

**Surname
Variants***Metcalfe**Metcalf**Medcalfe**Medcalf**Metcoff**Midcalf**Medecalf**Metecalf**Metkalf**Mydcalf**Midkiff**Mitcoff**Mitkiff**Meytecalfe**Matcalve**Modcalfe**Metcleff**Midcoff**Meatcoff**Midcalph*

'Mecca' is phonetic
dialect for Metcalfe

Can you add to this
list from records you
have come across?

Please email
editor@metcalfe.org.uk



THE METCALFE SOCIETY
Established 1980

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Message from the Chair

We are starting to plan the next Muster and AGM. This year, we will again be holding it online. While appreciating that timings can be difficult, we hope that as many of you will join us on the day for at least part, if not all, of the event. Details will be forthcoming in the next newsletter but please do put the date in your diaries – Saturday 17th October 2026. If you are hoping to attend, please let us know through enquiries@metcalfe.org.uk so we can send you the link nearer the date. We hope to have a usual mix of instructive/helpful research advice and interesting stories – so watch this space of details of speakers and detailed timings. The AGM is only open to members of the Society, but any interested non-member is welcome to the presentations on the day.

We are slowly adding new (to us) individuals to the database. It does sound complicated but is fairly simple when you get the hang of it. If anyone would be interested in helping with this project, you are more than welcome. We have a lot of information which has been culled from other sites and some of the names/individuals mentioned may be already in our database. In this case, we can either add the additional information or take them off the list – to leave us with those who have not yet graduated to our database. These new additions can then be added in their turn so we end up with a comprehensive listing of Metcalfes across the world. The 100 year rule does apply to any living individuals – but if you have any records not already included or updates on those individuals in your own family, then please do let us know through membership@metcalfe.org.uk so we can keep the database up to date.

As usual, we are looking for help in various areas of the work we do – so if you can spare an hour or so a month to help, we would love to hear from you.

And on a more up-to-date topic, the World Football Championship will be well and truly in action by the time you receive this, and what an experience it must have been for many of the players and the fans who have gone to America, Canada and Mexico to support their teams. Whether your team won or were knocked out early on – FIFA and the three countries have put on a game changing spectacular with new innovations – hydration breaks???? (is it naughty to suggest advertising breaks??) cont.

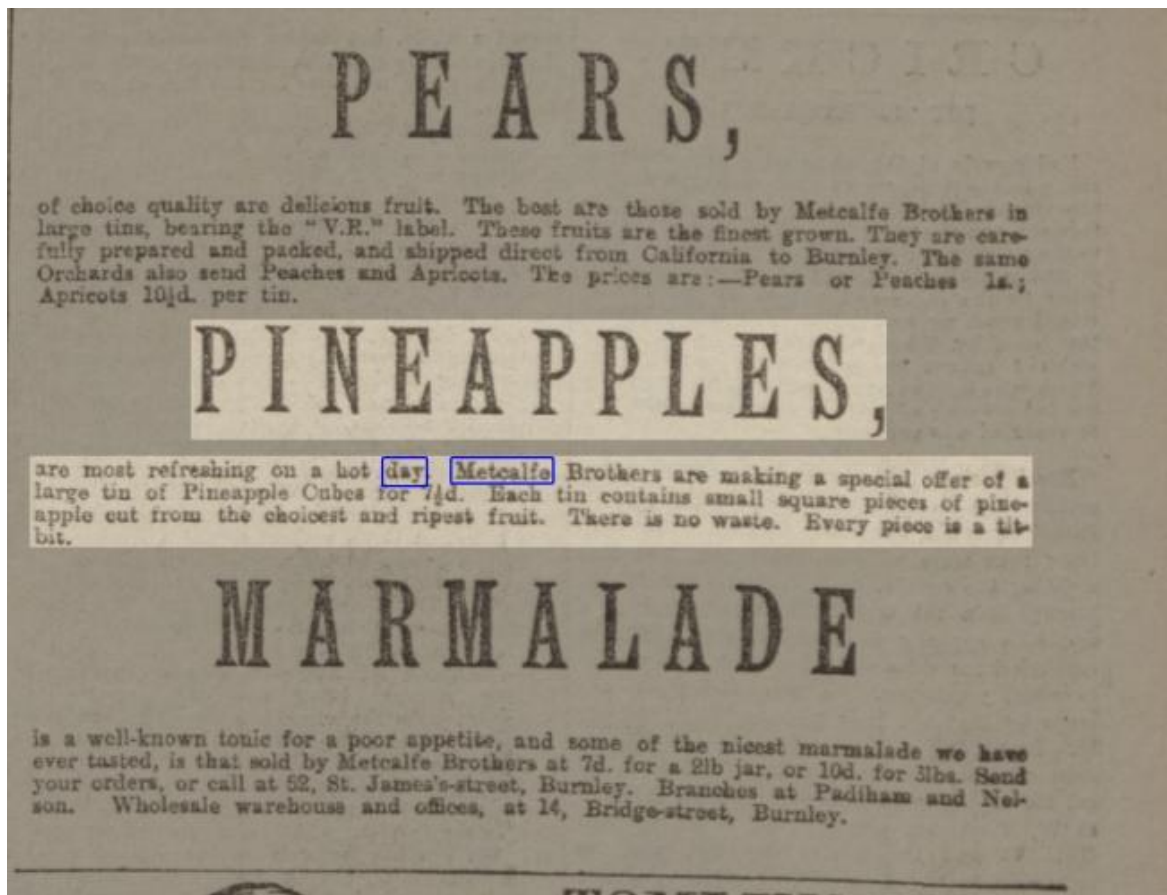
Supply and demand seem to have gone mad, and surely spreading matches over thousands of miles between venues has not been in the favour of fans, some of whom have spent thousands on accommodation and travelling. Even when it was held over several venues in Europe, none of the countries involved were further than a few hundred miles apart – no need for aircraft to get from one venue to another. Such a shame for the ordinary fans who have been limited to very short visits or confined to watching from home, but spectacular nevertheless. In Britain, we are now into Test matches and Wimbledon – so it goes on.

However, at the time of writing, we certainly send our very best wishes to the Canadian player who had his leg broken in a tackle – we hope that by the time of reading, he is recovering well and will be back to playing in the future.

Jo Heron

The Metcalfes of Burnley

My interest was piqued by the following advert which appeared while working on *Find My Past*.



There were no further details on this initial sighting, but searching further, it would appear that the Metcalfe Brothers mentioned ran several very successful 'high class grocers' which grew in range from 1870's to the 1950's '*famous for 95 years*'. They were based in several premises, presumably the business grew and they expanded: 14 Bridge Street & 52 James Street in Burnley & Rochdale Road, Todmorden are mentioned in their adverts, selling fruit and a wide range of items from all over the world – some still available today. Take your choice – Australian or Danish Butter or perhaps English or Canadian honey, fresh coffee and figs from France. It seems their range of goods was ever expanding. I'm intrigued by Wincarnis Beef Cubes and Jelly. I wonder what they tasted like. Did any member ever visit their store? All adverts from *FindMyPast* newspapers archive. Do let us know. editor@metcalfe.org.uk

Cont.'

WINCARNIS SPECIAL OFFER
can be obtained at **Metcalfe Brothers**, the High Class Grocers, The Pavement, Todmorden. Take the opportunity of getting a carton of four Wincarnis Beef Cubes, price 6d., and a full size 7½d. packet of Wincarnis Wine Jelly, 1s. 1½d. worth for 10½d. The offer gives you a clear saving of 3d.

SARDINES
Have you ever tasted boneless and skinned Sardines, specially prepared in pure Olive Oil? They are quite a delicacy. **Metcalfe Brothers** are selling these fine flavour Sardines in tins, 7½d. and 1s. 2d.

BONED CHICKEN IN GLASS.
Metcalfe Brothers have a new small size glass 2s., also filleted Chicken, and Chicken Breasts in a large size, very suitable for invalids.

HONEY.
A famous doctor stated that Honey, frequently used during cold weather, keeps away colds and influenza. **Metcalfe Brothers** sell the finest English Honey, in glasses, 1s. and 2s.. Honeycombs, 1s. 8d., Canadian Clover Honey, 1s. and 1s. 6d. Special Earthenware Crocks, 1s.

FINEST SMOKED and PLAIN BACON, LANCASHIRE and CHESHIRE CHEESE, NEW SEASON FRUITS.
SEND YOUR ORDERS TO
METCALFE BROTHERS, Pavement, 18, Rochdale Road, TODMORDEN. 'Phone 123
THE HIGH CLASS GROCERS,
Shops at Nelson, Padiham, St. Annes, Burnley and Oldham.

Australian Sultanas
of the finest quality are sold by **METCALFE BROTHERS** the high-class Grocers in St. James's Street, Burnley. They are very choice fruit and delightful flavour. Be sure to use them when you make your Plum Puddings and Mince-meat.

Orange Marmalade
made from Oranges and Sugar only is being sold by **Metcalfe Brothers** at the low price of 7½d. for a pound jar, and 1/1 for two pounds. Preserved Ginger in Syrup is a delightful addition to the tea table. Prices from 1/4 to 3/- per jar. Crystallised Ginger (Dry), 1/6 and 2/- per pound.

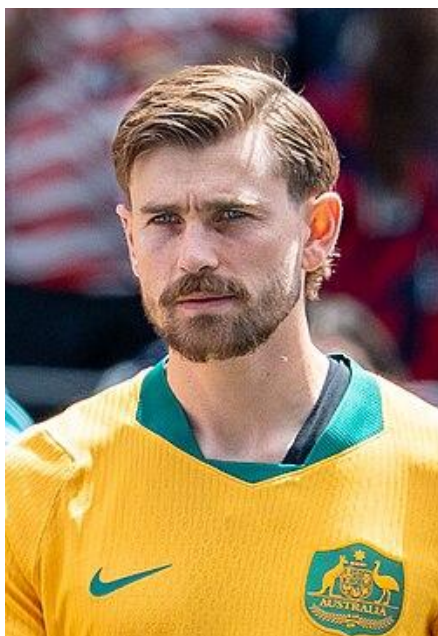
Bath Mustard
in very handy packets at threepence each. Get rid of your cold with a mustard bath. Put a few packets on your next order to **Metcalfe Brothers**. They also have some of the finest Cheshire Cheese—rather tasty, but full of flavour—which they are selling at one shilling per pound. It is honestly worth 1/4 to-day.

Freshly Roasted Coffee
of the kind sold by **Metcalfe Brothers**, is very acceptable for breakfast or after dinner. The quality is perfect, and the flavour delightful. Be sure to include some in your next order to

METCALFE BROTHERS,
52, ST. JAMES' STREET, BURNLEY. Telephone 3339.

Jo Heron

Australian FIFA Player – Connor Metcalfe



Connor Isaac Metcalfe is an Australian professional soccer player who plays as a central midfielder for Bundesliga side FC St. Pauli and the Socceroos. A Melbourne City academy graduate, he won the 2020–21 A-League Premiership, earned the 2021 Harry Kewell Medal, and made the PFA Team of the Season twice. Since joining St. Pauli in 2022, he helped secure promotion in 2023–24 and scored his first senior international goal in 2025 World Cup qualifying.

Age: 26 years (5 Nov 1999) Place of birth: Newcastle, New South Wales

“He was voted in the Professional Footballers Australia's A-League's Team of the Season in June 2021.[6][7] In August, he was awarded the Harry Kewell Medal, the award for Australia's men's young player of the year, for the 2020–21 season.”

“On 31 May 2026, Metcalfe was selected in the 26-man squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.[13] He scored Australia's second goal in a 2–0 win over Turkey, in their opening group game.”

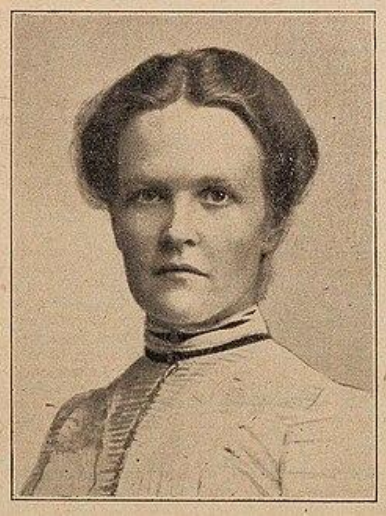
Source: Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connor_Metcalfe

Jo Heron

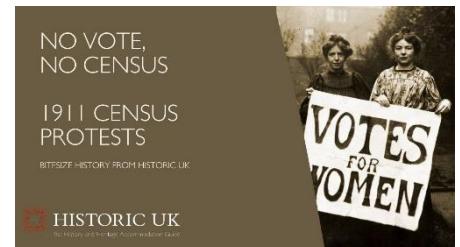
Two Suffrage Women of Note

Agnes Edith Metcalfe (2 March 1870 – 6 October 1923) was a British headteacher, author and active suffragist. She was deeply embedded in the suffrage movement. She worked with writers, doctors, educators, and middle-class activists who preferred civil disobedience (tax resistance, census evasion) over WSPU-style militancy (Women's Social and Political Union). Her closest collaborators were WTRL women. The Women's Tax Resistance League, 1909 to 1918, used tax resistance to protest against the disenfranchisement of women. Her activism was principled and vocal, but not militant in the way that typically led to arrest, although she was fined for refusing to pay for a dog license and boycotted the 1911 census.



Agnes was influential to the movement through her books:

- Women's Effort: A Chronicle of British Women's Fifty Years' Struggle for Citizenship (1865-1914), 1917
- Woman, A Citizen, 1918
- 'At Last': Conclusion of Women's Effort, 1919



Her first book became one of the earliest internal histories of the British women's suffrage movement written by a participant rather than an outsider. It documented organisational strategy and preserved first-hand accounts of meetings, debates, and tactics. Her works counterbalanced the Pankhurst-centric (WSPU) narrative that dominated early histories of the suffrage movement. Her books are cited to this day.

Read more about her life at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnes_Metcalfe and <https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/Documents/Detail/the-vote.-oct-26-1923/169844>

Genealogically, Agnes was the daughter of Frank Metcalfe, a solicitor, and Judith nee Hopkinson, the youngest of three daughters: Judith, born 1867, Dorothy, 1869 and Agnes, 1870, in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. Frank and Judith were married in 1866 in Stamford, Lincolnshire. Frank died in 1885 when Agnes was only 15 years old.

Research shows that Frank, born 1842, Wisbech, was the son of Charles Metcalfe, b 1797 in Wisbech, and Mary Metcalfe, b 1803 in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. They married in Gainsborough in 1826. Charles was a solicitor and the Cambridge Chronicle and Journal 26 October 1844 suggested that Charles was the Mayor of Wisbech, although no corroboration has been found. Find My Past index has a Charles born Dec 1796 at Wisbech, son of Charles and Elizabeth, while <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Metcalfe-1435> has Elizabeth nee Skrimshire and Charles parents as George Metcalfe and Rebecca Morehouse.

It gets more intriguing as Mary Metcalfe, who married Charles in 1826. was born 1804 in Gainsborough, the daughter of Morehouse Metcalfe and Mary Richardson.

The Society has a few members who are related to Agnes. Is this your family? Do you have suffrage stories to tell? Please share your thoughts.

Gertrude Metcalfe-Shaw (born Gertrude Metcalfe, 1864) was affiliated with the more militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Gertrude was the only Metcalfe, of any spelling, that appeared in the Home Office arrest index of 1,224 women and 109 men arrested for suffrage activism. In April of 1913, Gertrude at 49 years of age, was arrested for climbing the Monument to the Great Fire of London in London, unfurling a WSPU flag and dropping leaflets on the crowd below. In late June, that year, she broke a window at Scotland Yard and was imprisoned in Holloway. She refused to pay the fine for wilful damage and was sentenced to three weeks in Holloway Prison. In Holloway, she joined the hunger strike, and a clandestine surveillance photograph of her was taken while she was weakened. Source: [The London Museum](#)



She was released on 4 July 1913 after 7 days of hunger strike, under the Cat & Mouse Act. In 1914 she was arrested and imprisoned again at Holloway and again went on a hunger strike. Gertrude does not appear on any lists as having received the Hunger Strike Medal (left) and the Holloway Brooch (right). However, in October 2024 her WSPU medals and suffragette story

featured on the [BBC programme Antiques Roadshow](#). The experts valued her medals and her family's mementoes at £25,000 to £30,000. See a transcript of the segment [here](#).



The Cat and Mouse Act was the popular name for the [Prisoners \(Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health\) Act 1913](#), a law passed by the British government to manage imprisoned suffragettes who went on hunger strike. It allowed hunger-striking suffragettes to be temporarily released when they became dangerously weak but required them to be rearrested once they recovered, so they could finish their



sentences. Time spent recovering did not count toward their sentence. It stopped the practice of force feeding them.

Genealogically, Gertrude was the daughter of Wharton Metcalfe who was born 1814 in Scarborough, Yorkshire, son of Robert and Jane (Wharton) Metcalfe. Wharton married Elizabeth Pine Beardmore in Toronto, Canada West in 1852. Wharton was a successful businessman and in the early 1860s lived in Munich, Germany, where son Arthur Wharton Metcalfe was born in 1863 and Gertrude Elizabeth Metcalfe was born in 1865. Gertrude married Edward Shaw in 1887 at Malew, Isle of Man. The couple had three daughters: Una Madeline in 1890, Marion Eudisia in 1891, Gertrude Elizabeth Constance in 1900; and a son Edward Wharton in 1892. They lived in Sydenham, London, when Gertrude became involved in suffragette militancy. Both Gertrude and Edward were involved in the cause, until they moved to Canada during WWI and then caravanning in the USA* before returning to the UK. Gertrude died in St. Austell, Cornwall in 1944, a year after Edward. At some point the family changed their name to Metcalfe-Shaw, enumerated as such in the 1939 census of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, England.

*Their 'caravanning' tour of the US mid-west was recounted by Gertrude in her 1926 publication ['English Caravanners in the Wild West - The Old Pioneers' Trail'](#) illustrated by her daughter Una.

Is Gertrude part of your family? Please let us know your suffrage family stories.

Susan Harper, MN0266.

The National Archives – UK



For all of us, there is highly likely to be some useful information held by the National Archives (TNA) to help us – but it may need digging out.

The TNA is our largest archive and based in Kew, London. It considers itself '*as the custodians of our collective memory, preserving records of the past for the benefit of present and future generations.*'

Kew is supported by many other smaller units across the country in major cities and towns –perhaps more accessible to the general public, but all repositories hold historical documents that have been created across the country (at national and local level), from the major courts of law of the land as well as more mundane records from local businesses and organisations. The TNA, like many archive offices also hold more personal records – those collections from public figures such as politicians and celebrities, as well as some more ordinary families. Where they may not hold the actual parish records of Births, Marriages and Deaths, they can certainly advise where to look for this information. On the positive, Kew and the other 3,500 archives across the country hold over 37 million records and description of records.

The staff across the many archive offices in the country may be able to advise you on your research on a more local level, but they are all working tirelessly to transcribe records and documents so they can be used online. The TNA has a 'Discovery' page where there are lists and descriptions of the holdings across the country in all the archive offices and other repositories. If something is not held by Kew, they can direct you to the holding archive elsewhere.

So, let's make a start: [Home - The National Archives](#)

What do they hold:

There is a wide range of information. Government documents including transactions in parliament and reports from committees, many minutes and registers of official government and organisation meetings, letters from private and public individuals, photographs, films and maps of many areas and events, as well as digital and sound recordings. Depending on what you are looking for, and how you ask the question, the TNA has the answer in most cases. A word of warning, some of the records are available online through *Find My Past* and *Ancestry*, which they have a connection with to make the records available.



The first step: Let's get started:

Make a list/note of what information you are looking for, include a few details so you don't get too sidetracked but be careful not to pick up too much other peripheral information. Beware of rabbit holes – it is far too easy to spot some detail and follow that to a whole different area of research – you do need to focus, unless you are just trawling for information. One example might be connected to the Census returns

for the UK, or you may be looking for information on your soldier ancestor, or some other historic figure, or some event in the national psyche.

Log in to the National Archives website [Start here - The National Archives](#)

TNA is officially the Public Records Office for the UK under a Royal Warrant dating back to 1869, and with authority to locate and preserve the archival heritage of the country, whether those records are held by TNA or one of the other Archives around the country both council-run or held privately. So, they have an overview of all the archives in the country whether large and official or small and more privately run. They hold many of the documents created since the beginning of writing and relating to many aspects of life and governance of the realm, so over 1500 years. It includes documents, photographs and other records related to individuals and groups. Staff run regular podcasts to introduce the public to holdings and describe some of the items they hold, and there are regular exhibitions of their archives. They also offer assistance and guidance in finding information, can advise of archiving/preserving our own documents, grants and funding, and the legislation governing archives in the UK.

Included in the collections are some documents which are restricted by GDPR from publication, so more may be released over coming years or redacted sections may be opened, but they also include some of the most beautiful documents created in the country way back in the early days of writing.

'Discovery' is the means for us to examine the archives that are available. You have a number of options.

You can go to visit, you can access on line or you can pay someone else to do the research for you.

Going in person:

[Help with your research - The National Archives](#) which will take you to the search page, to the catalogue, to direct you towards how to use the archives or to the series of Research Guides which can help to narrow down your search.

[Discovery | The National Archives](#)

1. You can search on a keyword, name, place, event,
2. You have a date range to narrow your search.
3. You can specify which archive you want to search – all of them or just one in particular.

You can then go to: [Help with your research - The National Archives](#) which will take you to the search page and direct you towards how to use the archives and a series of Research Guides which can help to narrow down your search.

[Research guides keywords - The National Archives](#) – these are very useful tools to use to search for individuals or access the information held by TNA. The alphabetical index of topics sorted by keywords alphabetically, such as Deeds, Free online records, Manorial records, Trade Unions, Wills and so on.

So, if for instance, if we want to search on the wills held by TNA, click on the W. This brings up 4 guides available for 'wills'.

- [Civil court cases: disputed wills](#)
Keywords: [civil litigation](#) [courts of law](#) [deaths](#) [early modern period](#) [law and order](#) [prerogative court of canterbury](#) [probate](#) [trials](#) [wills](#)
- [Death duties 1796-1903](#)
Keywords: [administrations of probate](#) [death duties](#) [\(tax\)deaths](#) [duties and taxes](#) [legacies](#) [\(probate\)probate](#) [taxes and duties](#) [wills](#)

Research guides

☒ [Choose a different subject](#)
☒ [Our A-Z index](#)
☒ [Search all guides](#)

A-Z index

- **Wills and administrations after 1858**

Keywords: [administrations of probate](#) [death duties \(tax\)](#) [duties and taxes](#) [prerogative court of canterbury](#) [probate](#) [taxes and duties](#) [wills](#)

- **Wills and administrations before 1858**

Keywords: [administrations of probate](#) [death duties \(tax\)](#) [deaths](#) [duties and taxes](#) [early modern period](#) [prerogative court of canterbury](#) [probate](#) [taxes and duties](#) [wills](#)

So, we can work through to find a will we know the date of – either pre- or post - 1858, whether there had been any disputes to the wills registered and if/what death duties were due.

Clicking on the last entry – before 1858, we find how many pre-1858 wills are available to view online, whether we can order copies of any will we find, how to visit TNA to view the will or whether we can pay for someone to do that research for us. There are suggestions to help us to get started.

There is information on having a will copied by TNA - you send in a request, charges are based on searching for the record or will, the number of pages (as per any document) and the possible fee for the whole transaction will be notified to you. The whole process may take up to 29 days to complete. Accessing the document in person i.e. you visit TNA or downloading it on your own computer is free with a download link which is active for 30 days at each instance. Some are available free through *Find My Past* and/or *Ancestry* and these are noted in the catalogue. Fees for copying vary depending on the record required, so do check out the notes on the website and ask advice from the staff at TNA.

You can visit the archive and work through your research yourself, or you can pay a recommended researcher to do the work for you but paying for the privilege.

Many other archives hold wills local to their own area and have their own prices and availability of service – and there are many other documents viewable through FamilySearch [UK's Best Ancestry and Genealogy Archive](#) and, again, priced or not depend on your access to those sites.

Many records are increasingly available online, but if you decide to visit TNA itself, check out the process before you go. Firstly, the venue and opening times, so you can find online. Check whether you can access the documents you want online or need to look at the actual document. Book in advance to view any specific item you need to see giving the staff a date and time you will be visiting. Also, think about booking a research space – a desk, fiche reader, computer, so on. Some documents will be boxed but many other may be in bundles – please think of the staff trying to find your document when you book a visit, there is usually a time period for booking items prior to the visit.



So, the process to visit would be – log into the website, choose your preferred date, enter your name and other details, select the date and time of your visit, and preferably order the specific documents you want to look at. If you are not entirely sure when you book a visit, you can go back in and order them later before the visit. To enable you to view original documents, you will need a Readers ticket, available free of charge and part of the booking process. You can then order up to three documents at any one time, and if necessary, order more allowing an hour or so for the document to arrive. If you are going for more than one day, you can reserve further documents on your visit.

Be prepared to look out for the various facilities. They do have a café on the ground floor and obviously toilet facilities, but they may not be on the floor you will be working on. Check out any special assistance you might need – lifts, disable access and any other aids. Obviously, and only to be expected, they also have a Shop with some very interesting and informative items for sale – well worth a look.

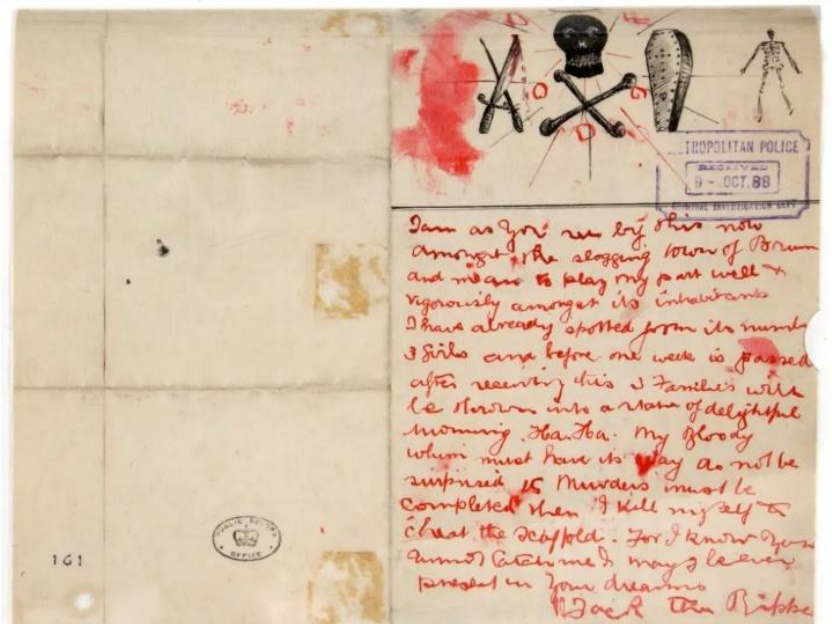
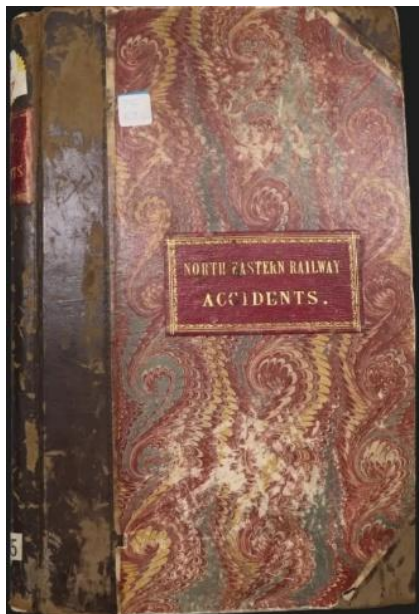
Having said that - Go ahead and look up the information you need, book your place and enjoy a day out at TNA – it is well worth a visit and an education in itself. If you have time for a longer visit to London – there are lots of other areas of the Kew district that you may find worth visiting.



Date: 1086–1089 Catalogue reference: [E31/2/1](#)
Great Domesday (left)

Date: 9th October 1888 Catalogue reference:
MEPO 3/142 Jack the Ripper letter (below)

Date: 1860-1865 Catalogue reference: RAIL
527/955 North eastern Railway Company
Accident records. (below left)



All images from the National Archive website

Jo Heron MN 1042

The National Archives
Kew, Richmond
TW9 4DU

See also:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheNationalArchives>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheNationalArchivesUK>

X: <https://x.com/UKNatArchives>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nationalarchivesuk/>

Old Molly Metcalfe

A few weeks ago, I was entertained on an online folk/ open mic session by someone singing a song by Jake Thackray called "Old Molly Metcalfe". It's a song that can be found on his 1972 album "Bantam Cock". It's not a song I'd heard before, though I'm sure many of you reading this might well know it already, but with the "Metcalfe" name I obviously wanted to know more about it.

Apparently, Jake would introduce this song by saying Molly was his great aunt who had died when she was 28 years old. He did reveal later on that the lady and the story was fictitious, and that the song was written "to challenge the romanticized, idyllic image of pastoral shepherdesses but that her way of counting sheep was very much real, and is derived from ancient Celtic languages.

The refrain, "Yan tan tether mether pip" is the score historically used by Shepherds to count their sheep. They would count the sheep from Yan to Jiggit (1–20), then they would pick up a stone, put it in their pocket, and start again, another twenty, then another stone, over and over. At the end they would have a stone (a score) for each set of twenty sheep. Thus 5 stones would represent 5 score, or 100 sheep. Sometimes, rather than use a stone, a shepherd may also place a marker on the ground, or move his hand to another mark on his crook, but the stones seem to be a very tangible marker of the count that they can double check later.

The words used did vary a little by region, for example in Swaledale the words used were "Yan, Tan, Tether, Mether, Pip, Azer, Sezar, Akker, Conter, Dick, Yanadick, Tanadick, Tetheradick, Metheradick, Bumfit, Yanabum, Tanabum, Tetherabum, Metherabum, Jigget".

In Wensleydale there was a slight difference with "Yain, Tain, Eddero, Peddero, Pitts, Tayter, Later, Overro, Coverro, Disc, Yain disc, Tain disc, Ederro disc, Pedderro disc, Bumfitt, Bumfitt yain, Bumfitt tain, Bumfitt edderro, Bumfitt pedderro, Jiggit."

Online you can find whole tables that compare the language used from various parts of the country.

This sheep counting system, using twenty as a base count, was traditionally used by shepherds in Yorkshire and Northern England, but also in many other rural areas of Britain including Wales and the West Country. The words may be derived from numbers in Brythonic Celtic languages such as Cumbric which died out in the North of England possibly as early as the sixth century, but it's impossible to say their exact origin. Tim Gay (Gay, *Tim* (July 1999). [*"Rural dialects and surviving Britons"*](#). [*British Archaeology*](#)) writes "Sheep-counting systems from all over the British Isles all compared very closely to 18th-century Cornish and modern Welsh."

This system of counting was commonly used for sheep, and also for counting stitches in knitting, until the industrial Revolution, especially in the Lake District fells, but most of these number systems fell out of use by the turn of the 20th Century.

Their use in knitting is also attested in a "knitting song" known to be sung around the middle of the nineteenth century in Wensleydale beginning "yahn, tayhn, tether, mether, mimph"

Ella Burton M0351

References

Jake Thackray website and video

Mainly Norfolk: English Folk and Other Good Music

Tim Gay (Gay, *Tim* (July 1999). [*"Rural dialects and surviving Britons"*](#). [*British Archaeology*](#))

Wikipedia

Mainly Norfolk: English Folk and Other Good Music

continued

Old Molly Metcalfe

Words: Jake Thackray

Old Molly Metcalfe counting sheep
Yan tan tether mether pip she counted
Up upon Swaledale steep and bleak
Yan tan tether mether pip she said.

Grow little sheep come hail come snow
Yan tan tether mether pip she counted
Fine warm wool for a gentleman's shoulder blades
Yan tan tether mether pip she said.

Over the heather when the weather is cold
Yan tan tether mether pip she counted
Stiff Molly Metcalfe goes bow-leggedly
Yan tan tether mether pip she said.

Grow little sheep, come wind come rain
Yan tan tether mether pip she counted
Fine warm wool for a lady's counterpane,
Yan tan tether mether pip she said.

On her back in the bracken with frozen bones
Yan tan tether mether pip she counted
Daft Molly Metcalfe singing alone
Yan tan tether mether pip she said.

Grow little sheep, come death come dark
Yan tan tether mether pip she counted
No such wool for Old Molly Metcalfe,
Yan tan tether mether pip she said.

Source: From the Jake Thackray website



[Old Molly Metcalfe by Jake Thackray](#)



(Editor: Image created with the help of AI)

'The Red Book of Scotland'

This is a [series of volumes](#) containing records and some information about Scottish families, mainly the landed gentry, dating from 1400 to about 1939-40. A lot of the information is genealogical and traces the clan lines through BMD's and other members of the family.

I checked through for 'Metcalf' and variants and only found 5 mentions – some of whom were already known to our database hunters. These included:

- An early record, 1790, Frederica Sophia Metcalfe who married James Mure. They had two sons and four daughters of whom only two were already listed on our database. Hopefully, by the time you read this, they will have been added to expand our records. Their line potentially goes back into the 1400's and the family living in the Nappa area. Unfortunately, it would appear that the members who gave us the initial details seem to have left the Society for whatever reason. If any of you know of M0566 or M0659, please do let us know. Other names included Astley, Banks, Barton, de Hertington, Gibson, Jerome, Pudsay and Tocketts.
- A recent David William Metcalfe who married who married Eleanor Constance Leslie Melville in 1926. David and Eleanor had three daughters who may be still alive today and are listed on our database. The girls were all born in the 1950's in Canada and are probably connected to current member, M0379. Other family names included Bartholomew, Fraser, Laird, Potts and Ramsey.
- The last one I could find in our records was Katherine Hawkins Dempster of Dunnichen who married Sir Theophilus John Metcalfe in 1876. He had already lost his first wife Charlotte Herbert who left him with a son, but Katherine and Theophilus John did not have any children between them. Theophilus John is a well-known character in our database, being born and living in Delhi, India and serving with the East India Company until he retired, and later died in Paris in 1883. Katherine survived him, dying in 1913 in Cannes, France. M0357 has links to this family but this member was one of our very early members and has subsequently left the Society.

Two further 'Metcalfes' were also listed but both present difficulties in tracing them.

- One is 'Jane, second daughter of Robert Metcalfe' who died in 1869, having married Francis Hawkins of Shirenewton in 1832. Potentially, they had at least a son and daughter, and like Theophilus John, they have a connection to India, probably the East India Company as well. Unfortunately, having only a Jane and a Robert to find them through is very difficult, even adding in London and even having a date of death has not helped. Further work need doing on this family.
- The second potential problem family is Elizabeth Medcalf who married William Menzies in Edinburgh, 1762. She is listed simply as 'Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. Medcalf, London'. They had one son who emigrated to South Africa.

Obviously, further research needs doing particularly on the last two, but all five show lively links to overseas areas where there may be more 'Mecca's' lurking in plain sight. If you have found a link to one of these individuals, please do let me know so we can follow up on their families and possibly increase our knowledge of what and where their ancestors were living.

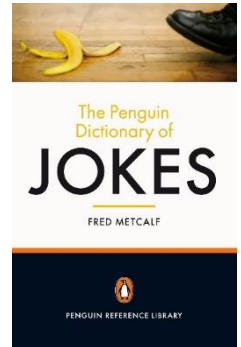
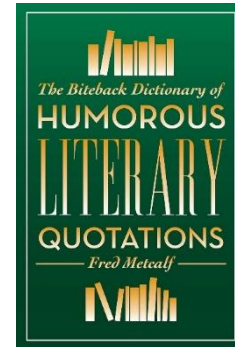
Jo Heron, MN1042

A Humorous Metcalfe

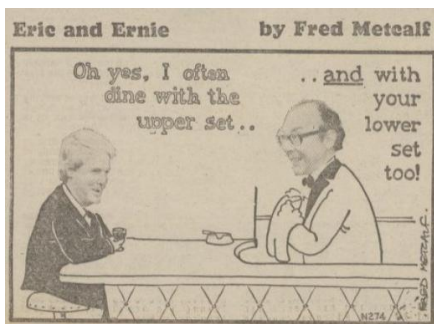


Fred Metcalfe - the one who wrote *The Biteback Dictionary of Humorous Political Quotations* et al - was a British humorist, gag-writer, speechwriter, and quotations specialist, long active in UK television and publishing. His early career included writing jokes for Kenny Everett and Germaine Greer on Granada TV's *Nice Time*. He then

spent forty years working with David Frost, writing jokes, questions, and interview intros for Frost's conversations with presidents, prime ministers, and celebrities. Metcalfe helped Prime Minister John Major with parliamentary and electoral witticisms — an unusual role that placed him inside the machinery of British political communication. He devised and drew the Eric and Ernie comic strip for the *Daily Mirror*. He wrote for major entertainment figures including: Gene Kelly, Sir Laurence Olivier and Jamie Lee Curtis and contributed to sitcoms in London, Sydney, and Los Angeles. Fred Metcalf was born in Yorkshire, England, UK, and also known for *Ultra Quiz* (1983), *Through the Keyhole* (1987) and *Frost on Satire* (2010). Source: [Biteback Publishing](#).



He died in March 2017. Fred says, in his *Biteback* book of *Humorous Book of Sporting Quotations*: The sort of people who compile 'humorous' books of quotations are a self-selected clerisy of wannabe do-gooders with one simple agenda: to bestow upon the world at large the precious gift of laughter.



Daily Mirror 17 November 1979 Findmypast in partnership with The British Library Image © Reach PLC. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.

Nothing about his genealogy seems to be available.

Are any members related to Fred?

Susan Harper, MN0266

On May 12th, I had the great pleasure of meeting Dianne Fox, Australian Agent (M0113), when

Metcalfe Society Agents Meet in Person



she arrived in Victoria, BC, Canada, on a vacation tour. We have seen each other on Zoom meetings for years, so we recognized each other immediately. I took Dianne, by car, on a tour of Victoria. She asked if there was anything of Metcalfe significance to see and so I took her to the house at 702 Gorge Road West, where my mother, her siblings and parents (Walter and Victoria Metcalfe) lived

during the 1930s. It is a heritage house, built c1903 and has been meticulously maintained. The picture at left, me and Dianne, in front of the house, and, at right, my grandparents Vic and Walter with my mother (Mary Christina) "Kitsie", in front, and with (Dorothy) Jean and (Stanley Walter) "Bus", at back, posing on the front porch of the house c1938, 88 years earlier.



Susan Harper, MN0266, Canadian Agent

Now Then 18 - 17th Century Tax Records

You've been fortunate enough to be able to trace your family back to the 17th century, having the good fortune to locate them during the 18th century, which can be challenging.

What might you find to extend your research back further? The 17th century can be rewarding to a researcher as I hope to demonstrate during this article.

There were no census returns of the kind we are used to in the 19th and 20th centuries but some assessments of members of the population were nevertheless carried out, mainly for tax reasons, and if they have survived, they can be useful in identifying where the family was living and its status and wealth (or lack of it!).

Before considering some of records, if you are searching for Yorkshire records, you need to know in which **WAPENTAKE** your ancestor lived, as it will be necessary to refer to those administrative areas in order to identify the location of the records of interest. You might well ask what is a wapentake .

You are probably well aware that historically Yorkshire was divided into 3 parts or **Ridings**, a Riding being derived from the Norse word '**Thriding**' meaning a one third part. Most counties of Anglo-Saxon England were themselves divided, administratively, judicially and militarily into '**Hundreds**' but in Yorkshire they were called **Wapentakes** instead. A 'hundred' comprised 100 'hides' of land this being an area which was large enough to support 100 families or to provide 100 soldiers. A 'hide' was enough land to support one family.

A map showing the wapentakes within the 3 Ridings can be found using this link [Wapentakes1.gif \(743x600\)](#)

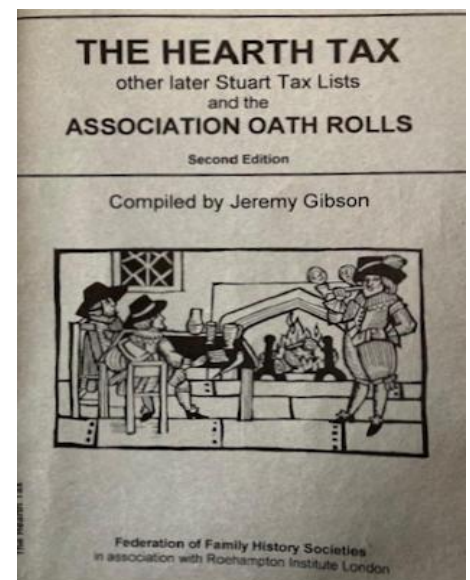
One can find details of wapentakes in volumes of the Victoria County History and publications of the English Place-Name Society too. Additionally street directories would refer to the town, village or hamlet's manor of which they formed part, the parish and the wapentake.

I intend to concentrate on one major tax namely the Hearth Tax. On the restoration of the monarchy Charles II was short of cash, like his father and grandfather before him, to govern the country. New taxes were introduced to resolve the problem.

Before doing so I would mention one less known revenue raising scheme called the 'free and voluntary present' to the King from his grateful subjects.

This was paid in 1661 and technically not a tax levy but rather as the name suggests a 'free and voluntary present' (or gift of money) to the King. It was an attempt by Parliament to raise money for the King following his restoration. Whilst it was voluntary, most of the wealthier members of the population contributed to this present. The money was collected either in the form of promises to pay or actual cash, generally in towns on market days in the autumn of 1661. In certain cases, occupations of the donor were given.

For further details of this little known 'gift' and a county-by-county guide to this record and others referred to in the article readers are referred to Jeremy Gibson's booklet entitled '*The Hearth Tax Other later Stuart Tax Lists and the Association Oath Rolls*' published by The Federation of Family History Societies, in



association with Roehampton Institute in London (1996). It is now out of print but many family history societies, libraries and record offices will still hold copies.

The returns for the royal 'present' survive for over 30 English and Welsh counties, but not unfortunately for most of Yorkshire. Records only those paid in the East Riding of Yorkshire (Wapentake of Holderness) have Survived.

The records themselves are held by The National Archives ('TNA') in Kew. They are among **Class E. 179** entitled **Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Particulars of Account and other records relating to Lay and Clerical Taxation**. Some may be held by local record offices and a few have been transcribed locally too.

For a useful and full explanation of the E 179 database you can read it at this TNA link. As you will see this class includes many more mediaeval taxes and levies not just 17th century hearth taxes. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/e179/default.asp>

HEARTH TAX

The first important new tax introduced at the Restoration of the monarchy was the Hearth Tax. This was raised following parliamentary approval. The tax (sometimes also referred to as the chimney tax) was collected between 1662 and 1689. Its administration had something of a chequered career as appears below. Unfortunately, not all of the assessments have survived. The majority of the surviving documents are from 1662-1666 and 1669-1674.

The tax was in effect a capital tax on occupiers.

Initially local constables, headboroughs (the head of the legal, administrative and territorial unit known as a 'tithing') and other parish officers administered the tax and they were required by the law to notify all landlords and tenants that they had to make a written return of the number of their hearths within six days. Empty houses were to be assessed by the constables, who were authorised to enter all inhabited houses in order to check the accuracy of the returns made by the occupants.

After 31st May 1662 the constables had to send their returns to the next Quarter Sessions. The sessions' clerk of the peace was instructed to compile these returns and make two enrolled copies of the assessment of the whole county. One was sent to County sheriff, who received the cash collected, and the other enrolment was certified as a true copy by three JPs and it was then sent to the Exchequer to enable it to check the sheriff's account. The tax itself was collected to start with by the petty constable. He had to collect it within six days of the due payment date. He had power to distrain goods for non-payment by the occupier. He was supposed to then pay the tax collected to the high constable of the hundred within twenty days along with a list of tax payers and those who had not paid.

When he received the tax which had been collected, the high constable had ten days to send the sheriff his return and the cash. The sheriff had three weeks within which to account to the Exchequer with the tax collected.

The taxation rate was 1 shilling (5 pence) payable every half year or (2 shillings (10 pence) annually) for each fireplace, hearth or stove in an occupant's property. It was levied on occupiers primarily. One half of the year's tax was collected from occupants on the 25th March and 29th September – the old quarter days of 'Lady Day' and 'Michaelmas' respectively. Rents as an aside would also be collected by a tenant's landlord on those quarter days, as well as on the 24th of June and 25th December. March and September would therefore be expensive months for tenants. If a property was unoccupied then its owner would be charged with the tax.

The fact that the tax was imposed on occupiers means that it should be helpful to researchers. You will see who was actually living in a property on the relevant quarter day and can see their relative wealth or local standing by reference to the number of hearths in their property. The wealthiest might have twelve in a large mansion house whereas the rest of the population only one or two hearths.

There were exemptions from paying hearth tax. 'Paupers' did not have to pay. Additionally, householders would be exempted if the local vicar or the church-wardens gave a certificate to the effect that their houses were worth less than a rent of one pound per year and that the prospective taxpayer owned goods or chattels worth under ten pounds. Charitable 'hospitals' and almshouses were exempt from paying the hearth tax. It is interesting to note that 'industrial' hearths used for industrial purposes were exempt, apart from a blacksmith's forge and a baker's oven, so a blacksmith and a baker were assessed on their 'work' hearths.

From May 1664 a landlord had to pay the tax for a tenanted house if the occupying tenant was exempt from paying.

The surviving records include the actual *assessments*, which name individuals and how many hearths there were in their property and consequently how much tax they were expected to pay, and the *returns* showing how much had been paid. Some constables prepared returns showing arrears 1662-1665. Some constables marked on the assessments that the tax had been paid and consequently no separate return will have survived. Exemption certificates may also have survived. Whilst as I say above, paupers and others were not chargeable with the tax, the law nevertheless required them to be listed from 1663 onwards.

By the spring of 1664 it was accepted that collection of the tax needed to be changed. A new Act of parliament was passed taking the collection of the tax away from the constables and sheriffs. Officers called 'Receivers' were appointed by the Lord Treasurer, the Lord Chancellor and Exchequer Court judges. The receivers had to enter into bonds as security for the collection of the tax. The receivers were given copies of the 1662 assessment for their area and were given authority to enter all houses, in the presence of a local constable, to verify the details and update the assessment where required.

As previously, returns of the assessments were sent to the quarter sessions clerk of the peace, who was responsible for writing an assessment for the county. A copy went to the Exchequer.

Despite these changes it was decided in 1666 that the administration would be removed from 'receivers' and put into the hands of 'farmers' instead. Reluctance on the part of occupiers to pay, coupled with economic problems and the Great Plague of London in 1665 resulted in reduced tax collections.

From 25th March 1666 the administration and collection of the tax was 'farmed out' to a group of London businessmen for a period of seven years, and no requirement to account at the Exchequer. The businessmen paid a sum to the Exchequer for the right to collect the tax. The 'farmers' retained out of the tax collected a proportion as their commission. The Exchequer audited these records but unfortunately the lists of taxpayers' names were not given by the 'farmers' to the Exchequer. Farming out collection of the tax was very unpopular.

Unfortunately, the change did not prove successful, partially due to the Fire of London in September 1666, which destroyed the Hearth Tax office and records as well as severely diminishing the tax recovered due to the destruction of buildings.

As the TNA says in its guide referred to above *‘....Rumours that the hearth tax was to be abolished, and the rising expectations caused by the circulation of these rumours resulted in widespread and violent opposition to the farmers' collection, when they proved to be unfounded. Sporadic rioting occurred in various towns over the next two years. Justices of the peace, moreover, resenting the farmers as socially-inferior outsiders, were often uncooperative or obstructive. Finally, two other factors which contributed to the farmers' decision to surrender the farm at the end of three years were the disputes between the farmers and the Treasury over defalcations claimed, and the costly delays and confusion caused by the changeover from the administration of the receivers to that of the farmers at Lady Day 1666....’*

As a result, the collection of tax due in the autumn of 1669 was abandoned. The Treasury then had a change of heart and decided to revert to the use of receivers again. From Michaelmas 1669 until Lady Day 1674 the tax therefore again was administered by *receivers* and assessments and returns were enrolled by Quarter Sessions and duplicate copies were sent to the Exchequer.

This time the receivers would be responsible for two or three counties and agents were appointed to supervise the receivers and liaise with the Treasury. These changes improved the collection and receipts increased.

However rather curiously on Lady Day 1674, the receivers' contracts were terminated and the collection by 'farmers' was reintroduced! The role was put out to tender and the role was given to 3 'farmers' for 5 years. This five-year period was followed by another five-year lease to a different set of 'farmers' at an increased rent, from Lady Day 1679. In May 1683, the 'farm' was abolished and instead nine commissioners were appointed to administer the hearth tax and collect the cash.

The new monarchs William and Mary in 1689 at their first parliament on 13 February 1689 repealed the hated Hearth Tax.

It was described as *‘a badge of slavery upon the whole people exposing every man's house to be entered into and searched at pleasure by persons unknown to him’*.

The above explanation has been taken from the Gibson guide referred to at the start of the article, secondly from Mark D Herber's *‘Ancestral Trails’* (in association with the Society of Genealogists) paperback edition 2000 and thirdly the guide which can be read on the National Archives ('TNA') website using this link [Taxation before 1689 - The National Archives](#). A search on the TNA website using this class reference and 'hearth tax' reveals **11,507 results**.

TNA has a separate online database for class **E.179 records**. Unfortunately, it does not allow one to search by surname. As the TNA guide says

“.....The database is searchable by:

- *place (administrative divisions have often changed over time: basic details are in the E 179 database, and more specific information is available in reference works such as volumes of the Victoria County History and publications of the English Place-Name Society)*
- *date*
- *tax*
- *document type*

You cannot search by names of individuals, but the database can be used to identify documents which contain taxpayer names.....”

If one wishes to see the duplicates of the hearth tax returns and assessments you may do so at the TNA. Many record offices also have copies following the filming of the records at TNA by the

(now) University of Roehampton as part of what is now known as the Hearth Tax Research Project. The Gibson Guide referred to above refers to the involvement of Roehampton Institute in London in its preparation.

If you want to see entries for surnames online then you must visit the website [Hearth Tax Digital](#).

As the website explains “.....*Hearth Tax Digital is run and maintained by the Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities (University of Graz, Austria) and the Hearth Tax Research Project (University of Roehampton, UK) as part of Roehampton's Research Centre for Inclusive Humanities. Hearth Tax Digital's work is supported by the British Academy and the Marc Fitch Fund to run between 2018 and 2026 to publish the best surviving hearth tax assessment for each English county that has not previously had an assessment published. Hearth Tax Digital provides free online access to personal names, place name and administrative data relating to England in the Restoration era (1660-1688).*

Published counties so far include Cambridgeshire, Kent, Norfolk, County Durham, the Yorkshire West Riding, Westmorland, and Warwickshire. A Heritage Lottery Fund grant also funded the creation of a master microfilm of all hearth tax listings held at The National Archives, with copies distributed to the relevant county record offices around the country. The Hearth Tax Digital site lists its future publications on its site and states that by the end of this year it will hopefully include Yorkshire North Riding 1673 (TNA E179/216/462), [See the link above for further details.] It has already made available East Riding and West Riding transcriptions.

To visit the Hearth Tax Digital site, use this link [Hearth Tax Digital](#).

This will take you to a page listing the various counties whose tax records have been transcribed and digitised.

By way of example find the reference to *Tax Assessment West Riding of Yorkshire - Staincliffe and Ewcross wapentakes - Lady Day 1672*. Click on the page and you will be taken to this page [Hearth Tax Digital](#) for transcriptions of the March collection 1672 for this wapentake transcribed from TNA E179/210/418.

The transcriptions start on this page with Adingham (sic). You can browse for the village or town you are interested in by moving through the pages. However, it may be easier to use the advanced search button. Select the county –West Riding and insert the name of the location in the wapentake you want and the surname. I selected Horton in Ribblesdale. It revealed JOHN METCALFE who had 2 hearths [[WR5#h_e10107](#)]

Here is the result on the Hearth Tax Digital site for another JOHN METCALFE this time in DENT.

[WR5#h_e6241](#) John Metcalfe 2 chargeable Dent E179/210/418 1672-03-25

The first column is the organisation's reference. The second column shows the name of the taxpayer/occupier and the fact that he had 2 hearths and was chargeable. the town where he occupied the house was Dent and the final column is the TNA class reference and date.

A search for the family name revealed 45 more.

At present there are 371,767 named individuals on its site - obviously not all Metcalf(e)!

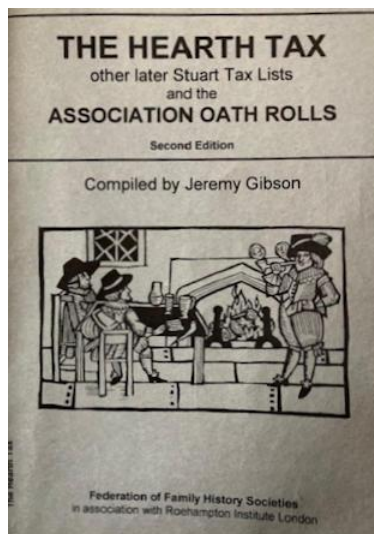
We are lucky that before the use of the internet and prior to the involvement of Hearth Tax Digital, the British Record Society over the years transcribed and printed several Hearth Tax Records.

A lengthy list is given on the website of Hearth Tax Digital using the link shown above. It includes West Riding and East Riding records thus: “..... Yorkshire East Riding 1672 (TNA E179/205/504) (25.06.2019): Neave, D., Neave, S., Ferguson, C., & E. Parkinson, eds., (2016) Yorkshire East Riding Hearth Tax, BA & BRS Hearth Tax Series X

Yorkshire West Riding 1672 (TNA E179/210/413) (22.03.2019): Hey, D., Giles, C., Spufford, M., & A. Wareham, eds., (2007) Yorkshire West Riding Hearth Tax Assessment Lady Day 1672, BA & BRS Hearth Tax Series V.....”

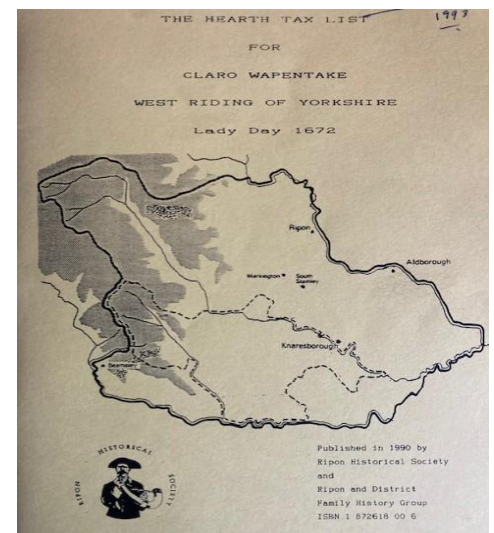
Many other antiquarians and local history groups transcribed the records.

For example, The Thoresby Society transcribed the Skyrack wapentake returns for 1672. This included Leeds and its environs.



The Yorkshire Archaeological Society published an index of the **Skyrack wapentake Lady Day 1672**. [ISSN 0265-119X]

The Ripon Historical Society and Ripon Harrogate and District Family History Group, did a remarkable job covering wapentakes across Yorkshire. In 1990 they published their transcript for the **Claro Wapentake** in the West Riding for Lady Day 1672. [ISBN 1 872618 00 6]. [TNA Ref E.179/210/400]



In 1991 they published the hearth tax list for **Agbrigg and Morley Wapentakes**, West Riding of Yorkshire, Lady Day 1672. They have also transcribed **Barston Ash and Osgoldcross Wapentakes**, Lady Day 1672, **Dickering, North, Mid and South Holderness wapentakes**, East Riding of Yorkshire, Lady Day, 1672, **Howden, Ouze and Darwant, Harthill Holme Beacon, Harthill Wilton and Buckrose wapentakes**, East Riding of Yorkshire, Lady Day 1672, the **North Riding of Yorkshire**, Michaelmas, 1673 hearth tax, a list for the **town and county of Hull and Harthill Hunsley and Harthill Bainton Beacon wapentakes**, East Riding of Yorkshire, Lady Day, 1672 and a list for **York city parishes and Ainsty Wapentake**, Lady Day 1672.

These and more are referred to on Family Search -see link

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/catalog/490592>. You do need to log onto the site first though to see the list of their publications.

An added bonus is the fact that the society has added just under 200 Metcalf(e)s named in the transcriptions prepared by the Ripon and Harrogate booklets and added them to a separate section of the website entitled *Hearth Tax Records*.

To locate it, open up the society's website, then log on using your password. Visit next *the members Room* and locate the button along the top showing 'search records' and click on it. A drop-down list opens showing the various databases available for you to search. One near the bottom is for *hearth tax records*. Click on it and enter the surname *Metcalf(e)* and you will be given

a list of individuals. Click on a name and you will obtain details of that persons' name location and the number of hearths in the property they occupied.

Here is an example

Hearth Tax Record information for

Edw (Edward) Metcalfe

[Home](#) [The Name](#) [Join Us](#) [Projects](#) [Events](#) [News](#) [Contact](#) [Shop](#) [Members Room](#) [Search Records](#)

[Image Library](#) [Log out](#) [0 items](#)

Year	Surname	Forename(s)	Number
1673	Metcalfe	Edw (Edward)	1
WP	Town	Country	
Hang West	Askrigg	UK	

Notes

Michaelmas 29 Sept 1673 (in the absence of precise dating). Extracted from Ripon Historical Society publications.

It shows Edward Metcalfe was assessed as occupier in Askrigg (wapentake of Hang West) where he had one hearth.

In conclusion using the published transcripts (subject of course to the dangers of relying upon them not the original source!) both printed and online you ought to be able to locate your ancestors.

The tax assists in that you have a record on a given date of occupiers of houses and a chance of comparing the size of their property with their neighbours. One can assume that the tax payers were adults over 21 years of age. Widows were listed especially when 'poor' if you are lucky with their first name. If a family had unmarried children living with them, they would not be named of course but equally you can conclude that the taxpayer was the father rather than the child when studying parish registers. All the wapentakes in North Yorkshire hopefully will be included online later this year.

I have concentrated on Yorkshire for obvious reasons but there are lots of assessments for other counties to find.

David Lambert, MN0011

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using your credit card.**

I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you have any comments, research questions or articles you wish to contribute, please contact editor@metcalfe.org.uk

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