

# Newsletter Number 4 for July 2015



## Introduction

First a big thank you to the people who responded to Newsletter Number 3 on Winchcombe Schools. At the end of this newsletter I include a brief note on one of the outcomes.

Secondly an apology that this one, which has a label for July, is only reaching you in August. For this my apologies but holidays and tackling the garden have taken time during the month.

In Newsletter Number 4 I will be concentrating on the importance of your surname when it comes to family research and to the help Winchcombe Museum and others will be able to offer you in your enquiries.

## Museums and the past

"The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there." [L.P. Hartley in 'The Go-Between']

The role of museums has changed over time and never more so than in the last 10–15 years [Museum Association]. Traditionally the museum has collected, identified, catalogued and stored artefacts and documents and has arranged displays and prepared booklets to reveal the past. As the role of the museum has developed, two particular features of its work have come to the foreground. One of these is to reveal the contribution of past events to a community and to put the contemporary local physical, social and cultural environment into a context that has a time dimension. A second aspect of the modern museums' work concerns the individual. Museums are now more able to access documents from a variety of archival sites. This means that individuals are able to trace their ancestors and gain a broader understanding of themselves and their families. It is this second role that forms the focus of this newsletter and hence the importance of surnames.

## Some background information on surnames

The surname or family name is added to a given name. For many the surname is placed at the end of a name. Some will remember, particularly those educated at boys' secondary schools, that for the staff the surname became your only name. In some Spanish and Portuguese areas two family names, usually the mother's and father's are used by their children as double surnames. In some Asian countries the family name is placed before the given names. Some people take only one name, called a mononym e.g. Plato, Napoleon and Elizabeth.

Many women, when they marry, give up their family name. Men may wonder how this feels to their partner.

The twenty most common surnames in England were in 2013:

1	Smith	2	Jones	3	Taylor	4	Brown
5	Williams	6	Wilson	7	Johnson	8	Davies
9	Robinson	10	Wright	11	Thompson	12	Evans
13	Walker	14	White	15	Roberts	16	Green
17	Hall	18	Wood	19	Jackson	20	Clarke

I found it interesting to discover the rank order of my surname 'Hancock'. Apparently it was 396<sup>th</sup> in England and I share it with about 24000 other people. It's the 93<sup>rd</sup> most prevalent in Gloucestershire. 'Oddy' and 'Trotter' are at the end of the national rank order at 8459<sup>th</sup>.

The surname 'Winchcombe' is probably a locational surname. The implication is that the person was from a type of place. The word Winchcombe can be translated as 'remote village'. An early spelling was 'Wincelcumba'. The way this worked was that when someone new came to a village the locals would call them, for example, John from Winchcombe (or wherever he had come from). There is a portrait in the museum of a sixteenth century clothier John of Winchcombe, who is also known as Jack of Newbury. This is because he moved from Winchcombe to Newbury and became more famous there as a cloth merchant.

Few hereditary surnames can be found before the 12<sup>th</sup> century and most emerged from the 14<sup>th</sup> or even 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the case of Winchcombe, records from Elizabethan times state that John Wynchcombe married Alyse Whittinge in Painswick, Gloucestershire on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1594. In 2013 it was estimated that 1668 people share the surname Winchcombe in Great Britain.

### **Surname riches in Winchcombe Folk and Police Museum**

Winchcombe Museum is very fortunate in holding a Local Surname Index that was prepared by B. K. Edward and last printed in 2008. There are about 1700 surnames in the index. The surnames have been extracted from the museum's collection of certificates, books, posters, photographs, documents, artefacts, paintings and other sources.

Each surname has with it the date to which it is linked as well as a unique museum entry number. When you look up the surname in which you are interested the index gives its location in the museum. For example you might be directed to a display cabinet in the museum or a folder of local history information that has been collected around a theme or a display in the Judges Room [now the entry room and desk for the museum]. A small number of sources are kept in store but can be shown by prior arrangement.

Here are a few examples of local surnames taken at random from the index:

Abbatt, Dr. P.D.	1930s	Doctors' equipment	Store
Adlard, F.W.	1901	Parish Magazine Report	Folder
Bateman, W.	1887	Golden Jubilee Celebrations	Folder
Brown, Kate	1914	Infants School photograph	Folder
Dent, Mrs. E.	1900	Obituary notice	Store
Evans, PC	1923	Photograph Gloucestershire Constabulary	On wall
Ensor, Rev.	1940	WWII photograph Scouts Troup	Folder
Greenall, Jos. C.	1815	Copy of Enclosure Map	At desk
Greening, George	1938	Autobiography 1894-1938	Folder
Halliwell, Dr. who lived in what is now Lloyds Bank	1915	VAD Hospital Staff	Folder
Halliwell, Miss	c1915	Photocopy of cast of Bluebeard pantomime performed in Winchcombe	Folder
Hunt, W.H. & family	c1900	Photograph of family at George Hotel	Folder
Matthews, Albert	1930	Photograph, Paper Mill Staff	Folder
Mitchell, Mr. (Senior)	1926	Photograph, bowling club	Folder
Oakey, Mrs J.	1942	WW2 Invasion War Book	Folder
Wedgwood, Miss Eliza	1914	Album, Winchcombe VAD Hospital	Store
White, "Donkey"	1930s	Photocopy, Folk Society Festival	Folder
Wiggins, Richard	c1908	Shepherd's Smock	Display

Willett, "Duggin"	1914	Infants School photograph	Folder
Woodford, Thomas	1890	Post Office Jubilee W&S Record	Folder
Yiend, A.	1930	Photocopy workhouse guardians	Folder
Yiend, George	1891	Fire Engine W&S Record	Folder

It's worth a visit to see if your surname or maiden name is on the list.

Barbara Edward has continued to build up the index as new material arrives at the museum. At the moment the index runs to 36 pages and is currently stored on a computer. There are plans to print a new up to date copy.

### Internet help with surnames

There are many sites on the internet to help you know more about your family. Examples include:

[www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com) [14 day free trial]

[www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) [14 days free trial]

[www.surnameb.com](http://www.surnameb.com)

[www.surnames.behindthename.com](http://www.surnames.behindthename.com)

Many make a charge after a brief trial period.

A very useful site is [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives). You are advised to have a look at their website and plan your visit. The archive provides helpful guidance notes on its site.

### One Response to Newsletter 3 on local schools

Abbey Old School in Cowl Lane

In Newsletter 3 we called for help finding out about The Abbey Old School run by the Quinn family in Cowl Lane in the 1960s

Stewart Aylward contacted Pat Quinn. The helpful response we received was 'Yes, we started the school for Jeremy and ended it when Jane moved to Croftdown in Malvern and we moved to Lower Harford. Sheila Hood was amazing and we had about twenty children (I guess, at one time) including the Sudeley Brockhursts and Tony Jacklin's little boy. Also Tim Graveney. I have lots of photos. We had Danish au pairs to help.'

Stewart is planning a meeting with Pat Quinn with a view to collecting more detail for the Newsletter.

Caroline Smith [née Royle] confirmed that she attended the school. She recollects standing in a horseshoe-shape each morning to start the day. She remembers a strong emphasis on the three R's and having a sleep each day towards lunch time. In addition she recalls walking from school through Winchcombe to the swimming pool. Apparently there were three islands in the pool and as one's swimming improved you could progress to the islands in the deeper part of the pool.

### Some extra news for those interested in local history

Cheltenham Heritage Open Days will be from 10-13 Sept. 2015. This is the time when many buildings not usually accessible to the public open their doors to visitors. There will be over 50 events and 30 open buildings and a series of walks lead by experts in their field, as well as an open air exhibition of Cheltenham in Photographs by Cheltenham Camera Club. For detail consult Cheltenham Tourist Information Office or [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk).

I am particularly grateful to Barbara Edward for her expert guidance in the preparation of this newsletter and to Sean Mason of Spargo Ltd. for his enthusiastic support and detailed knowledge of the long standing surnames of many Winchcombe families. I also wish to thank Stewart Aylward, Pat Quinn and Caroline Smith for the information they have supplied on the Abbey Old School.

Feedback is always welcome to [john@hancojohn.plus.com](mailto:john@hancojohn.plus.com)

The key thing is to come along to the museum and start your surname search there.

John Hancock

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