Welcome to issue fifteen of the newsletter.

I have included in this issue a rather long article on the Minney Index as it is time that it came out into the open. The index now consists of over 5,700 records, mostly English and mostly pertaining to the 19th century. I have used it to good effect recently in assisting some of you with your queries, and in one or two cases it has saved a lot of hard work.

Quite by accident I seem to have started a collection of books by R J Minney. During the past year I have found in second hand book shops his 'Tower of London', 'Hampton Court' and 'Rasputin' to add to 'Carve her name with pride' which I found some years ago. Mind you, he did write over 25 books so I have some way to go yet. I have also tracked down copies of 'Kings England' for the counties of Bucks and Northants. Now all I need is a copy of Beds & Hunts to complete the set for me.

As usual I remind you that now is the time to send in your subs - £3 UK and £5.50 overseas. I still have outstanding ten subscriptions from last year, that is the equivalent of an issue's postal bill. Luckily, some of you generously give more which makes up for the shortfall.

My new year resolution is to catch up with the updating of records. I have plans to visit Bedford Record Office to concentrate on Great Barford and later do some research in London. I have come to a temporary halt at St Catherine's House (thank goodness). I also intend to obtain results of the 1881 census index as and when they are released. One of the exciting prospects for me is the Information Highway and the availability of records world-wide to family historians, but first I must update my pc and buy a modem, so I had better start saving.

You will notice that I have deleted the back page index, mostly because it took up valuable space, was not 100% accurate (surnames and places easily confused by the computer) and was a pain to set up. If you feel that it should return let me know and I will put it back.

Finally, a sobering thought; since 1990 I have written over 60,000 words for the newsletter!

Happy New Year.

Barrie Minney

2 Stanley Cottages, Sheffield Park, Near Uckfield, East Sussex. TN22 3QG. England

telephone   Newick   (01825)   723051

New Member

Welcome to Ken Blackwell of 8 Cliff Mews, Paignton, Devon. His line of Minney originates from Flamstead in Hertfordshire. He is member number 50!

If anyone is interested in a holiday in the sun then contact Ken. He has a holiday apartment for rental near Marbella, Costa Del Sol available all year round at £65 per week. Ken can be contacted on 0803 521743 for more information.

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The Minney Index

When I first started the Minney Index I thought I could cope with a card index. I soon realised that this was not going to work. I then invested in a computer and jumped headlong into a powerful software database called dBase 3+. The reason I chose dBase was that there was no tailor made software for one-namers but plenty for 'normal' family historians (whatever they may be!). Also, I did not wish to embark on several years of transcribing records to find that the software was obsolete.

As I went along entering records I was able to adjust how it worked in response to the various sources that I was extracting information from. Census entries in particular gave me a headache.

The database consists of individual Minney entries (records), normally one record for each particular event such as birth, marriage or death. Each record will have a number of fields such as firstname, secondname, event, place etc. A full list is given later. Obviously not all the fields will be used all of the time.

Each record is indexed on the prime name extracted from a record. For instance; when recording from a baptism in the IGI just one record is made with the baptised child as the prime name and the parents entered in the same database record. The parents will not have their own prime record. They can be found when searching the database by using the Male (male relative) and Female (female relative) indexes. This saves time, computer space and duplication.

Upon marriage a female taking the name Minney will not get a separate record, she can be found using the Female index.

Where I have information that a widowed Minney has remarried I will enter her as if she was a

Minney and also give her maiden name if known and details of the groom. I will try to clarify this in the notes plus any other information such as date of death.

Any query on the spelling or accuracy of the transcription will be further clarified in the Notes field. I will not attempt to make corrections to transcripts but where I feel there may have been an error then I will mention this in the notes field.

No attempt is made to link any records.

Many events will be duplicated ie; a baptism record from an entry in the IGI will also have a separate record from the entry in the corresponding parish register.

Where a record (such as a census entry) includes a married girl whose maiden name is known to have been Minney then I have indexed under Minney and included spouse details in the non-Minney male fields. Other wise there is no other way of showing that individual in the index. Clarification will be given in the notes field.

Initially the database is indexed on Firstname, Gencode, and Date fields. The reason for using Gencode before the Date field is that in some cases I do not have a date to refer to.

The database also has secondary indexes on the male_rel and female_rel fields. I can construct other indexes as and when using any combination of fields.

After some experimenting with dBase which is known to be cumbersome I have decided on the following method of searching and collating records:

If I have a request for records relating to say a Samuel Minney after 1820 but before 1900 who lived in Bedford, then I would copy all the records to a new database where the Firstname (and possibly Secondname) and Male_rel fields equal Samuel and the County equalled Bedfordshire. I would also exclude any records outside the two dates given.

I would then index/sort this new database into any order I wanted such as date or place and then print it out.

I will keep this new database on my computer as long as I have disc space in case of further queries for any additional info. Any request should quote the record number which is unique to the temporary database and will ensure the exact record is used.

After much experimenting I have settled on the following fields for each record. Although in theory it is possible to have over 120 fields for each record I have kept them to a minimum so that each record will fit on one screen.

AGE

Only used if given in the original source.

If source states "of age" or similar without a definite age or states less than a year old then I have ignored this field and mentioned this in the Notes field.

COUNTRY

I use abbreviations such as ENG, WLS, USA etc.

If the number of countries becomes a long list or references are obscure I will then list the abbreviations in a separate document.

COUNTY/STATE

This will be the Chapman County Code for England, Wales, Scotland and Eire. I have used my own abbreviations for other countries such as the USA.

DATE

One of the drawbacks of dBase is that you cannot use a partial date, a serious problem when recording details from a directory, GRO etc. Eventually I scrapped the date field and designed my own. There are now 3 fields - day, mth and ye(a)r. By having three separate fields for each date allows partial completion. The indexes have been amended accordingly by indexing on yer(year), then mth(month) and then day. The original date field has been kept in case I need to check any older entries prior to November 94 but this field no longer shows on the screen. I have updated all the previous partial date entries.

GRO entries now show as 3,6,9 or 12 month depending on which quarter the record comes from.

EVENT

I have designed my own codes for all the various events. These are listed in a separate document. I have kept to a simple formula using four letters eg; 'bapt' for baptism, 'marr' for marriage.

Some types of record entries can cause complications and I have listed below those that have given me a problem so far;

Census

1841 census. If individual is over 15 years then the age was rounded down to nearest 5 years ie 19 shows as 15 etc.

Each person appearing in a census return is given a record.

Some relationships are calculated guesses.

I have shown the head of household as husband to wife or father/mother to daughters/sons and not used the term 'head' as this is ambiguous. Except in those cases where the head of the household is shown as a widow or widower then I have put as head, unless I know that the head is the father or mother of the other occupants. In the Notes field I have stated as widow or widower and listed other members of the household. Where there are no other Minney members of that household then I have shown the head as male, female, widow, widower in the Relationship field. I know this sounds confusing but it makes sense when you have to enter up some of the more complicated households (and in this respect the guilty families always appear in Yardley Hastings!)

If relationships are not clear for each individual to other members of household I have put 'u' (unknown) and where there is a relationship query I have listed the household members with their ages in notes to assist in cross checking.

If grandchildren are shown in same household as their parents and grandparents I have shown as gs or gd to head (ie grandfather and grandmother) as stated in the census return. Probable parents are given in the Notes field.

If a Minney female is living with her family but has since married (or where the record indicates the maiden name as Minney) then I have indexed her as a Minney, put spouse details in non-Minney male field and clarified same in notes.

Parent mentioned in marriage certificate

Event code = 'parm'

I have entered first name(s) and surname as usual plus if son is getting wed then I have recorded the son and daughter-in-laws' first names and her maiden name in.

If a daughter is getting wed then I have put her first name in and put her husbands first name and surname in 'Not Minney Male' fields.

If Minney marries a Minney I have entered in notes field "Minney wed Minney".

If parent is shown as deceased I see little point in putting place details in.

Somerset House entries

I have given relationship of main person named in index to the person(s) granted probate or letters of administration. There is a separate record for each person mentioned. In addition I have given a separate record for the main person if a date of death is stated. In Notes field I have added any useful comments that are given in the extract eg; amount left etc. Event codes = 'will & exor'.

Witness at a wedding

If to a male Minney wedding then I have used fields for husband, wife and wife's maiden name. If for a female Minney wedding then I have used wife firstname only, I have not entered her maiden name as Minney (left blank) and I have entered 'not Minney' male firstname and surname.

If a witness to a wedding that is not Minney then I have just entered details of the groom and added details of the wife in Notes field.

Any queries on events are clarified in the Notes field

Unless relationship is definitely known I have put 'u' and used a gencode the same as the persons getting married.

FEMALE_REL = Dau/Wife/Mother/Head

Used for wife, mother, daughter or head of household to the prime name.

FIRSTNAME

Spellings taken as given.

GENCODE

Generation codes are a useful way of 'dating' persons and placing them in their correct place in the index when age or date of birth are unknown. For example, in most family trees there are gaps in dates, the names are known but not their dates of birth. In cases like this you take a starting point where a date is known such as that person's grandson who was born in 1813. This would give the grandson a generation code 'O'. His father would then be given a generation code of 'N' and likewise the grandfather a code 'M'. Overlapping can occur so I always check one further generation when searching the index.

I have used the code devised by Frank Leeson as follows;

A 1380-1409 B 1410-1439 C 1440-1469 D 1470-1499 E 1500-1529
F 1530-1559 G 1560-1589 H 1590-1619 I 1620-1649 J 1650-1679
K 1680-1709 L 1710-1739 M 1740-1769 N 1770-1799 O 1800-1829
P 1830-1859 Q 1860-1889 R 1890-1919 S 1920-1949 T 1950-1979
U 1980-2009 . Any entries prior to 1380 then I would use -Z and work backwards

A burial without a given age would be labelled two gencodes previous and a wedding one previous gencode before the date of the event.

If a parent is shown on the marriage certificate then I have allocated a generation code of two before the event date (ie one before son/daughter getting married). This may cause variations in generation codes used for the same person.

If the event is a burial of a child then I have used a code for that year, likewise if entry just states son or daughter of ? then I have assumed it was a child death.

MAIDENAME = Her maiden name

Used for wife or mother's maiden name when given.

MALE_REL = Father/Husband/Son/Head

Used for male relation to prime name.

NONSURNAME = His Surname

Relates to a Non Minney male (spouse to a Minney female).

See Non xname.

NON XNAME = NON MINNEY MALE SPOUSE FIRST NAME

Used when female marrying out of Minney or a Minney witness to a non Minney wedding. On the two occasions so far where two Minneys have married I have put the husband in this field and the field above as it made sense if I had to search all records of female Minneys and their marriages.

NOTES_1 & NOTES_2 = Notes

This will include details of addresses, witnesses and anything else to clarify entries particularly census returns where relationships are not clear when more than one family/generation are recorded at one address.

Consists of two fields of 62 characters each sitting one above the other.

OCCUPATION

Again, I have made up my own four letter codes which are listed in a separate document..

ORIGIN

A field to cater for records that state place of residence, birth etc which is different to where the event is taking place or where area of village is given. For example; where a baptism is taking place in Flamstead and the parents' address is given as Friars Wash, Flamstead. A code for Friars Wash will be entered on the origin field.

Only applies to the prime name on the record. For example if a female married a Minney and came from a different parish to the wedding the only place this would be mentioned is in the Notes field.

If a detailed address is given such as a house number and street then I have added this to the Notes field.

This is a three letter code which is listed in a separate document.

PLACE

This will be the town or village of the event. Does include Church if space permits as this allows for easier indexing and searches. If there is no room then I have included further details in the Notes field. This is for the place of event and not for a detailed address given in say, a baptism. For example; if a baptism takes place in Flamstead and the parents address is given as Friars Wash, Flamstead then Flamstead will be put in Place field and Friars Wash will be given a code and placed in Origin field. See Origin field above.

REL=Relation

This field records the relationship between the prime name and others recorded at the event. The most obvious use is at a baptism - son or daughter to parents (male_rel & female_rel fields). Where no relationship is given I have put 'u' (unknown) or where no other person is named at source then 'm', 'f' or 'u' (male, female and unknown).

When copying from a record such as a family tree where a person's relationship changes eg; a wife to a widow then I have tried to remember to do this when entering the burial record.

A one or two letter code listed in a separate document.

SECONDNAME

Self explanatory. Also, if there is a third name then I have include it here.

SOURCE

Refers to type of source eg; IGI, PR, PRTR (transcript), GRO (St Catharines House), TREE (family

firstname XXXXXXXXXX second name XXXXXXXXXXXXXX surname XXXXXXXX

 event XXXX   date XX XX XXXX

 relationship or sex XX of/to male relative XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

 and/or female relative XXXXXXXXXXXXXX her maiden name XXXXXXXXXX

 non Minney male firstname XXXXXXXXXXXXXX his surname XXXXXXXXXX

 age XXX occupation XXXX generation code X   origin if stated XXX

 place of event XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX county or state XXX country XXX

 notes   XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

          XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

                      source XXXXXXXXXX

tree) LETTER etc. Individual trees and letters will be numbered. Where letters are received and they include information from various sources ie census and parish registers then I have given the source as 'Letter___?' as opposed to a census or pr reference. This is purely for ease of filing of the original document

These codes are listed in a separate document and currently comprises of four pages.

SURNAME

I have recorded all the various spellings of Minney and Minnell and have not attempted to correct them.

Above is an example of an entry as it would appear on the computer screen.

Although I have spent many a lonely hour entering up records on the index I cannot claim all the credit for it. A vast amount of information has been supplied by many of you and without your help this index would not exist.

Even though I still have a large number of records to add to the index, it is now capable of being a useful research tool. I have concentrated on the parish records of Northants, Bedfordshire, Bucks and other places where Minney families were known to have lived. In addition records from St Catherines House (births up to 1916, marriages to 1921 and deaths to 1930) have been added. The

number of different sources where Minney details have been found number in excess of 100. Over 300 different parishes have had their registers checked and nearly 45 census indexes analysed. There

are now over 5,700 records on the index and before I give a breakdown of those figures I must apologise to those of you in the USA and Australia. I have a lot of your records to put on the index (particularly USA) but felt that as nearly all the roads lead back to Northamptonshire and surrounding counties it was important to get these on first.

I have been playing around with some of the statistics and thought you might be interested in the following:

Surnames

There are a total of 79 variant spellings on Minney (52 types) and Minnell (27 types). The vast majority of these are 'one-off' mis-spellings.

The numbers are; Minney (4,539), Miney (191), Minnell (189), Minell (155), Minnie (151), and Minny (63) and accounted for 5,288 out of the 5,700. Minney alone has 80% of the entries in the index. The remaining 73 spellings add up to only 7% of the total entries.

Events

There are 25 different event codes currently in use. The most popular is 'born' (1,310), then comes 'marr' (1,062), 'bapt' (936), 'died' (861), 'cens' (860) and 'bur'd' (336).

County

There are 63 different counties and states listed to date. The most popular county is, of course Northants with 2,066, next is Bedfordshire (1,537), London (387), Bucks (287), Herts (126), Hunts (94),Cheshire (94) Hants (91), Herefordshire (66), Durham (62) Glamorgan (59) and Yorkshire (58).

Places

Over 500 different places have been recorded. The most common is Yardley Hastings with 1,042. Next is Bedford (437), Hardingstone (417), Gt Barford (315), and Wellingborough (230). Some of these place totals are distortions caused by the GRO entries. For instance the Hardingstone figure is just those entries from St Catherines House and would include Yardley Hastings. The same could be said for the Bedford entries which include Gt Barford and surrounding villages.

Although there over 500 different places the top 9 account for over 3,000 (53%) records.

Sources

The most common source of information is St Catherines House (GRO) with 2,588 entries. Followed by Parish Registers (979), Census (811), IGI (659), Somerset House (76) and Gravestones (56).

Generation Codes

All entries are given a generation code and I have listed these in gencode order followed by the number of entries for each code;

F= 2, G= 6, H= 16, I= 10, J= 41, K= 68, L= 137, M= 205, N= 567, O= 966, P= 1,469, Q= 1,376, R= 716, S= 106, T= 19. The most popular period is from 1770 to 1889 and has 4,378 entries.

The highest number of entries is for England (5,429). With USA (107), Wales (62) and Australia (39). Other countries including Scotland and Canada account for the remaining 63. I expect the USA to exceed a thousand once I embark on their records.

These figures are not static and are really just for our enjoyment but they do show what is now available on the index. It has taken five years to get this far but just think that before 1990 this information just wasn't available. I was told that each entry can be costed at 50p so even I can work out that the index has cost over £2,000 but is worth far more.

All I ask now is that you use it. Send your request in even if it is to check information that you already hold. And if you have anything then send that as well. As you can see I am desperately short on records for this century, and overseas records. It would be a great assistance if everyone sent in their family tree, no matter how sparse the detail. It doesn't matter, I will make use of it.

Those of you with computers who wish to have a copy of the index then drop me a line.

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Robert Minnie of Virginia

In several of the newsletters I have printed extracts from Connie Allen's and Fern Minney's books on the USA Minney line. These family lines are descendants of Daniel Minney who first appears in New Jersey in tax returns of 1778.

Whilst glancing through Fern Minney's book I found the following snippet:

".....There is also on record a parchment deed granting to Robert Minnie by the Commonwealth of Virginia a certain tract of land, which reads as follows; "Edmund Randolph, Esquire of the Commonwealth of Virginia, to all to whom these presents shall come, greetings, know ye, that by virtue of certificate in right of settlement given by the county, for adjusting title to unpatented land in the district of Monongalia - (then follows a description of the tract of land which is illegible) there is granted by the said Commonwealth the said Robert Minnie. Signed Samuel Burros. Entered book 42 Monongalia County Court 1788. Re Robert Minnie assignee."

Records have not been found to identify this Robert Minnie with the family of Daniel Minney....."

I suspect that Robert may be worth further investigation in USA records, particularly if he is a relative of Daniel Minney. It is a well known theory in family history that if you get stuck then go sideways and up. In other words concentrate on other members of that generation.

The one frustrating fact about the USA Minney line is that there are others researching Minney in the

States who for whatever reason do not wish to know about Minneys outside the USA. This is odd because eventually they must begin to research their line in England. Perhaps time will tell.

<p style="text-align:center">✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱</p>

Certificates

From David Minney

Birth of Henry Samuel Minnie son of William and Martha (nee Watts) on 14th January 1886 at 21 Chapel Place, Northampton. Father's occupation is given as 'General Labourer'.

Marriage of Harry Samuel Minney age 24, a drayman, to Harriett Skillman age 21, bachelor and spinster, both of 122 Great Russell Street, Northampton on 25th December 1909. Father of Harry is William, a labourer. The wedding took place at St Lawrence Parish Church after Banns.

Birth of Alfred Herbert Minney son of Harry Samuel and Harriett (nee Skillman) on 21st February 1920 at 111 Great Russell Street, Northampton. Father's occupation is given as 'Brewers Motor Lorry Driver Ex-Army'.

Death of Harry Samuel Minney, age 37 years, a Brewers Motor Lorry Driver on 22nd May 1923 at 111 Great Russell Street, Northampton. Cause of death:- 1. Pneumonia. 2. Syncope. Informant is the widow, present at death, Harriett Minney.

Marriage of Alfred Herbert Minney, age 23 years, Motor Lorry Driver 197383 HM Army to Margaret Bould, age 20 years, Counter Hand NAAFI on 12th February 1944 at Chickenley, Dewsbury, West Riding, Yorks. Bachelor and Spinster. His address is 111 Great Russell Street, Northampton and hers is Dewsbury. Father of Alfred is Harry Samuel Minney (deceased), driver. The wedding took place at the Methodist Church, Chickenley. Harriet Minney was a witness.

<p style="text-align:center">✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱✱</p>

Bucks King's Own Militia

Militia consisted of able bodied men between the ages of 16 and 60 who performed military service for local defence and, on occasions further afield. A sort of cross between the National Service and the Home Guard.

Joan Robinson has supplied a letter from Buckinghamshire County Record Office regarding the Bucks King's Own Militia. It reads as follows;

> "Samuel Minney of Clifton (Reynes) was appointed a corporal on 14th July 1810 and a sergeant on 15th February 1814. I have not been able to discover when he joined the militia.
>
> William Minney of Clifton served as substitute for Richard Barrett for the parishes of Nash and Little Crawley from 16th Jan 1808 to 10th August 1815.

"It was common practice for a man picked to serve in the militia to pay a substitute to serve for him if he could afford to do so."

"While a man served in the militia his family had to be supported by their parish. The parish expenses were reimbursed by the County Treasurer. The militia accounts for Olney 1808-1815 have survived (ref L/Md/3). Samuel Minney's wife and children are mostly supported by Olney, although for part of 1814 the money is paid by Clifton Reynes. From 6th Nov 1809 to 2nd Jan 1810 before his marriage, Samuel Minney is paid by Tingewick[1] parish. William Minney's family are supported by North Crawley although they presumably still lived in Olney."

The Record Office also sent copies of the following two documents;

Royal Bucks or King's Own Militia

This is to Certify that Samuel Minney of the Parish of Clifton in the County of Bucks is now present and serving in the above Regiment as a Sergeant and is entitled to the usual family allowance the Regiment not being Disembodied.

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[1]This is the first time I have heard of Tingewick in connection with Minney, it is a small parish west of Buckingham and near the borders of Oxfordshire and Northants.

Detachment Head Quarters Buckingham

Masters

J H

Commanding Detachment

11th Sept 1814

To the Treasurer of the County of Bucks

For 14 weeks pay to the wife and children of Samuel Minney, the first ten weeks at 4 shillings per week and the remaining 4 weeks at 6 shillings per week, from the 4th April to the 11th July 1815.

I, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the County of Bucks, do hereby certify, that Timothy Brice, Overseer of the Poor of the Parish of Olney hath made oath before me, that he hath actually paid the Allowance, herein before mentioned amounting to the sum of Three pounds four shillings to the wife and family of the said Samuel Minney in pursuance of an Order to the Overseers of the Poor.

Given under my hand the Eighth day of July 1815.

Signature unreadable.

I also contacted Bucks Record Office as I wanted to know more on the King's Own Militia. The archivist replied that in the 1860's a record of the militia's service was drawn up and printed.[1] Enclosed with their reply was a photocopy of the relevant pages for the period of the early 1800s.

"The Bucks Militia was first raised in 1642. The regiment got it's name in 1794 when it was visited by King George IIIrd whilst encamped at Weymouth. At this time the regiment was selected as the personal guard of the King. For this distinguished service the King conferred the title of "35th Royal Bucks King's Own Militia".

Briefly, the Regiment served in Ireland from July 1796 and were the first English Militia Regiment to have landed in Dublin, Ireland. This was during the Irish Rebellion which was quelled in 1798. In the spring of 1799, the Regiment returned to England. In the same year the Regiment supplied 400 volunteers to the 4th or Kings Own Regiment of Infantry. This was repeated in subsequent years of the Napoleonic War (mainly to the 14th or Buckinghamshire Regiment of Foot).

In 1813 the Regiment again served in Ireland. At this time the government formed Provisional Battalions of Militia. The First Provisional Battalion consisted of the Royal Bucks King's Own and were commanded by their Colonel, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. They embarked in 1813 for Bordeaux and served in France under the Duke of Wellington during the time the allied armies

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[1]Record office reference T/A/2/9

were in possession of that country. On leaving, each officer was presented with the "Fleur de Lis" by Louis XVIII.

In September 1831, the level of the Militia was reduced and the arms and stores were removed to the Tower of London. After the death of the Duke of Buckingham in 1839 the remaining permanent staff were relocated to High Wycombe. In 1881 the regiment became the 3rd Battalion (Royal Bucks Kings Own Militia) Oxfordshire Light Infantry. The regiment was abolished in 1908.

For a more detailed history of the militia see "Call To Arms" by Ian Beckett, published in a limited edition by Barracuda Books Ltd, Buckingham, 1985.

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FONS

More results from the FONS Database.

Census return of 1851

Mary Minnie age 41 and married appears as a servant in the household of John Kinsop, 105 Fore Street, Cripplegate, London. Her birthplace is Chester le Street, Durham. The family of Kinsop appear to have all originated from Durham.

Joannah Minney, age 25 and unmarried appears as a house servant in the school of Oliver Walford at Liberty of Glass House Yard, 1 & 2 Rutland Place, Finsbury, London. Her place of birth is Waterford, Ireland.

Charles Miney, age 42 and married is shown as head of family at Black Horse Alley, St Brides, London. He is a shoemakers porter. His place of birth is Woolwich, Kent. No other members of his family are given.

John Miney, age 23 unmarried, a lodger with the family of Thomas Kelly at 13 Maryans Buildings, Deptford, London. He is a dock labourer. No place of birth but all the other residents are from Eire.

Thomas Minney, age 23 and head of the household at 20 Canal Street, Stockport, Cheshire. He is a power loom weaver cotton, and was born in Stockport. His wife is Elizabeth age 23, also a power loom weaver. She was also born in Stockport.

Ann Minney, age 32 and unmarried, is head of the household at 30 Tatton Street, Stockport. She is a factory hand, cotton and was born at Clifton, Bucks. Also in the household is her brother Joseph Minney, age 21 and unmarried. He is a cotton weaver. Also born at Clifton. There are two lodgers, both from Eastcot, Northants, Harriet and Eliza Brown, age 19 & 17.

Mary Ann Minney, age 35 and unmarried, is head of household at Heaton Lane (no house details), Stockport. She is a cotton winder. Her birthplace is given as Buckinghamshire only - (but I suspect this is a transcription error and should read Olney!). Also in the household was her sister Elizabeth, age 34, a cotton card room hand. Same place of birth.

"War Office Personal Records 1863"

1811

John Minney - Late Clerk, 1st Class, War Office. Entered the late office of the Secretary-at-War as Junior Clerk, 1811, promoted to the second class, Jan.1836: 1st Class, Jan.1854. Retired, Aug.1859, on a pension of £733 6s 8d.

September 1849

Harry Minney - Clerk, 2nd class, in the Accountant-General's Department, War Office. Appointed a Junior Clerk in the Office of the late Secretary-at-War, Sept. 1849; promoted to the 2nd Class on the establishment of the consolidated War Office, Jan. 1856. Served as Assistant Estimate Clerk from Oct. 1854 to March 1861.

April 1854

Charles John Minney - Principal Purveyor to the Forces, and Paymaster at the General Hospital, Woolwich. Appointed Purveyor in April 1854. From April 1857 to March 1861 served in charge of the Purveying Department of the China Expedition; has received the China war medal.

As I know next to nothing about the China Wars I borrowed a library book "Victoria's Enemies" by Donald Featherstone[1]. I discovered that there were three China Wars, namely the Opium War of 1839 to 1842, the China War of 1859 to 1860 and the Boxer Rebellion of 1900.

After the Opium war ceased in 1842 China and Britain clashed sporadically. The Chinese were ill-equipped with bows, muskets and swords. Their artillery was a hodgepodge of designs with poor quality ammunition.

In June 1859 Admiral Sir James Hope attacked the Taku forts at the mouth of the River Peiho...."blocked with cables, chains, floating booms, rafts and iron stakes planted in the river bed. Shallow water allowed only 11 small gunboats to be used and the Chinese fort-guns, served so rapidly, steadily and with true aim that they could have been crewed by trained European artillerymen, soon disabled six of them and severely battered the others. In early evening a landing party of 600 sailors and Marines attempted to storm the South fort across 500 yards of mud and weeds, cut up by ditches and pools in which men sunk to their waists. The struggling attackers were belaboured by round-shot and grape, balls from swivel-guns and muskets, rockets and even arrows. Forced to withdraw in gathering darkness, they were heavily fired upon by the

ghastly blue light of fireballs and rockets; the force lost 68 killed and 300 wounded.

By the following August an avenging force of 18,000 British and French troops under General Sir Hope Grant assaulted Taku forts....the defenders were Mongol soldiers of the Imperial Guard, considered the best troops in the empire. Fierce hand to hand fighting wiped out many of the garrison, Chinese losses being at least 1,500 against the Allies 200 or so; three forts surrendered and no less than 600 guns were taken. The Allies marched into Peking, and burned and looted the Summer Palace."

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Romeo, Romeo

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[1]ISBN 0 7137 2081 6. Blandford Press 1989

Romeo Minney is an ancestor of Spence and one or two others. He was baptised on 22nd September 1823, the son of Samuel and Elizabeth at Clifton Reynes, Bucks. According to the index he wed twice; first to Sarah Mason on 5th May 1845 at Didsbury, Lancs, and second to Mary Jarvis on 18th August 1861 at Bolton, Lancs. His death is registered in the December quarter 1881, Stockport at St Catherines House. I am aware of two children of Romeo's; firstly, Samuel James, from his first marriage and whose birth was registered in the December quarter 1849 at Ashton Under Lyne, Lancs. He has a marriage registered in the September quarter 1874 at Todmorden, Yorks. His death at age 59 is registered in 1909, again at Todmorden. The other child, Juliet, is the daughter of Romeo and Mary. Juliet's birth was registered in the September quarter 1862 at Todmorden.

So far nothing of interest until you look at his second marriage certificate. On it he states that he is a bachelor, a mistake perhaps? Strange then that I cannot find a death registered for his first wife, Sarah. And if she was dead why not state that he was a widower?

The index does show three death entries for a Sarah Minney after 1861 for the Stockport area; Sarah aged 51 = June quarter 1877, Sarah aged 64 = June quarter 1889 and Sarah aged 81 = December quarter 1895. All three are from St Catherines House records, there are no entries for Lancashire.

From Spence's Australian Insight magazine (Sept 94):

"Contact with Joan Robinson......confirming that Romeo did take another wife, Mary, this info is from 1871 census for Bolton, which also shows that they had a daughter, Juliet, born at Todmorden 1862/3 (I was told years ago that Romeo's first wife was a Mary Barret but had divorced her and remarried....Joseph Minney, in a statement, said that his trouble was caused by his grandfather having a child to another woman).

"Joan has revealed other locations in Romeo's wanderings; Clifton Reynes then most probably Newport Pagnell, Heaton Norris (Stockport), Ashton Under Lyne, Stockport, Todmorden and Bolton, one wonders where he will turn up next."

The full entry for the 1871 census is as follows:

38 Bamber Street, Bolton

Romeo Minney, aged 47, head of family. A shoemaker, born in Clifton, Bucks. His wife is Mary, aged 44, a shoe closer, born Stockport, Cheshire. They have one daughter, Juliet, aged 8, a scholar.[1]

Did Romeo commit bigamy or is there a simple explanation regarding the details on his second marriage certificate? The second marriage took place at the parish church of Bolton Le Moors. Were there any other children from the first marriage and if so, what happened to them?

Your views would be most welcome.

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Olney & Clifton Reynes Registers

Lynn Wright has once again provided Minney extracts for us even though she has no Minney ancestors - perhaps I should make her an honorary member.

Clifton Reynes - Marriages 1813 to 1836

22nd May 1831
Thomas Palmer, a widower to Elizabeth Minney, a spinster, after banns. Both of this parish. Both signed with a X. Witnesses: George and Elizabeth Valentine.

7th October 1832
William Minney, a bachelor to Mary Ann Minney, a spinster after banns. Both of this parish. Both signed with a X. Witnesses: Samuel Minney (signed with a X) and Joseph Luck.

Olney - Burials Lady Day 1800 to July 1849

28th October 1832 Elizabeth Minney, age 45, of Olney. Died from Cholera Morbus.
29th November 1837 George Minney, age 1, of Olney.
4th December 1846 William Minney, age 22 months, of Olney.
13th August 1848 William Minney, age 5 months, of Olney.

Olney - Baptisms Lady Day 1811 to Feb 1881

31st March 1812 William son of Samuel & Elizabeth Minney. Born 7th Dec 1811.
12th May 1812 Samuel son of William & Hannah Minney. Born 16th April 1812.
19th July 1815 Mary Ann dau of Samuel & Elizabeth Minney. Father is a Sergeant in the Bucks Militia, of Olney.
12th Nov 1837 William George son of Samuel, a labr & Sarah Minney of Olney. Born 2nd April 1837.
8th June 1845 William son of Joseph, a labr & Mary Anne Minney of Olney. Born 5th Jan 1845.
10th Jan 1847 Elizabeth dau of Jeffery, a labr & Catharine Miney of Olney. Born 19th Nov 1846.
10th Oct 1847 Naomi dau of Joseph, a labr & Mary Anne Minney of Olney. Born 19th June 1847.
28th April 1848 William son of Jeffery, a labr & Catharine Minney of Olney.
13th October 1850 William son of Joseph, a labr & Mary Ann Minney of Olney. Born 3rd Mar 1850.

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[1]Thanks to Joan Robinson for supplying a copy of the entry.

10th May 1851 William son of George, a labr & Elizabeth Minney of Olney. Born 13th Feb 1851.
13th Dec 1857 Julia Freeman dau of Samuel, a labr & Sarah Minney of Olney. Born 12th Mar 1857.
8th Sept 1861 Harry son of Samuel, a labr & Rebecca Minney of Olney. Born 1st July 1861.
10th May 1863 William son of Samuel, a groom & Rebecca of Olney. Born 5th March 1863.
11th June 1865 Mary Ann dau of Samuel, a labr & Rebecca Minney of Olney. Born 7th May 1865.
14th June 1868 Martha Jane dau of Samuel, a labr & Rebecca Minney of Olney. Born 7th April 1868.
12th Feb 1871 Alice dau of James, a labr & Sarah Minney of Yardley Hastings. Born 20th April 1870.
14th Feb 1875 Annie dau of James, a shoemaker & Sarah Minney of Olney. Born 22nd July 1874.
12th Aug 1877 James son of James, a servant & Sarah Minney of Olney. Born 25th Oct 1876.

The baptism and burial registers for Clifton Reynes after 1812 are still with the incumbent, D P Cianchi, The New Rectory, 7a Northampton Road, Lavendon. MK46 4EY.

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Charlie Minney

An Australian Autobiography

In Spence Minney's September 94 Insight (a periodical of news and views of the Minneys in Australia) I found this marvellous autobiography from Charlie Minney and felt it was worthy of a wider audience. Thanks Spence, I am sure you won't mind me borrowing it.

"Patriarch is a word I use, both with pride and some trepidation. Proud to be known as the oldest surviving male member of a proud family, however this means that I am next in line for the long sleep. And in this regard I'll surrender my title to any volunteer.

Born to Ada Minney[1] at Young on 24th March 1919. I do not remember much of my pre-school days. I do remember my early school days at St Marys Convent School at Young. I don't think I was much of a student, but I clearly remember I was the first kid in the class who could write his name on the slate (we didn't use books at that time). The first book I remember was the Catechism, par for the course.

My progress through infants school was remarkably unspectacular. After which I graduated to the Christian Brothers, the boys went to the Brothers and the girls went to Convent Primary (I think the boys were the privileged gender). I think this was the only time in my life when I felt superior to the opposite sex. I now firmly believe that the female of the species is far superior to the male. I love them all.

I only spent a couple of years at the Brothers school, I fondly remember this as a school that was dedicated to sport rather than religion, of course they also taught the '3 Rs' remarkably well. I was very proud later, when my brother Jim was Dux [2]of this school.

To say that money was short during the early great depression would be an understatement. It was

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[1]For details on Joseph and Ada Minney see page 14 of January 94 Newsletter
[2]Dux = top pupil, a phrase used in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. From the latin for leader.

during this time that I suffered a broken right leg. An involvement with one of the few motor vehicles of the time, if it happened now there would be an insurance claim, but no-one knew anything about insurance at the time: Result; six weeks in hospital where all kinds of bastardies were performed by the nurses of the time, including being strapped to a bed and a laxative (licorice powder, weekly), if you didn't take it you would have caster oil instead.

I loved my mother dearly and also my siblings. My earliest memories are of playing with my brothers and sisters in the backyard. At this time I also became aware of Gladys, she was one of the kids who lived a few doors away. It was also a period that was to herald a very grim period of my life. Because of the depression, my mother had to make probably the hardest decision of her life. On the advice of the parish priest she had to make the decision to send three of her children to orphanages, the three, Charlie and John to the Boys Orphanage at Goulburn and Mary to the Girls Orphanage, also at Goulburn. I never blamed my mother for this. And I remember

often crying myself to sleep, pining for her. At least John and I were together, I can only imagine how tough Mary's life must have been.

Orphanages at that time did not receive any government funding ,and I suppose that the Nuns did their best with the funds available, but Goulburn in winter, with only shirts and shorts (no boots) and no heating, was a very hard place.

An episode involving another inmate caused me to take the decision to abscond. A boy was late for assembly, he was standing next to me, and the sister-in-charge decided to punish him by giving him a large dose of caster oil. On drinking this he threw up, this caused me to throw up as well and my punishment was 'six of the best'. This triggered my desire to abscond and try and make my way to Young[1]. I went to John's bed in the dormitory and told him what I had decided to do and advised him to stick it out until I found help.

I raided the orphanage pantry and found a loaf of bread, a pound of butter and a box of matches. I had no blanket, just my shorts and shirt. I set off down the Hume Highway. At night I disappeared into the bush and lit a fire. On the third night I had reached Gunning (22 miles). My fire was spotted and the police arrived. They took me back to Goulburn and gave me a warm bed and fed me well. The next day I appeared in court and sent to a child welfare home at Mittagong, sentenced to two years. My misdemeanour had a good side because when mum heard about it she went to Goulburn and retrieved John and Mary.

So now I was a State Ward, the Child Welfare Homes were like heaven compared to the orphanage, good clothing, good lodgings, good food and schooling. Having served my sentence, I was transferred to a Home (Roylston) in Glebe. I was fostered out to a spinster lady at Galong, she was wonderful. At that time I was 12 years old and attended St Lawrences, captained both the football and cricket teams, also won the Southern District Primary School Boxing Championship (with luck) I came up with a lucky punch that ended the fight (I thought I was losing).

At 14, school leaving age, I was returned to Roylston from where I was sent to Dungog to work on a dairy farm, wages 2/6 a week and found. After 2 years the owner, Mr Hampton sold out and I again returned to Roylston. Was again sent to work on another dairy farm owned by a Mr Croke. The wages were 5s and even though it was a 14 hour day I was reasonably happy.

I was now 17 and decided to again make my way home to Young (30 miles). This time I made it with the help of a couple driving a horse and sulky[2]. I was not supposed to leave the child welfare until I was 18. However, I had secured a job on a farm near Young and except for a police interview I was released from Welfare.

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[1]About 70 miles, as the crow flies, according to my map. Quite a journey for a boy aged under 10 years to attempt.
[2]Sulky = a one horse vehicle for one person.

Even though work was scarce I was able to find work in various occupations; shearing sheds, harvesting, chaff cutting, stack building, even extracting eucalyptus oil from felling the oil bearing bush trees. I picked fruit at Young, Orange, Griffith and Batlow. Dug spuds at Taralga and Batlow. Of course I had a good push bike and ride up to 100 miles a day for the chance of a job. The dole at that time took the form of food vouchers to the value of 7/6 a week. I am proud to say that I never had to resort to the dole. This period was a great learning experience.

Spence finishes the article by saying that he has more of Charlie's biography and will put it in his next issue of Insight.

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