



Melton Family History Group Inc

A0030595D

Registered 6th Dec 1994

April 2022-May 2022

Meeting Times: 6:30pm on the second Thursday of each month except for January

Venue: Melton Library – McKenzie Street, Melton

Membership Fee: \$25 per year payable July each year prior to August A.G.M.

Correspondence: 17 Sutherland Ave, Melton Sth, Vic, 3338.

President: Judith Bilszta

Vice President Janeen O’Connell

Secretary: Ian Bowey

Treasurer: Deborah Slattery

Email: sec.meltonfhg@outlook.com

Web site www.meltonfamilyhistory.org

Committee Members: Sue Morton and Pauline Stotten

2022 Monthly Meetings at Melton Library in McKenzie Street.

14 th April	T.B.A
12 th May	T.B.A
9 th June	T.B.A
14 th July	T.B.A
11 th August	T.B.A

All dates and times are subject to change

Update: Regular work:

With the Melton library still operating at reduced hours, the library generously allowed us to hold our February and March meetings at our normal time of 6:30 pm. Deb and Ian were inducted into the use of library swipe cards to gain access out of hours.

Due to the uncertainties of meetings, it has been decided to postpone any planned guest speakers for the time being.

Attempts are currently being made to organise audio interviews with a number of Melton residents. Please notify me if any member is willing to conduct these audio interviews. Bernie Coburn recently interviewed Barbara Atkin nee Butler. Barbara recounted tales of her times in Exford.

Our current Memorandum of Understanding agreement with the library has been reviewed. A sub-committee and Melton Library's Nicole have discussed amendments to the agreement. The final draft to the agreement was met with approval by both parties, with the agreement formally signed at the Melton Library on the 10th of February. Melton Library's Nicole kindly organised a morning tea to celebrate. This gesture was gladly received by all who attended.

A joint venture between the Melton Library and our group involving photograph scanning is being organised for Friday the 29th of April between 10:00am and midday. This joint venture is part of this year's Heritage Festival. Patrons are invited to bring along family photographs or photographs of Melton and district. They will then receive high resolution photographs on a U.S.B stick to keep.

With the library opening up again, we have received a number of requests for assistance.

A community help desk was organised for Saturday the 26th of March in Bunnings. Many thanks to those who helped. Despite a small amount of interest, we have no new members.



1920s Censuses - Scotland and Ireland

Following the release of the 1921 census for England and Wales on FindMyPast the census for Scotland will be released on the Scotland's People website 'in the latter half of 2022'. The Irish independence war prevented the census being taken in 1921, so both the Republic and Northern Ireland carried out a census on 18/19 April 1926. The records for Northern Ireland were, apparently, pulped during World War II, but the National Archives of Ireland intends to release the census for the Republic in 1927.

History of Irish census records

Censuses of population are taken by governments to establish numbers and characteristics of a country's inhabitants. The first full government census of Ireland was taken in 1821 with further censuses at ten-yearly intervals from 1831 through to 1911. No census was taken in 1921, because of the War of Independence. The first census of the population of the Irish Free State was taken in 1926. The censuses from 1851 to 1911 were taken under the supervision of the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The 1926 and all subsequent censuses were taken under the Statistics Act, 1926. The responsibility for taking censuses was transferred from the Registrar General to the newly established Statistics Branch of the Department of Industry and Commerce. The Statistics Branch has since become the Central Statistics Office (<http://www.cso.ie/>).

To date censuses have been taken in 1926, 1936, 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1979 (the census due in 1976 was cancelled as an economy measure), 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2002 and 2006. The returns for 1926 - 1946 and part of those for 1951 are held in the National Archives, but they remain under the control of the Central Statistics Office, to the extent that the staff of the National Archives are not permitted to examine them for any purpose. The more recent returns are still held by the Central Statistics Office. The 1926 Census Returns will be released to public inspection in January 2027.

The original census returns for 1861 and 1871 were destroyed shortly after the censuses were taken. Those for 1881 and 1891 were pulped during the First World War, probably because of the paper shortage. The returns for 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 were, apart from a few survivals, notably for a few counties for 1821 and 1831, destroyed in 1922 in the fire at the Public Record Office at the beginning of the Civil War.

The above articles were taken from the March edition of the Somerset and Dorset Historical Society newsletter and the National Archives of Ireland.

The cotton weaver who became a soldier



An illustration of Ernest Butterworth, drawn from a photograph. By Sophie Glover.

Ernest Butterworth was born in 1877 to John and Susan Butterworth, the second youngest of seven children. The family lived in Wardle, a village in the Rossendale Valley, near Rochdale. His parents, like many in the area, worked in the cotton mills, his father as a cotton loom jobber (machine supervisor) and his mother a cotton weaver.

Rossendale towns, with a ready supply of fast flowing water, were ideal for cotton spinning and riverside mills were a common feature in the 19th century. At its peak, the area was producing some 68 million pounds (~31 million kilos) of yarn and 210 million yards (~192 million metres) of cloth each year. Ernest was himself a cotton operator by the age of 13. He was working as a stone quarry man by 1901, and the family had moved to Whitworth, a small town situated between Bacup and Rochdale. The 1911 Census records him as having returned to the occupation of cotton weaver, living in accommodation with only two rooms in the nearby village of Shawforth with a wife, Isabella, and five children. They would go on to have eight children in total.

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NAME and SURNAME.	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Household.	AGE.	SEX.	MARRIAGE or ORPHANHOOD.	BIRTHPLACE and NATIONALITY.		OCCUPATION.
					(1)	(2)	
26 1 Ernest Butterworth	Head	38	M	married	Wardle Lancashire	England	Weaver Cotton 37016
27 2 Isabella	Wife	35	F	married	Shawfield	England	Home duties
28 3 Selma	Daughter	10	F	single	Wardle Lancashire	England	Weaver Cotton 37016
29 4 Jack	Son	7	M	single	Wardle Lancashire	England	Magazine Seller 37016
30 5 Horrie	Daughter	5	F	single	Wardle Lancashire	England	Weaver Cotton 37016
31 6 Alice	Daughter	4	F	single	Wardle Lancashire	England	Weaver Cotton 37016
32 7 Harry	Son	3	M	single	Wardle Lancashire	England	
33 8 Jack	Son	9	M	Both alive	Lancashire	Shawfield	
34 9 Ida	Daughter	7	F	Both alive	Lancashire	Shawfield	
35 10 Mary Emily	Daughter	4	F	Both alive	Lancashire	Shawfield	

Ernest Butterworth, in the 1921 Census

Working in the cotton mills was a dangerous, noisy and dirty experience, despite the introduction of various Factory Acts to improve conditions from the 1850s. The air in the mill had to be hot and humid to prevent the thread from breaking. Temperatures between 65-80 degrees Fahrenheit (18-27 degrees Celsius) and 85% humidity was normal, and the air in the mill would've been thick with cotton dust. Protective masks were not introduced until after the First World War, without which there was a high risk of developing breathing difficulties and lung diseases, as well as skin and eye infections and tuberculosis. Intense high noise levels could lead to deafness for those who worked in the mills over a long period of time. Typically, a mill worker could expect to work for 13 hours a day and six days a week.



Ernest in army uniform, after enlisting to fight in the First World War

These conditions may help to explain why Ernest, at the age of 38, decided to join the Army reserve on 12 December 1915. Recruitment had been high at the start of the war, before starting to fall by late 1915. At this time, it was unusual for someone to volunteer at such an age, and there is no evidence of previous army service in Ernest's family history. Ernest was also relatively short at just 5 feet 4½ inches tall – perhaps not a typical build for a soldier.

His service records show that in April 1917 he was posted to France with the 16th Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers. He spent only two months in the trenches, before being hospitalized on 24 June 1917. The entry in the war diary, made on the previous day, read:

‘Relieved by 1st Battalion Black Watch and marched to Jean Bart Camp Coxyde-Bains, Belgium. The casualties during the tour of the trenches was 1 officer wounded, seven other ranks killed, thirteen other ranks injured’.

Ernest returned home in September 1917. He spent 66 days in hospital suffering from insomnia, sluggish reflexes, severe headaches and memory lapses, with ‘...no interest in his surroundings’. He was discharged on 20 September 1918, aged 41. His discharge notes state “feeble-mindedness” in the disease column.

Clearly traumatised by war, like so many men, Ernest never fully recovered. Many of the symptoms he experienced are symptomatic of ‘shell shock’.

In the 1921 Census, the family were still resident in Shawforth but had moved to a different home, Ernest’s widowed mother-in-law is now living with them. The 1921 Census, taken in June 1921, asked a specific question relating to the First World War. Children were asked whether their mother, father, or both were dead, so the Government could understand the impact of the war on society. Ernest was not one of the 700,000 men who died in the First World War; however he did pass away shortly after the Census was taken, on 27 December 1921 at just 44 years old.

Ernest’s youngest child was only four when he died. His widow, Isabella, would live for another 46 years, without remarrying. Ernest’s cause of death was listed on his death certificate as intestinal disease of the kidney and urenia. Urenia is linked to renal disease, which sadly claimed the lives of many who worked and were exposed to cotton dust in the mills.

The above story appeared in an article from the British National Archives.



Correspondence between children and Children’s editor ‘Countryman 1924-1929

Transcription

26th April 1929

Fourteen Cats

“Glencoe, Diggers’ Rest”

Dear Queen Bee,

This is my first letter I have written to you and I will tell you some news. A concert is going to be held in the hall on the 19th to celebrate the instalment of the electric lights in the hall.

I ride a pony two and a half miles to school and I am in the seventh grade. We are milking twelve cows and feeding four calves. We have fourteen cats, some of them can sit up and beg like a dog.

Well Queen Bee, as I have no more news I will close. I remain your new Bee

George Duncan

Answer:

Gracious George! What a number of cats you have! Do you feed them or do they catch their own dinner? You must write and tell me about the instalment of the electric light. I expect you will have a gay time.

Saturday the 1st of March 1930.

The Weekly Times p34

Letters from readers by Charles Barrett.

The Australian Boy's Pastimes and Habits.

From Diggers Rest.

"Dear Charles Barrett,- This is the first time I have written to you. I live in a country town called Diggers Rest. My father is the station master here. We have a lot of pets including a pony, a pair of white Angora rabbits, a pair of pigeons, a lamb, three dogs and two cats and two kittens. I read the Australian Boy's page every week and wish to become a member of the Camp-Fire Circle. I am 12 years of age and am in the seventh grade at school. Wishing the page every success."

Frank Scholes

Diggers Rest Vic.

Answer: I have often visited Diggers Rest, Frank. Welcome as a member of the Camp-Fire club.

The above two newspaper transcripts are by courtesy of Judith Bilszta



Recent community table event at Bunnings.

Sitting, Cheryl Graham. To the left of Cheryl, are Deb Slattery, Pauline Stotten and Ian Bowey.