



GREAT POSTER HOUSE, EGHAM, SURREY.

A RETREAT FOR THE MENTALLY AFFLICTED.

of Dr Furnival's general patients.

Rebecca died in February 1838, of "cold and inflammation", a fortnight after the birth of their youngest son, Charles. John continued to work at the lunatic asylum, but had to employ a housekeeper to help him look after his infant children.

On the night the 1841 census was taken, Sunday 6th June, not only was John Bosher on duty at Great Fosters, but also his thirteen-year-old son, John. At home nearby in the hamlet of Stroude were Mary (11), David (9), Thomas (5) and Charles Bosher (3) in the care of a Hannah WELLBELOVE. It must have been a welcome addition to the family income in the 1840s to receive coal from a charity set up by their landlord, Edgell Wyatt Edgell, for the benefit of those cottagers in the poor areas of Stroude and Virginia Water, whose homes were rated at 10s. or less. On the charity list the surname is spelt BOWSHIRE - yet another variation of Bosher!

The family of John BOSHER (1) and
 Born c.1795 Harwell
 Died Sept.1870 Egham
 Married Dec. 1817 Thorpe

Rebecca DABOURN
 Born Nov.1797 Bisley?
 Died Feb.1838 Egham

Born c.1818 Eliza
 Bapt. April 1820 Bisley William
 " Dec. 1822 Egham Gabriel
 " June 1825 " Henry
 " Nov. 1827 " John

Bapt. Mar. 1830 Egham Mary Ann
 " May 1832 " David
 " May 1836 " Thomas
 " Mar. 1838 " Charles

Part 2 of the Bosher Family of Egham will appear in the next edition of Root & Branch

Surrey Soldiers Index - A New Resource

Robert Mesley

Few families in Britain were unaffected by the First World War. Around 750,000 British servicemen were killed in action or died of wounds, to which can be added perhaps another 100,000 who died while serving from other causes, including deaths by enemy action at sea and those who succumbed to malaria in the Middle East and influenza in the 1918 epidemic. Most of these men are commemorated on war memorials, and for several years I have held the Surrey War Memorials Index, which contains over 20,000 names of casualties from all three services in both world wars, together with 17,000 records from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission relating mainly to Brookwood Military Cemetery.

Information on war memorials is often limited to surname and initials, though some give full names or rank and unit. In recent years several local researchers have attempted to find out more about their war dead and have kindly supplied me with supplementary information. A major source for the First World War is *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919*, published by HMSO in 1921 in 80 parts dealing with individual regiments. We have purchased the complete set on microfilm and I have now extracted from them records relating to 13,500 Surrey men. The records are restricted to the British Army and they only cover 'other ranks' up to Warrant Officers, so commissioned officers are not included. Also excluded are the Royal Marines and those who died while serving with the Royal Flying Corps, which was split off in 1918 to become the Royal Air Force.

The information extracted for each soldier, listed under regiment and battalion, comprises surname, forenames, regimental number, rank and any gallantry awards; place of birth (usually), place of enlistment, and place of residence (where given); cause of death, operational theatre, date of death, and details of any previous service in other regiments. I have extracted this information for all men shown as born or resident in Surrey (for this purpose taken to be Surrey as it was in 1914, i.e. excluding the metropolitan area). Those who enlisted in Surrey but were not born or resident in the county were excluded, as many people from other counties enlisted at Kingston or Guildford, which were regimental depots.

The index contains 13,500 names, but there should probably be at least a thousand more, since some regiments, unfortunately including the East Surrey Regiment, omitted place of residence from their records, while many Territorial units omitted birthplace. In addition, in visually scanning three-quarters of a million records I am bound to have missed a few, particularly when place names are garbled (eg Wobblestone for Worplesdon) or shown in wrong counties. Although there were obviously a lot of Surrey men in the two Surrey infantry regiments, it is remarkable that men from Surrey were serving in every regiment in the army, including those which were nominally Irish, Scottish or Welsh.

The full records are listed under individual regiments, but I am compiling an index, which should be complete by the time this article appears (for search arrangements see below). So what use will this be to family historians? First, it will provide the unit, rank, number and date of death of each soldier, which could be the key to locating other records. Unfortunately the service records of World War I soldiers were mostly destroyed or damaged by enemy action in World War II, though some of those which survived are now being filmed and made available at the Public Record Office. However, knowing a man's regiment and battalion may mean that the actions in

Ag Labs

Jill Haworth

I thought members would be interested in details of a talk given to the Woking Centre members at their March meeting by Marjorie Moore when she gave a wealth of information on researching Ag Labs. It is not surprising that so many of us have agricultural labourers among our ancestors when you realise that agriculture was the major occupation in 1801, but by 1901 the main employment had moved to the towns.

The term Ag Labs was often a general description used in the census to cover many activities; even a farmer of seven acres could be so described.

There were many reasons why agricultural labourers would move around. There were the major emigrations due to Highland Clearances and the Irish Famine. Drovers were constantly on the move and even general farm hands maybe moving to another property after being hired.

The hiring fairs and markets were important occasions, especially for those who stayed with the land, and finding the location of these fairs can help with research. Once hired it was usual to live on the farm, but that could be up to 60 miles from the place of hiring. So it is not surprising that it is so difficult to trace ancestors when family members might be born miles apart. As an illustration Marjorie quoted the case of an Ag Lab who was born in Chiselhampton, Oxfordshire, and then turned up in Mortlake, Surrey in the 1871 census.

Major landowners often had Manors in different parts of the country and some Ag Labs would move around at different seasons, perhaps for fruit picking in the Evesham area or hop picking in the South. Lords of the Manor often built chapels in remote areas, expecting their workers to worship there, perhaps travelling up to 15 miles to do so. Drovers travelled long distances and were often unmarried men who probably met their future wives many miles away from home. When families moved to a new area, the relatives would often follow and this applied to migration as well.

Newspaper advertisements encouraged migration. Money was sent to an area to help fit out families for a new country. The Parish could then repay the money by instalments. Particularly during the Irish famine, ships would operate between Ireland, Liverpool, Canada and the USA. Many families went to Canada first before moving into USA.

Following the 1833 Factory Act, when children under nine could no longer be employed, and the hours of work were also reduced, there was a need for more workers so further encouragement was given for people to move from the country to the town.

Marjorie stressed the need to read about the local history, as well as getting a background to the National History. She recommended *The Poor Law Unions' Gazette* (to be found at Colindale) as a good source for research.

The Boshers of Egham

Dorothy Dayis

I. THE EARLY DAYS 1817-41

Tracing the BOSHER family is complicated by the numerous variations in spelling that were still in use as late as the 19th century. However, with the use of the research resources in The Egham Museum and the help of descendants in New Zealand, Canada, Australia and Surrey the following story of varied fortunes can be told: how it was that the fourth son of an apparently illiterate labourer became a merchant and landowner in the town of his birth, while three other sons stuck with farm labouring, until they sought their fortunes on the other side of the world.

The John Boshers who settled in Egham in the early 19th century revealed in the 1851 census return that he was born in Harwell, Berkshire, in about 1795. Boshers remains a fairly common name in that county. It would seem that, as is not unusual, John Boshers left his native village in early manhood. A John BOWSHER, bachelor of Egham, married Rebecca DABOURN, spinster of Egham at Thorpe parish church on 5th December 1817. In that year Egham's medieval church had been pulled down and, until the new building was ready, Egham parishioners had to go to nearby Thorpe for marriage and burial rites. Neither John nor Rebecca signed their names.

It was a surprise to find that there were no baptismal entries for Boshers in either the Egham or Thorpe parish registers between 1817 and 1822. By chance, I discovered in the IGI for Surrey the christening of a William BOUSHER, son to John and Rebecca, in Bisley on 24th April 1820. The will of John Boshers of Egham (discovered by his descendant, Mrs GORDON of Australia) did indeed reveal that John and Rebecca's eldest son was called William and that their first-born was a girl called Eliza.

By December 1822, however, John and Rebecca were clearly settled once more in Egham: their second son, Gabriel, was baptised that month, followed by Henry in June 1825, John in November 1827, Mary Ann in March 1830, David in May 1832, Thomas in May 1836 and Charles in March 1838. Four different spellings were used for these seven baptismal entries: Bousher, Boshers(2), BOUCHER(3) and BOSHIERS. Between 1822 and 1827 John was described as a labourer, but in the 1830s as a servant. His abode was given merely as Egham, but from later evidence and a note found amongst a descendant's papers in New Zealand, they lived in Stroude (pronounced Strude), a hamlet just outside Egham, on the road to Virginia Water. The May and Collins Poor Law map and key of Egham show the location of the house, which was owned by Edgell Wyatt EDGELL, Lord of the Manors of Egham and Milton.

It was this hamlet that provided John senior with his living. To the north-west of Stroude lies Great Fosters, a late Elizabethan or early Jacobean mansion. Today it is a hotel but in the 18th century and first half of the 19th it was a lunatic asylum. It was a retreat for mentally afflicted "Gentlemen and Gentewomen" as the censuses record. Many of the inmates may well have been little more than eccentric and the regime was described as being "of the mildest character". The respected Egham physician, George Frederick FURNIVAL, owned and ran it from 1818 as well as running a general practice in the town. The poet, Percy Bysshe SHELLEY, was one