

# Bolton's Genies

The Monthly Newsletter of the Bolton Family History Society

**Edition 116 – January 2024**



This month's photograph is *A Winter Sunrise over Bolton*. Can readers remember if sunrises and sunsets have always been so colourful?

Photo by Ron Cole

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## **Editorial Musings**

A Happy New Year to one and all.

I am looking forward to visiting the refurbished Central Library with our youngest granddaughter and sampling the new café. At four, she is an expert on Bolton's cafes.

Mine and Ron's families have a long history of working in Bolton's textile mills but we had never heard of the Russian connection until Wayne Ashton's recent talk. It was fascinating to hear the story of Wayne's family and their adventures in Russia.

Cath Cole

# **Information and Updates for Members**

## **Exciting news for book lovers in Bolton!**

**The Central Library will reopen at 9.00 am on Friday 19th January 2024 at Le Mans Crescent.**

## **Publican Ancestors**

The December edition of "*Who Do You Think You Are?*" contained an article on Publicans. If you have ancestors who managed or worked in a pub, there are a number of websites that will be of interest.

British Newspaper Archive - [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) - includes the 1874 issues of the weekly "*Licensed Victuallers Guardian*."

English Heritage - [www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list) - search by pub or location.

The Pub History Society - [www.pubhistorysociety.co.uk/links.html](http://www.pubhistorysociety.co.uk/links.html) - the site has material re pubs and the people who ran them and includes links to other useful websites.

Sourced by Ron Cole

## **The National Archives**

TNA have an exciting programme of online events for 2024. Access their website - [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) and click on "Events at Kew". You can also join their mailing list by clicking on "Sign up to our mailing list now"

Sourced by Jane Milne

## **Manage Your Tree For Free**

There is a free program on a website called Ancestris that runs on Windows, macOS and Linux. It is recommended that version 11 is used - version 12 is a testing version. You can import an existing tree, view and navigate your tree. Further details are available at the website - [www.ancestris.org](http://www.ancestris.org) or in the December edition of "*Who Do You Think You Are?*"

Sourced by Ron Cole

## **Do Not Allow Original Wills to be Destroyed after 25 Years**

The Ministry of Justice proposes to digitise and then destroy original wills. If you wish to sign the petition against this happening, go to this web page:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/654081#:~:text=The%20MoJ%20proposes%20to%20digitise,the%20destruction%20of%20these%20documents>

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## **Recent Events**

### **December Meeting**

#### **Christmas Quiz Answers**

1. Ebenezer Scrooge (1)
2. Cambridge (1)
3. Advent (1)
4. Michael Caine (1)
5. Caspar, Balthasar, Melchior (3)
6. Jingle Bells (1)
7. 3 : Dasher, Dancer, Donner (4)
8. Narnia (1)
9. Sending Christmas cards (1)
10. To be taxed ( and for the census) (1)
11. The Annunciation (1)
12. 4: Marley's ghost, the ghost of Christmas past, the ghost of Christmas present and the ghost of Christmas yet to come (5)
13. Coca Cola (1)
14. Marzipan. (1)
15. Capricorn (1)
16. Mrs Cratchit (1)
17. Japan (1)
18. Twankey, Wishee Washee (2)
19. 1 point for each correct answer
  - a. Once in Royal David's city
  - b. Ding-dong merrily on high
  - c. The Holly and the Ivy
  - d. Hark the Herald Angels sing
  - e. We three kings of Orient are
  - f. Away in a manger
  - g. I saw three ships come sailing by

- h. Deck the halls with boughs of holly
- i. In the bleak midwinter
- j. It came upon a midnight clear
- 20. Postmen (1)
- 21. One (1)
- 22. 364 (1)
- 23. Tchaikovsky (1)
- 24. Bohemia (1)

6: Partridge, Turtle Doves, French Hens, Collie Birds, Geese, Swans. (7)

## January Meeting

**Wayne Ashton “Tom and Fanny have gone to Russia they liked it so much they stayed”.**

Wayne related the surprising story of how many of his relations lived and worked in Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup>. While researching his family tree, he learned of his three times great grandfather Charles Fords, who married Elizabeth Crook in 1857 and had 5 children (one of whom, William was Wayne’s great great grandfather). Apparently, Charles had previously been married to Elizabeth Rothwell who died in 1848. They also had 5 children. The eldest, Thomas appears on the 1841 and 1851 and 1861 censuses but not again until 1901 where he is listed as a retired cotton mill manager living in Bolton with his wife Fanny.

A clue to where they had been for 40 years is a photo of their gravestone on Ancestry, which noted that Fanny was “late of Narva, Russia”. (Narva was part of the tsarist Russia and is now in Estonia.) This discovery opened a new avenue for his search but didn’t answer the question of what they were doing in Russia. Contact with the museum in Narva provided answers.

Wayne learned that many skilled mill workers, engineers and managers from Bolton and Oldham went to Russia to work in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The story of these workers is fascinating and largely unknown. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Russia was mainly feudal with serfs tied to large estates owned by the aristocracy. There was much corruption in government and generally low education levels among the ordinary people. Peter the Great (1672-1725) was interested in new ideas and modernizing Russia and visited Europe on an extended trip. He and later Catherine the Great (1762 to 1796) adopted many of the ideas of the Enlightenment. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there was some commercial activity and Russia was trading with Europe in yarns and fustians (a coarse cotton cloth for work clothes). By 1820, factories of mostly hand looms had been established and some British textile machinery had been illegally imported. Tsar Alexander II, a reformer and modernizer, was promoting cotton production around Moscow and St. Petersburg. When the serfs were freed in 1838 (providing cheap labour) and restrictions on

exporting machinery were lifted by Britain in 1843, this opened the door to large scale production.

Ludwig Knoop, a Bremen merchant working in Russia, imported various types of textile machinery. He decided to build a factory in Narva which was completed in 1858. It was called Narva Kreenholm Cotton Products. Since there were no skilled workers in Russia to set up or run it, Knoop invited skilled workers and managers from Germany and England to come and work. By the spring of 1860, 2000 people were employed at Kreenholm, By 1872 there were 4600 workers and in 1911 the number of workers there reached 10,000. It was the biggest mill site in Russia. What made moving to a foreign country attractive to these foreign workers? It is possible that the losses in the Crimean War were a catalyst and Knoop also offered many amenities (English schools, accommodation, health care, churches) and good pay. Many similar facilities were built near St. Petersburg and Moscow. The imported workers formed a managerial class who led a comfortable life and were able to educate their children in English (although they also learned Russian) and live a comfortable life. There were some variations among workers and between factories. Some English employees would go to Russia on a contract for a year for instance, to set up a factory, and then return home before taking on another contract. Others stayed for several years, running the mills, and overseeing the Russian workers, and some for very long periods of time, like Tom and Fanny Fords. Travel was reliable and it typically took about 5 days from Russia to Liverpool, so it was possible to go back and forth. Many families sent their sons to England for higher education, while daughters stayed behind. Some, on extended stays in Russia, kept a family member in the UK to represent their interests, which included investing earnings in English properties. There was little socializing with the Russian workforce who were paid far less and enjoyed fewer amenities, often sleeping next to the machinery. There was some resentment towards these foreign bosses.

Alexander II was assassinated in 1881 and his successors, Alexander III and Nicolas II were more conservative. By this point the Russian textile industry was the fourth largest in the world and former employees from England had gone to other textile producing countries such as Mexico, Japan, India and Brazil as well as returning home. Anxious about the political environment, some foreign workers left in the lead up to WWI and others sent their wives and children home for safety. When the Russian Revolution broke out in 1914 and companies were nationalized, a few stayed on (Wayne had an example of a great uncle who had married a Russian woman), but most tried to leave. Some were able to travel via Finland and others left Russia but couldn't go further because of WWI fighting in the Netherlands and Belgium. A number of these travelled east instead to Vladivostok and from there to San Francisco on to Chicago, and on from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Liverpool. Most who returned to Lancashire went back to work in the mills or retired on their savings, but many did not make it out or lost all they owned.

Wayne also found another branch of his family tree related to the Elizabeth Holt who married his great, great, grandfather. They appear to have arrived in Russia

much earlier than the other family members, some by 1840. Many fled in 1917 after 80 years in Russia. One example from this family is John and Isabella Yates. John was born in St Petersburg in 1837, son of Boltonians George Yates and Isabella Harper. He died in Ekaterinburg in February 1918 at the age of 88, but Isabella and her daughter appear on a ship's manifest in San Francisco in June 1918. E. Yates, her declared Russian next of kin was possibly her oldest son, who stayed behind in Russia but died in WW2 in 1944 in a Japanese internment camp. Several members of the Yates family were on that same ship which sailed from Yokohama. All are listed as speaking Russian and English. Three of their four children seem to have survived WWII. Edward, as mentioned above died in a Japanese camp in 1944, but Walter returned and settled in Bolton leading an uneventful life. John married a Russian citizen and returned to England, opening a restaurant in London. The fourth son, Thomas, born in St Petersburg in 1840 left Russia in 1918 at the age of 78 and settled in Blackpool where he died in 1920 after being knocked down by a tram. Wayne was very surprised to discover this almost forgotten story of Lancashire workers in Russia as he had heard no family stories about this part of the family. Evidently, those who came back after 1917 didn't want to talk about it. Although Russia was an ally in WWI, the Revolution had alienated much of western Europe. Wayne is continuing to carry out research on this fascinating part of his family tree and has promised to update us with new findings. He thanked several people who had assisted with his research. There were several questions.

Q: Did those who went to Russia attend Russian churches?

A: They attended Protestant Lutheran churches.

Q: If you think you might have relatives in Russia, how would you go about researching them?

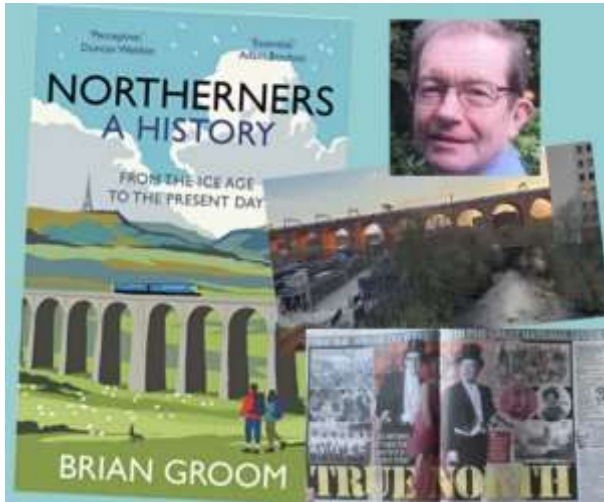
A: It helps to know when and where they went and what company they worked for, but it is a challenge as there are no actual Russian sites dealing with this. One indicator of possible Russian family members is the large number of young men boarding in Bolton and Oldham in the 1911 census, sometimes with grandparents and sometimes several brothers boarding with different families. Ancestry has some records kept of baptisms in the British Chaplaincies of St Petersburg and Moscow.

Wayne has kindly permitted us to post a copy of the presentation he used which was assembled mainly from his wonderful collection of family photographs and notes. This can now be found in the Bolton Members' section of our website.

# Upcoming Events

**Brian Groom - Northerners = Based on Brian's book 'Northerners: A History, from the Ice Age to the Present Day',**

**Wednesday 7 Feb 2024 - HYBRID MEETING**



Brian's book was published in paperback on 25 May 2023 by Harper North. It is the first general history of northern England to be published for more than 30 years. We are promised an entertaining event with wide appeal and plenty of local interest, a 45-minute romp through 180 million years of northern history!

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## Advance Notice of 2024 BFHS Speakers

**Ray Jefferson from his new book 'The Bolton - Bridgeman Connection'.**

**Wednesday 6 March 2024 - HYBRID MEETING**

Ray, a local author and lifelong photographer, believes photography should be valued according to the contribution it makes to society. He is the chairman and a photographer for the voluntary community and arts organisation Bolton Documentary Photography, meet the team ([boltondocumentary.co.uk](http://boltondocumentary.co.uk)).

The story tells how the Bridgeman family (later elevated to the Earls of Bradford) were involved in the story of Bolton over 350 years and it is a development of the exhibition which was mounted in the parish church in 2017.

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**Maggy Simm will talk about Henry Dawson's presentation album and T Taylor Ltd of Bolton**

**Wednesday 3 April 2024 - HYBRID MEETING**

Maggy is a retired teacher who has been involved in local history for many years, latterly as a member of the u3a. She will explain how she became interested in Henry Dawson's album.



Maggy has suggested some homework for us to consider:

Can anybody identify any of the individuals in the pictures?

Can any more be discovered about T Taylor's, such as have the archives of the business been deposited anywhere?

Who were the family of Thomas Taylor MP?

There was another contemporary mill in Horwich owned by T Taylor - later called Spirella. Does anyone in BFHS have a connection?

Speakers for the remainder of 2024 will be published each month in this newsletter. Speakers have been invited for all months up to November 2024 and are available to view on the following website: <https://mlfhs.uk/Bolton/events/meetings>

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## **Bolton History Centre and Bolton Records**

### **Latest News from Bolton History Centre**

Bolton History Centre is due to re-open on Saturday 20 January 2024. The Centre has informed us that "It will be relocated (in one of its original positions!) to the far right hand corner of the main library."

The telephone number for any local history and archive queries and requests for material is 01204 332185 or send an email request to [archives@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:archives@bolton.gov.uk). Requests take seven days to turn around and will either be looked at in the lab at or the museum at Crompton Place. References to some of the websites:  
<https://boltonremembers.org/> has some of the WW1 & WW2 records we have found for Bolton military personnel either born, resided, or enlisted in Bolton.  
<https://bolton.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/HOME> Spydus catalogue for local studies search.

<https://www.boltonlams.co.uk/history-centre-1> This is the History Centre page for the services that are offered to researchers. It gives some information about archives and the records that are held.

An interesting website sourced by Bolton News – “Unclaimed estates in Bolton revealed by Treasury for June”

<https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/23622610.unclaimed-estates-bolton-revealed-treasury-june/>

## **Lancashire Records**

### **News from The Archives**

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



**Lancs OPC** [www.lan.opc.org.uk](http://www.lan.opc.org.uk)



Lancashire Archives News and Events - their latest newsletter and more - [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk)

Lancashire Archives Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/lancsarchives>

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## **Activities and Events from MLFHS Branches**



Please note these events are all free to subscribed MLFHS members, £3 to guests.



**Manchester branch** – Next meeting – At the time of publication of this Newsletter there is no notice of a future meeting for the Manchester Branch



### **Oldham and District Branch**

Next meeting: Saturday 10 February 2024 at 2 pm

“DNA and Ethnicity” - Illustrated presentation by Hilary Hartigan

A free, Zoom only meeting .... All are very welcome

Booking for attendance is on Eventbrite



### **Anglo Scottish Branch**

Next meeting: Saturday 3 February 2024 at 2.00 pm

“Caledonian Asylum Petitions” by Lorna Kinnaird

The Highland Society of London launched an appeal in 1808 to raise funds for an Asylum to house and educate the many young Scots who were roaming the streets of London, many having been orphaned or left fatherless following the Napoleonic wars.

An online meeting via Zoom

Booking via Eventbrite - Free to members Non-members £5.00

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## **Other Local History Societies' Meetings**

WE ADVISE CHECKING THEIR RESPECTIVE WEBSITES PERIODICALLY FOR UPDATES AND DATES OF MEETINGS.



### **Halliwell Local History Society** <http://goo.gl/8erYyr>

Email: [enquiries@halliwell-lhs.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@halliwell-lhs.co.uk)

Next meeting – At the time of publication of this Newsletter there is no notice of a future meeting for Halliwell LHS



### **Turton Local History Society** <https://goo.gl/adx4GM>

Next meeting - At the time of publication of this Newsletter there is no notice of a future meeting for Turton LHS

Email: [mlandypublishing@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mlandypublishing@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Westhoughton Local History Group** – <http://goo.gl/XNugl5>

Next event - Thursday 8 February 2024 - Visit to Harewood House, ancestral home of the Lascelles family. The cost is £34.50 per person. Call Cindy Ritchie on 07818 212939 to inquire about available seats.

Meetings usually take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month in Westhoughton Library, Market St, Westhoughton, BL5 3AU.

## **Horwich Heritage Centre - <http://goo.gl/fSPsj>**



Next event – 13 February 2024 at 7.30 pm - “A Trio of Lancashire Gardens” - A talk by Elaine Taylor

This event will be held at Horwich Community Centre, Beaumont Road, Horwich BL6 7BG. It is free to members. Non-members are welcome with a £2.00 admission fee payable at the door.

Open Days, Admission Free, are held most months on Saturdays between 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

New Exhibition: “Centenary of Horwich Harriers” On now till 31 May 2024 at Horwich Heritage Centre with free admission.

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## **Key Information about Bolton Family History Society**

<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton>

•Speaker Bookings: [Boltonprog@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:Boltonprog@mlfhs.org.uk)

•Bolton helpdesk: [boltonfhishelp@gmail.com](mailto:boltonfhishelp@gmail.com)

•Newsletter Archives since July 2014:

<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/newsletter/archives>

•General Society enquiries to the BFHS Secretary, Christine M Ellis

[bolton@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:bolton@mlfhs.org.uk)

•Manchester Research - email a brief enquiry to <https://www.mlfhs.uk/virtual-help-desk>

or visit us at

•Bolton Facebook page <https://goo.gl/n99qtW> 976 Likes and 1K people following on Facebook

•Bolton Research Collection on the MLFHS website: (For members only)

<https://www.mlfhs.uk/bolton/research>

•Join the MLFHS/BFHS at: <https://www.mlfhs.uk/join>

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