

Founder of the Filby Association

Ellsworth Lincoln Filby 1896 - 1976 **Honorary President 1969 – 1975**

Ellsworth L Filby was born in New York and lived there for 45 years. He graduated from Cornell University, Ithaca, NY., in 1917.

He was a registered professional Engineer. He became assistant sanitary engineer for the Jersey State Health Department in 1917 and state sanitary engineer for the South Carolina State Board of Health, Columbia from 1919 to 1925. He was chief engineer for the Florida State Board of Health, Jacksonville from 1925 to 1931.

He married Marion, and they had two sons, Ellsworth F Filby and Harry W Filby.

He was a member of the Kansas City Rotary Club and the Missouri Historical Society and was past president of the Kansas City Engineers Club. He was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Water Works Association and the American Institute of Consulting Engineers. He was a former member of the American Academy of Sanitary Engineering, the American Public Works Association, the Water Pollution Control Federation and the American Public Health Association.

Ellsworth was a partner in the engineering firm Black Veatch from 1931 -1964. He was an Army veteran of WW1. He was a member of St Andrew's Episcopal Church.

After such a full and satisfying life most men would be content to retire with their reminiscences, but not so Ellsworth Filby. He found himself a hobby getting to know from whence in England his grandfather and great-grandfather and in the space of fifteen years he found fellow Filbys spread around the world; he made them aware of one another and through the great good fortune of having a name derived from the village of Filby in Norfolk, started many lasting friendships among people who would otherwise never have met or even "gotten to know each other". That would indeed have been a loss to us all.

The words he wrote in his last Saga newsletter were; "for here is a Man with a Mission saying, 'Mission Accomplished'"



Marion Filby, Ellsworth's widow, Honorary President 1976 – 1989



Percy William Filby FSG. **10th December, 1911 ~ 2nd November, 2002** **Honorary President 1996 - 2003**

Percy William (Bill) was born in Cambridge, England in 1911, in his youth he played cricket, rugby, football and tennis, the latter well into his 70's. He was a chorister at Trinity College Cambridge, and in 1927 joined the University Library taking a

course in German, as well as becoming a member of the rare books division, which became a major vocation in later years.

In 1935 he became secretary and amanuensis to Sir James Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough* and later director of the University Scientific Laboratory during the atomic period at Cambridge, and a member of the University faculty.

In 1936 he married Nancie Elizabeth Giddens and there followed four children, Ann, Jane, Guy and Roderick (Roddy). In 1940 after assisting scientists in the development of radar he volunteered for the British Army, his knowledge of German led to his transference to the British Intelligence Corps., as a member of the cryptographic team at Bletchley, where ULTRA was broken. Throughout most of World War II he was head of the German Diplomatic Section, rising to the rank of Captain. From 1943 the section broke the double additive system and the one time pad system.

Following the war he joined the Foreign Office working in Cyprus, America and Germany. After his divorce he married American Vera Ruth Weakleim and in 1957 he immigrated to America where he returned to his library work at the Peabody Institute Library, Baltimore, as librarian and assistant director. In 1965 he became librarian at the Maryland Historical Society and director in 1972. It was there with the late Edward. G. Howard that he wrote the definitive study of the Star-Spangled Banner correcting previous theories, which was hailed by the *New York Times* as the most important work on the Banner.

His memberships included: National Genealogy Hall of Fame since January 1981, The Grolier Club, The Manuscript Soc. (President 1976-78), Baltimore Bibliophiles (President 1964-66 & 1991-93), Bibliographical Soc. of America (Council 1976-84) Typophiles, calligraphic and genealogy societies. He was a Fellow of the Maryland Genealogy Soc., National Genealogy Soc., Manuscript Soc., Utah Genealogy Ass., and London Society of Genealogists.

In 1982 he was honoured with a Fellowship by the Society of Genealogists for his activities, in the course of which he was introduced to the Queen.

Having been American Correspondent of the Filby Association for many years, he was made Honorary President in 1997. In 1998, Scholarly Resources, publishers of Wilmington, Delaware awarded an annual prize of \$1000 named the 'Filby Prize' to be awarded to a genealogical librarian. In 2000 the American Society of Genealogists conferred its Certificate of Appreciation for his genealogical publications.

Posthumous Recognition for Services to the Country in WW2

When Jane Johnson first heard that her father, Mr. P.W. (Bill) Filby, was to be given posthumously, a veteran's lapel badge for his part in code breaking at Bletchley Park during the Second World War, she recalled that his work was never spoken about, everything was very secret, and it wasn't until many years after he had left England that the family learned more of the work in which he was involved.



Having received the badge, Jane and husband, David Johnson, decided to visit Bletchley Park to see for themselves the nature of this work.

Bletchley Park, Churchill's Secret Intelligence and Computers HQ, also known as Station X, was the location of the UK's main code-breaking establishment. Codes and ciphers of several Axis countries were deciphered there, most famously the German Enigma. The high-level intelligence produced by Bletchley Park, codenamed Ultra, is frequently credited with aiding the Allied war effort.

In the summer of 1939, a small team of code breakers arrived at the Government

Code and Cipher School's (GC&CS) new home. Their mission was to crack the backbone of German military and intelligence communications. Bill Filby volunteered for the Army, his knowledge of German led to his transference to the British Intelligence Corps., as a member of the cryptographic team at Bletchley where he was head of the Diplomatic Section, rising to the rank of Captain.



Leonard W Filby 1925 - 2006
Honorary President 2003 - 2006

Leonard W.R. Filby and his wife, Mary, were founder members of The Filby Association. During the early years Len escorted Ellsworth Filby, our Founder, in his search for all 'Filbys' and mainly his own ancestors around East Anglia. Len had supported Mary in her role as Secretary and then as Manager, thus making the continuation of our Association's work possible.

Mary E Filby 1933 – 2014
Honorary President 2007 – 2014

Many members have fond memories of Mary Filby from earlier years when she and her husband, Len, took a leading role in the development of our Association and opened their home to everyone from all corners of the world as 'family'.

Mary was a legal secretary and therefore had expertise in this role. She was the Association Secretary from the very beginning and did lots of the research herself. She extended her kitchen to make room for an office and The Association was run from this small hive of activity.

The first newsletter sent out after the 1968 'Homecoming' was called "Saga" then every year from 1969 when Mary became Secretary, and Frederick N. Filby, British Coordinator.

In the early 1990s Mary was appointed as Manager before Frederick N Filby passed away in 1996. In 2003 when the opportunity arose for her to become President, she proposed that her husband, Len, be offered this position first as he had been a major part in the creation of the Association alongside her. After his death in 2007 Mary took on the responsibilities of Presidency and appointed Jim Filby as Manager to succeed her.

In Memory of Mary Filby a bench was donated to the village of Filby by The Filby Association and situated on The Pound alongside two others in memory of Ellsworth and Mary Filby and Founder Member, Frederick N Filby.

It was only in her later years that she began using a computer having relied on paper and pencil for almost 45 years she preferred her own filing system and passed an enormous amount of paper records to those that followed in her footsteps.



Frederick N Filby 1916 - 1995
Founder Member & British Coordinator 1969 – 1995

Frederick N Filby deserves recognition for all he did during his period with the Association. He became British Coordinator, equivalent to Manager, in support of Ellsworth Filby from this side of the Atlantic in 1989 after the death of Marion Filby, President.

He bought the first copy of the International Genealogical Index (IGI) for the Society of Genealogists (SAG). He helped establish the Guild of One Name Studies (GOONS) and the East of London Family History Society. He was honoured with a Fellowship by the Society of Genealogists for his genealogical activities, in the course of which he was introduced to the Queen.

Fred, as he was known, answered over 2,300 letters about family research within our Association in just one year. It was all on typewriter or by hand in those days! He was also presented to the Queen following completion of the East of London Society's Monumental Inscriptions Project.

In remembrance of him a bench donated by The Filby Association was situated on The Pound at Filby village alongside of one in memory of Ellsworth and his wife, Marion Filby.

These people began ancestor hunting when the requirement was looking through telephone directories for Filbys, travelling through town and country, knocking on doors and interviewing people with the surname of Filby (and its variants) from all over the world; bringing them together to share stories about their families. This is how family history research began for us and many others.

We owe them a debt of gratitude for their determination and positive resolve to seek and find everyone and everything they possibly could and for sharing it with us.

Current Association Officers can be found listed at the bottom of each web page