike are mine”;  
and therefore fear no winter and no storm  
while in the knot of earth that root lies warm.



Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed; and that was quite enough for him ... and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God Bless Us, Everyone One!

*Charles Dickens*