

In Touch



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The Filby Association

AUGUST 2006

Dear Friends,

As you know Mary Filby, our manager, has not been well for most of 2006. This resulted in a spinal operation from which she is now recuperating she was unable to attend the Filby Sunday on July 2nd, but she will join us at the triennial 'Reunion' next year on July 1st 2007. Please put this date in your diaries now and try to book a holiday in the Great Yarmouth area of Norfolk. We know we will be welcoming some of our overseas members at our gathering next year so please come along and support us as this year we were very few in number.

At the end of April our Priest-in-Charge of All Saints, Filby, The Reverend Carl Le Prevost, left to take up a new post as Vicar of St Barnabas Church in Ealing, West London. He said that it had not been an easy decision to make, since although he was fully recovered from his heart attack last year and he did enjoy his ministry at Filby, he did not feel that looking after seven churches was the best way to look after his own health long term. Carl and his wife, Cathy, remain Members of the Filby Association and hope to visit All Saints Church at a future 'Reunion'.

A new regular vicar was not appointed before our July 2nd 'Gathering' and our service, which was taken by Peter Chapman, was followed by a wedding. Therefore, with apologies, grandparents, Lynn and Alan Filby, decided to delay their four Christenings until next year's 'Reunion'. The day following our Filby Sunday, extensive work began on re-thatching All Saints Church roof involving scaffolding both inside and outside, which means that the church will be closed to the public during the work. However, Sunday Services will still be held in the Chancel.

How our Chronicle is bringing people together: Margaret Pitt wrote:

"In the Filby Chronicle no.4 there was an article by Susan Julius regarding her family's arrival in Australia. As you may know we have ancestors in common – my grandmother, Katherine Sarah Pitt (nee Brown) was Alice Julius's sister and they were both daughters of Emily Filby. Susan may be able to solve a mystery that has bothered me for many years and I may have info about the Julius family which she might lack, so I would very much like to get in touch with her."

Perhaps we will hear the outcome of this contact in the next Chronicle.

If you have been put in touch with other members or relatives through the association, who have helped with your research, then we would love to hear from you.

Mike Dewey has been researching his family for many years and passing vast amounts of information onto our association. He has been kind enough to ask that this note be included in our newsletter to the effect that if any member wishes Filby information relating to Buckinghamshire to be researched, he would be pleased to do it for them. Please contact either, Jim Filby, Ruth Smith or myself for his details.

A FILBY CONNECTION by Ed & Diane Filby (Ottawa, Canada)

Ed writes:

Even though I grew up in Canada, I was always aware of a strong Filby connection to England. I knew that my father (Murray Elgin Filby) had been able to locate some Filby relations when he was serving with the Canadian Army in England during World War II. In fact, it was through one of his cousins that he met, and subsequently married, my mother; which explains how it came about that, although a Canadian by birth, I was actually born in Ipswich.

While my grandfather (Robert James Filby) died in 1947, before my birth, I knew from my father that he had emigrated from Ipswich to Canada as a teenager and settled in rural western Canada in the area that became the province of Manitoba.

As well, there was mention of a sister (my great-aunt) named Amelia, who emigrated to Australia, and a brother, Alfred, who probably stayed in Ipswich. One of the results of the economic depression in Canada during the 1930's was that my father's family dispersed across the country (one aunt even homesteaded in the Yukon) and family ties were broken. Thus, many of the details surrounding my grandfather and his family were lost.

When my wife, Diane, and I were making holiday plans to travel in Scandinavia in the fall of 2005, it seemed an opportune time to visit England and perhaps learn a bit more about my Filby roots. The Filby Association, which my father belonged to before his death in 1993, seemed the best spot to start and so I began an e-mail correspondence with Marion Filby, providing her with what I knew about my branch of the Filby family tree. Before we set off, Marion promised to see what she could find.

After visiting some of Diane's relatives, we set off for East Anglia and, of course, stopped at the village of Filby. Imagine our surprise when, after touring through the lovely stone Filby church, we paused to sign the visitors book and discovered a handwritten note addressed to "Ed & Diane" (that was us!) with directions to contact Marion. She had been busy indeed, searching through all sorts of records (birth, death, marriage, census, etc.). When I phoned, Marion alerted me to a possible family connection that could be traced back to the village of Elsing (near Norwich) and mentioned that there were some potential Filby relatives still living in Ipswich.

And so we set off, travelling down winding country roads and hedge-lined lanes to finally come upon the village of Elsing - one pub and a cluster of houses with yet another impressive mediaeval stone church (we don't have any of those in Canada!).

We scoured plaques and stones in the sanctuary and surrounding graveyard but were unable to find a mention of any Filbys. By chance, we met a congregant who had lived in Elsing for many years but he was not aware of any Filbys in the area. No headway made in that direction but an interesting side trip and a church well worth visiting, even if only to view the "Hastings Brass".

Moving on to Ipswich, my efforts to connect with the names Marion had provided met with no success. However, while in Ipswich we were very pleased to receive an envelope from Marion (yes, she mailed it to our guest house address) containing information that traces our branch of the family back to Elsing in the mid-1700's.

Since the next leg of our holiday (a hiking tour of Hadrian's Wall) beckoned, we deferred reconnecting with the Filby Association until our return to Canada. I've learned that at least one relative who I tried to reach has subsequently contacted the Association and emails have since been exchanged.

We are quite confident now that my Filby line traces back to Edward Filby (b. circa 1728) who apparently had significant land holdings in Elsing. It is interesting to speculate why with lands and families in Elsing at one time, there are no present day traces of Filbys in that area.

None of these results would have been possible without Marion Filby's cheerful and generous encouragement and help. I especially appreciated her patience as we tried to cope with uncooperative village phone boxes.

All in all, our experience in tracking the Filby Connection has definitely been enjoyable and rewarding. We would welcome hearing from other descendants of the Elsing line and certainly intend to keep in touch with the Filby Association or maybe even return to the UK in time for a reunion!

Thank you Ed & Diane for sharing your story with us. On a recent visit to Elsing I took a photograph of a Filby grave in the churchyard. It was Bridget and Edward Filby. I will email this to you.

Our secretary, Ruth Smith, and her brother, our web master, Jim Filby, attended the AGM and Conference of the Guild of One Name Studies at the beginning of April. They had lectures during Saturday and Sunday including one on DNA Family History, which they found very interesting as well as the informal discussions with other attending members. More news about this event in our Chronicle 2007.

Ruth and Jim also spent Christmas 2005/6 in New Zealand visiting a 'Gutteridge' cousin, Brenda (on their mother's side of the family). Unfortunately, they didn't have time, nor were they in the vicinity to visit any of our New Zealand members. They did stop for coffee in Hawera and tried to contact Kylie Filbee, but she wasn't at home.

They found the North Island very beautiful with very friendly people, well worth a visit. Jim and Ruth stopped off in Kuala Lumpur for 2 nights both ways, enjoying the Batu Caves, wandering around the markets, seeing the sights and sampling the Malaysian food. Jim took his golf clubs as some of Brenda's family in NZ were golfing enthusiasts, and he played at several different clubs. The ladies did other things then, including a visit to Hobbiton where the film 'Lord of the Rings' was made – also well worth a visit.

Due to our treasurer, Wally Filby's involvement with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme in the London Borough of Croydon over the last 20 years, the first 15 as a volunteer expedition leader, the last 5 as a paid co-ordinator, he was invited to a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on Thursday, 13th July, to celebrate 50 years of the Award, and took Ruth Smith, his sister, along as his guest. He will be writing an article for the Chronicle about this honour.

Ruth asks if you could please let her know if you no longer wish to remain on our mailing list as there are still a few who have not replied. If you have **not** been given a membership number (**in red on the envelope label posted to you, but not shown on emailed version**) and you do wish to continue receiving the Chronicles and In Touch, please let one of us know. **Chronicle 2007 will not be sent unless we have been told that you wish to remain on our mailing list.** Also, if you have asked for help and not been told that a researcher is ready to assist you, could you please contact her with a reminder. ruth@filby.org.uk

Did you know that we have a FILBY BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE?

You can have a full page entry outlining the life of a loved one or interesting ancestor for a £5 donation. It will be handwritten and of approx. 25 lines. Please send copy to our secretary, Ruth Smith.

Grace Filby writes: It may be of some help to other members of the Filby family to refer to some research on healthcare associated infections that I've put together on www.relax-well.co.uk during the last twelve months. Worldwide, many people are concerned about going into hospital because of the 1 in 10 risk of patients acquiring a healthcare associated infection such as MRSA, Clostridium difficile and also winter vomiting virus etc.

You will see that there are many different ways (often very natural and economical) that infections can be avoided or eradicated. Fortunately there are options and alternatives instead of relying solely on antibiotics. Since this project is not for profit and it's independent, unfunded research with an educational purpose, I wondered if you and other members of the Association would like to visit the site and see for themselves if the information will benefit them.

Peter Filby from South Devon has been spending a year with the VSO out in the Gambia. He writes: "There is a WW2 Military Cemetery here. The Gambia was a staging point to North Africa and the Middle East, but I think that most deaths were accidental rather than as a result of the fighting. There are a good number of RAF personnel – many contemporaries of my wife's father. I will try to obtain a register before I leave. It may be of help to someone.

There is also another cemetery on the beach near Banjul, which has graves of local African and British dignitaries from the Colonial days. This was under considerable threat because of coastal erosion but that has stabilised now. There is also an interesting museum, which I think was formerly the cricket pavilion, with some artefacts from the Colonial times. - If you know of anyone that I might be able to help with information please let me know."

I was delighted to welcome one of our overseas members and her husband when they arrived to stay with Alan and me overnight in May, en route to Scotland where they were ancestor hunting. Jill (nee Filby) and David Yates from Brisbane, Australia, were doing Europe and visiting their son, Joe, in London, so we made contact during their travels. They visited Mary Filby in Norfolk and then travelled north to York where we talked until the early hours and then next morning whisked them off on a tour of our ancient walled city before they continued their journey. I will be editing the lengthy article that Jill and David have written about their travels for the Chronicle.

We welcome any article you may like to share with other members; please do not hesitate to send it by mail or email. **Copy to me before the end of September please. By mail to 22, Aldwark, York, YO1 7BU. England. Or email as on above heading.** I will be sending out the Chronicle 2007 in December this year due to my leaving the country for three months in January. I will resume research etc. upon my return in April. Don't forget to make an effort and attend our triennial "Reunion" on July 1st 2007. We are looking forward to a good attendance from overseas visitors too.

Our best wishes to you and your families, on behalf of The Filby Association,

Marion Filby (Editor)