



The Filby Association



Our Founder, Ellsworth L. Filby, a civil engineer living in Kansas City, USA, as a retirement hobby in 1961, decided to try and find out from where in England his grandfather had been taken to the USA in the early part of the 1800s. He made contact with various Filbys in the UK in search of his roots; two very important people at that time were Len and Mary Filby of Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

Mary and Len moved to Downham Market from Kings Lynn after Len's parents died. Len was a Past President 2003 – 2006. Mary was Past President 2007 - 2014 having been both Association Secretary and Manager throughout the years.



As long ago as 1962 Mary began helping Ellsworth Filby collate names and addresses of Filbys (all spellings) from telephone directories and any other available source throughout Great Britain. There followed letters asking for information about their family and known ancestors, which when returned, were the beginning of our paper filing system. During these early years this group of people grew and new friendships were formed whilst staying at each other's homes during their annual pilgrimage to All Saints Church at Filby village in Norfolk, where it is believed our name originated.

Ellsworth and his wife, Marion, came to England in 1964/6 and stayed at the Duke's Head Hotel in Kings Lynn. Most of their time was spent with Mary and Len, who drove them around the country visiting the homes of people with variants of our name to gather information. Many of our current members are either these people or their descendants. These families were the basis of what would eventually become our Association trees.



In 1968, Ellsworth and his growing loyal team of researchers decided to create The Filby Association, and became Founder Members inviting all those that had kept contact and were interested, to attend what he called "The Homecoming" at All Saints Church, Filby, on 22nd September.

250 Filbys attended.

The first newsletter sent out after the event was called “Saga” then every year from 1969 when Mary became Secretary, and Frederick N. Filby, British Coordinator. It was in 1970 when Ellsworth made his way to Australia to trace all the Filbys/Philbeys that were descendants of immigrants, and so the Filby Association continued to develop and grow.

In 2003 I published the first edition of the Chronicle, an A5 booklet, which replaced the Saga, and for a few years the In Touch newsletter was circulated each August, this ceased in 2013. With technology developing at a fast rate the Chronicle began circulation via email in 2009 and reached out to our 250 members worldwide. These are available to read on this site. We digitised most of our paper files and now have instant information accessible of which some is also on this site.

2018 marks our Golden Jubilee - Fifty Years of The Filby Association, and it’s most definitely worth remembering that it is all due to our Founder, Ellsworth L. Filby, who started the ball rolling with his own family history research – sadly, he died in 1976, but what aforethought he had!

Since then member volunteers have worked relentlessly to develop the database that the Association now holds today. We have over 17,000 people, 200 trees and numerous Wills dating from 1500. We help all descendants with Filby, Filbey, Filbee, Philby, Filbey and other spellings of our surname to find evidence of their ancestors and create a family tree.

There are no subscriptions as we are a non-profit raising charitable organisation, and apart from our running costs any donations help and support All Saints Church in Filby village Norfolk, England.

We rely on donations from our members and also individuals who will gather information from this website. **We hope that anyone using these facilities to further their own research will support us by making a small donation via our CONTACT page.**

Thank you.