

## CASE STUDY TWO



## Brewing in Britain

*Find ancestors who  
worked this popular trade*

Beer has been made and sold in Britain for over 1,000 years and the Brewers' Company is one of London's oldest livery companies. Many of our ancestors would've been involved in the industry and there are several sources for tracing them. You can see find brewers' apprentice records at the Guildhall Library ([www.cityoflondon.gov.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk)) and The National Archives ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)). The Guildhall also has a collection of trade directories.

The Brewery History Society at Birmingham Central Library has a huge archive at [www.breweryhistory.com/archive](http://www.breweryhistory.com/archive), and you can visit the National Brewery Library at Oxford Brookes University. The National Brewery Centre in Burton-on-Trent is home to displays, a working brewery and much more ([www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk](http://www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk)).

# Solving a family portrait puzzle

Our reader used online resources and an old letter to identify a couple in a portrait

By **Tessa Buckley**



Tessa has been researching her family history for ten years. She writes health and fitness articles as well as genealogy.

**W**hen my mother died, I inherited a pair of pastel portraits of a man and a woman in handsome walnut frames. All I knew was that they were connected to my grandmother's family, the Haileys. I set out to discover what I could about the

two people in the pictures and, if possible, where exactly they fitted into the family tree.

The man and woman in the pictures looked well-off and wore 1820s-style clothes. On the back of each picture, their names were written in faded script. The man was Robert Goswell Johnson, born in 1760, of Crutched Friars. The woman was Elizabeth Johnson née Newsam, born in 1762 in Northallerton, Yorkshire.

I'd been researching the Haileys for some time, but had

never come across the name Johnson. The Haileys were farmers from Arlesey in Bedfordshire. From the 18th century, each generation had a doctor. My 2x great-grandfather, William Hailey continued the tradition as a surgeon in Oundle, Northamptonshire, and he and his wife Elizabeth had a staggering 14 children before she died of tuberculosis in 1838.

I'd always been fascinated by Elizabeth and her huge family, but I hadn't been able to find her maiden name or even the date of her marriage. This gap had nagged me for some time and I wondered if she could be the link to the Johnsons. She was 46 when she died, which put her date of birth at around 1792 – about the right age to be a daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Johnson. I decided to look for evidence.

### SURNAME

#### Newsam

Newsam (and its variants Newsham and Newsome) is an ancient Anglo-Saxon name derived from the names of villages and farmsteads. It means 'at the new houses'

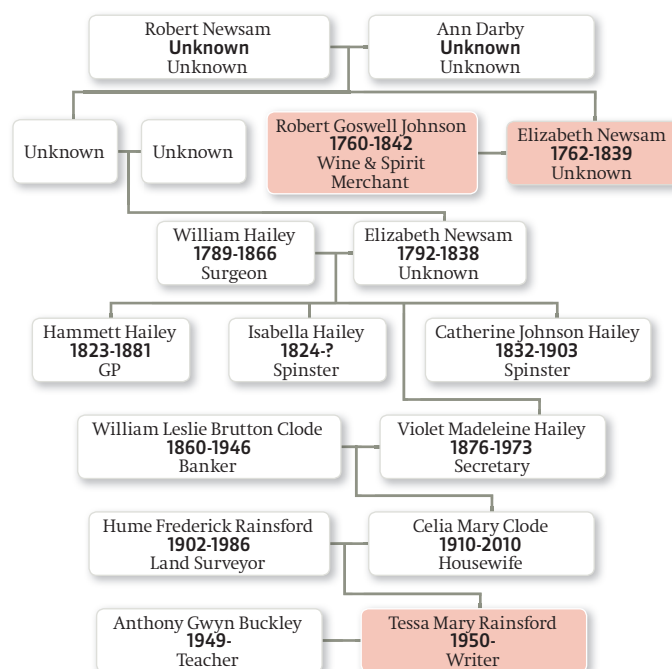
### Trading places

I started by taking a fresh look at William and Elizabeth's family. Sure enough, when I



## “The faded script said: Robert Goswell Johnson and Elizabeth Johnson née Newsam”

### THE NEWSAM FAMILY TREE



checked the details of the children, I found that the youngest child was christened Catherine Johnson Hailey. This was a promising start, because in the 19th century it was quite common for the mother's maiden name to become the child's middle name.

I've always done most of my research online, so that's where I started with Robert. I looked for a reference to him in the International Genealogical Index at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). Although I couldn't find a record for him, I did find the birth of his son Goswell in 1801. The next step was to find out more about Robert by researching Crutched Friars, London. Could this be a street of shops, and Robert Goswell Johnson a shopkeeper?

**Clues** The intriguing portraits that inspired Tessa to carry out detective work that extended her tree

### TOWN

#### Oundle

Oundle is a market town in Northamptonshire surrounded on three sides by the River Nene. Mary Queen of Scots was once imprisoned in the now ruined Fotheringhay Castle

I consulted [www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org), which has a digital library of trade directories from 1750 to 1919. I looked up Crutched Friars in the Post Office Directory of London for 1808, and found 'RG Johnson, Brandy and Hop Merchants' at 39 Crutched Friar. This was interesting because several of my mother's paternal ancestors, the Clodes, were involved in wine and spirits in the City and in Windsor, and her great-uncle, Joseph Brutton, owned a brewery in Yeovil, Somerset.

### The research spirit

My next port of call was the Wills and Death Duties at DocumentsOnline ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline)), and I was lucky enough to find Robert's will. It named five children: Thomas, Goswell, Henry, William, and Elizabeth. However, there was no mention of Elizabeth's marital status, so I still didn't know whether she was the same Elizabeth who married William Hailey. The probate date was October 1842,

which meant he was still alive when the registration of births, marriages and deaths started in 1837. It was therefore feasible that I could find his death. I checked the death indexes on Findmypast ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)) and found his death listed in the third quarter of 1842. I sent off for a copy of the certificate, which confirmed he'd died of apoplexy (stroke) at the age of 82.

At this point, a contact on Genes Reunited ([www.genesreunited.co.uk](http://www.genesreunited.co.uk)) suggested I look at the 1871 Census for Broadwater, Sussex. There I found Isabella Hailey, one of Elizabeth Hailey's unmarried daughters, visiting Henry Johnson, a brandy merchant. She was described as his cousin. This was both good and bad news: it was the first documented link I'd found between the two families; but if Elizabeth Hailey was a daughter of Robert, Isabella would be Henry's niece, not his cousin.

The obvious next step was to research the Johnson family on census returns. I couldn't find



~~WILLIAMS~~ nee Yorke.  
 Extracts from Elizabeth Sayers, letter July 1937 –  
 from Pershott, 8 Petrie Road, Sheringham, Norfolk.  
 "I have been married 25 years & have been living in  
 Sheringham all that time".  
 "Ann Newsam was my grandmother, & my father was  
 first cousin to Isabella".  
 "The Miss Haileys used to stay with us often from  
 Arlesey".  
 "I know the Newsams were in Domesday Book. Godwin  
 de Newsam & that they were a very old Yorkshire  
 family. I do not know any more except that they  
 had plenty of blue blood!! Kate (Hailey) used to say  
 too much, as all the news came from that side".  
 "I am 83 & my husband 81".  
 "My grandmother on my father's side was Catherine  
 Charlesworth, she married Francis Yorke, my  
 1st grand father. H.H.  
 "I have still a York cousin left, a 2nd cousin, Rev:  
 Edward York at Brighton, has a son David".  
 "Charles Talbot belongs to the Ipswich Co. as his father did.  
 He was a master at Oundle, for 1 year, when I was there.  
 I was born 24 April 1854. Stayed at the home  
 (Newport Pagnell) when she was about 20.  
 "Elizabeth Yorke was my Aunt who lived with us at  
 Oundle, am in valid all her life".

**Evidence** Important extracts copied from a letter originally written in 1937

any reference to Robert or his wife in the 1841 Census, but in 1861, I found Henry Johnson, aged 55, a wine merchant, living at 39 Crutched Friars (now renamed Crutches Terrace). With him was his unmarried sister, Elizabeth, aged 67. This definitely wasn't Elizabeth Hailey, who had died in 1838. It was beginning to look as if I was on the wrong track.

## Luck of the drawing

Just as I was about to give up and admit defeat, I had a stroke of luck. Among my mother's papers I found an extract from a letter written in 1937 by a Harriet Elizabeth Sayers. She appeared to be replying to a query about her family history. She said her maiden name was Yorke, and her father Charles was a wine and spirit merchant in Oundle in the late 19th century. "Anne Newsam was my grandmother" she wrote, "And my father was first cousin to Isabella Hailey. The Misses Hailey used to visit us from Arlesey. My grandmother on my father's side was

Catherine Charlesworth and she married Frances Yorke. Elizabeth Yorke was my aunt who lived with us at Oundle, an invalid all her life."

The name Newsam leapt out at me. This was the maiden name of Robert's wife Elizabeth – I'd been so busy concentrating on him I'd forgotten his wife! I'd never heard of the Yorkes, but it was no surprise to find that they too sold wines and spirits, since so many of my mother's other ancestors – the Clodes, the Bruttons and the Johnsons – were in the trade.

The Yorke family proved to be the missing piece of the puzzle. They were linked by marriage to the Newsams, and through them to both the Haileys and the Johnsons. They were easy to track on census returns. Harriet Elizabeth Sayers first appears in 1861, and her invalid aunt Elizabeth is mentioned in 1871.

I went through many sheets of paper trying to tie the names in the letter to what I knew of the Haileys, Johnsons and the detail I now had about the Yorkes.

*"The Yorke family proved to be the missing piece of the puzzle"*

## From friary to public house via tennis courts

*The history of Crutched Friars, London*

Crutched Friars is near the Tower of London. It's named after the Friars of the Holy Cross who, in 1298, rented buildings at the corner of Hart Street. Two centuries later, when Henry VIII closed down all religious establishments, it was replaced by a carpenter's yard, a tennis court and a glassworks. Then in 1575, a disastrous fire destroyed all but the stone walls.

By the early-19th century, when Robert Goswell Johnson set up shop at 39 Crutched Friars, it was a street of shops. Later, however, the street moved upmarket, and by the time he retired, the shop was one of 18 wine and spirit merchants, mixed in with a few tea and coffee dealers and tobacco sellers. Today 39-41 is a successful public house, still in the business of supplying wine and spirits.

When I'd finished, I had a clear family tree showing Robert and his wife as the uncle and aunt of William Hailey's wife, Elizabeth. Elizabeth's maiden name, like her aunt's, was Newsam.

The new, expanded family tree also provided the answer to a puzzling question: why did William Hailey move away from his family and his roots in Bedfordshire to work in Oundle? Perhaps it was so that his wife could be near her Yorke relatives.

Now, when I look at the two portraits hanging on our dining room wall, I can at last identify them as my 3x great-uncle and aunt. We raise a glass to them on special occasions, of which I'm sure wine and brandy merchant Robert would approve of. ■

## RECORD

### Directories

Trade directories can give you an insight into the area your ancestor lived in. Each town is described, noting population, major industries and significant buildings such as schools

## CONTACTS

### DocumentsOnline

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline)

### FamilySearch

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

### Findmypast

[www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

### Genes Reunited

[www.genesreunited.com](http://www.genesreunited.com)

### Historical Trade Directories

[www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org)