

# M&LFHS Newsletter

The monthly newsletter of the  
Manchester & Lancashire Family  
History Society



**July 2020 Issue 3**

## **SOCIETY CONTACTS**

Website: - <https://www.mlfhs.org.uk>

Newsletter editor: - [newseditor@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:newseditor@mlfhs.org.uk)

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MLFHS mailing address: Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor,  
Manchester Central Library, St. Peters Square, Manchester, M2 5PD.

## **SOCIETY BRANCHES**

Oldham Branch of MLFHS - <https://oldham.mlfhs.org.uk>

Bolton Branch of MLFHS - <http://www.bolton.mlfhs.org.uk/>

Anglo-Scottish Branch of MLFHS – <http://www.angloscots.mlfhs.org.uk/>

## **EDITOR'S COMMENTS**

I am writing this just days after the Government relaxed some of its lockdown measures. Included is the limited opening of libraries and other public venues. Sadly this does not mean that the Society is in the position to re-open the Help Desk and provide normal service to our members and visitors. Elsie Lowe, General Secretary, has discussed what measures will be put in place with library staff and she outlines these in her report.

If you had planned to attend an event or talk then please check their website, as you are aware many have been cancelled.

Websites mentioned this month are the Manchester City Council site listing family history advice and websites at Ancestry, Findmypast and the British Newspaper Archive to keep you up-to-date with news and recent additions.

The Society has just launched a virtual Help Desk. Please let us know your views on this new service.

Another good piece of news is that the Bookshop has re-opened so now is your chance to order all those books you have been wanting for over the last 3 months.

Finally there are updates on the Society Forum, Manchester Central Library Archives+ and the Film Archives.

I would be delighted to receive your views and comments through our e-mail address [newseditor@mlfhs.org.uk](mailto:newseditor@mlfhs.org.uk).

Stay safe. [Barry Henshall]

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN**

Hello fellow members, the easing of the lockdown is an encouraging sign of a return to normality, though what the new normal will be is still to be defined. Details about the introduction of a much reduced and limited service by the Manchester Libraries feature elsewhere in this newsletter, but alas it will be some time yet before the Society will be able to offer its full service of meetings and helpdesks.

Meantime I commend the launch earlier this month of the Virtual Helpdesk [VHD} which provides research guidance to members and non-members alike. This service is possible because of the commitment and expertise of our Helpdesk volunteers and the foresight of its Coordinator, Leslie Turner. I applaud their efforts and hope that they are rewarded by a growing use of the facility.

The Virtual Helpdesk, of course, runs alongside our traditional Member Forum, which continues to provide more in-depth research solutions. The launch of a series of Hints & Tips from the Helpdesk completes the programme of remote assistance which has been especially designed to bridge the gap left by the suspension of our physical presence in Central Library. If you have an outstanding research question you are likely to find the help you need from one of these sources. I do urge you to take a look on our Facebook page for the links to both the VHD and the Hints & Tips. You may join the Member Forum from the Society website.

I should say something about our Annual General Meeting which was originally scheduled for April and became one of the first casualties of the lockdown. We rescheduled it for our July Quarterly meeting, but that too will not take place until we are installed in Archives+ again. Please take note of the warnings in this newsletter and on our website and Facebook page as all programmed meetings are prone to cancellation.

We are now entering the final phase of the development of a new website and management system with a predicted launch date later on in the summer. Look out for an announcement in the next couple of months when final testing and training have been performed.

As ever, I wish you and your families continuing good health as the lockdown eases in all parts of the world. Meantime, please take the opportunity to make use of the many benefits of Society membership,

Best Wishes,

David Muil, Chairman, MLFHS

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL SECRETARY**

### **Opening of City Library**

It is proposed to open the City library in early July with a one-way system in operation. This will mean entrance from Mount Street (where the Post Office used to be) and exit through to St. Peters Square. A maximum of 40 people will be admitted at any one time, the 2-metre rule will remain in place.

Opening times will be Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 11.00 am - 3.00 pm.

Other measures that will be put in place are:-

All soft seating has been removed, short browsing of books and handled books to go into quarantine.

Gloves and masks are not advised.

Books can be ordered on line or by phone, see the library website.

All books out on loan before the virus will not be charged, at the moment they have a return date of August.

### **Membership renewal**

Next time your journal arrives, before you open it, please look at the address label. It will show you what month your renewal is due or whether you pay by BSO.

I am surprised that so many are paying too early or too much so please check.

Membership is £15 and some of you are still paying £18.

As a temporary measures during lockdown could you please forward all mail to the General Secretary at:

Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society,

46 Kew Road,

Failsworth,

Manchester, M35 9LD.

[Elsie Lowe]

## **EVENTS/TALKS**

**Please note that because of Covid 19 all talks and events previously programmed have been cancelled or postponed. Please check our website for update information.**

### **Family and Local History Fair in Stretford – Cancelled.**

The following mail has been received regarding the above event.

The family and local history fair at Stretford on 12th September has now been cancelled as there is still a lot of uncertainty about what it happening in the future. David Johnson and I took the decision after a lot of careful consideration. It is hoped that it can be re-arranged for the spring of 2021, depending on the situation.

Yours faithfully,  
Chris E Makepeace

## **Huddersfield Family and Local History Fair - Cancelled**

The following has been posted on their website regarding the above event. Sadly our committee has taken the reluctant decision to cancel our 2020 Family & Local History Fair in November this year. There is just too much uncertainty at the moment with regard to large scale events. We hope to see everyone again in 2021.

## **Family & Local History Fair with Craft Stalls 2020**

Saturday 3rd October 2020 10:00am – 4:00pm

Doncaster Deaf Trust, Leger way, Doncaster

Organised by Doncaster & District FHS

<https://www.familyhistoryfederation.com/event-doncaster-district-fhs-family-local-history-fair-with-craft-stalls-2020-2020-10-03>

Please check regularly in case this event is postponed or cancelled.

## **WEBSITES**

Each month we will highlight sites that may be useful in your family research, particularly for our newer members.

In the run up to lockdown at the end of March, the Society was asked to contribute to the British Library podcast series called 'Anything But Silent'.

We're on the episode called 'Uncovering Mysteries and Secrets' but towards the very end (our section starts with Barry Ashcroft's story) <https://podcastc41509.podigee.io/22-uncovering-mysteries-and-secrets>

Apparently the 'Anything But Silent' episode was broadcast but the The British Library didn't really advertise it much as it launched during the start of lockdown and they had to focus down on their marketing. [Leslie Turner]

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Manchester Central Library has much to offer anyone carrying out family history searches. If you go to the following website - [https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/324/family\\_history\\_searches](https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/324/family_history_searches) you will find help, advice and links to aid your family search.

Areas covered are:-

- Getting started - track your family tree
- Birth, marriages, deaths and divorce
- Church and chapel registers
- Grave or cemetery burial
- Census records
- First World War archives
- Second World War archives
- Manchester Regiment
- Wills and probate records
- Historical maps
- House and electoral registers
- Rate books
- Immigration records and passenger lists
- Jewish records

Some of the links lead to online sources such as Ancestry and Findmypast but much also refers to books and microfilm. Even so, although the library remains closed, there is still much to see and you can always plan for your next visit.

You can keep up-to-date with all the news and recent additions to Ancestry, Findmypast and the British newspaper archives through the following websites:

<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/cs/whats-new>

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/blog/new>

<https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

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The following announcement has just been made for the UKBMD web site and the county web sites.

Message from Ian Hartas, Local BMD Project. Back in January I announced that there will be an update to the search software later this year which will allow births, marriages and deaths to be searched in one go on each of the Local BMD Project websites. This is still in development - the current COVID-19 situation has altered a lot of things around here. However, one feature planned in this update will be to allow multiple entries from the results page to be added to the Summary page in one go. This has meant that the Summary page software has had to be updated as well. This part of the development is complete and I've also updated the multi-region search page to make use of this new feature. So, when you use the multi-region search page you will now see an extra column in the results which will contain check-boxes to allow you to choose up to 100 entries at a time to be added to the Summary page. The text on the multi-region search results explains it fully. For those of you who had not discovered the multi-region search page before you will find a link to it on the Local BMD page within the UKBMD website. Please note that as usual the manner in which the browser's Back button behaves as you navigate forwards and backwards through the search forms depends on which browser you are using. E.g. Microsoft's Edge browser tends to clear a form when you click Back, whereas Firefox typically leaves your previous choices in place. We have no control over this other than to recommend that you avoid Microsoft's browser and upgrade to Firefox, Chrome or one of the many other free alternatives.

[Forwarded by Bob Kirk. Cumbria via the Society's forum.]

### **THE VIRTUAL HELP DESK**

Many of you may know that the Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society (MLFHS) have successfully operated a free Family History Help Desk at Manchester Central Library since it reopened in 2014. Since the swift closure of the library in March, the shutters at our Help Desk have also remained firmly closed.

However, with lockdown now easing and wanting to return to some form of normality we are now in the position to offer a 'Virtual Family History Help Desk'. Just like our base at Central Library our Virtual Family History Help Desk will be available to assist members and non-members.

On the Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society Facebook page you will find the first promotional video, hosted by Vimeo, of the launch of the Virtual Helpdesk (VHD). This replaces the physical Help Desk service which was suspended in compliance with the Covid-19 regulations. The video was posted on the 19th June and is titled 'Hints from the Help Desk: Using TNA Research Guides'. The following web address will take you directly to the video. Depending on the web browser that you use you may find that there is no sound. If so hover the mouse pointer over the screen then click on the loudspeaker symbol at the bottom right of the screen. The video lasts for about 6 minutes with an introduction followed by a presentation about the free National Archives Research Guides.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3163607440389690>

Perhaps over the lockdown you have had the chance to start your own family history research but are not sure how to continue? We are happy to help you with some advice and guidance in order for you to further your research. Or maybe you are already an avid family historian but have now become a bit stuck and have hit the proverbially 'brick wall'. Perhaps you are one of our Help Desk regulars? Whatever your situation we are happy to help out so please get in touch!

You can contact us via this link:

[https://www.mlfhs.org.uk/contact/mail\\_hd.php](https://www.mlfhs.org.uk/contact/mail_hd.php)

[Leslie Turner, MLFHS Help Desk Co-ordinator]

## **PROJECTS UPDATE**

### **New Data Online**

The following new records have been added to The Great Database in the member area.

**Bolton Workhouse Creed Register:** transcripts around 2,800 further entries covering the period 1902-1908.

**All Saints, Newton Heath Burials:** transcripts 1854-1910 are now online and the remainder, taking the index up to the graveyard's closure in 1950, close to completion.

**St. Thomas, Ardwick:** work has started on transcribing burials 1813-1854

**Henshaws Asylum:** Mark Harrey has completed the marathon task of transcribing the donor lists for Henshaw's Asylum for the Blind 1840-1940. This adds 4,889 names. There are a further 2,000 or so 'corporate' donors who do not readily fit into the database format and which have been listed in the accompanying descriptive document. Thanks are due to Mark for completing what has been a very challenging job.

**Newspaper Extracts:** Linda Bailey has started a project to extract various items from the Manchester Courier, starting with extracts from issues in 1825 and 1895, relating to BMD announcements, obituaries and inquests. The first 2,500 references are now online and contain some fascinating stories. To these are added the small number of 'eloping' husbands published in the Manchester Mercury (and appearing in the latest Manchester Genealogist). From what I can see, this was a one-off list and not published previously or subsequently – pity!

[John Marsden]

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## **Projects in Progress**

### **Manchester Probate Names Index**

**Progress Report:** I think the team have now indexed about 65% of the first 10 year batch of Wills (1812-1821) - although I only have 3 completed years as yet. It should be about a month before the 10 year batch is complete. A second batch (1822-1829) should follow about a month later. I can now give the volunteers an index which locates the Wills down to Film/Image level and this speeds up the name collection a bit. The final batch (1830-1837) contain a lot more wills per year and the volunteers may have probate fatigue by then, and perhaps other places to go. It would be nice to get to 1837 for links with LancsBMD and 1841 Census but this would be more likely with a few more volunteers. [Geoff Edge]

**Volunteers Needed:** Geoff needs more volunteers to complete the project in a reasonable time. All that will be required is access to a spreadsheet - Excel or another program capable of reading/writing Excel files. A spreadsheet template and instructions will be provided. As with many projects the larger the screen size the easier it is to carry out work of this type. If you are interested in contributing to this project, please contact Geoff direct at [geoffedge292@gmail.com](mailto:geoffedge292@gmail.com) for more information.

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### **Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue – Cheetham Hill Road**

Transcription of the births and marriages from records held by the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue – Cheetham Hill Road are now complete and awaiting adding to The Great Database [Barry Henshall]

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### **Royal Manchester School for the Deaf and Dumb**

A list of donors to the institution has been supplied by Ed Baines. This will soon be added to The Great Database. [John Marsden]

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### **Delph Independent Chapel**

John Gartside has provided a transcript of the memorials at this chapel and following indexing these will be indexed and added to the Memorial Inscriptions database. [John Marsden]

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### **Got a project in Mind?**

If you have a source accessible to you which you think might produce something which would be of help to other members and are prepared to roll up your sleeves and work on it, then let us know what you have in mind, We'll be happy to discuss and provide you with some guidelines.

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Thanks to all volunteers who are contributing to MLFHS having one of the most impressive data collections of any FHS.

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John Marsden

### **The BOOKSHOP is Now OPEN**

You can see all our stock via our website. <https://www.mlfhs-shop.co.uk/>

We will process your orders as normal but please be patient as the postal service is very busy and there may be delays of a few days especially if you are requesting delivery

outside of the UK. We are not as yet able to provide a 'Collect from Central Library' service as the Help Desk is closed.

### **THE SOCIETY FORUM**

The Forum has proved to be very active over the last month with many members asking for help in tracing family members.

Why not post your query or problem to like-minded and very knowledgeable members and you may be surprised at the result.

To register go to our website and sign in as a member. At the Member Area Main Menu click on the E-mail list at the right of the tool bar. This will take you to the MLFHS E-Mail Forum page. From here you can access the registration form.

I know that forums of this type and social media in general is not to everyone's taste but why not give it a try.

### **MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY ARCHIVES+**

<http://manchesterarchiveplus.wordpress.com/>

During these unprecedented times, it's more important than ever to stay connected with your loved ones whilst observing the government led social distancing guidelines. We hope Archives+ can help you to do this by publishing our popular memory boxes online which can be used as a starting point in discovering your family history, find out what their childhood was like, look back at the area where they grew up, discover their fondest childhood memories and maybe uncover some hidden gems in your family's story.

On-Line Memory Box – Each week Archives+ will publish a memory box for an area in Manchester. The following Memory Boxes have been added: the Spanish Flu pandemic in Manchester, Levenshulme, Cheetham Hill, Didsbury and Harpurhey

In addition to these blogs, the online memory box will be published on the Archives+ Facebook page. Dig out your old photos too, these can also be a brilliant resource to trigger fond memories of family times. We encourage you to share your findings on social media, either as comments on our Facebook page or on Instagram or Twitter using the hashtag #A+memorybox.

### **NORTH WEST FILM ARCHIVE**

While staff are working from home they are sharing with you each day a highlight from the collection through 'A Film A Day'. Please visit <https://www.nwfa.mmu.ac.uk> for more information on how to view these short films.

This is a site well worth visiting The NWFA was set up in 1977 and preserves moving images made in or about Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside and Cumbria and offers a variety of access services to users in the public, academic and commercial sectors.

### **HELP DESK – Closed until further notice.**

Please refer to the short article on the Virtual Help Desk.



<https://www.facebook.com/MandLFamilyHistory>

and [Twitter](#)



[M&L Family History@MLFHS](mailto:M&L Family History@MLFHS)