



The York and District Family History Society Newsletter

The York and District Family History Society
Registered Charity No. 1085228

Founded in 1975 ***50th Anniversary***
Affiliated to the Family History Federation

President: Dame Judi Dench



Roots and Branches Around the World

March 2025

ISSN 1464-147



Sheriff Hutton Castle

Contents

- Chairman's Comments
- 50th Anniversary Fair – 28th June
- Death of a long-standing member
- Shrove Tuesday / Pancake Day
- The Book of Hours
- A Sad Tale from a Voyage
- Why scattered ashes deserve a place in family history
- Researching Publican Ancestors
- Self-written obituary
- Marriage Registers and the importance of Dade
- 1921 Census finds
- **Important** – information about parking at The Raylor Centre
- Meeting Talks
- The Research Room
- Invitation for submissions and deadlines
- Committee
- Keep in touch

Chairman's Comments

Welcome to our March edition of the newsletter.

AGM

Our AGM will take place on Wednesday **2nd April**.
Nominations are needed for committee members by **March 19th** for the AGM on April 2nd.

Vacant posts -

Secretary

Monumental Inscription Co-ordinator

Book Stall Manager

Research Room Manager

There is a Nomination Form in the members area of our website to download.



Alan Powell, Chairman



50th Anniversary

This year is a big year as it is our **50th Anniversary!**

We are having a 50th birthday Fair on

Saturday June 28th 10am to 3pm

at Acomb Church Hall 18A Front Street, Acomb, York YO24 3BZ

There will be stalls, including:

- The Borthwick Institute,

- Holgate Windmill Society,
- Acomb Local History Group,
- Clements Hall Local History Group
- York Men's Shed (crafts)

More to be added!

There will also be family and local history books available to buy.

Throughout the day there will be talks, a tour of Acomb Churchyard and refreshments will be available.

There is a public car park, with no time restriction, adjacent to Morrison's supermarket in Front Street (YO24 3BZ).

We hope to welcome many members to celebrate with us!



Death of a long-standing member

Dr Dorothy Lecker of Dunnington, a long-standing member of the society, sadly died on 1st January.

Dorothy was the second of twins, born half an hour after her sister, Audrey in Alnwick on 8th March 1936. Her parents were Alice Matilda (nee Hogg) and Thomas William Busfield, there was an older brother called Duncan.

Her father was a Schoolmaster so she grew up in an educated family. Dorothy became a Doctor of Medicine. She worked in pharmaceutical research for many years and travelled widely, working for some time in Russia.

In the 1960s, she worked at the South Western Medical School in Dallas and was in the city the day President Kennedy was shot and watched in horror as the motorcade rushed him to hospital. She was standing about half a mile away from the School Book Depository, in Dealey Plaza, when the shots were fired.

Dorothy married Alexander Lecker in Hillingdon in 1978. Alexander passed away in 1985.

She was Membership Secretary for York and District Family History Society in the 1990s and a regular volunteer in the Research Room.

As well as her interest in family history, Dorothy was a keen golfer and was captain of every golf club she joined.

Dorothy's funeral took place on 11th February at York Crematorium – the Society was represented by John Neale.

Dorothy kindly bequeathed her family history library to the society.

Shrove Tuesday/Pancake Day



Shrove Tuesday, often referred to as Pancake Day, is a Christian tradition that marks the day before the start of Lent.

The name “Shrove Tuesday” comes from the word “shrive,” which means to confess one’s sins and receive absolution from a priest. The shiving bell would be rung on to call people to church to prepare their souls for the penitential season of Lent.

The Monday and Tuesday before Lent were periods of great festivity before the coming days of abstinence. Before Lent could begin in earnest, all edible temptations needed to be removed so it is a day of preparation and feasting before the 40-day period of fasting and reflection leading up to Easter.

Children would go ‘Shroving’ or ‘Lent-crocking’ on Shrove Tuesday (or the night before), knocking on their neighbours’ doors and singing:

*'We be come a-shroving,
For a piece of pancake,
Or a bite of bacon,
Or a little truckle of cheese
Of your own making'*

This year Shrove Tuesday falls on **4th March**. The date changes each year based on the date of Easter, which is determined by the lunar calendar.

The tradition of making pancakes on this day is believed to have originated in medieval England as a way to use up ingredients like eggs, milk, and sugar before Lenten fasting began.

According to tradition, pancake racing started in Olney, Buckinghamshire in 1445 when a woman was so busy making pancakes that when she heard the ringing of the shiving bell, she panicked and ran to the church with her frying pan still in her hand, tossing her pancake to avoid it from burning! The annual pancake race in Olney is now considered to be the most famous of its kind in the world.

The Book of Hours

Have you managed to trace any line of your family back over 500 years? If so, this could be of interest to you.

A stunning 545-year-old book, filled with beautifully illustrated information showing how people organised their lives, has gone on display in Leeds Central Library.

Penned in around 1480 and inscribed on delicate vellum, the *Horae beatae Mariae Virginis*, or Book of Hours, contains forty-six vividly illuminated images depicting various duties to be carried out each month along with the signs of the zodiac.

The volume has enriched floral borders on every page, and the capital letters are executed in colours and burnished gold.

The Book of Hours was a devotional book that began to appear in the 13th-century. It became extremely popular with the wealthy classes as a way of continuing their devotions whilst in their own home. It contained prayers that were to be said at the canonical hours in honour of the Virgin Mary.

This particular illuminated manuscript was probably produced in Paris and was for general sale rather than being specifically created for any one person or family in particular. It would still have been very expensive to buy and would have been beyond the reach of the majority of people.

Books such as this would often have been produced in family run businesses. One member would mark out the lines, another would write the text whilst someone else would do the miniatures and yet another would apply the gold leaf.

To view the Book of Hours please visit the Local and Family History department on the 2nd Floor of the Central Library. Please call 0113 378 6982 for further details.



Pages of the Book of Hours in Leeds Central Library

A sad tale from a voyage

Clara Alexander was born on 15 November 1858 in New Plymouth, Taranaki, New Zealand.

In 1885 she married Stephen Surman and, after 6 years of marriage, the couple were delighted to find they were expecting their first baby.

They moved from New Zealand to Australia, arriving first in Sydney and then setting sail around the south coast of Australia, via Melbourne, on their way to Perth, where they intended to settle.

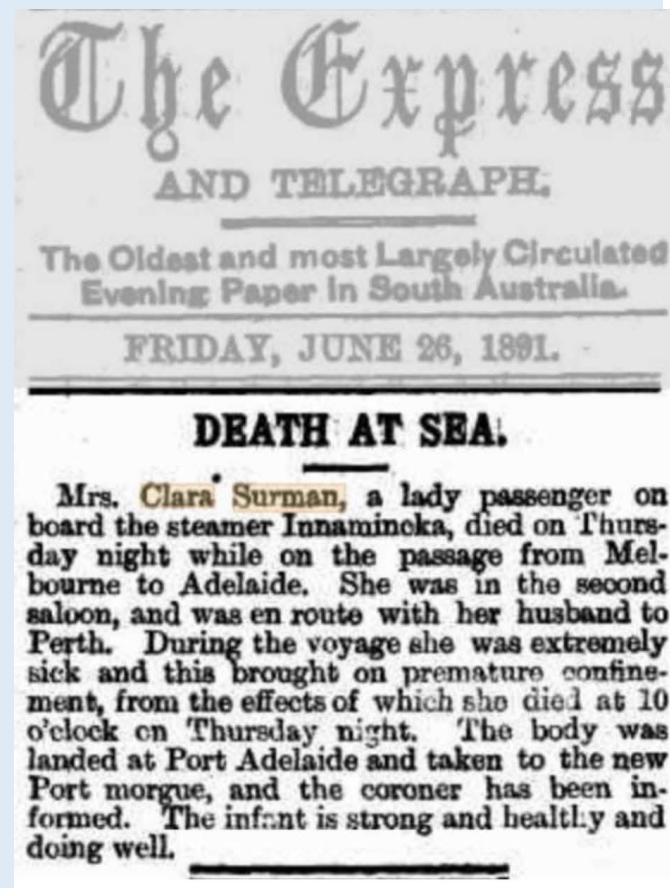
On 25 June 1891 the seas were very choppy in summer storms. Clara became increasingly unwell with severe sea sickness, which brought on early labour.

Their daughter was born on board but, sadly, the severity of her sea sickness, and exhaustion from a difficult labour, was too much for Clara who passed away soon after the birth. She was 32.

The ship docked at the port of Adelaide, where the authorities were advised of her death. Stephen was understandably distraught at the loss of his wife and named their daughter Adelaide. Unable to continue with the plans they had made as a couple, Stephen returned to New Zealand with his daughter. As yet, I have found no evidence of him remarrying.

In 1911 Adelaide married my 1st cousin 2x removed, Herbert Joseph Schofield. She named their daughter Clara after her mother.

Holly Firth-Davies (member 3410)



Why Scattered Ashes Deserve a Place in Family History

Genealogists are natural detectives. We delve into centuries of records, piecing together the fragments of our ancestor's lives. We search for births, marriages, and deaths, scan census returns for lost family members, and comb through gravestones and churchyard inscriptions to discover more about where 'our people' are laid rest.

For the millions of us who choose cremation and then go on to scatter ashes—this final chapter of life often goes undocumented.

As genealogists, we know just how vital it is to preserve these moments—not just for us, but for generations to come.



An example of a recorded location

In the UK, cremation is increasingly the choice for over 80% of those who pass away annually; and families are opting to scatter ashes in meaningful places rather than leave them in traditional cemeteries. A favourite beach, a beloved forest walk, a spot overlooking the hills where someone grew up—these locations hold deep emotional value, but they are rarely documented. Families scatter in private moments, often with no witnesses outside their immediate circle. It's personal, it's heartfelt, and it's poignant. But without a record, these locations and stories risk being lost to time.

This is where **The Ashes Register** comes in—a platform that invites us to change the narrative. The site offers families, genealogists, and history enthusiasts a way to record the final resting places of cremated remains. It's simple: you create a digital entry, marking where ashes have been scattered, stored, or buried. It's like creating a virtual gravestone, but one that can be accessed and passed down through generations. And the good part is it is free!

Its creator, Richard Martin, says: *"by encouraging families to record these details now, we're not just preserving memories; we're enriching the resources that future genealogists will rely on".*

Of course, members who record their trees on sites such as Ancestry may already record the location of ashes, but even that information can be lost if other family members do not have access to your account.

If you are interested in being involved in The Ashes Register project, please contact Richard Martin at richard@scattering-ashes.co.uk

Researching Publican Ancestors

The public house as we know it is really an invention of the eighteenth century. Before that there were alehouses that sold beer brewed on the premises, often by women known as alewives or brewsters.

Inns were much larger establishments, which provided food, stabling for horses, and a variety of dining and meeting rooms.

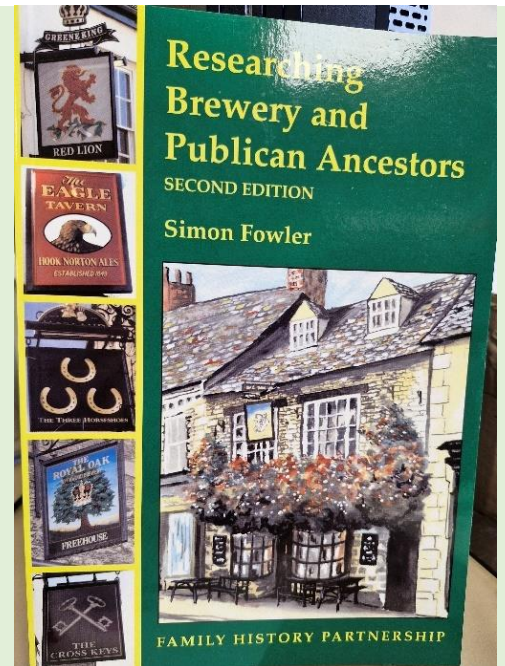
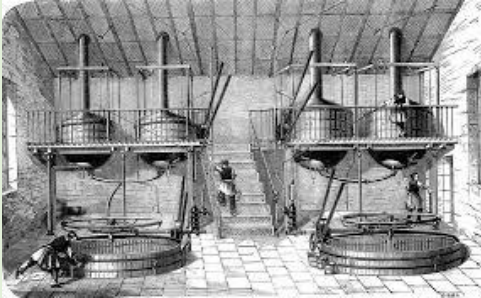
They often became the centre of local society and economic life. A census of inns and taverns taken in 1577 showed that there were just under 20,000 licensed establishments in England and Wales – roughly one to every 187 of the population.

By the end of the eighteenth-century pubs were being bought up by breweries with the object of selling their wares to the public.

From 1552 onwards, anyone who wanted to sell ale had to apply for a licence at the Quarter Sessions or the Petty Sessions. Records of licences can be found in these records, held at local record offices.

Directories list all trades people and The Guildhall Library - www.ihinfo.ac.uk/gb - holds the largest national collection of directories.

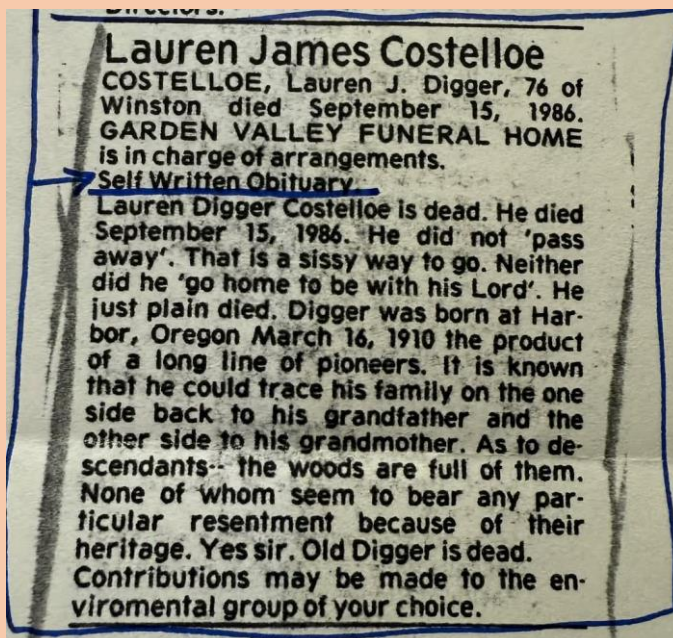
The book opposite is a very useful resource containing essential information including apprenticeship records, biographical sources, census records, company records and more – a copy can be found in the Research Room.



Self-written obituary

A somewhat amusing newspaper cutting where an individual has written his own obituary...

Not everyone is as interested in their family history as members of our society!



Famously, the comedian and writer, Spike Milligan, had the following on his headstone in Irish:

“Dúirt mé leat go raibh mé breoite” – which translates as ‘I told you I was ill’...

Marriage Registers

An Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriage was the first statutory legislation in England and Wales to require a formal ceremony of marriage. It came into force in 1754.

The act introduced a specially printed paper register to record marriages, which had to be by published banns or by licence for a specific church. Registers of banns of marriage were also to be kept from 1754.

The Act was intended to prevent illegal, runaway marriages and irregular ceremonies as the wedding ceremony now had to take place in a church; only Quakers and Jews were exempt. Those of all other denominations, including Catholics, were forced to marry according to the rites of the Church of England. The age of consent was set at 21 years, although no minimum age was specified. The later, *Age of Marriage Act*, 1929 set the minimum age at 16.

From 1754, marriage registers usually record:

- Names of bride and groom
- Their marital status
- Their parish of residence
- Date married
- The way in which the ceremony was performed, by banns or licence
- The signatures or marks of the husband and wife
- Signatures or marks of at least two witnesses
- The name of the officiating minister

Information you don't usually find:

- Age of bride and groom
- Detailed addresses
- Occupations
- Names of parents

In the 18th century, even after the 1753 Marriage Act required additional information to be recorded in the marriage register, the details recorded in the separate baptism and burial register remained very brief. As well as the date of the ceremony, records of baptism usually included only the child's name and parent's name(s), and for burials, the name of the deceased.

Between 1770 and 1812, however, a number of parishes in Yorkshire adopted what are known as **Dade registers**, and recorded a significant amount of additional detail.

For baptisms, this information can include the child's seniority in the family, date of birth, father's occupation, and grandparent's names, occupations and abodes. Likewise, for burials, registers can include date of death, occupation, parentage, age at death and cause of death.

These registers were devised by the **Reverend William Dade** of the City of York (he was the curate of St Stephen's Church, in Acomb, for a while). Their use was encouraged by William Markham, Archbishop of York, throughout his diocese, which included most of the West Riding and parts of the North Riding of Yorkshire.

Their format varies from parish to parish, some were written freehand, and others had more formal headings. Their use was largely discontinued with the introduction of a new pre-printed register format from 1813. Some ministers' handwriting was extremely neat, others less so! Nevertheless, in researching your family history the discovery of more detailed information in a Dade register is a happy occasion for genealogists!

BAPTISMS in the Parish of <i>Scruton</i>				for the Years 1797, 1798, 1799		
Infant's Christian Name, and Seniority.	Infant's Surname.	Father's Name, Profession, Defect, and Abode.	Mother's Name, and Defect.	Born.	Baptized.	
John 1 st Daug ^r	Hawe	W ^m . Hawe Labourer Scruton	Anne Hawe	March 3 ^d	privately March 7 th	1797
Anne 4 th Daug ^r	Mitchel	W ^m . Mitchell Farmer Scruton	Anne Mitchell	April 9 th	privately April 10 th	1797
George	Newsam	William Newsam Farmer of this Par.	Elizabeth Newsam	April 24 th	privately May 7 th	1797
	Lewther	John Lewther Labourer Scruton	Anne Lewther	May 8 th	privately June 12 th	1797
			William Newsam Rector			
			John Place Churchward			
Samuel 1 st Daug ^r	Panson	Christ. Panson Farmer Scruton	Elizabeth Panson	June 25 th	privately June 25 th	1797
John 5 th Son	Mops	W ^m . Mops Farmer Scruton	Mary Mops	July 6 th	privately July 8 th	1797
Richard	Dunn	John Dunn Scruton	Mary Dunn	February 16 th	privately July 9 th	1797
Mary	Kettlewell	Richard Kettlewell Blacksmith	Frederick Kettlewell	August 6 th	privately Aug. 6 th	1797
Jane 1 st Daug ^r	Harrison	William Harrison Labourer	Ann Harrison	August 23 rd	privately Aug. 27 th	1797
George	Gale	Matthew Gale Labourer Scruton	Jane Gale	Sept. 11 th	privately Sept. 19 th	1797
1798			Ann Taylor	February 4 th	privately Feb. 22 nd	1798
John	Taylor	Richard Taylor Mason Scruton	Jane Alderson	May 22 nd	privately May 26 th	1798
Mary	Alderson	Daug ^r of Ch ^r . Alderson Scruton	Elizabeth Newsam	June 16 th	privately June 19 th	1798
Margaret 3 rd Daug ^r	Newsam	William Newsam Rector of this Par.				
			William Newsam Rector			
			John Place Churchward			
			William Mitchell			
George 2 nd Son	Butterwick	George Butterwick Farmer Scruton	Elizabeth Butterwick	Aug. 26 th	privately Aug. 27 th	1798
Bartholomew 1 st Son	Little	Samuel Little Butcher Scruton	Jane Little	Aug. 27 th	privately Aug. 27 th	1798
Elizabeth	Pinson	Christopher Pinson Farmer Scruton	Dorothy Pinson	September 2 nd	privately Sept. 2 nd	1798
Jane	Cundall	William Cundall Blacksmith Scruton	Jane Cundall	September 23 rd	privately Sept. 24 th	1798
1799			John Thompson	November 22 nd	privately Nov. 23 rd	1798
Elizabeth 1 st Daug ^r	Nelson	Francis Nelson Labourer Scruton	Jane Watson	February 17 th	privately Feb. 17 th	1799
Frances	Bowman	Richard Bowman Blacksmith Scruton	Frances Bowman	March 1 st	privately March 2 nd	1799
Henry	Pearson	Henry Pearson Blacksmith Scruton	Frances Pearson	March 23 rd	privately March 24 th	1799
William	Mops	Thomas Mops Farmer Scruton	Mary Mops	April 15 th	privately April 16 th	1799
George 1 st Son	McKee	George McKee Jun ^r Butcher Scruton	Elizabeth McKee	May 4 th	privately May 6 th	1799

An example of a Dade register

Information from North Yorkshire County Record Office [Parish registers: 1754 and after – North Yorkshire County Record Office](#)

Interestingly, Marriage Registers have to be written in black ink. They are a permanent record, so must be signed using permanent black liquid ink. The ink in ballpoint pens isn't permanent – it fades over time, and it can be erased, and that is why celebrants, members of the clergy and registrars have to use fountain pens and archival, or permanent black ink.

Origins of street names

In Medieval England, names developed gradually, helping to identify a place such as a pond, a hilly place or river, the farm at the end of the road, or the inn on the corner. More recently, the use of grove, rather than street or road, indicates a throughfare through or near a group of trees.

York can be referred to as the place where “the streets are called gates, the gates are called bars, and the bars are called pubs”. Here are a few of the streets of York with their name origins.

One of the most well-known streets in York is **The Shambles**, which is listed in the Domesday Book (1086 AD), and was a street of butchers' shops. The street takes its name from the displays outside each butcher's shop. Fleshammels were ‘meat-shelves’ and Shambles comes from the shelves – shammels – so, Shambles simply means ‘shelves’.

Goodramgate is named after a Viking leader, Gurthrum was a 9th century Viking ruler of York who lived in the street. Goodramgate means Gurthrum's Street.

The shortest street in York has the longest name of all **Whip-Ma-Whop-Ma-Gate** is only a few yards in length but features on every tourist tour of the city.



One theory of the explanation for the name, based on the findings of language experts, is that the translation of 'whip-ma-whop-ma-gate' was an exclamation of "what a surprise". Further study of the language used in the middle ages backed up this theory but changed it slightly to mean 'neither one thing nor the other'.

Nether Hornpot Lane takes his name from the medieval horn-making industry that once thrived here. Discarded cattle and sheep horns were repurposed into combs, utensils, and other everyday items.

With an entrance on Back Swinegate, this historic cut-through once led to the bustling Thursday Market, now known as St Sampson's Square.

Do let us know if you have any stories of street names – or any streets have been named after members of your family!



IMPORTANT



PLEASE NOTE THESE CHANGES WHEN ATTENDING THE RESEARCH ROOM

Parking at The Raylor Centre

Please note that all visitors parking at The Raylor Centre need to use the car parking area **on the left** as you turn in from the road.

If this area is full there is additional visitor parking through the gates on the left – use the spaces marked for Office parking.

Please **do not** park in the main car park in front of the building as this is reserved for people who work there and there is numberplate recognition in place. You will get a £60 fine if you park in this area.

Members interests

If any members are looking for information on, or links to, **specific surnames** please let us know and we can include your request in a newsletter. You never know, you may find another family member within our membership!

Upcoming meeting talks

Please note there have been some changes:

Meeting venue

5 th March	<i>The Commonwealth War Graves Commission</i> with Elizabeth Smith (from the Commission)
2 nd April	<i>AGM and Family Genealogy Quiz Night</i> – lots of prizes!
7 th May	<i>York Churches Remembered</i> with Jonathan French
4 th June	<i>‘The Oglesby Incidents’ – a family history scandal revealed from newspaper articles in mid Victorian York</i> with Steve Barrett
2 nd July	<i>‘High Stakes on the Knavesmire’ poison criminality and infidelity on York Racecourse in Regency Times.</i> with David Rigby
6 th August	<i>The Acomb Asylum scandals</i> with Alan Powell
3 rd September	<i>‘Preserving our heritage - the unique work of the William Etty Society in York and beyond’</i> with Gordon Campbell Thomas
1 st October	<i>Stories from Micklegate</i> with Sue Major
5 th November	<i>Coroners Case Files – murder most foul (from Harrogate and York)</i> with Tee Bylo (and free roast chestnuts!)
3 rd December	<i>Yorkshire Dialect Society – Christmas at home</i> (Mince pies and our popular Stollen, free to all!)

Meetings take place on the

1st WEDNESDAY of each month
(apart from January) at:

Friends Meeting House
(*behind the Folk Hall*)
White Rose Avenue
New Earswick
York YO32 4AD

Opens 7pm for 7.30pm start until 9.30pm

DISABLED ACCESS

FREE CAR PARKING (limited space)



The Friends Meeting House in New Earswick

The Research Room

The research room is open **10-4** on **Tuesday and Thursday** at:

The Raylor Centre, James St, York
YO10 3DW
Tel: 01904 412204

All Society resources are available for use, including:

- 6 computers with internet;
- Microfiche readers;
- Printer;
- A large library of useful publications, including Parish Registers.

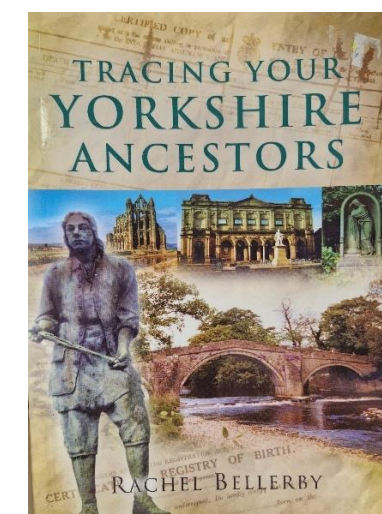
Volunteers from the committee can help in your search and show you how to get the best out of relevant sites.

Disabled access – our facilities are on the ground floor. There is limited parking – please see the article above for details.

All are welcome! Come along for a cuppa and a biscuit! Please note the Research Room costs over £500 a month to rent and pay for the internet services for your research, so donations are requested and gratefully received when you visit.



A busy day at the research room



A new addition to our library

Invitations for submissions and deadlines

Family stories and findings are welcome in as great a variety as possible, particularly illustrated with photographs or copies of documents.



Please either email your submissions to:

yorkfamilyhistory@btopenworld.com



Or send a hard copy to the address in the contact details below.

Deadlines for submissions are on 14th of the following months – February, May, August, and November.

Don't worry if you miss a deadline as your submission as can go into the following edition!



Committee

Chairman:
Vice-Chairman:

Alan Powell
John Neale

Treasurer:	Cathy Parker
Assistants to Treasurer:	Catherine Richardson and Judy Clarkson
Secretary:	John Neale
Membership Secretary:	Tee Bylo
Programme Secretary & Publicity Officer:	Steve Barrett
Publications Officer:	Yvonne Clarke
Project Manager & IT:	David Rigby
Webmaster:	Jo Barnett
Newsletter Editor:	Holly Firth-Davies
Acting Research Room Managers:	Yvonne Clarke and Judy Clarkson
Federation Family History Rep:	Steve Barrett
Member:	Margaret Tadman

Vacant position on the committee:

Research Room Manager

Please do let us know if you would like to take up this role.



Keep in touch...

Email: yorkfamilyhistory@btopenworld.com

Website: www.yorkfamilyhistory.org.uk

Facebook: YorkFamilyHistory *Please note: this is a private group for our members only*

Bluesky: @yorkfhs.bsky.social

Twitter/X: @Yorkfhs

Instagram: York Family History Society

Phone: 01904 412204

Address: York & District Family History Society, The Raylor Centre, James Street, York, YO10 3DW

Subscriptions:	Annual single membership (home)	£20
	Annual joint membership (home)	£25
	Annual single membership (overseas)	£15