

Words: 534

The Fruits of Being an OPC

By Nigel Pocock, OPC for East Tytherton

East Tytherton, near Chippenham, is a very small place. Just a cross-roads. Yet it boasts a wealth of extraordinary history. A history that has stimulated interest world-wide.

How so? This partly due to the accidents of history, and the presence of the unique Moravian burial ground in the village. It is also due to a great deal of persistence in researching the people there over several years, the fruits of which are now on the Wiltshire OPC webpages. From there to travel the world ...

About five years ago the gravestone carrying the name 'Diana Ormond' (died 1837) was discovered there. Apart from the Moravian records telling us that she was from Wales, and that she was a speaker and housekeeper in the Moravian Girls' School and Single Sister's House, we knew nothing at all about her. That is, until Myrna, from the US, and a descendant of this family, contacted the site. She had found a cache of Diana's letters in Oxford, and wanted to come to England to find her gravestone. A whole new window was opened on Diana's life. Here was a woman, well-educated, with brothers who were solicitors and the like, and who also had connections in Baydon, near Marlborough.

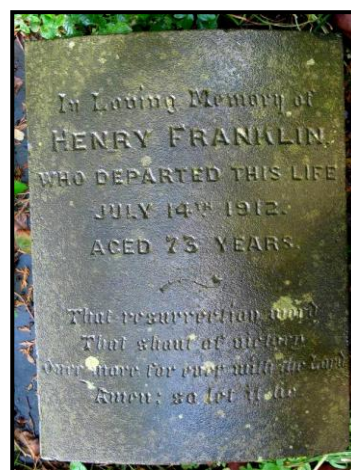
Then there was an enquiry from a descendant of a certain William (died 1912) & Amelia Franklin, also interred in the Moravian burial-ground. Why did William & Amelia appear to have no marriage record, she asked? Research soon revealed that 18 year old William had had an 'adventure' with 22 year old Amelia, resulting in an offspring. However, they evidently stayed together, and presumably married, as the Moravians were strict about such things. From this a previously unknown number of photographs emerged, and a picture - quite literally - was provided, of William & Amelia's descendants.

For a substantial time, we had wondered why Edith Long, *née* Freeth, had died so young, at 35 years, in 1915. That is, until

Diane, a descendant, contacted the site with a request for more information. It materialised that poor Edith, of whom we had a photograph, had died shortly after the birth of her sixth child. Pictures of her husband's second marriage (1917) were then discovered, together with photographs of the surviving children. All good things come to those who wait with patience!

Finally, we had struggled for years to make connections with the descendants of Moravian Bishop George Hanna, bishop in Jamaica, who is interred in the Moravian burial-ground with two of his ten children. We had yet to actually achieve this, but a contact through the OPC site with Lou-Anne, also in the US, has opened up hitherto unknown lines of enquiry through a very closely related family.

Such contacts through the OPC site make such research worthwhile. At the deepest level, constructing a family history is not simply a meaningless chronologue of events. It is a story with a plot, and hugely meaningful in helping people find their identity. The stories are indeed fascinating in the own right, aided by the excitement of discovery of new finds previously unknown. But the reward lies in the networking and relationships, the building of new understandings of who we and our families are.



William Franklin was Henry & Amelia's son. Here he is (L) in about 1886, and in 1912 (Below) : Henry (nearest) and Amelia's graves are the third and fourth from the bottom on the left of the other picture.

