

Abbey Genealogy Enthusiasts

Date - Wednesday 17th February 2010

Next Date - Wednesday 17th March 2010

Issue - 39

www.walthamabbeygenealogy.co.uk



Notice Board

➤ Congratulations

Congratulations to Helen and Chris on your wedding!! We wish you both all the best for the future from all the group.

➤ Thank you to Ray Sears

A big thank you to Ray Sears for giving us a very interesting talk on old Waltham Abbey last month.

➤ Family Relatives

Familyrelatives.com has added more parish records to the website. The database is a collection of historical parish and probate registers from many counties of England and Wales dating from the early 1500s to the middle to late 19th century.

www.familyrelatives.com

➤ Moving Here

This website is all about the experiences of migrants moving to Britain. A very interesting website that has many stories, photos and covers a lot of history.

www.movinghere.org.uk

➤ Scots Origins

Scots Origins features a Free IGI search, a Free Scottish Place search, and expert articles and discussion on Scottish history.

www.scotsorigins.com

➤ News Plan

The NEWSPLAN London and the South East web-site provides details of about 2,500 titles of local newspapers, past and present, relating to the London and the South East region of the United Kingdom.

www.newsplan.co.uk

Beyond Parish Registers and Censuses 4

The Scales of Justice



Drury Lane

Several years ago I tracked my maternal grandmother's family, the Hollands, through the censuses, back to the marriage of James Holland to Jane Heighway on 30th August 1822 at St. Andrew's, Holborn. He was a cheese monger and the family lived at 107 Drury Lane, almost opposite Drury Lane Theatre – so life must have been quite exciting in those days. Although the parish registers recorded his occupation as cheese monger, confirmation also came from various **trade directories** of the time.

James' children were all baptised at St. Clement Danes which stands in the middle of the Strand. (The registers are available at Westminster City Archives). I found the birth of James Holland, son of William and Elizabeth, on 8th February 1797 and hoped that this was the entry that I needed. After further research, the only seemingly plausible marriage between a William and an Elizabeth took place on 16th March 1794 at St. Helen's, Bishopsgate. The marriage entry stated that Elizabeth was a widow, and this perhaps explained why I could only find one child.

Apart from broadening out the family tree over the years, I was never able to trace the family back any further. Then, last weekend, with the arrival of the London Parish Registers online at Ancestry, I decided

to make another attempt. As the parish of St. Clement Danes is part of the City of Westminster, it meant that I did not have access to those registers, nor did the indexes for the available parishes go back further than 1813.

First I tried **Genes Reunited**, a site I only rarely use, but just occasionally I have been able to find some useful information without even contacting any members. This time, however, I drew a blank. The members who had James in their family tree were people already known to me, so I would have to look elsewhere.

For a couple of hours, I made no real progress, and was just about to give up. Almost in desperation, I typed into **Google** "James Holland, cheese monger Drury Lane" and immediately got a few hits – all under the heading of "Central Criminal Court"!

Over the next couple of hours I downloaded several reports which had been written down at the time of the court cases which had been held at the **Old Bailey***. Needless to say, my James was beyond reproach! The earliest report is dated 1st December 1819 and James stated, "I am a shop man to Mr. Dowlman, who is a cheese monger, and lives in Drury-lane. On the 24th of November, about twelve o'clock in the day, while I was serving a person, the prisoner came in, pulled the bacon about, and went out; I followed and secured him with a piece in his hand." (Property produced and sworn to). The prisoner was confined for one month. (I subsequently found two more proceedings which referred to Mr. Dowlman, dated 1815 and 1822).

In 1833 James again appeared at the Old Bailey, this time to give evidence that he had been offered a large bundle of paper for sale, which had been stolen from a firm of lawyers. The prisoner, aged 19, was found guilty and transported for seven years!

Finally, in 1840 James seems to have made his final appearance at the Old Bailey, again as a witness for the prosecution. This time he stated that he had been given a fifty-pound note as payment for some produce from the shop. It turned out that the note had been acquired by means of fraud and the two guilty parties were confined for twelve months and fined fifty pounds each.

What caught my eye when reading the 12-page report was the name of one of the accused – Charles Ricaby. James stated that Charles was his brother-in-law, and I remembered seeing that surname on James' entry in the marriage register.

Sure enough, one of the witnesses was a Mary Ricaby. Was Mary his sister, or perhaps his wife's sister? A quick check on Ancestry's London marriages located a marriage between Charles Abraham Ricaby and Mary Holland on 8th August 1820 at St. Andrew's, Holborn, the witnesses were

James Holland and Jane Heighway. So this meant that James had at least one sister. As both James and Mary had married at the same church, I began to wonder if I had made a mistake concerning the James I had found born in St. Clement Danes. I have since found both a Mary and a James in the St. Andrew's registers, but they annoyingly had different parents!

And what of Mr. Dowlman? Again I thought I had seen that name before, and sure enough, a William Dowlman was the other witness at James' marriage. All I need now is to get hold of William's **will** dated 1828, available at the LMA, to see if it contains any mention of James in it. By the end of the day, I had thrown doubt upon James' parentage, but had found a sister for him, and a little more about James as a person.

Article by David Humphries

Photos



Helen and Chris



If you want to contribute to the newsletter or share your research please feel free to contact myself
Cheryl Horncastle