

# Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society



## **Chorley Branch Education Group Talk Handout Further Steps Poor Law**

## Poor Law

- Relief of the Poor Acts date back to 1349 after the Black Death
- It was an attempt to stop labourers roaming the country to find work at better wages and where laws were not too strictly enforced

## Rogues and Vagabonds

- During the next two centuries more laws were enforced mainly to keep vagabonds and vagrants off the roads
- The Statute of Legal Settlement in the reign of Edward VI enacted that beggars could be branded or made a slave for two years, but the impotent poor were to be housed in cottages erected for the purpose where they could be cured or relieved
  - Wikipedia Definition – Rogue - In [England](#), the 1572 Vagabonds Act defined a rogue as a person who has no land, no master, and no legitimate trade or source of income; it included rogues in the class of idle [vagrants](#) or [vagabonds](#). If a person were apprehended as a rogue, he would be stripped to the waist, whipped until bleeding, and a hole, about the compass of an inch about, would be burned through the cartilage of his right ear with a hot iron. [\[2\]](#) A rogue who was charged with a second offense, unless taken in by someone who would give him work for one year, could face execution as a [felony](#). A rogue charged with a third-offense would only escape death if someone hired him for two years. The 1598 Vagabonds Act banished and transplanted "incorrigible and dangerous rogues" overseas, and the 1604 Act commanded that rogues be branded with the letter "R" on their bodies.
  - Wikipedia Definition - Vagabond - In 16th and 17th century England, a vagrant was a person who could work but preferred not to (or could not find employment, so took to the road in order to do so), or one who begged for a living. Vagrancy was illegal, punishable by branding, whipping, conscription into the military, or at times [penal transportation](#) to [penal colonies](#).

## **Overseers**

- After the 1598 Act Overseers of the Poor were appointed in every parish to find work for the unemployed and set-up parish houses for those who could not support themselves
- The Overseers had to go round the parish and collect the poor relief from the wealthier inhabitants – not a very popular part of an unpopular job

## **Settlement**

- After 1662, not only rogues and vagabonds were removed from parishes, but also anyone who could become a liability on the parish could be removed to their parish of settlement

## **Parish help**

- The impotent poor could be helped in their own homes by being given bread and wheat and potatoes to grow
- Parish houses or poor-houses were built by parishes for housing the poor
- Poor children could be apprenticed by the parish

## **Apprentices**

- An indenture



**In loco parentis**

- Apprentices could be beaten by their masters, but they very often married the master's daughter



## Apprentice records

	Name of the poor child being apprenticed	Name of the master or trader	Place of residence of the master	Occupation of the master	Term of the apprenticeship
<b>1775</b>					
489	Elizabeth GIPSON	Joseph TINKER	Tipton	Housewife to nailer	21 or married
<b>1776</b>					
490	Elizabeth FOSTER	Isaac BALLAMEY	Kingswinford	Pipemaker	21 or married
491	Isaac ROBINSON	James MARSH	Oldswinford	Nailer	Until 24
492	William SIDAWAY	George SIDAWAY	Oldswinford	Nailer	Until 24
493	Henry WIDDOWS	James GREEN	Blocsidge (Bloxwich)	Nailer	Until 24
<b>1777</b>					
494	Nancy GIBSON	Isaac BELLAMY	Kingswinford	Pipemaker	21 or married
495	Edward HILL	Joshua JEVONS	<u>Oldswinford</u>	Nailer	Until 24
496	Francis PERKES	Samuel PERKES	<u>Oldswinford</u>	Nailer	Until 24
<b>1778</b>					
497	Elizabeth GREEN	Thomas CHAMBERLIN	Oldswinford	Housewife to farmer	21 or married
498	Elizabeth BROOKS	Francis SUTTON	Kingswinford	Housewife to bricklayer	21 or married

Repository	Lancashire Archives
Level	Item
Reference number	<a href="#">DDPR/138/1</a>
Title	Register of Apprentices
Date	1682-1744
AccessStatus	Open

## **London apprentices**

- There are many records from the various London Guilds or Livery Companies
- These are early records of the Merchant Taylors Company
- First a page from the register of apprentice bindings (1609)

Thomas ap Evan filius Johannis ap Iwan de mallyllan  
in villa Miamoult' episcopi de seipsum Thomas filius de  
Septimo pro septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' prime  
die Augusti Anno Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie  
et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Johannes Hoord filius Thome Hoord aap de Jesson in  
villa Estall' p'prietari' de familia de seipsum Joh' Hoord de  
ville Estall' pro septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat'  
Septimo die Augusti Anno Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi  
Anglie et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Josephus Cook filius Petri Cook de Darnham in villa de  
villagio scilicet de seipsum Josephus de Darnham pro  
Septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' Septimo die Augusti Anno  
Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Robtus David filius Willielmi David de Wintonon in villa de  
Wintonon gentis de seipsum Robtus de Wintonon pro  
Septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' Septimo die Augusti Anno  
Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Franciscus Welesford filius Willielmi Welesford de Sutton  
in villa Wintonon gentis de seipsum Franciscus de Sutton  
pro Septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' Septimo die  
Augusti Anno Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Jacobus Dunning filius Willielmi Dunning de Wintonon in villa de  
Wintonon gentis de seipsum Jacobus de Wintonon pro  
Septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' Septimo die Augusti  
Anno Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Willielmus Dartnidge filius Willielmi Dartnidge in villa de  
Wintonon gentis de seipsum Willielmus de Wintonon pro  
Septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' Septimo die Augusti  
Anno Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Thomas Millard filius Johannis Millard de Wintonon in villa de  
Wintonon gentis de seipsum Thomas de Wintonon pro  
Septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' Septimo die Augusti  
Anno Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie et Sextimo

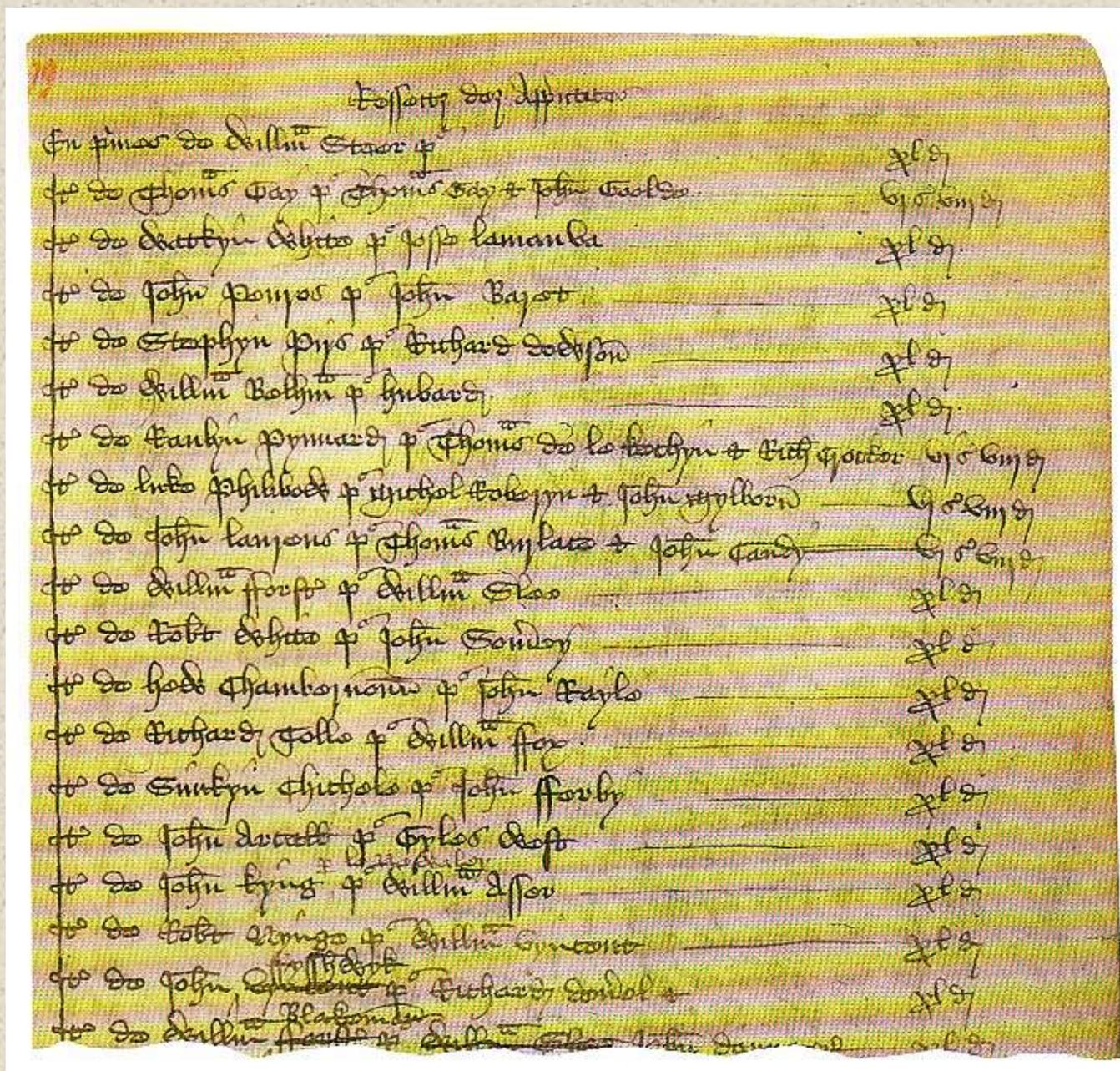
Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

Thomas Brownie filius Thome Brownie de Wintonon in villa de  
Wintonon gentis de seipsum Thomas de Wintonon pro  
Septimo annis a die dat' hujus patris dat' Septimo die Augusti Anno  
Domini 1609 Anno regni Jacobi Anglie et Sextimo

Patris et matris  
Septimo Augusti  
1609

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- None of these apprentices were from London
- They were from Wales, Cambridge, Wiltshire, Lincolnshire, Somerset, Staffordshire and Warwickshire
- Each member paid dues (3s 4d or ½ a noble) and were entered in the Master and Wardens Account Books



## **Proof of Settlement**

- To live in a parish, and therefore claim relief, you had to prove settlement in several different ways
- Up to 1692 by owning freehold property and residing in it and renting a property or land let at £10 per annum
- After 1692 there were four new ways of claiming settlement
- By holding a parish office
- By paying local rates
- By hiring oneself out to a master in the parish for one year
- By serving an apprenticeship in the parish

## **Children and Wives**

- Legitimate children acquired settlement by birth in the parish, unless their parents' place of settlement was different and could be verified
- Married women gained the settlement of their husbands

## **Vagabonds**

- Inhabitants of Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands had no place of settlement, and could only be removed under the Vagrancy laws
- Settlement certificates are very useful in family history as they can give a lot of biographical detail

## **Settlement Certificates**

- Here is a transcript of a settlement certificate from Cambridgeshire



Soham in the  
County of Cambridge

Wee whose Hands and Seals are hereunto set Church =  
wardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Pish of Soham =  
In the County of Cambridge: Doe hereby Certifie Owen  
and Acknowledge Margrit Manth's Widdow; to be Law =  
fully and Legally Sattled in our Pish of Soham. In =  
Witness whereof wee have hereunto set our hands and Seals  
the 30<sup>th</sup> Day of March: In the year of our Lord: 1714

Attested by vs two  
Freeholders of the  
Parish of Soham

M. Wilkin

Ow Dechoy Jun  
Edmou Broock



Church

Luko Staples



Wardens

Lancelott Rigg

James Hanna

William Palmer



Overseers

of  
the Poor

Wee whose Names are hereunto set  
his Maj<sup>ties</sup> Justices of Peace for the County of Down  
of this Certificate dated 9<sup>th</sup> Day 1714 year above said

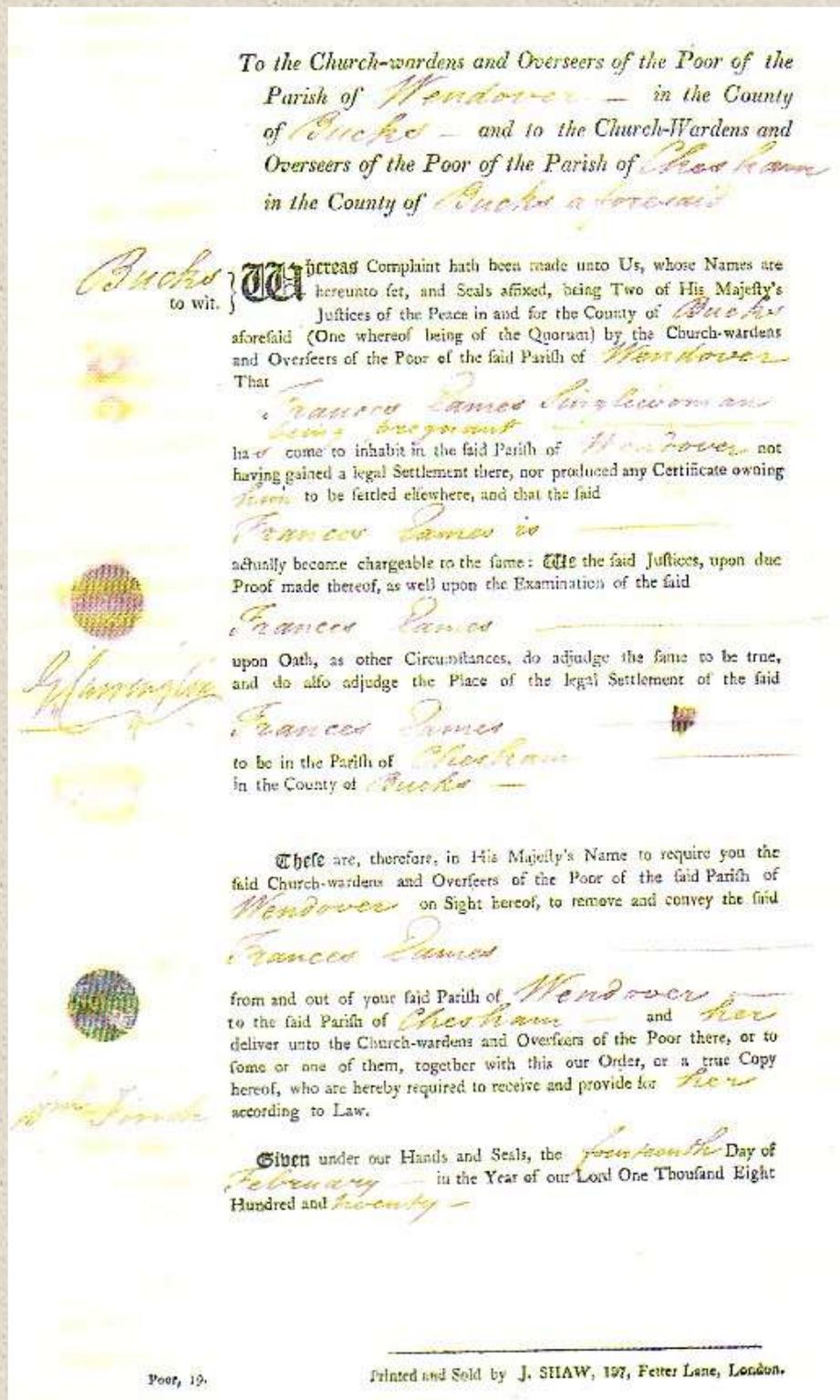
Clement Palmer  
Rob: Clarke  
G. Jefferson



P68/13/4/9

## Removals

- Some parishes looked after their impotent poor well, but could be quite brutal in their treatment of single women who were pregnant
- Removal to a place of settlement could also be very brutal – old, infirm people could be moved across the country in the depths of winter to their place of settlement and dumped on the local Overseers of the Poor



## Indemnity Bonds

- Indemnity bonds were entered into when it was likely that someone could be a drain on the parish resources
- Sureties of up to £50 could be assigned to indemnify the churchwardens, overseers and parishioners against any loss from care of illegitimate children, unsupported wives, etc

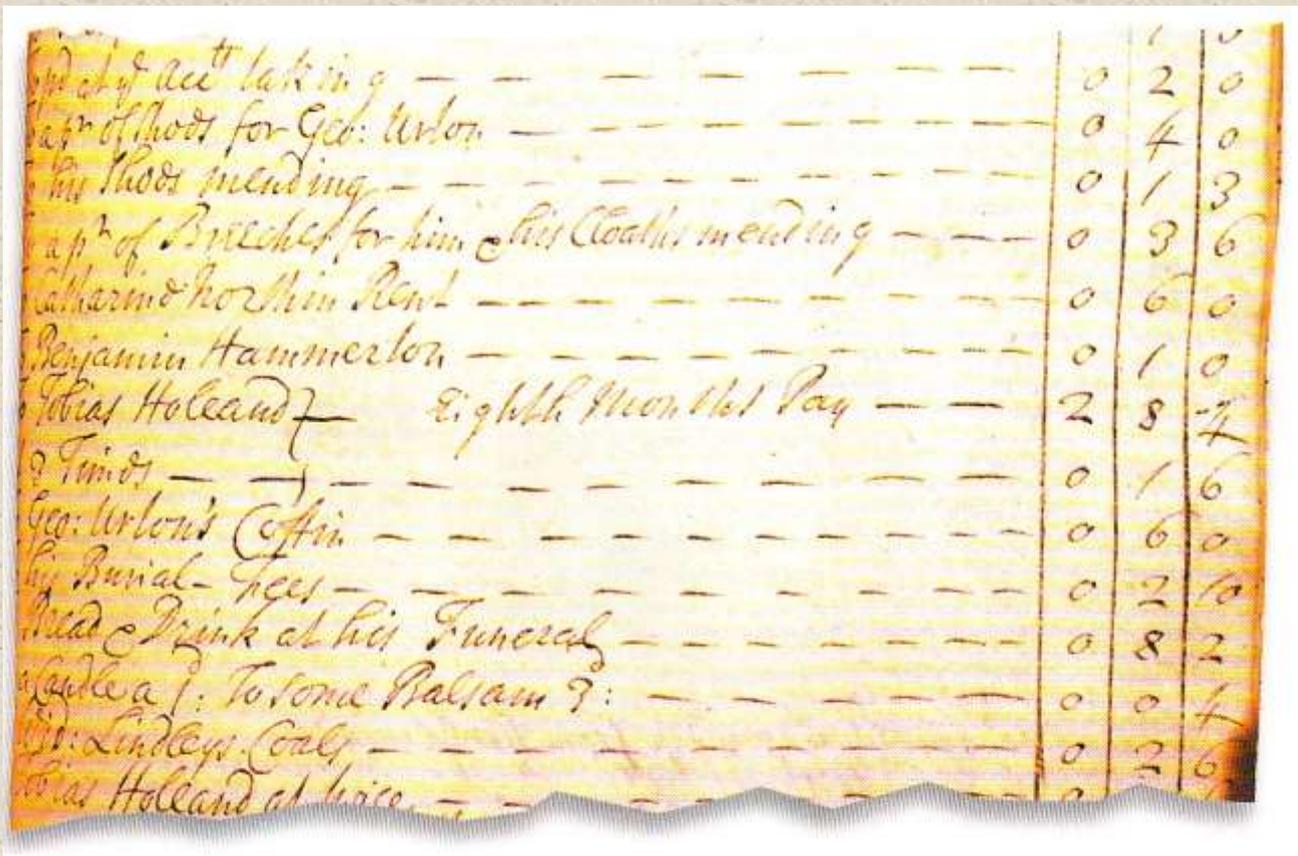
E.g.

- 1685 – John BROOKHURST, senr. Locksmith of Stourbridge, Thomas PARKES, weaver of Stourbridge. Bond re. John WHEELER, baker, late of St Nicholas, Worcester, and his wife come to live in Stourbridge
- 1716 – Edward HAYNES, weaver of Stourbridge and William HAYNES, baker of the same. Bond re female bastard child born in Stourbridge to Elizabeth BLUE, singlewoman

## Poor relief

- The parish helped people not only with food but with clothing
- When paupers died the parish also paid for their funerals and bread and drink for the mourners

for him	0 9 4
for Thread & making	0 0 3
A yard of 1/2 of Cloth at 2:8	0 4 0
A skin for Pockets 8. Harding 2. Button & Thread 3: 24 Taylor	
Wages	0 2 1
for his shoes mending in yr half year	0 1 1
for Geo: Urton a p <sup>r</sup> of shoes soeling & covering	0 1 3
for a p <sup>r</sup> of Stockins for him	0 2 2
for a new Hat	0 2 0
for a p <sup>r</sup> of new shoes	0 4 0
for 5 yards 1/2 of Cloth for 2 shifts for him	0 4 1
for a p <sup>r</sup> of shoes soeling, covering & nails	0 1 7
for 2 shifts for Mary Cudworth 4 yards at 9 byard	0 3 0
The expences at Martha Motforth's funeral	0 14 0
for repairing Tho: Woodhead's House at Birdwell	a 10 1



- If your ancestors kept on the right side of the law and were not the indigent poor nor the very richest in a parish you might have to use a very large magnifying glass to find a mention of them in older records
- Keep looking though and they will wave at you from the sidelines – usually where you least expect it

Lancashire Family History & Heraldry Society  
**Chorley Research Centre at Astley Hall Farmhouse**

**Opening times**

First & Third Saturdays Noon—4:00pm  
 Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10:00am—4:00pm  
 Last appointment 3:00pm

**Booking advisable**—Tel. 01257 231 600 (When centre is open),  
 Tel 01257 262 028 (When centre is closed)  
 or

**Book in line at - Chorley Family History Research Centre Website – [www.cfhrc.com](http://www.cfhrc.com)**

**Research Enquires - [chorleyresearch@lfhhs.org.uk](mailto:chorleyresearch@lfhhs.org.uk)**

**Chorley Branch Website - [www.lfhhschorleybranch.com](http://www.lfhhschorleybranch.com)**

**LFHHS**

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