



*Dear Family,*

Last year our cousin Art in California wrote to say that he thought it would be good for me to have a computer, adding that he could order one and have it delivered to my door! As you can imagine, I was overwhelmed, but had reservations about me and a computer and did some soul-searching. For Christmas Art sent the wherewithal to purchase a computer, but 'phoned and said that if I didn't, 'have a party'! E-mailing, as he says, is a boon, but if I had an e-mail address I would be inundated with messages, requests, etc. from my family history peers and a computer couldn't help me with my searches since I am delving into the distant past for documents which may help solve early mysteries and I can only find these by visiting the Public Record Office, so I decided to 'have a party'. Most of these documents are in Latin and I hadn't been able to afford the services of a transcriber and translator, so I asked Art if I could use his very kind gift for this purpose. After a number of enquiries I have found a translator who is currently working on the Will of John, younger of 1457 and that of his great-grandson John 'the Great Copleston'. I have asked her if she can obtain, transcribe and translate three of the early Pardons from the Patent Rolls which I ordered when last at the PRO and could not even find, for the writing is so weird and the Rolls so long that I was exhausted after examining the first two and didn't even try the third! I hope, therefore, to have some interesting things to tell you in December and my heartfelt thanks go to Art for making this possible.

Hazel Polasckek née Copplestone of Christchurch, NZ, has sent me a wonderful picture of her parents' wedding in 1913 with the names of almost all of the wedding party given. So many of these pictures have missing names and I urge you all to put names on your pictures for the sake of future family searchers. Hazel's grandfather, Azael and grandmother Elizabeth (Yaxley) went to New Zealand on the 'Cardigan Castle' in 1876 and her father, Charles Henry married Elizabeth Annie Williams (known as 'Nance') on June 26, 1913. No name in our family has been spelled so many ways as Azael. In Hazel's branch Ambrose Copplestone, son of Jerome of Little Torrington, was a haberdasher's apprentice in London in 1619, married Elizabeth Rogers in 1633 when he was a 'citizen haberdasher' and had a son Azael who was variously spelled Ashwell, Hasaell, Asahel and Asaell in his various entries in St. Katherine by the Tower.

Reg and Olive had their Diamond Wedding anniversary May 31st, celebrated June 3rd with a party at the Village Hall in Birchington - congratulations! I had an enjoyable visit with them last month, which included a lunch at Sandwich and a lot of relaxing.

I have still not heard from the family of the late John Copplestone of Seaford regarding the ceremony which was held to commemorate the crash of the RAF 'plane in Wales in 1940 when three airmen died, one of them being John's brother Anthony Drake Copplestone who was a Pilot Officer. Ken Clark, Chairman of Abersychan and Garndiffaith Local History Group has written a booklet on the crash and describing the ceremony at which the relatives of the other two airmen were present and laid wreaths - a local lady laid a wreath on behalf of the Copplestones, since none of his family attended and there are pictures of the two, but not of Anthony. The RAF made a fly-past and the Mayor had a video made of the ceremony.

On a recent visit to the PRO at Kew I obtained a copy of the Will of Lancelot Coppleston of Nottingham who died in 1754. He was of the step-family to those of us descending from the Bideford people. He married Margaret Sharney and I had never found children of the marriage and thought the Will would show whether they had any - they didn't! Lancelot was a wine cooper and left everything to Margaret except a bond given by his brother Hungerford, dry salter of St. Ann in co. Middlesex and Hungerford to pay to their aunt Elizabeth Coppleston of Rotherhithe thirty pounds of 'lawful money of Great Britain' within twelve months of his decease. It is strange that there seem to be no descendants of this family of the first marriage of Lancelot to Letitia Hungerford c1636 (we descend from the second marriage to Wilmot, of which I've not found an entry, but it did happen!) and the last male descendants of the first marriage are a Christopher born 1737 St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, a John born 1720 and brother Lancelot 1722, also St. Botolph - no marriages found for these, so I guess that line did die out.

Confession time! While sorting papers prior to starting this Newsletter I found buried among them a letter from Margaret Taylor dated Feb 15th. Margaret, you may remember, I met with her husband Jim last October and Australian cousins don't deserve to be so neglected - my profuse apologies. I will partly answer the letter here because Margaret enclosed a copy of the 'Armada Tree', asking if I'd seen it. It was among my early discoveries and while it is partly suspect, it is certainly true that a Drake was the mother of Sir John Bampffield who married our heiress Gertrude Coppleston. The Moysey family of Somerset compiled the tree which jumps in and out of female lines and includes Boleyns, Howards, Careys and Drakes. Gertrude's father Amias was the last of the main line Copplestons since all of his sons died s.p. and Gertrude and her sister Elizabeth were the heiresses, Elizabeth marrying John Elford of Sheepstor. John Bampffield of Poltimore was MP for Penryn and created Baronet 14 July 1641. Much earlier Agnes, daughter of Adam de Coppleston married Thomas Bampffield of Poltimore in the 14th. Of interest also is Elizabeth daughter of John Coppleston who married John Raleigh of Fardell, becoming gt-gt-grandmother of Sir Walter who lost his head.

I now intend to examine Pipe Rolls back to the 12th, Chancery Inquisitions, etc. and who knows, I may even find a Crusader - the late Leonard Copplestone of Shrewsbury was sure we had one and had been investigating. Not that a Crusader is necessarily anyone to be proud of, but look at the villains we already have - Philip, Christopher, Sir John the Roundhead, to name but three. I've also found a reference to a William de C. in the Historical MSS Commission, Exeter in 1323 - brother or father of Adam? This will be consulted.

My hopes for the young blood in the family to join the hunt have not materialised - not that I blame them. It seems that present technology, which was supposed to give people less working hours and more leisure, has not come to pass and has, in fact, made their lives busier than ever. I should talk, I'm having the last week of this month in Eastbourne and into my beloved Downs, when I could have had a week in Exeter delving into the Westcountry Studies Library and the Record Office, but I'm weak and in need of that good E. Sussex air!

I hope that you all have a good summer, with decent weather of course. A happy birthday to Agnes in Charleston on the 7th - now there's a person and a place to whom and which I'd like to go back. (Not to mention having real crab cakes!) The cousins and friends I've met in the twenty-two years of doing family history are legion. So much help has been given by so many and by academics, fellow-searchers and curators. My thanks to all those who have so kindly assisted.

*Your coz,* Muriel.