

FreeCEN Newsletter – June 2021

Hello All

The FreeCEN website has been updated in the last few days, with 41 new pieces added to the database. Details at the end of this newsletter.

The development of FreeCEN2 (our new website) has entered the next phase with live updates now available. This means that as soon as a piece is fully transcribed, checked, and validated, it becomes immediately searchable on upload of the piece.

Any piece uploaded under the new system **will not** appear on FreeCEN1 (our old website). There will still be pieces uploaded under the old system, and available to search on both versions of the website for the time being, but it is expected that over time, FreeCEN1 will be phased out.

The next newsletter is due to be emailed out by July 5th. Anything you have for this newsletter needs to be sent to me by July 3rd.

We need your contributions for these newsletters; otherwise there will not be much to put in them. Anything related to the census welcome. Is there anything you want to see in these newsletters, let me know as it may be possible to make that happen. Address for contributions, suggestions and so on is cmahoney@orcon.net.nz

Hair Weavers

(From Jane Melbourne)

Jane recently posted the following to a mailing list:

I've been transcribing the 1861 census for Lawshall for freecen, as that is where my HARROLD/HURRELL family were in the early 1800s. I've found it interesting that a lot of the young women were hair weavers. I've never come across so many females with named employment before, apart from "servant". Would this have been for mourning jewellery?

Her response from Lyn Boothman (with permission of Lyn) is:

Hi Jane, no, although there must have been an industry making mourning rings somewhere ...horsehair weaving was a major industry in Melford/Lavenham and surrounding area ... the cloth was used for all sorts of things, best known for railway seats and other uses which needed very hard wearing materials – and the material was also used for crinolines and dress

shapers; shorter pieces of hair were used to stuff seats etc. The industry lasted well into the 20th century with the last factory closing in the 1960s. Melford also had other industries which employed women, so at least up unto 1881 there are far more women working in industry than there are female servants. I don't have the 1891 and later figures, but I expect they show a long slow decline in later years. Much of the weaving, but not all of it, was out-work – you find lots of women working at home with their young children working as horse hair 'servers' ... that meant using nimble fingers to pick out just a few hairs for their mother to weave .

You probably know that the area had had a very strong textile industry which died during the 18th century, and I'm convinced that the culture of having women workers was carried over from that industry. These days all the censuses (except 1871) are available for academic researchers, so they can analyse all the occupations given in a census across the country and look at the age or marital status or whatever of the people in question. It's been shown that the proportion of married women with an occupation given is consistently far higher in textile areas than anywhere else – and for the Melford/Lavenham area this was still true with the 'textile' being horse hair rather than wool or cotton; elsewhere in the country plenty of single women have a recorded occupation, far fewer married women.

<https://www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/economic1851/3.4.html>

should take you to a map of female employment in the 1851 census, which highlights the textile areas and the lace and hat making industries in Buckinghamshire and surrounding counties. You will see that the area around Sudbury and extending to Braintree and Bocking is the area of East Anglia with the highest concentration of female employment ...silk, horsehair, lots of industries that had succeeded the old textile industry. If the link doesn't work, get back to me and I'll give you the route through the website.

I work on the population history of Melford and there the number of women (married and single) working in horsehair were 129 in 1851, 230 in 1861 and 289 in 1881. There was horsehair weaving elsewhere in the country, for example I've found people from Melford working in the same job in London. Today there is one horsehair weaving firm in this country, and I think it's the only one in Europe ...it's in Somerset. They make very expensive high end very strong materials used for all sorts of things including furniture, but also lining walls (with stuffing or insulation behind I assume) where sound proofing is important ... home recording studios or cinemas etc ... Long Melford historical society had a talk about it some years ago.

Because it was such a small industry there's virtually nothing written about it – it rarely if ever features in any of the academic work about the textile industries, for example. In 2000 the Long Melford Historical and Archaeological Society produced a small book called 'Long Melford, the last 2000 years'; in that there's a short article by Elizabeth Wigmore about 'The Nineteenth Century Industries' which covers horse hair, the flax works, coconut matting (which also employed women) and the iron foundry. The book is out of print but I expect that there's a copy in the local library (currently shut of course) and the Record Office at Bury (ditto).

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The undermentioned Houses are situated within the Boundaries of the [Page 5]

No. of Schedule	Parish (or Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	Ecclesiastical District of	HOUSES		Name and Surname of each Person	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf and Dumb		
								Inhabited	Uninhabited (No. of Buildings)				Male	Female					
26	Lawsford									Thomas House	Head	Married	63		Ag Suburban	Lawsford Suffolk			
27	Lawsford									William Sutton	Head of family	Mar	46		Ag Suburban	do do			
										Matilda Sutton	Wife	Mar	39		-	do do			
										Maria Sutton	Daughter	Mar	19		Hair Weaver	do do			
										Sarah Ann Sutton	Daughter	Mar	17		do	do do			
										Margaret Sutton	Daughter	Mar	16		do	do do			
										Mira Sutton	Daughter	-	14		do	do do			
										Ellen Sutton	Daughter	-	12		do	do do			
										John Sutton	Daughter	-	9		do	do do			
										William Sutton	Son	-	6		-	do do			
										Robert Sutton	Son	-	4		-	do do			
										Mary Ann Sutton	Daughter	-	2		-	do do			
										Maria Bulcher	Wife of the Head	Mar	72		Open work Pensioner	do do			
28	Lawsford									Charles Double	Head of family	Mar	45		Beer House	Hornsea			
										William Double	Son	Mar	16		-	Cambridge			
										John Carmenter Double	Son	-	6		-	Halstead Essex			
										Sarah Double	Daughter	-	2		-	Lawsford Suffolk			
										Joseph Carmenter	Wife of the Head	Mar	46		-	Whipstead	do		
Total of Houses...								3	Total of Males and Females...								8	10	

Reg.—Sheet D.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE						Reference: —	COPYRIGHT PHOTOGRAPH—NOT TO BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON
1	2	3	4	5	6	R.G.9/1132	

Sample of census page from the 1861 census listing several people whose occupations are Hair Weavers.

Pieces Uploaded to FreeCEN2 Since Last Newsletter

(will not appear on FreeCEN1)

Year	County	Piece	Place	Entries
1841	Westmorland	HO107_1156	East Ward	4,238
1861	Yorkshire - East Riding	RG9_3561	Market Weighton	5,323
1861	Yorkshire - West Riding	RG9_3321	Bradford	4,364
1861	Yorkshire - West Riding	RG9_3396	Leeds	4,807
1871	Dorset	rg10_1997	Bere Regis	2,728
1871	Dorset	RG10_2006	Weymouth	3,581
1871	Dorset	RG10_2007	Portland	2,610
1871	Kent	Rg10_996	Thanet	5,528
1871	Oxfordshire	RG10_1425	Fawley, Hambleden, Henley, Medmenham, Remenham	2,754
1871	Oxfordshire	RG10_1426	Harpsden, Henley, Rotherfield Greys, Rotherfield Peppard, Shiplake, Sonning	4,830
1871	Oxfordshire	RG10_1427	Caversham, Checkenden, Henley, Ipsden, Nettle bed, Nuffield	4,545
1871	Oxfordshire	RG10_1439	Oxford St Ebbe	4,360
1871	Oxfordshire	RG10_1440	Oxford St Ebbe, Oxford St Thomas	3,100
1871	Oxfordshire	RG10_1445	Cottesford, Fringford, Hardwick, Hethe, Ledwell, Stoke Lyne	5,225
1871	Yorkshire - East Riding	rg10_4743A	York NRY	5,181
1871	Yorkshire - East Riding	rg10_4787	Kingston upon Hull	4,490
1871	Yorkshire - West Riding	RG10_4472	Bradford	2,605
1871	Yorkshire - West Riding	RG10_4614	Wakefield	2,910
1881	Northamptonshire	RG11_1583	Raunds	2,817

1881	Northamptonshire	RG11_3188A	Gretton	846
1881	Northamptonshire	RG11_3189A	Rockingham	229
1881	Northamptonshire	RG11_3190A	Fineshade, Herringworth, Laxton, Shotley, Wakerley	757
1891	Northamptonshire	RG12_1215	Barton Seagrave, Broughton, Burton Latimer, Cranford St Andrew, Cranford St John, Cransley, Kettering, Pytchley, Warkton	7,353
1891	Staffordshire	RG12_2142	Meaford, Oulton, Stone, Walton	6,278
1891	Staffordshire	RG12_2143	Burston, Coton, Darlaston, Fulford, Garshall Green, Hilderstone, Little Aston, Milwich, Moddershall, Oulton, Sandon, Stone	4,868

Pieces Uploaded to FreeCEN1 Since Last Newsletter

(these pieces are also available on FreeCEN2)

1861	Channel Islands	RG9/43 93	Jersey	St Helier
1861	Channel Islands	RG9/43 94	Jersey	St Helier
1861	Channel Islands	RG9/43 95	Jersey	St Helier
1861	West Riding of Yorkshire	RG9/33 16	Bradford East	Bradford
1871	Suffolk	RG10/1 735	Mendlesham	Mendlesham , Wetheringsett/Brock , Aspoll , Rishangles , Thwaite , Wickham Skeith , Finningham , Cotton , Bacton , Wyverstone , Westhorpe
1871	West Riding of Yorkshire	RG10/4 429	Northowram	Shelf
1871	West Riding of Yorkshire	RG10/4 478	Horton	Horton
1881	Nottinghamshire	RG11/3 322	Greasley	Greasley , Kirkby in Ashfield
1891	Berkshire	RG12/9 93	Reading	St Mary
1891	Berkshire	RG12/1 013	Windsor	Clewer , Dedworth Green , Egham SRY , New Windsor , Old Windsor
1891	Channel Islands	RG12/4 693	Jersey	St Helier
1891	Lancashire	RG12/3 044	Ormskirk	Skelmersdale
1891	Lancashire	RG12/3 062	Wigan	Ince in Makerfield
1891	Lancashire	RG12/3 066	Wigan	Bank Top , Billinge Chapel End , Billinge Higher End , Dalton , Digmaor Green , Far Moor , Holland Moor , Upholland , Walthew Green
1891	Lancashire	RG12/3 136	Bury	Bury
1891	Lancashire	RG12/3 467	Lancaster	Lancaster

88,850 Entries between these pieces