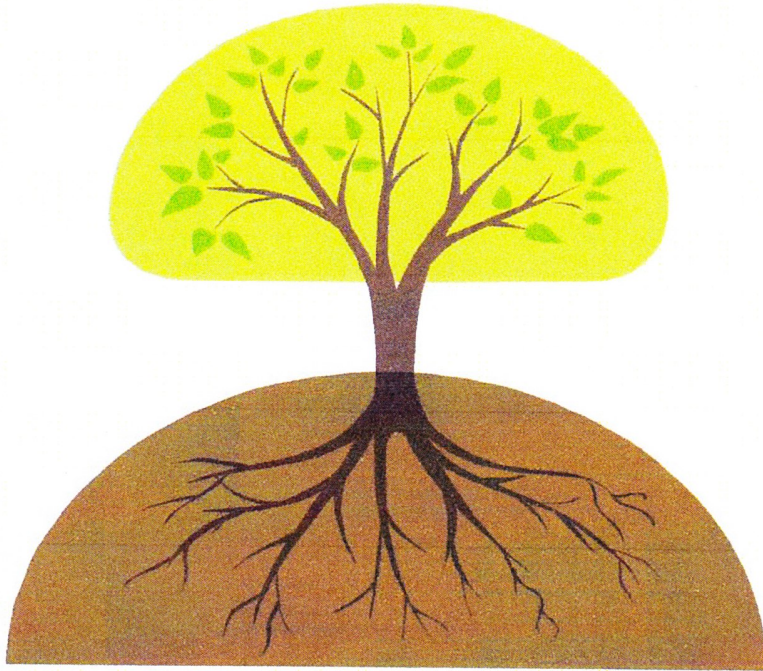


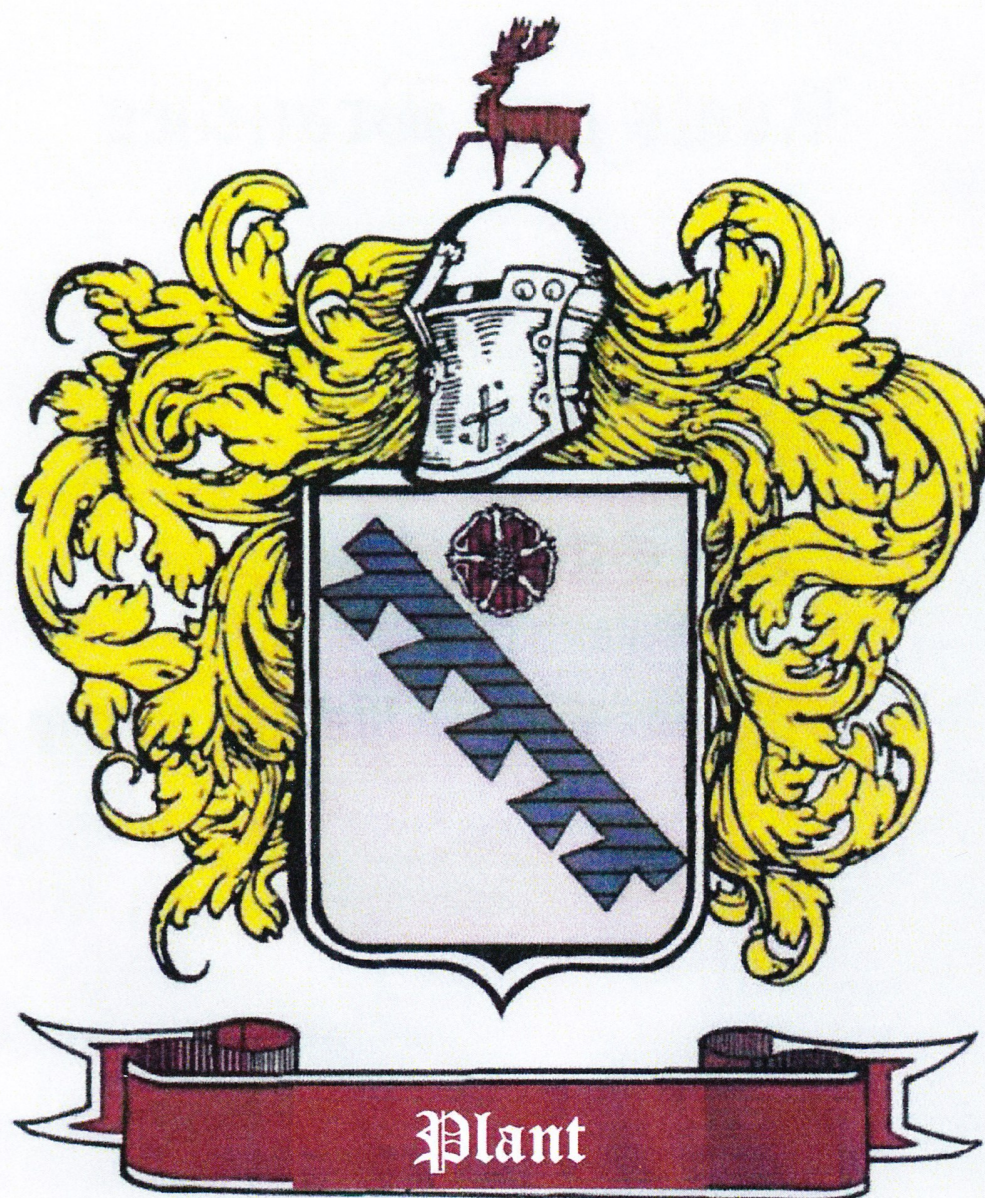
# Roots & Branches



**The Official Journal  
of the  
Plant  
Family History Society**

**May 2010  
Series 2 / Issue 1**





THE PLANT COAT OF ARMS HEREBY ILLUSTRATED IS OFFICIALLY DOCUMENTED IN *BURKE'S GENERAL ARMORY*. THE ORIGINAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ARMS (SHIELD) IS AS FOLLOWS:

"AR. A LABEL IN BEND AZ. IN CHIEF A ROSE GU."

WHEN TRANSLATED THE BLAZON ALSO DESCRIBES THE ORIGINAL COLORS OF THE PLANT ARMS AS:

"SILVER; A BLUE LABEL PLACED DIAGONALLY IN UPPER THIRD A RED ROSE."

ABOVE THE SHIELD AND HELMET IS THE CREST WHICH IS DESCRIBED AS:

"A RED STAG WALKING."

ARMS: ARGENT, A LABEL IN BOND AZURE, IN CHIEF A ROSE GULES

CREST: A STAG, TRIPPANT GULES

MOTTO: NUNQUAM NON PARARUS – NEVER UNPREPARED



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# Peter Thomas Johnson

I was born in 19?? ( Err ! lets just say that King George VI was on the throne at the time) in Chester Royal Hospital, lived at Tarporley for 6 years then moved to Crewe as my father was a Millwright (Maintenance) at Rolls – Royce Motors Ltd. Crewe where he worked till he died in service in 1976 aged 53 Having served 37 Years.

I attended Brierly Street Secondary Modern School and left to join my Brother Michael and my father at Rolls-Royce Motors I took early retirement in 2006 having served 40 years.

My interest in family history came about when my eldest son Andrew Thomas was born, we kept the name Thomas as this was my fathers middle name, also his fathers name Thomas Wilfred.

I had to find out who was his father, this is when the bug bit and from then on I have become a fanatic

Thomas Wilfreds Father was **Samuel Johnson** who married **Elizabeth Plant**, this marriage is a story of its own, I will just say that he was lodging with his work pal **Samuel Plant** his wife **Sarah** nee' **Hulse** and daughter **Elizabeth** Lets just say it was Roger the Lodger who took advantage of this minor, you can reed more in an article further on in this journal.

Having served on many a committee I was soon spending most of my free time doing family history, which lead to my divorce in 1994, I reckon I am the one and only person ever to be divorced due to spending too much time on family history and not enough time with the family.

I met my second wife Sue in 1996, she is involved in family history researching **Noone & Webster**.

**Many Thanks for all your good wishes and messages of support for resurrecting the group**



## **Peter Johnson Family History C.V.**

- 1981 - Date **Member** of The Family History Society of Cheshire
- 1981 - Date **Member** of The North Cheshire Family History Society
- 1984 - 1988 Hon. **Treasurer** of the Nantwich Group of the FHS of Cheshire
- 1985 - 1988 Hon. **Treasurer** of the FHS of Cheshire
- 1986 - 1988 **Founder & First Chairman** of the Stretch Ancestral Research Society
- 1990 - 2007 **Member** of the **Plant Family History Group**
- 1990 - 2003 **Member** of the South Cheshire FHS (Ceased in 2003)
- 1990 - 1997 **General & Membership Secretary** South Cheshire FHS
- 1994 - 1995 **Taught Family History** to Associates at Bentley Motors Academy
- 1992 - 1995 **Vice Chairman** of the **Guild Of One Name Studies**
- 1992 - 1996 **Book Depot** for the Federation of Family History Societies
- 1996 - 1997 **Executive Director** of the Federation of Family History Societies
- 1997 - 2002 **Leader** of the Runcorn Group FHS of Cheshire
- 1999 - 2000 **Publicity Officer** FHS of Cheshire
- 1999 - 2001 **Founder & Group Leader** Tarporley Group FHS of Cheshire
- 2007 - Date **Committee Member** Runcorn Group FHS of Cheshire
- 2008 - Date **Member** of the Liverpool & SW Lancs FHS
- 2009 - Date **Publicity Officer** FHS of Cheshire
- 2009 - Date **Founder & Chairman** Friar FHG
- 2009 - Date **Chairman** Plant FHS



## Society Members

No	Title	Name	Address
HLP	Mr.	W. Keith Plant	Redacted
HLW	Dr.	John S. Plant	
Chair 1	Mr.	Peter Johnson	
2	Mrs.	Katherine Compagno	
3	Mr.	Michael Plant	
4	Prof.	Dennis Wood	
5	Mrs.	Judith Wilkinson	
6	Mr.	Anthony David Plant	
7	Rev.	Cyril D. Blount	
8	Mrs.	Jennifer Plant	
9	Mr.	Kenneth T. Plant	
10	Miss.	Joan Plant	
11	Mr.	Ron Plant	
12	Mr.	William Turner Plant	
13	Mr.	Michael J. Plant	
14	Mr.	Colin H. Plant	
15	Miss.	Tessa Pilsbury	
16	Mr.	Earl J. Davis	
17	Mrs.	Frances Upson	
18	Mr.	Peter R. Plant	
19	Mr.	John E. Ransley	
20	Mr.	David Capes	
21	Mr.	David Plant	



## Members (Continued)

No	Title	Name	Address
USC 22	Mrs.	Linda S. Wheeler	<b>Redacted</b>
23	Mrs.	Dorian G. Greenbaum	
* 24	Mr.	Philip Plant	
* 25	Mrs.	M. J. Plant	
26	Mrs.	Doris Howorth	
27	Ms.	Alice D. Mercer	
28	Mrs.	Olivia S. Masters	
29	Mr.	Patrick Pearson	
GMC 30	Mrs.	Sian Plant	
31	Mrs.	Estella A. Nobles	
32	Mrs.	Margaret Lake	
33	Ms.	Evelyn M. Pitts	
34	Mr.	Frederick E. Plant	
35	Mr.	Andrew Plant	
36	Mrs.	Frances Plant	
37	Mr.	Richard E. Plant	
AC 38	Mr.	William (Bill) Plant	
39	Mr.	Michael Perkins	
% 40	Mrs.	Brenda Plant	
41	Mr.	Benjamin J. Plant	
42	Mrs.	Linda Plant Wagoner	

## Members (Continued)

No	Title Name	Address
% 43	Mr. Michael Plant	<b>Redacted</b>
44	Mr. Alan Plant	
45	Mrs. Sylvia Wells	
46	Mr. John R. Plant	
47	Ms. Linda C. Brice	
% 48	Mrs. E.J. Plant	
% 49	Mr. James W. Plante	
50	Mr. Bill Lowe	
51	Mr. Walter F. Plant	
% 52	Ms. Sylvia Trumble	
53	Mrs. A. Dowell	
54	Mrs. Hazel Morgan	
55	Mrs. Deanna P. Richards	
56	Ms. Aloa Dereta	
57	Col. Mike Walker	
58	Mrs. Janet Padrazolla	
% 59	Ms. Sandra Doble	
% 60	Mr. Frank Robinson	
61	Mrs. Heather Plant	
% 62	Mrs. Marie Pincus	
% 63	Mr. William Lonnen	
% 64	Mr. James W. Plant	

**HLP = Honorary Life President**  
**GMC = Guild Marriage Coordinator**  
**AC = Australia Coordinator**  
**\* = Change of Address or E-mail**

**HLW = Honorary Life Webmaster**  
**USC = United States Coordinator**  
**% = New Member**



## Members Interests

No	Title	Name	Interest
HLP	Mr.	W. Keith Plant	General
HLW	Dr.	John S. Plant	19c Sheffield Yorks / e19c Clowne Derbyshire
Chair 1	Mr	Peter Johnson	L 19c Mid Cheshire/
2	Ms	Katherine Compagno	19c West Bromwich + Walsall Staffs/ L18c + e19c Brierly Hill/ 18c Old Swinford
3	Mr	Michael Plant	18c & 19c South Yorks / North Derbys (m.plant@hotmail.co.uk)
4	Prof	Dennis Wood	17c to 20c Rowley Regis + Oldbury/
5	Mrs	Judith Wilkinson	18 + 19c Dudley, Tipton, Halesowen, Rowley Regis, Brierly Hill, Langley, Cradley West Bromwich
6	Mr	Anthony D. Plant	Pre 19c Clowne Derby/19c Doncaster Yorks/19c Notts/ 19c Cheltenham Glos
7	Revd	Cyril D. Blount	M 19c Cheadle, Staffs (James Plant)
8	Mrs	Jennifer Plant	18c + 19c 'Black Country'
9	Mr	Kenneth T. Plant	18c + 19c South East, Leicestershire + Rutland Border
10	Miss	Joan Plant	e19c Bristol
11	Mr	Ron Plant	L 19c Dudley South Staffs
12	Mr	William T. Plant	18c + e19c North Staffordshire
13	Mr	Michael J. Plant	e19c Shropshire/e19c Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire
14	Mr	Colin Plant	William Plant 17c/early 19c Hundleigh, Lincs/ L18c + E19c Hundleby Lincs.
15	Miss	Tessa Pilsbury	18c + 19c Congleton, Cheshire/ 18 + 19c Horton + Leek, Staffs
16	Mr	Earl J. Davis	Cheadle, Staffs
17	Mrs	Frances Upson	19c Burton on Trent + Croxton + Great Haywood, Staffs
18	Mr	Peter R. Plant	E19c Tittesworth + Ipstones, Staffs
19	Mr	John E. Ransley	18c + 19c Staffs
20	Mr.	David Capes	18c + 19c Harthill + South Auston + Rotherham Yorks.

## Members Interests (Continued)

21	Mr.	David Plant	19c Billingham, Deepfields, Penkridge, Staffs
22	Mrs.	Linda S. Wheeler	Pre 1700 Staffs/Cheshire/John Plant (Emigrant) from UK to US
23	Mrs.	Dorian G. Greenbaum	18c + 19c Dudley ' Kingswinford / Brierley Hill.
24	Mr.	Philip Plant	As for member 25 Plus North Wiltshire
25	Mrs.	M.J. Plant	Any period / Market Harborough, Little Bowden, Great Bowden, Foxton Leics/ Sutton St Edmund/Halbeach Lincs/ Brighton Sussex / Haverhill Suffolk / Battersea London.
26	Mrs.	Doris Howarth	18c + 19c Frodsham / Great Budworth (Plants & Whitby's) + 18c & 19c Manchester
27	Ms.	Alice D. Mercer	19c Leicester/L19c Nottingham
28	Mrs.	Olivia S. Masters	18c Shropshire
29	Mr.	Patrick Pearson	Any Period Stockport Cheshire
30	Mrs.	Sian Plant	e19c Denton Lancs / 19c Leicester / 20c Rounds Northants
31	Mrs.	Estella Nobles	Any Period Fenton + Cheadle + Longton Staffs.
32	Mrs.	Margaret Lake	m 18c Suffolk
33	Mrs.	Evelyn M. Pitts	Lancashire 1850 to date / Staffs prior 1850
34	Mr.	Frederick E. Plant	20c Lower Broughton, Salford, Lancs
35	Mr.	Andrew Plant	M18c + Little Bowden and Market Harborough / 19c London
36	Mrs.	Frances Plant	19c Leek Staffs.
37	Prof.	Richard E. Plant	19c Birmingham (Edward Plant bn circa 1787)
38	Mr.	William (Bill) Plant	
39	Mr.	Mike Perkins	All Periods, Black Country.
40	Mrs.	Brenda Plant	18 + 19c Dudley, Tipton, Halesowen, Rowley Regis, Brierley Hill Langley, Cradley, West Bromwich
41	Mr.	Benjamin J. Plant	18 + 19c Lichfield, Staffs / 19c Liverpool Lancs
42	Mrs.	Linda Plant Wagoner	Any Period USA / Immigrants from UK to USA
43	Mr.	Michael Plant	General
44	Mr.	Alan Plant	General Staffordshire



## Members Interests (Continued)

- 45 Mrs Sylvia Wells 19c Market Harborough / London Area
- 46 Mr. J.R. (Ron) Plant Pre 1900 Stoke-on-Trent / Pottery Plants, Longton, Lane End Caverswell
- 47 Ms. Linda C. Brice L19c Wakefield, Pontefract, Purston, Yorkshire / 19c Gresley, Derby /  
m19c Cheadle Staffs.
- 48 Mrs. E.J. Plant Awaiting Update
- 49 Mr. James Plante Awaiting Update
- 50 Mr. Bill Lowe 19c Birmingham
- 51 Mr. Walter F. Plant Woodthorpe Nr. Chesterfield / Woodthorpe Nr. Loughborough
- 52 Ms. Sylvia Trumble 18c & e19c Stafford Staffs / 19c Whitchurch Shropshire
- 53 Mrs. A. Dowell 18c + 19c Desford + Newbold Verdon, Leics.
- 54 Mrs Hazel Morgan 19c Meerbrook, Grindon, Staffs / Ashbourne Derby.
- 55 Mrs. Deanne Richards 19c Eckington Derbyshire / Sheffield (Brightside)
- 56 Ms. Aloa Derita Any Period pre 1860 Leek Staffs / m 19c Sheffield Yorkshire.
- 57 Col. Mike Walker 19c +20c Longton Staffs (Samuel Lucas Plant + Frederick Sutton Plant)  
RH & SL Plant & Co
- 58 Mrs. Janet Padrazolla 18 + 19c Piddington, Oxford / 18 + 19c Crendon, Bucks
- 59 Ms. Sandra Doble Wicklow
- 60 Mr. Frank Robinson Awaiting Update
- 61 Mrs. Heather Plant Pre 1850 Herts (Hertford, Stapleford & Saccabe)
- 62 Mrs. Marie Pincus Awaiting Update
- 63 Mr. Bill Lonnen Awaiting Update
- 64 Mr. Jim Plant Awaiting Update

# Your Letters

From Michael Plant  
Member No 0003

Hello Peter,

We have in our family a jug inscribed :**Abraham Plant 1815**' and the nearest Abraham I have, was born in 1800, the son of **John Plant 1763 -10/4/1844** (Still can't find where he came from, any help gratefully received).

I have looked for years for the missing **Abraham (1815)** and it suddenly struck me that the jug was probably given to a 15 year old **Abraham** commemorating the Battle of Waterloo.

So it shows how easily one can be lead up the garden path.

From Sian Plant  
Plant Marriage Coordinator  
Member No 0030

Dear Peter,

Could you please ask **all our members** to send me details of any **Plant Marriages** From **1837 to 1911**, Thank You

From Bill Plant  
Australia Coordinator  
Member No 0038

Hi Peter,

I am so pleased the journal is to begin again; I am descended from the South Lincolnshire Plants, and have had DNA tests to level 37

I have traced my ancestry back to 1651 and solved a few queries on the way.

My great great grandmother **Mary King** migrated to Australia in 1854/55 and one of her sons voyage diary was listed in an earlier journal.

(Perhaps we could print it again PJ )



From Linda Wheeler  
USA Coordinator  
Member No 22

Hi Peter,

I have a request perhaps more than you want to take on, the records involved are further back than most of what I find available at ancestry .com or the other genealogy sites, and there is so much speculation put down as fact in various genealogy records that one doesn't know what to believe.

I am trying to find out where my family's first **JOHN PLANT** came from in England. I have extensive records of his life here in America, all the way down to me, but his previous life is a blank, I would like to find a tie on English soil, so that I can trace that line back further.

Some family records indicate that my **JOHN PLANT**, who was the first member we know of that line for sure to come to America, was born in about 1646 in England. Family lore says it was in perhaps Cheshire or somewhere nearby, one story suggests Macclesfield, he died in Branford Connecticut in 1691.

What I am hoping to find is a family with a **JOHN PLANT** born about 1646 who left England, never to return. I did find a family that might have fit the parameters some years ago – a family with several children, including a John, all the other children had records indicating marriage and/or death, but after Johns birth there were no further indications of any activity.

I have somehow lost the records connected with that search, perhaps if I could find further relatives still in England, and further ancestry.

I also found a **JOHN PLANT** born in 1619, who could have been the father of our John born in 1646, but I am not sure.

I have just come across some information that I have ignored for many years, thinking it couldn't be right - however, I am finding more listings which include this, so I'll give it to you just in case.

**JOHN PLANT 1646 – 1691** baptised Staffordshire 1648, Parents – **JOHN BLAND 1612 – 1680** and **SARAH GREEN 1624 – 1713** Both lived and died in London, England

I am puzzled by this listing, as a **GILES BLAND** born of these parents came to America and still used the name **BLAND**, though he settled in a different part of America than John, is it possible that John was born to them, but changed his last name when he came here? And there is no indication that the **BLANDS** lived in Staffordshire, so I am not convinced that they are my Johns parents.

However it is listed that way in a lot of Ancestry.com family tree sites.

It may be possible that my Johns father was a **THOMAS PLANT, b. 1612, d 1680** – England, but no more certain birthplace.

If anyone can help me I will be most grateful and will reimburse any costs involved

From Lois Smythe  
Possible Member

Hello from Australia, I was looking on the net for my mothers family her name was **MONA ANNIE PLANT**, so far I have traced her family back to her great – great grandparents **SAMUEL PLANT and JANE BELL**, they were from County Cavan in Ireland, all that is known before that is her father was also **SAMUEL** but have not found dates as yet.

Samuel and Jane had 6 Children that we know of 1. John 2. James 3. Samuel 4. Catherine 5. Ellen all of these came to Australia, John and James in 1856 young Samuel in 1858, old Samuel with Catherine and Ellen in 1963 another daughter I found when I was in UK in 2006 was Mary, but could not find anything else. I guessed she had married and was no trace of any other plants in the area today, there are a lot of Plant Family members in Australia, James and his wife had 13 children John and the girls also had large families, not sure how many.

SJames and Rebecca's 5<sup>th</sup> Child William my great grandfather had 7 children 2 died as infants his second child John Alexander was my grandfather and his 2<sup>nd</sup> child Mona Annie Plant was my mother, can anyone connect to my ancestry?

From Bill Lowe  
Member No 50

My grandmother **MATILDA PLANT** and her husband **BENJAMIN LOWE** arrived in South Australia from Birmingham UK about 1880, on the ship 'Dundee'. I and my distant cousin Irene Plant – Berger from America are both descended from **EDWARD PLANT**, Frying Pan maker of Birmingham born 1787.

Irene's cousin is Dr Richard Plant Member No 37



# Your Letters

From Bill Lonnen  
Member No 63

The rather obvious reason my name is Lonnen and my father's is Plant-Wells is that I was adopted. I had little interest or time to find my real family until I retired by which time both of my adopted parents had died. Also, by this time, the internet had been around for some while so there was no better time to start.

I had great difficulty finding anything about my mother who was named as Beryl Malcolm on the adoption consent forms I had obtained from the Dorset County Archives. All I knew of my father was that his name was James P Wells. I thought the "P" would be Peter, Paul, Phillip or other usual middle name. I could only find one Beryl Malcolm in the BMD records but she would have been quite young when I was born. There were a number of James P Wells listed who could have been my father but I had only searched the records back to the turn of the century and even then I had amassed over 500 pages from the BMD index. The BMD information suggested my mother was born in the Coventry area and so I put adverts in all the local papers for information on Beryl Malcolm. I even received a telephone call from the Mayoress of Birmingham who told me of a Beryl Malcolm she knew but the person in question was far too young. I found every living Beryl Malcolm in the telephone directory, all four of them, and contacted each one. None were my mother. I redirected my search to my father and found him on the electoral roll for Sherborne, the town listed on the adoption consent form. He was the chief waterman at the waterworks during the Second World War and I visited the waterworks and the house I was conceived in. The Waterworks preservation society couldn't tell me what the P was in his name. I trawled further back into the BMD index and found a James P Wells born in 1880 - far too old to be my father. However one James P Wells had married a Beryl Collard. This was too much to be a coincidence even if the spouse's surname was wrong. I sent off for the Marriage certificate and lo and behold on it was written "Collard otherwise known as **Malcolm**". No wonder I couldn't find the marriage information for Beryl Malcolm if her name was really Beryl Collard! I also found that the "P" stood for Plant. I was about 75% certain that these were my parents but still needed confirmation.

I was now able to search the Death records and found that James P Wells had died in 1975 and Beryl 10 years later. I searched to see if they had any other children and found that they had a daughter, Lynda. Searching the records for Lynda I found that she had been married twice and had a daughter. Looking for Lynda under her last married name was unsuccessful so I looked for her as Lynda Wells acting on the hunch that she may have been divorced and was now using her maiden name. Again I had no luck. Then a flash of inspiration. Maybe she was using her father's name? I looked for her using the name Plant-Wells and 'bingo'. I found her on 192.com and Friends Reunited. From these sites I knew where she lived, which schools she attended and her occupation. I even had a picture of her home courtesy of Google Maps.

I emailed her via Friends Reunited and asked "Did your father work at the Sherborne Water works and marry a lady named Beryl?" The reply was a cautious "Why do you want

to know?" I replied with "My father worked at the waterworks and married a lady called Beryl". Her next reply was simply titled "Sister" Within 24 hours she was sitting in my home chatting about my family and showing me photos of my mother and father. It transpired that I also had an older half sister, Jill, whom Lynda had contacted to ask if there was a possibility that their mother had had another child. Jill told her that around the time of my birth her mother had taken her to Bournemouth for a few months and lodged at Ridley Road. The same road I had lived as an infant. My mother had kept her pregnancy secret and before it became noticeable had told my father she had obtained temporary employment in Bournemouth. She then lodged with the couple who were to adopt me, used an assumed name on the adoption papers and forged my father's signature to keep my existence a secret. Jill was packed off to London to stay with her grandmother before things got too obvious. My sister told me that she had wanted her adopted as well but my father would have none of it.

My mother was the youngest of 10 children of a gentleman farmer of 375 acres and was brought up in a 17 bedroom mansion (Stodmarsh Court in Stodmarsh, Kent). She was educated by a governess and later became a socialite and model. In her twenties her 'boyfriend' was the Earl of March, the owner of a racetrack and had been taken out on Goodwood motor racing track several times. When my older sister was a toddler my mother took her to a dinner party where she introduced her to a gentleman, Prince Edward, later to be King and even later to abdicate. Unfortunately my grandfather was a poor business man and had to move into a smaller house in Herne Bay. His brother was more fortunate and kept his 1000 acre hop farm right up to the 1960's. My mother had to find work and many years later became the housekeeper for my father. We are wondering if there are any other children my mother had adopted??

To my surprise, father was indeed born in 1880 and joined the Royal Navy in 1901, the same year Queen Victoria died. He was married the same year and later had two sons who both died before their 40th birthdays. If they had lived I would have half brothers 107 years old!! He divorced his first wife shortly after he left the Navy. My father served for a while on the Navy's first iron clad warship 'Warrior', although by then it was just a supply ship. He saw action in the First World War being severely wounded in 1916. He retired from the Navy as a Chief Petty Officer in 1921.

As a scientist (I qualified as a Chemist) it was interesting to see the genetic similarities between my real family and myself. My sister and I have very similar tastes in food, music and interior design. Her daughter even noticed similar mannerisms. I was a bit of a cuckoo in the nest of my adopted family being more academic and had better technical skills. My (real) father had a classic **Alvis** and I have several classic cars as well. He was a very skilled engineer and could make almost anything from a Swiss army knife to a working 3HP steam engine. His model of HMS Victory was bought by Lord Montague and is on display in the Maritime Museum at Buckler's Hard. I think I get my scientific leaning and technical skills from him.

However, apart from finding two sisters, a niece and many cousins the most gratifying result of my searches is the fact when I started I wondered if there were any medical 'time bombs' hidden in my genes and found that my father had lived into his 95th year -so no worries there. I'm now the family genealogist and have managed to get back to 1630 on my mother's side but only to 1835 on my father's and hope to find the connection with the Plant name he was given and but for my devious mother I would also have.



**From Mrs Margaret Dowell  
( Member 53)**

**My Husbands Plants are from Desford Leicestershire**

Joseph Plant m Ann Garland

George Plant m (1) Ann Mills (2) Mary Geary

Joseph Plant m Ursula Payner

Fred Plant m Lydia Emma Hatton

Margaret Emma m Willoughby Samuel Dowell

Margaret Ann.....Alan.....Peter.....John

# Isaac Plant

By

**Mrs. Alice D. Mercer**

**Member No 27**

My Grandfather was **Isaac Plant** born in Loughborough Leicestershire England on October 14<sup>th</sup> 1876, he had two elder brothers **John & George** both born in Loughborough where the family lived between 1870 – 1878, when they moved to Heanor in Derbyshire.

Isaac's father **Benjamin Plant** was a Framework Knitter, and possibly moved for better work prospects in Nottingham & Derbyshire, where there were many Hosiery Factories.

Isaac's two sisters were born after they moved to Heanor, their father **Benjamin Plant** born in Castle Donnington, and their mother **Mary Barker** in Loughborough Leicestershire, they appear on the 1881 Census of Heanor, Mary must have died young, and Benjamin married for a second time to a much younger woman Sarah Hogg from Losco Grange near Heanor at the age of 22 years.

Isaac married a travelling girl an actress and dancing girl **Eva Quail**, She was also 22 years old and very beautiful, they married at the Wesleyan Chapel Bath St, Ilkeston, Derbyshire on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1899, Eva was the Granddaughter of **Sammy Raynor** a well known showman of that time in the Midlands of England.

## ISAAC PLANT

M

b. 14/10/1876 Loughborough

m. 1899

d. Oct 1953 Notts

father **Benjamin Plant**

second wife Maria Biggs

g father **John Plant & Elizabeth Clarke**

## EVA QUAIL

b 18/08/1876 Rochdale

d 02/05/1907

father **John Quail**

mother **Rebecca Raynor**

b 1844 daughter of

**Sammy Raynor Showman  
& Sarah Stevenson**



# Plant and Plantagenet. Is there a connection? Does DNA help?

Dr John S Plant

April 2010

## The Plant millennium reunion

At the Plant Family Reunion in 1999, there was particular interest in a possible connection between the Plant and Plantagenet names. At that time, I recall merely mentioning that DNA testing was 'coming along'.

Since then there have been significant advances.



## A background of nineteenth-century debate

The nineteenth-century debate is, at least, 'amusing'. It concerns an old story, a version of which is outlined by M.A. Lower in his 1860 Surname Dictionary:

A family in humble circumstances at Kettering bear the ancient royal name Plantagenet, though now it is commonly corrupted to Plant.

That the name Plant 'is supposed to be corrupted from Plantagenet' was noted also in an 1862 book entitled *A History of the Ancient Parish of Leek* referring to Leek at the northernmost tip of Staffordshire in the main Plant homeland.

In 1897, some further discussion appeared in *Notes and Queries* (Oxford University Press) [8th S., XII, Aug 28, '97, p. 167], as follows:

PLANTAGENET. - Some time ago I read an account of a boy named Plant (residing in Warwickshire, I believe), whose grandfather had borne the royal name Plantagenet, but had changed it to Plant, thinking that the full name too grand for a poor man. The note proceeded to state that this boy, if Salic Law had been in force, would have been king of England. Can anyone tell me more of this, or inform me as to where I should obtain the note in question? ... PELOPS.

There were replies [op. cit., Sept. 25, '97, p. 258]:

PLANTAGENET (8th S, xii. 167). - Some such note as this, of the name Plantagenet shortened to Plant, may be found in Burke's 'Vicissitudes of Families.' But there is no kind of verification, and the statement that the holder of the name would be king by Salic law must be taken with very great caution. ... C.F.S. Warren, M.A., Longford, Coventry.

The Rev Anthony Bathe wrote from Paull, Yorks, the account of the boy Plant that PELOPS enquires about. It appeared in one of the daily papers - the *Standard*, I think - and Mr Bathe mentioned that the boy at that time was living at Paull. - R.H., Ely.

## Debunking the circumstantial evidence

The old story finds just *a little* resonance in the recently established evidence. I shall avoid either exaggerating the strength of the case for the story or denying that there is any evidence at all. My own view is that: if there is a connection between the Plant and Plantagenet surnames, it can not be said to be any more than cultural. Adopting this view, I shall debunk any claim of a blood relationship by stressing the limitations of the onomastic evidence, point by point, as follows:

- the Plantagenet forefather Geoffrey, Count of Anjou was nicknamed *Plante Genest*; and, following his 1151 death there is a 1202 record of Emeric *de la Planta* owning land in Anjou;
  - however, there is no clear genetic or genealogical evidence of a connection between the names *Plante Genest* and *de la Planta* in Anjou, nor, for that matter, any certainty that there was a genetic connection to subsequent by-names that could have led on to the prolific Plant surname in England;
- the Plant-like name *Plantyn* or *Planteng'* (ca. 1250) belonged to a servant of the noble Plantagenet descent; like the place name *la Planteland*, this Plant-like name can be related to some known illegitimate descendants of Geoffrey Plante Genest;
  - however, though this perhaps hints at a cultural tradition for 'Plant-like' names, there are only sparse references, such as ones to *Plantegenest*, *Planteng'*, *Plauntegenet etc.*, relatable to 'Plantagenet' around the times when the Plant surname was forming in England (ca.1250-1400);
- the name Plante or Plont or Plant is found in particular near the illegitimate Warren descent of Plante Genest; there is an indication of illegitimacy in the Plant blazon; and, DNA evidence shows that the main Plant family is sufficiently large for a 'many bastards' hypothesis to be helpful in explaining its origins;

- however, though the Welsh meaning of *plant* is ‘children’ and could refer to many polygynous children, we can not simply presume that the name *Plant* referred to the generated (illegitimate) children of a generator of the realm;
- there is strong evidence that the so-called ‘Plantagenets’ were womanisers (Appendix A); and, they presumably had many illegitimate children;
  - however, a ‘putative’, thriving, illegitimate descent from the so-called ‘Plantagenets’ does not constitute an adequate basis for claiming that descent was the Plants;
- the spelling Plantt (a possible abbreviation) is found after the times of the royal House of York (for whom there is definite evidence that they used the surname Plantagenet, ca.1450-1500); to this, it can be added that recent DNA evidence shows that Plantt belongs to the same male-line family as Plant;
  - however, Plantt could simply have reflected the pronunciation of the co-existing spelling Plante. Though no genealogical evidence would necessarily be expected for scattered bastards, there is none to prove that Plant/Plantt descended from Plantegenest/Plantagenet.

Notwithstanding that most of us are related, one way or another, over the time-span since the medieval period, male-line relatedness is much less common; and, in royal matters in particular, the usual onus of proof is to supply strong evidence and not simply to say that a blood relationship *could be* possible. That is not to say that a ‘cultural’ connection of some kind can be ruled out between the Plant and Plantagenet names.

## **Onomastic significance of Plantagenet-like names**

There is no clear evidence for a genetic connection between the many bastards that evidently issued from the ‘Plantagenets’ and the Plant surname. This then leaves just a hint of a possible, perhaps indirect, cultural connection between the names Plantagenet and Plantt or Plant. Though just a hint, it is an important hint when taken together with a consideration of other ‘Plantagenet-like’ names. A standard onomastic technique is to consider a series of similar names when trying to reach an understanding of those names’ meanings. The Plantagenet surname itself is controversial and the Plant surname, together with other by-names similar to Plantagenet, can provide valuable clues.

The name ‘Plantagenet’ was originally spelled Plante Genest or Plantegenest or Plauntegenet or Plantaginet. It originated with Count Geoffrey of Anjou, father of King Henry II who ascended the English throne in 1154. It is most commonly claimed that the name arose because Geoffrey wore a sprig of broom in his bonnet – its significance has been said to relate to its golden flower though, in a recent *Nomina* publication, I have proposed that it related culturally to the earlier name



Plantapilosa and, thereby, to the development of contemporary belief in man's vegetative soul.

There is no contemporary evidence that Geoffrey Plante Genest's royal descendants used the Plantagenet surname before the mid fifteenth century; and so evidence for the intervening years of the development of similar names, such as Plant, is amongst the best available evidence when seeking onomastic clues for the significance of the Plantagenet surname.

For a rational onomastic consideration of the evidence, it is important to consider *all* the contemporary names of a similar nature. This may seem obvious; but, rather remissly, it has hitherto been the custom to pick just *some* of them to suit a particular line of argument for the meaning of the surname Plant. The nineteenth-century claim that Plant is a 'corruption of Plantagenet' prompted a particular rebuff. The oft-repeated counter is that Plant relates not to Plantagenet but to Plantebene and Planterose. A persistent dogma is hence that Plant means a 'gardener'. However, a detailed examination of the late twentieth-century 'gardener' contention for Plant reveals that it has been repeated and overstated with just a partial understanding of the evidence. The persistent controversy - Plantebene and Planterose, instead of Plantagenet - unfortunately detracts from a more rounded debate. In the fuller evidence, the set of medieval English names comprises: Plantagenet; Plantebene; Plantefolie; Plantefene; and Planterose - these do not all mean a 'gardener'. Instead, they all relate to the medieval concept of generation which, in contemporary belief, was a power of man's vegetable soul.

A deeper explanation of Plantagenet-like names is hence that they all relate to the generative power in man's vegetable soul. It is hence in keeping with this better-informed understanding that there is a generative sense for Plant, which was proposed before the fashion for 'gardener'. Ernest Weekly's early twentieth-century Surname Dictionary offered such opinions as 'sprig', 'cudgel', or 'young offspring' for the meaning of the surname Plant; and, having studied the matter for many years, I believe that his suggestion 'young offspring', which relates back to the medieval concept of generation, should not be ignored.

Around the mid twentieth century, when the 'gardener' meaning was proposed, there was much controversy about whether to lift the censorship on D.H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The said lover was a gardener/gamekeeper - his passion for generation extended beyond just plants and animals. His full range of activities spanned the scope of medieval belief in the power of generation in the vegetable soul, which extended from plants to animals and man. There are related meanings of the Welsh and archaic English word *plant* concerning procreation. Censorship has stood in the way of a full and frank debate of such meaning.

Recent Y-DNA and other evidence has added support to the generative meaning for Plant: 'offspring'. This is outlined at <http://cogprints/5985/> in the academic paper John S Plant (2005) *Modern methods and a controversial surname: Plant*, *Nomina* 28, pp. 115-33. This and other evidence suggests that generative aspects of man's vegetable soul could have played a key role in the development of the Plantagenet surname. This is outlined further at <http://cogprints/5986/> in the academic paper: John S Plant (2007) *The tardy adoption of the Plantagenet*

*surname*, *Nomina*, Vol. 30, pp. 57-84. More recently still, more DNA evidence has accumulated to indicate that the Plants are an abnormally large single family and this reinforces the Welsh meaning: '[many] children'.

The earlier proposed meaning 'young offspring' for Plant evidently derives from a medieval concept of generation through shoots, ramification and offshoots. This, unlike the modern idea of a 'gardener', is not easily explained to a modern audience. However, the medieval mindset was different and belief in how generation worked in man's *vegetable* soul carried through to how plant generation was salient as a metaphor for the human procreation of children. More simply, suffice it to say that the Welsh meaning of *plant* is 'children'.

## The large Plant family and polygyny

The Welsh meaning 'children' of the word *plant* relates to the emerging Y-DNA evidence. Polygyny, that is a man taking many women, can lead to an unusually large family down the male lines. To this, it can be added that surnames generally descend down male lines and may, at least occasionally, help to trace out the descent of an abnormally large family.

Some recent, relevant, academic publications relate to common Irish surnames, for which several have been found by Y-DNA studies to belong to abnormally large single families. A similar line of argument to that for populous Irish single-family surnames can be developed, in connection with late-medieval Welsh law, for the Plant surname in the Welsh Marches.

The DNA-inspired line of argument for Ireland can be outlined as follows. Irish Brehon Law allows polygyny (albeit while citing the authority of the Old Testament) and other actions which Canon Law expressly forbid [D.A.Binchy, Introduction in *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, p. ix]. Brehon Law was effectively outlawed by the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1367 and the policy of Surrender and Regrant. Early polygyny [*i.e.* a man taking many women] can apply a large multiplier to the whole of the subsequent population of a surname. This lends support to a current opinion that very large single-surname families in Ireland may have originated as a result of early polygyny.

In the Welsh Marches, polygyny may have intermingled with the English fashion for hereditary surnames; and, so, the same argument as in Ireland can be carried through to the Plant surname. The evidence for polygyny in Welsh Law and in the Welsh Marches is outlined more fully in Appendix B.

Traditionalists in England are often more preoccupied with a different view. It is often suggested that the origins of hereditary surnames in England related to the inheritance of office or property, inspired by the customs of the French nobility. For the purposes of considering the formal influence on whether polygynous children could inherit a surname, it is relevant to consider the hereditary rights of bastards. However, the situation was not as clear-cut as it is often presumed.

The historian, Rodulfus Glaber, was a monk at Cluny in eastern France, who died ca.1046. He approved of the Norman dukes and seems to have accepted the

transmission of their office through 'concubines' which he defends by Old Testament precedence and that of the illegitimate birth of Constantine the Great [*Rodulfi Glabri Historium libri quinque*, tr. John France, Oxford Medieval Texts, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, pp. lvii, 164-5, 204-5]. This provides evidence of a practice that was in general disagreement with the Canon Law of the church.

English and Canon Law favoured primogeniture whereby the eldest legitimate son had sole rights to inheritance. However, even under English Law, no-one questions that others, besides the eldest legitimate son, could inherit a surname. In Blackstone's 18th century *Commentaries of the Laws of England* [Vol. I, ed. W. Morrison (London, 2001) pp. 352-53], it states:

Yet he [a bastard] may gain a surname by reputation though he has none by inheritance. All other children have a settlement in their father's parish; but a bastard in the parish where born, for he has no father.

In short, despite *some* customs of property law, there is substantial reason to doubt that there was a universal restriction on bastards inheriting a paternal surname, particularly when surnames were first forming, especially in the Welsh Marches, particularly for a name that simply meant 'children' in Welsh.

It is accordingly reasonable to surmise that the Plant name could have been coined for the 'many children' of a single family. The main concentration of Plants is found near the Welsh Marches and the Welsh meaning of *plant* is 'children'. Alternatively, the name could have been coined elsewhere and then circumstances in the Welsh Marches could have led on to its proliferation throughout an abnormally large male-line family.

There are other early instances of the Plant name elsewhere; but, there is no need, for this surname, to consider its inheritance by a large number of polygynous children away from the Welsh Marches. The name could have been coined in Anjou, for example, as *de la Planta* meaning 'from the shoot' or 'offshoot' or 'offspring'. It could have been a coincidence of shared culture that the meaning 'from the shoot' chimes with the barely different Welsh meaning 'children'. Polygynous Plant 'offspring' could then have shared the same surname, since the general meaning 'children' does not identify a father and so could hardly offend the father's more legitimate issue under Canon Law. Even if the names *de la Planta* and *Plant* belonged to the same family, it could have been that it was when the family reached the polygynous Welsh Marches that Plants sharing the same surname began to proliferate to an unusual extent. This is enough to explain the Plants' surprisingly large single-surname, single-family population, particularly in the Welsh Marches, even if the surname did not originate there.

I have discussed the technical background to this in more rigorous detail at <http://cogprints/6595/> in the article: John S Plant (2009) *Surname studies with genetics*, DNA Section, Guild of One-Name Studies.



## Some other 'noble' surnames

There are particular uncertainties for early times. Relatively little is known about social customs in late medieval times and common behaviour could have differed from that typical of today. Early practices of surname inheritance could produce a large effect on the ensuing Y-DNA results for a surname. One such result is that of an abnormally large male-line family, arising as a result of early polygyny. Also, as a possibility for smaller families, much Y-DNA mismatching might arise due to family branches 'daughtering out'. I shall briefly mention the emerging findings from Y-DNA testing for a couple of other surnames. Though generally little is known for early surname times, a little more is known for some noble families.

One suggestion is that the surname Pomeroy derives from the old French for an apple orchard and some resulting French place names. More particularly however, the name is found widespread in Devon and can be traced back to Ralph de la Pomerai, a close associate of William the Conqueror, whose family lived for over 500 years in the castle of Berry Pomeroy, near Totnes, Devon. Chris Pomery's DNA study has found that other bearers of the Pomeroy/Pomery surname do not match with the Viscount Harberton line, which traces back to the noble family. The surname shows relatively few Y-DNA matches amongst those tested; also, the name has only a moderate overall population. This may be compared with the predictions of computer simulations. For simplicity, such simulations are based on certain assumptions, such as monogamous families and a constant, small, so-called false paternity rate. Assuming a constant false paternity rate that is typical of modern times leads on to a prediction that a single medieval ancestor is unlikely to give rise to more than four clusters of matching Y-DNA signatures in the living population of a typical surname. More Y-clusters than this have been found for Pomeroy.

However, despite the model prediction that there should likely be no more than four clusters deriving from a single ancestral root if one allows just a 'typical' false paternity rate, this does not rule out that several other of the Pomery Y-clusters could have descended from an early 'affinity' with the noble Pomeroy. Indeed, surname transmission could have been more commonly than normal through daughters or by polyandry [a woman taking more than one man]. In other words, the early, so-called false paternity rate could have been higher than that which has been assumed for the model predictions. An early, high false paternity rate for the Pomeroy name could have arisen as a result of female descendants being amenable to holding on to the noble name for progeny who were not genetic *male-line* descendants of the noble family. This would have led to many non-matching clusters of Y-DNA signatures amongst the modern bearers of the Pomeroy/Pomery name, in keeping with the experimental observations.

There have been various suggestions for the surname Warren, such as that it could have derived from the common Norman forename Warin. Another suggestion is that it could have derived from the *de Warenne* earls descended from Geoffrey Plante Genest, though there were earlier *de Warenne* earls of different male-line stock. The population of the Warren surname is very large but, unlike Plant,

it shows hardly any Y-DNA matches. It can simply be said that this is because, for example, there were many different Y-signatures amongst the many different name-originators called Warin. For a particularly interesting case however, we can consider some comments that Roger Warren has kindly supplied about the Marnhull Warrens:

I am far from clear that we shall regress successfully beyond an ancestor born in Marnhull, Dorset in 1623. Our little group is entirely certain of the documentary trail back to that date and [there are also] four previously unknown cousins who have [Y-DNA matched]. [At that date, we reach] a currently insurmountable obstacle. We are entirely certain that the Marnhull Warrens descended from a strange family which changed its surname over the course of a century or so from Sidling to Sydling alias Warren, to Warren alias Sidling and eventually to plain Warren (of which our proven ancestor Christopher Warren, b ca.1623, was the first to carry the surname Warren without embellishment). Documentation for the period earlier than 1600 is scant and, for the first identifiable Sidling alias Warren in around 1520, lacks any reference to his parentage. Curiously, the surname Sidling seems to have died out. We are left with only speculation that illegitimacy was involved and that the first "errant" mother adopted the surname Sidling from that of her native village some 20 miles from Marnhull. We can only speculate that the father had a surname homologous to Warren and that the Sidling successors knew of the parentage and assumed the Warren surname when the founding father died without legitimate issue.

There are three possible candidates with Warren-like surnames involved in and around Marnhull in the 1500s/early 1600s: Sir Ivo FitzWarine (descended from Fulk de Guarine of Metz); one of the Warrens of Fifehide (descended from King John and his concubine, an illegitimate daughter of the earls of Warren and Surrey); and, Sir John Wareyn (a CANON of Wells Cathedral who appears to have had associations with Marnhull).

## The old question in a new century

Still, the old question remains. We may never know whether Eimeric de la Planta (1202) in Anjou had a direct connection with the Angevin count Geoffrey Plante Genest. There are tantalising hints, in that Geoffrey has been tentatively associated with the old French word *plantat* meaning 'shoot'; add to this that *de la Planta* can mean 'from the shoot'. However, there is no evidence that such a connection was any more than 'cultural', relating to developing belief in man's vegetable soul. Nor is it clear that subsequent thirteenth-century names in south-east England belonged to direct descendants of the Angevin *de la Planta*. Also, there is doubt that these in turn were the genetic ancestors of the many Plants evidently emanating from the fourteenth-century Plant homeland. This homeland is in the north-west midlands of England, not far from Wales. There is so far just a limited number of Y-DNA results and these are widely scattered well beyond this main homeland; a significant fraction of these living males have matching Y-signatures, suggesting that they

belong to an abnormally large single family whose branches were, according to the genealogies, quite widely spread from early times.

All I can say is that I currently believe that a medieval meaning 'offspring' now seems more likely than 'gardener' for Plant. Has DNA helped? Yes, the emerging DNA evidence for Plant has helped with a '[many] children' hypothesis. This, of course, leaves the intrigue of whose children they were.

The old story that the Plants were 'Plantagenet' children remains open to intense scepticism and, indeed, ridicule by some. One might set out to compare the Plant Y-DNA signature with one for the Plantagenets though even such an approach can leave ambiguities of interpretation. In any event, such attempts have not been fruitful so far for the case of Plant and Plantagenet. Perhaps the best hope for obtaining a 'Plantagenet' y-signature would be to seek that of the Duke of Beaufort and his male-line relatives though the sceptics question whether even that would be a true signature of the 'Plantagenets' since even this reputed male-line descends through two illegitimacies. There is no 'Plantagenet' y-signature in the public domain with which to compare. I have written to the Duke of Beaufort about this but I have received no reply.

The scene has changed rapidly this first decade of the new century, with DNA testing. The Plant study has been amongst the first exploiting this exciting advance [Susan Meates (2008) – see Further Reading]. The Plant Y-DNA study has also been mentioned, for example, in an article by one of the prime instigators of the new DNA pursuit [Chris Pomery (2009) – see Further Reading].

In Y-DNA testing, different strategies are appropriate for frequent and infrequent surnames. Plant is particularly frequent amongst the million or more surnames in the UK, being the 617th most common in England and Wales. Studying every genealogical tree is a mammoth task for such a populous surname. The most telling approach, at least to start with, is to consider a random sample of males bearing the surname. That so many such Plants match seems quite extraordinary for so common an English surname and this is a particularly surprising finding of this approach.

The 'Plantagenet' associations that have been mentioned are best taken as evidence of polygynous behaviour amongst some of the English medieval nobility (Appendix A). The Laws of Wales and the Welsh Marches (Appendix B) suggest that there was a similar behaviour amongst others. Early polygyny is particularly helpful for explaining the initial Y-DNA findings for the Plant surname (Appendix C); and, this deserves particular attention and warrants further investigation. The finding of an abnormally large, single-surname family could become more statistically robust with more high-resolution Y-DNA results for more Plants. That is not to say that this represents the sole role of Y-DNA testing – at a more detailed level, much remains to be discovered about the various, modern branches of the Plant family.



## Further Reading

- Susan Meates (2008) *Adding DNA to Your One-name Study*, Journal of One-Name Studies, Vol 9, Issue 12, pp 9-11  
<http://www.one-name.org/journal/9-11-AddingDNA.pdf>
- Chris Pomery (2009) *The Advantages of a Dual DNA/Documentary Approach to Reconstructing the Family Trees of a Surname*, Journal of Genetic Genealogy, 5(2), pp 86-95  
<http://www.jogg.info/52/files/pomery.pdf>

## Appendices

### A: Plantagenet polygyny

A particular point to be made is that along with the Plantagenets there could have been many others, lost to the historical record, who were indulging in similar practices and who may have sired many illegitimate children. According to Laura Betzig [Laura Betzig, *British polygyny in Biology and History*, ed Malcolm Smith, pp 30-87.], rich men throughout the Middle Ages and in modern England *married* monogamously but *mated* polygynously, having sex with as many women as they could afford: they have almost certainly produced more children as a result. She adds that, in the past several hundred years, the tide has turned in England from despotism to democracy, and polygyny started to give way to monogamy. For this view, she depends not least on the following evidence for the Plantagenets.

The best-known bastard son of Geoffrey Plante Genest of Anjou was Hamelin, who became the Warenne earl of Surrey. Plante Genest's eldest legitimate son, Henry II of England, had two well known, well placed bastards: Geoffrey, Archbishop of York; and, William Longspée, earl of Salisbury. Identifying his other bastards is clothed in mystery though Henry's reputation for womanising is clear. He is supposed to have coveted the sister of Roger of Clare, earl of Hertford. A little later, Eude de Porhoet, who had been Brittany's count, complained that Henry held his daughter hostage in 1168 and got her pregnant. Henry presumably fathered another bastard - Morgan, a provost of Berkeley and bishop-elect of Durham. And there were rumours that Henry debauched his own daughter-in-law to-be, Alice who had been meant to marry his legitimate son Richard. There were undoubtedly other concubines of a lower class, of whom we know relatively little, such as 'fair Rosamund' Clifford and a 'Bellebelle' who is recorded in an 1184 pipe roll. Gerald of Wales said the king 'became an open violator of the marriage bond.' Another contemporary, Ralph Niger said the king's vassals 'hid their daughters and wives when the king was in other towns' since Henry 'was a corrupter of chastity, and followed his father in committing crimes.' Ranulf de Broc was keeper of the king's whores.

Henry's youngest legitimate son John is even more notorious for his womanising. According to Roger of Wendover, John was very fond of his wife; and, accord-

ing to Matthew Paris, he was fond of other men's women. According to more than one source, John made his magnates mad: he 'seduced their more attractive daughters and wives.' Among the king's known women were: Suzanne (listed *domicella, amica domini Regis* in a Misac roll); 'queen' Clementia (named by a Tewkesbury monk); Hawise (the widowed countess of Aumale); another Hawise; 'Alpesia, the queen's damoiselle'; and the wife of Hugh Neville, chief forester. John's philandering resulted in bastards, some of whose names are apparent. For example, one, John, was supported by the see of Lincoln; Henry FitzRoy was given lands in Cornwall in 1215; Richard captained troops in a baronial revolt; Geoffrey emerged from obscurity to command troops and mercenaries in 1193; Osbert Giffard's fate is not clear.

## **B: Welsh polygyny**

Welsh Law applied in the Welsh Marches as well as areas ruled by Welsh princes. In a dispute, for example, between Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn and Roger Mortimer, Gruffydd wanted to apply English Law but, in 1281, the royal justices upheld Roger Mortimer's wish that Welsh Law should apply as the lands concerned lay in Wales. In Welsh property Law, illegitimate sons were entitled to an equal share with the legitimate sons, provided they had been acknowledged by the father. This was the provision which differed most from Canon law. The recognition of polygyny in Wales may have been drawing to a close in the thirteenth century; but there was still recognition of the rights of the male offspring of such relationships. As the Iorwerth thirteenth-century text puts it:

The law of the church says that no-one is entitled to patrimony save the father's eldest son by his wedded wife. The law of Hywel adjudges it to the youngest son as to the eldest, and judges that the father's sin and his illegality should not be set against the son for his patrimony.

Also relevant in this regard is the list preserved in several law books of nine sexual unions, *Naw Cynyweddi Deithiog*. The *Naw Cynyweddi* lists nine unions which seem unlikely to have met with Ecclesiastical approval. This is because some of them may plainly coexist with other unions in which either or both parties are involved. In other words, the list (similar to Irish lists) seems to presuppose a society which permitted polygyny [Huw Pryce (1993) *Native law and the church in medieval Wales*, p. 109.].

## **C: Including polygyny in a computer simulation**

The standard 'Sturges and Hagget' computer simulation comes nowhere close to explaining the large size of the main English Plant family. This simulation assumes standard distributions for the numbers of children that might arise in a monogamous family and computes how surviving male offspring can be expected to die out or thrive down the generations.

Slight changes to the distribution of family numbers do not significantly affect the results, which are constrained by the consideration that the total population for all families should not grow any faster than the population of England as a whole, since medieval times. The effects of many children for each family can be expected to be bounded, in the simulation, by not all sons surviving to produce sons of their own.

To explain exceptionally large male-line families, it can be conjectured that a few males fathered families by polygyny and these grew at the expense of other families. This would not break the constraint on the growth of the total population. Including this hypothesis of 'early polygyny for a few' in a computer simulation is complicated, however, by the fact that several arbitrary assumptions would need to be made. This makes the predictions rather arbitrary. There is no way of knowing how many families were of polygynous intent, how many more children than other families they fathered, and for exactly how many generations did their polygyny persist.

However, though quantitative predictions are difficult in connection with polygyny, there is some evidence to suggest that a small percentage of the medieval families may have had disproportionately many surviving children, either because they were rich and privileged or because, near Wales, they adopted the Welsh custom of recognised polygyny together with a developing English custom to transmit surnames down male lines. Such a situation seems to have occurred in the early times of surname history and such early practice can be expected to have greatly enlarged the subsequent populations of their modern male-line descendants. Other possible causes have been considered for abnormally large single male-line families; but, so far, none seems as productive as early polygyny [John S Plant (2009) Surname Studies with genetics – <http://cogprints/6595/>].

It can be expected that most male-line families in England would not see any benefit in their size but that some could be considerably larger than most families, as a result of early polygyny – a few of the exceptionally large male-line families could have retained a single surname. The vast majority of surnames are far rarer than the Plant surname, which has around 15,000 members in the UK and others overseas. Most of the most common surnames (e.g. Smith) seem, according to the emerging DNA evidence, to belong to many different male-line families. The available Y-DNA evidence so far suggests that it is unusual for so common an English surname as Plant to belong largely to a single male-line family. The general picture can be expected to become clearer as more of the frequent English surnames are tested.



# Interviewing Elderly Relatives

By Peter Johnson

When talking to elderly relatives, take oral information with a pinch of salt, there will be an element of truth in it somewhere.

A cousin and I once visited our great aunt **Elsie Buchan (nee Johnson)** when asked what she had for lunch from 'Meals on Wheels' she couldn't remember.

As I spoke to her about past she would drift off in a daydream, then she would tell me all about her childhood, playing with cousin little **Sammy Plant** outside their home in **Chelford**, next door lived my parents **Samuel Johnson** and **Elizabeth nee Plant**, **Sams** dad my uncle would give all the kids in the street a bag of toffees on his birthday on October 3<sup>rd</sup> I remember my dad also treating us on his birthday May 27<sup>th</sup> I can't remember my mother's birthday, as I was only three when she died, I was born in 1897 so she must have died in 1900.

Armed with all this information, I set off to the Cheshire record office in Chester, to look up all the information she gave me. I was astonished to find out that every word she said was absolutely true. She could not remember what she had had for her lunch that day, but she could recall all of her childhood going back some eighty years.

A word of warning, do not go visiting unannounced ring or write to them, ask if they have any photographs you could look at, ask if you could borrow them to have them copied.

Make sure that they are photographs that have identification in pencil on the back. Today's ballpoint pens will ruin the photographs in time do not write auntie Joan at home with daughter.

Example- Joan Henshall at home 32 Henry Street Crewe  
With daughter Eliza 3years

# The Census & the Lodger

By Peter Johnson

Census returns started in 1801 but up to 1831 it was just a count of heads in each household however in 1841 the government wanted names occupations etc: Although the census was a useful tool to family historians but it lacked vital information. For an example the head and spouse age was given as full meaning they were over twenty one. Also, the question were you born in this county yes or no. If no, they could have been born anywhere, if yes then they could have been born in Nantwich or Wallasey a hundred miles away.

In 1851 all people had to give their correct age, and state exactly where they were born this being a favourite census. Groups of the FHSC & NCFHS began to extract names streets and areas from the films and produce an index. Where you once had to take hours going through the film frame by frame it now takes minutes.

The name you are researching will have a page number, and you can reel you film straight to that frame. 1841 to 1881 are available on film, at County record offices and local libraries. And from then on in different way, always look for different spellings, of the surnames. In the 1800's many people were illiterate, and the enumerator had to fill in the forms for them, writing down what they heard.

Dickson can become a Dixon and Nickson can become Nixon.

I happened to me with the names Henshall and Enshall he dropped his 'H's.

Many people lied about their ages so beware if you cannot find a certificate after working out ones age, and date of birth. Take a look a few years either way, as many ladies took a few years off their age. (Nothings changed they still do it today).

A marriage certificate for my Great Grandfather **Samuel Johnson** and his bride **Elizabeth Plant** gave their ages as twenty six and eighteen. Unable to find birth certificates for them, I later found in the 1881 census that they had lied on their marriage certificate, he was actually twenty eight and she was sixteen, he gave her two years of his age to close the gap. According to the census he was lodging with his workmate **Samuel Plant** and his wife **Sarah** nee **Hulse**, with their daughter **Elizabeth** and it was **Samuel Johnson** who got her into trouble, talk about Roger the lodger!

They married in a Methodist chapel in **Mill Street, Crewe** and produced twelve children and stayed together for over 50 years, they can be found buried together in Crewe cemetery

## Caught in the Act

By Peter Johnson

I've looked through the records but I 'canna'  
Find the marriage of **John Stretch** and **Susanna**  
They were two devout Quakers, so I'm told  
But their marriage record they did not hold

"Something's wrong" I told myself  
Susanna wasn't one to be left on the shelf  
So off to the Records Office I did go  
To search Quaker minutes, to see if they know.

I found an entry for John and his intended spouse  
A half page from this Quaker Meeting House  
The minutes were there for the entire nation  
To read about their fornication

The minutes told how they were caught red handed  
And sinners of the church they were branded  
A court was convened and they were tried  
And both found guilty and cast aside

The Quaker folk said they didn't care  
You'll have to find a church elsewhere  
We don't even want you to live round here  
So pack up your bags, and collect your gear

So **Stretch** and **Miss Maddock** went off to find  
Somewhere to marry, a faith of a different kind  
Little did they realise that they would be  
**Married (1790)** in a church which was C of E.

Taken from a book of **Family History Poems** by Peter Johnson  
55pp/ISBN 1 898438 00 5 £4 including P/P Mainland & £6 Overseas.  
Cheques made payable to Plant FHG  
57 Helston Close, Brookvale, Runcorn, WA7 6AA



Can anyone claim this certificate

CERTIFIED COPY of an  
Pursuant to the Births and



ENTRY OF BIRTH  
Deaths Registration Act 1953

CN 224826

Registration District Northwich

in the County of Cheshire

Children No.	When and where born	Name of Child	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname, and maiden name of mother	Description of father	Residence, description and address of mother at date of birth	Age of child at date of birth	Signature of Registrar	Name of Registrar
1	400 of November 1843 in Leftwich	Ann	Girl	John WALKER	Alice WALKER (née PLANT)	SWIP CARPENTER	The manor of X Alice WALKER Hether Leftwich	Twenty first of December 1843	John DALE	Registrar

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

*Receipts*

*DPJ*

Superintendent Registrar

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WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

19 419 2001

Date

# Constitution: Plant Family History Society

## Background

Between 1990 and 2007, the Plant Family History Group produced twice-yearly copies of a Journal called *Roots and Branches* ([www.plant-fhg.org.uk/journal.html](http://www.plant-fhg.org.uk/journal.html)) for paid-up members. Continuously, since 2000, this has been supplemented by a web-site ([www.plant-fhg.org.uk](http://www.plant-fhg.org.uk)). Between 1990 and 2007, the Group had 259 paid-up members and held a Reunion in 1999 ([www.plant-fhg.org.uk/millen.html](http://www.plant-fhg.org.uk/millen.html)) In 2009, paid-up membership of the Plant Family History Society was resurrected with a view to producing two Issues of *Roots and Branches, Series 2* in 2010 and holding a further Reunion.

## Principal Officers

Honorary Life President: Mr W Keith Plant

Honorary Life Webmaster; DNA Project Manager; and, Society Representative of the Guild of One-Name Studies: Dr John S Plant

Chairman and Treasurer : Mr Peter T Johnson

## Other Contacts

USA Co-ordinator: Mrs Linda Wheeler

Australian Co-ordinator: Mr William Plant

Marriages Co-ordinator (Guild): Mrs Sian Plant

Backup DNA Project contact: Prof Richard E Plant