

## ADMINISTRATOR'S VIEW



It came as a shock to see in black and white that Susan and Michael were relinquishing control over the OPC Website although I knew it had been difficult for them for some time. However, from the ashes rises the phoenix and we are now moving into a new era. It is with reluctance that we have felt it necessary to follow many of the other projects nationwide and ask for donations to keep the site online. Personally, am overwhelmed with the response over the first week of the donation facility being launched.

The amount so far raised will mean we can continue for some time into the future. We still need donations whether financial or of a material kind. OPCs (Parish Adopters), Transcribers and Researchers are much needed especially as so many OPCs have left us recently as they felt they could contribute nothing more. Thanks to everyone who has contributed in the past and to those who will in the future.

Teresa Lewis

## JOHN'S JOTTINGS

The last newsletter was in 2013, and now perhaps is the time to issue another as major changes are taking place at Wilts OPC. At about 6000 hits a month we must be doing something useful for the genealogy community. See the article below.

I have been with Wilts OPC from the start, (previously being a volunteer with Freecen). during that time we had to cope with moving servers, hacking and enhanced the style of the website various times.

The cost of running the website has now fallen on ourselves and you may have noticed that we have used crowd funding to generate funds for the future. Teresa and myself continue to invest our own resources into buying books, postcards, indentures etc so that we have research material for the website.

I must mention the volunteers and contributors who help support the website, without you we would not exist, thank you for your time and effort.

John Pope





## NEW MANAGEMENT TEAM

It is with sadness that we have to announce that the present owner and technical wizards have decided, after 9 years, that they can no longer maintain this website both financially and technically due to other commitments. We therefore thank Susan and Michael Pearson for shouldering the responsibility for so long.

The site have come a long way since Susan first had the idea of the Wiltshire OPC following the idea of the original concept of Cornwall.

Susan has passed the site over to us and we shall be moving to a new host over the next few months - we hope to keep any disruption to the site at a minimum but there may be times that the site will be offline for short periods of time.



Teresa Lewis, our chief administrator, needs no introduction and will continue to be the main face of the website. Richard Cresswell has taken the role of Website Manager and John Pope the duty of Fund Accounting.



## FAMILY TREES

We have all created family trees using various software available, Word or a Spreadsheet.

Taking this one step further I have come across a German family tree which has been well embellished.

It is an example of an illuminated genealogical tree.

The Pedigree of Ströhl.

This family, which became extinct on the death of the Bavarian Lieutenant-General Alois, Freiherr von Ströhl, in the year 1836, was supposed to have originally owned estates in Silesia and in Lausitz, and to have borne the name of Strela or Strel. At the foot of the family tree, as the first authentically proved bearer of the noble name of Ströhl, is Jarolaus, married to Katharina von Kunitz.



## ROUND TOWER CHURCHES



The Round Tower churches of Norfolk and Suffolk are a signature architectural style of these two counties. There are a few round tower churches elsewhere in England and there are vastly more churches in the two counties that do not have round towers but they are nevertheless a cherished symbol. Let's put this into perspective: there are around 180 round towers in all, of which 120 are in Norfolk, 42 in Suffolk, 7 in Essex and 2 in Cambridgeshire - all East Anglian counties. A further 3 are in Sussex and 2 in Berkshire.

So why do they occur so much in this part of England? It is widely believed to be because of the lack of local quarried stone suitable for the usual square configuration. Thus towers were built with rubble faced with the flint that is abundant in this area. The coincidence of these towers with the lack of quarries is hard to argue with.

What is also interesting is not only that the towers are often *round* but that there are *so many* of them. Towers were big undertakings for church builders in any period so they tend not to be readily demolished once built. The comparative rarity of Anglo-Saxon towers elsewhere reinforces the fact that there were not too many stone Saxon churches *at all*. Compared with the rest of England, these two counties have a superabundance.



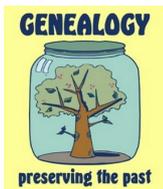
It is popularly believed that this can be accounted for by the peculiar vulnerability of these two counties to Viking raiders. It is a theory, however, is increasingly under challenge. The Round Tower Churches Society investigate the architecture of these churches with the thoroughness only justifiable by true devotees and they believe that a defensive role was secondary, if it was there at all ("The Round Tower" December 2011). I am not sure I agree. It's not that I don't follow their logic it's just that I can't think why so many towers were built in this part of the world *at all* if it is not *something* to do with the Viking raiders.

The towers are generally from the Anglo-Saxon and Norman periods, sometimes built in the first period and raised in the second. Again, however, the Round Towers Society cast some doubt on whether all towers that are ostensibly Saxon are indeed so. They point to Haddiscoe St Mary Church tower which they strongly believe to be as late as the last decade of the c11 but which has double-triangular bell openings that are so characteristic of Anglo-Saxon architecture. If they are right then that has profound implications for the dating of other churches in England. It would take a bigger expert than myself to counter their arguments but we should acknowledge at least the fairly obvious fact (repeated ad nauseam on these pages) that new church architectural fashions did not sweep away the old overnight. So perhaps we should at least look at the "Saxon" round towers with a degree of circumspection.

Article by Lionel & Diana Wall, [Great English Churches](#)

PS. In AD 937 King Athelstan decreed that local leaders desiring the status of thegn must raise bell towers on their lands – possibly resulting round towers might then have become turrets of refuge in ensuing times of trouble.

Also visit [Building Conservation](#), Stephen Hart's article on their architecture.



## GENEALOGY LATIN DICTIONARY

Latin words are fairly common in some type of ancestral record sets like land records, parish records and wills. Use this dictionary to help you understand these terms. [[Genealogy Latin Dictionary](#)]

## WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON ARCHIVES

Wiltshire and Swindon Archives is the county archive service for the whole of Wiltshire and Swindon, based at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham. The service was established in 1947 so this year is our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Further information on the history of the service can be seen at: <http://www.wshc.eu/history.html>

We look after over 8 miles of shelving containing unique and irreplaceable archives for the lieutenancy county of Wiltshire. These come from a variety of sources, including public bodies such as local authorities, parish councils and law courts; Church of England parishes and the diocese of Salisbury; private individuals, landed families and estates (excluding the large landed estates of Bowood and Longleat which employ their own archivists); societies and voluntary organisations and businesses and professional firms across Wiltshire. A more detailed list can be seen at: <http://www.wshc.eu/records-summary-list.html> but our collection is growing all the time, so please get in touch if you'd like to know whether we hold a particular record or check out our online catalogue – see: <http://www.wshc.eu/catalogues.html>

The records are useful for family and local history as well as a wide variety of historical research as well as artistic and creative uses. This material is in a wide variety of formats from maps and plans to volumes and parchment deeds, to audio-visual and digital records. What they all have in common is having been selected by the archivists for permanent preservation. Some of this material was given to the archive service but much of it is on deposit, held by us on behalf of the owners. We have a legal duty to consider the needs of those owners and bear in mind things like Data Protection, Freedom of Information, and copyright.

The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre conforms to national standards for the preservation of archives (PD:5454) and is a nationally Accredited Archive Service. We look after the archives in our secure, fire-proof, temperature and humidity controlled strong rooms and make them accessible to the public five days a week in our research rooms.

We would be delighted to welcome you any time we are open to the public – see: [www.wshc.eu](http://www.wshc.eu) for opening times. There is plenty of free parking on site and we are accessible for wheelchair users. Please see: <http://www.wshc.eu/visiting-the-centre.html> for details of how to find us and what you need to consider in advance of your visit.

Claire Skinner, Principal Archivist, Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre

## WILTSHIRE WILLS

The outstanding Salisbury Diocesan Probate collection contains 105,000 wills and inventories and approximately 400,000 individual documents dating from Tudor to Victorian times c.1560-1858. This unique collection covers the whole of Wiltshire and Berkshire, and those parts of Dorset, and Uffculme in Devon which came under the jurisdiction of the Dean of Sarum.

In January 1858 civil registries became responsible for probate matters. The Salisbury Diocesan wills were sent from Salisbury to the new Principal Probate Registry in London.

Conditions were far from ideal and in 1874 the wills were moved to Somerset House. Somerset House was not able to cope with the volume of documents it received and after the Second World War, a new county record office opened in Wiltshire and this was a sensible alternative place of deposit for the wills.



In the 1950s the office was approved as an authorised place of deposit for probate records and the Salisbury Diocesan wills were transferred to the Record Office at Trowbridge. With the closure of the old Record Office in 2007 the wills were moved with the rest of the archive to our current purpose-built facility in Chippenham.

After receiving substantial Heritage Lottery (and other) funding, the Wiltshire Wills Project was inaugurated in 1999, to re-index and digitise the records. They have all been catalogued onto a computer database, flattened, re-packaged and (where necessary) repaired. This has ensured that they will be cared for better than ever in the future – particularly since digitisation means that the originals will not normally be handled any more. Digitisation, which proved a lengthy process, was carried out by ourselves until last year when the company Ancestry took over. The whole collection will be available online (hopefully second week of December) through the Ancestry website.

In common with Wiltshire libraries we can offer a free subscription to Ancestry, which now holds the Wiltshire parish registers and in due course will hold our wills and bishops' registers.

A will or testament is the documentary instrument by which you regulate the rights of others to your property and your family after your death.

Article by Wiltshire Family History Centre, October 2017.

We  
  
Our Volunteers

Volunteers are always welcome.

You do not need to live in Wiltshire, or even in the UK, to become an OPC or volunteer. We have OPC's and volunteers in Australia, Canada, Holland, England, New Zealand, India, Scotland, Spain and several in Wiltshire itself.

See our Home Page for further details [[Wilts OPC](#)].

