



A Time There Was ...

As we live our lives in this modern liberal environment it is worth looking back to see how our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents lived and what day-to-day life was like for them. We forget sometimes on how tough life was for some. The object of this special edition is to record some brief memories of those years past as an introduction to the genealogy project, where these short biographies and more can be found.

In this issue we will focus on two generations. Geoff’s family - Davies and Harrison and Sheila’s family - Stanbridge and Easton. However, the main objective of this publication is to prompt readers to record as many of life’s events as possible either in writing or as a photographic record. Unfortunately, not all memories remain as we grow older hence the need to document as much as possible before it’s too late.

The Davies Family

The Davies family hailed from Haverford West. John Davies and his wife Mary (James) had seven children of which the only survivors were Stanley, Alquin, George and Annie. Annie, as far as is known, is the longest living relative passing away at 103 years old!

George Davies

George Davies, was the youngest of the three boys who survived into adulthood and worked as a power station engineer after being discharged from the Territorial Force in 1910.

Royal Blood

A story goes that when George was a boy at school he used to brag that he had royal blood, being related to the Welsh Black Prince, Cadwalladr. The local vicar, however, cautioned him saying that the Black Prince was a rapist and plunderer.

In 1914 he married Martha Punter who bore him three children - Otto, Muriel and Leonard. George was a very practical man and also very

careful with money.

When Martha passed away at 54 George took a second wife Olive, by whom he had a second daughter Lynne.

Martha Punter

Martha Punter was one of nine children born to Christopher Punter and Frances Jenkins . Kathleen, Otto’s wife, always spoke very highly of Martha describing her as a lovely woman with a great sense of humour. Sadly, she died of cancer in 1942 and was greatly missed by her family

George Otto

Otto, as he was known in the family, worked in a garage after he left school and finally left home at eighteen to join the army. He was posted to Aldershot where he met his future wife, Kathleen Harrison, whom he married in 1939.

Whilst in the army Otto’s loves were motorcycling and horse riding. In fact he was in Germany on motorcycle trials when war broke out, and

was lucky to get back to Britain before being interned as a prisoner of war.

George and Kathleen had two children - Valerie and Geoffrey born in 1939 and 1941 respectively.

At the end of the war George had various postings which included Blandford, in Dorset, and Bordon, in Hampshire. In 1951 he was posted to Fayid, in Egypt. Kathleen and the children joined him but, being very unhappy there, Kathleen returned to England with the children after nine months.

In 1959 he was seconded to the Territorial Army in Swansea and in 1962 posted to Singapore, where he spent three years with Kathleen. On returning to England they bought a house in Frimley where they enjoyed a close relationship with their family.

In 1962 he was honoured to receive the MBE from the Queen for years of service and on retiring from the army in 1967, with the rank of Major, he worked for the Lucas Group before finally retiring for reasons of health. Diabetis and a weak heart led to his death in May, 1990 aged 75 years.

The Harrison Family

The Harrisons lived for most of their lives in Aldershot. Alfred and his wife Emily (Copping) had nine children - Oswald, Evelyn, Elsie, twins Kathleen and May, Leslie, Charlie, Leonard and Gwen. Of these nine only Leslie is still alive.

Alfred Llewellyn

Alfred was one of eight and worked as a clerk in charge of the office at a fruit wholesalers. After the 1914-18 war he returned to find his old job had been given to the owner's son so took a new clerical job with a different company. Alfred was a very precise and quiet man but unfortunately, he was apt to diddle his wife out of housekeeping for drinking. His wife had to take in washing and sewing to earn extra money.

Emily Copping

Emily was one of fifteen. She left school when she was twelve to go out to work. Her first job was in service as a parlor maid. Apparently she refused to wear a cap like the other servants because she was too proud. Fortunately, being a good worker, she got away with it. Her mother used to collect her wages from her mistress and when Emily told her mother that she should really have her money herself, her mother said that she had to pay for the clothes she had bought her, which were second hand anyway. She had one boyfriend before Alfred.

Kathleen Peal

Kathleen had a very happy childhood. Her and her twin sister, May, were reportedly her father's favourites. He used to take them to the warehouse where he worked and told them to choose a piece of fruit each. On one occasion Kathleen chose a pomegranate and even though her father tried to persuade her to select an alternative, she was adamant. (The stubbornness stills runs in the family.) He also took the twins to the zoo and bought them some nuts to feed the monkeys. Kathleen thought they

were for her and started eating them. On another occasion he bought them each a complete new outfit and changed them into them before returning home. Kathleen remembers that every Sunday they used to go to church and family walks. Another amusing tale is when a boy threatened to kiss Kathleen and she ran away.

The Stanbridge Family

The Stanbridge family were from Reigate. Thomas Stanbridge and his wife Emelia (Morley) had eight children - seven boys (Alfred, Wilfred, Edward, Donald, Albert, Reginald & Bernard) and one girl (Lucy).

Albert James

'Bert', along with his brothers and sisters, had a very hard life. His father used to give the children the belt if they moved out of step. They had to sit upright on stool for meals. If they moved they got the belt. If they were outside playing their Father would blow a whistle for them to come in. If they didn't immediately then ... the belt. All left home as soon as possible.

Albert, along with his brother Reginald, joined the Navy and for most of the war years he was at sea finally leaving the service in 1945. He served on many ships and hence called at many ports and operating in the North Sea, The Mediterranean and the Far East

He married Nellie Easton, one of three children, by whom he had a boy, Colin, and two girls, Sheila and Janice.

In December 1940 Nellie received a telegram stating that Albert had been seriously injured in battle, not knowing the extent of his injuries or his state of health. He also observed the sinking of the Ark Royal off Gibraltar in November 1941, knowing that his brother Reginald (Nellie's sister Edith's husband) was on board. Fortunately there was only one life lost in that disaster. On leaving the Navy at the rank of

Chief Petty Officer he initially worked as a labourer before joining the General Post Office working his way up to inspector. On retiring from the Post Office he worked as a caretaker at a local school before retiring completely..

In 1994 lung cancer necessitated the removal of his right lung, which resulted in his greater susceptibility to bronchial infection. This led to his death in December, 1994 on his Grand Daughter Zoe's birthday.

The Easton Family

The Eastons were also from Reigate. Ernest Easton, believed to be one of four, married Minnie Haybittle. Like Albert and Reginald he also served in the navy. There were three girls - Nellie, Edith and Vera. Unfortunately Ernest died when he was 44, and Nellie 4 years old. Minnie eventually re-married and became Minnie Beale.

Nellie Elizabeth

Like her husband, Bert, Nellie also had a hard life but a much happier one. When her father died she and her sisters were looked after by her grandfather, as her mother refused to have any of them adopted. However, the grandfather was a very hard man. On Sundays, the sisters had to attend church three times and were not allowed to do anything, including talking and laughing, except sit and read a book all day.

Nellie was a bright girl who could have entered grammar school, but due to family hardships was required to go out to work to earn money.

Genealogy Project

Comprehensive charts and documentation on the various families has been, and still is being, collected. Sadly, comprehensive details only seem to be available for the Harrisons, due to the commitment of family members to document their history.