
NO(R)STER NEWS

December 2001

Issue 3

What is this all about?

Well, having decided to send one of these out on an irregular basis to keep you all informed of what has been happening, here is the latest offering

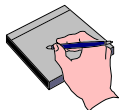
If you would prefer to see other subjects covered, or some not covered, I'd be pleased to hear from you. I will be including a section soon on how I got started on this.

Examples could be a section for notification of Births and Marriages, or perhaps a list of contact points - whatever you want, I will try to incorporate.

If any of you are on the net, I can send this newsletter via e-mail. If you wish this, please let me have your e-mail address. Due to computer problems, I have lost any of your e-mail addresses that I had. Could you please re-send them to me.

Previous copies are available to anyone who would like one.

As for me, my details remain the same:-



6 White Broom
Lymm
Cheshire
WA13 9JA



07941344858

I am beginning to think again of a Reunion or Family Gathering, similar to the one held in 1998. Venue and date to be decided on, and dependant on the number interested. The last one was on Portland in Dorset, so a different venue may be required this time, perhaps further north, to accommodate more people. Let me know your views, either positive or negative, so that I can begin to make arrangements.



Canadian Cousins.

I had found that there were 3 people named Norster in the Canadian telephone directories that can be accessed over the Internet.

May 2000, I wrote to all 3, hoping for some information, but not really expecting a reply (I have long since learnt that if you don't expect, you're not disappointed).

However, I did receive a reply, from 1 address, enclosing a copy of her Father-in-Law's marriage certificate, in Toronto, Canada. He was Henry Norster, born about 1879, and he married Mabel Emily Glover at Deer Park, Toronto, Canada on 25th February 1911.

This confused me, as I had no Henry Norster's born at that time. I did have a Henry William Fowler Norster born in 1885 who disappeared after the 1891 Census.

I wrote back with this information in August 2000, but have heard no further.

I then contacted the Diocesan Archivist for Toronto, in the hope that the parents of Henry Norster might be recorded in the parish records of the church - no luck I'm afraid. There was no provision to record them, so they were not asked for. The marriage should have been registered officially, but this seems to have been missed, although it is dubious if additional information would have been given then either.

The next step was to try and find the death record for Henry, to see if that held any more information. It should do, as there are spaces for Name of Father, and Maiden Name of Mother, but the death was registered by the funeral home who did not have all the details. They did have two however, his name was recorded as Henry W F Norster, and his birthplace was England.

That was the link I needed. I should have known really, the Norster's had a habit of changing their ages when it suited them - Samuel Norster (transported) and his son Samuel, both deducted 16 years when they married.

I now knew who he was and how the family all fitted together. Now all I need are a few dates and a few maiden names.

Home and dry really !!

So - we now have cousins in Canada, America, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Wales, Scotland and England. If anyone knows of a continent I have missed, I'd be glad to hear from you!

Abraham & Samuel, the transportees - continued.

As you may remember, these two were accused, tried and found guilty of theft. They are probably the most documented members of the family. They both used the name Norster, but after the trial and their transportation, their families started to use Noster. This appears to be where the split began. It worked, for only a few generations later, nobody knew of the connection between the two family names.

There was talk on Portland, among some members of the family, that one of the brother's was innocent. Below is copied some Petitions for Clemency, made to the Home Office on behalf of Abraham. All spelling and punctuation is copied faithfully from the original.

Letter from Thomas Dade, Broadway Rectory, Dorchester, 25th April 1835.

My Lord,

I take the liberty of addressing you on the subject of Abraham Norster, who was tried with his brother Samuel, & his wife for a burglary in the Island of Portland at the last Assizes at Dorchester - the two brothers are now under sentence of transportation for life. I was the committing magistrate, & have sifted the evidence very closely both before and after the trial - & the reason of my addressing you is, because I am convinced there is not the guilt on the part of Abraham there is on that of Samuel. The burglary took place between six and eight in the eve. I cannot prove it, but I am fully convinced that Abraham was not present when the robbery was committed - he was certainly at home till very near seven o'clock - his wife was from home nursing a sick woman, but an uncle was with him, tho' that evidence was not given in Court. No part of the money stolen was found on him - a few shillings were found in the walls of his house, but then Samuel and he lived under the same roof, and used the same door - in Samuel's house money was found. He denies having been in any way concerned, & when I asked Samuel why I should not commit him for trial, he gave a no way credible account how he became possessed of the money, & finished by saying that his wife & brother were innocent of the money. I attended the trial &, with other magistrates who knew the case, expected Abraham would have been acquitted, such was the case too with the attorney for the prosecution. I believe that he knew of the robbery afterwards - but felt unwilling to say anything against a brother. I do not mean to speak of him as a good character, but I feel strongly impressed that he was not a party concerned here. I hope your Lordship will excuse my requesting you to ask the Judges opinion, & that if you should find that mercy may be extended to him, that you will recommend a commutation of punishment for Abraham Norster.

I believe the prisoner will be removed early next week from Dorchester Gaol to Portsmouth, but the hopes of finding evidence to strengthen my opinion of his innocence was the cause of my being so late in making application to you.

I have the honor to be my Lord, your Lordships obedient servant, Thos Dade.

Letter from Charles Cannon, Cove Cottage, Isle of Portland, 10th May 1835.

My Lord,

May it please your Lordship to allow me the favor of stating my opinion, & the opinion of all the inhabitants of this Island, who, are in possession of information sufficient, to enable them to judge of the circumstances connected with the prosecution of Samuel and Abraham Noster, at the last Lent Assizes held at Dorchester, for breaking into the Dwelling house of my neighbour Mr William Pearce, on the evening of the 21st December 1834, and stealing there from upwards of 60£ in Gold & Silver - they were convicted before Sir John Patteson, & the sentence of "Death recorded" against them, but in consequence of an impression made on the minds of some persons, not connected with the Island, that Abraham Noster was not accessory before the fact, it is understood that application has been made to you Lordship, to intercede in behalf of Abraham, for the purpose of mitigating his punishment. I beg to assure your Lordship that there is every reason to believe that Abraham was accessory before the fact, & that he and his brother, contrived & executed their scheme conjointly - for since the trial terminated, it has been stated that two persons were seen after it was dark standing in the passage leading to Mr Pearce's, on the night of the robbery, & it created surprise, but this excitement subsided on a second thought, that, it probably was persons belonging to his Majesty's Coast Guard, & therefore no further notice was taken. The character of Abraham as well as Samuel Noster is notoriously bad, so much so, that tho' an attempt was made to get signatures on a petition in their favour by their relations, it failed, scarcely any one would sign it. I believe that Abraham Noster is not more deserving of lenity than his Brother Samuel, and that the peace and safety of the inhabitants of this Island, require that they should both be sent out of the country, as a preventive to worse consequences.

I beg the honor of subscribing myself, My Lord, Your Lordships most obedient servant, Chas Cannon, Dissenting Minister of Portland.

'His venom towards the brothers seems to originate from his friendship with William Pearce (his neighbour) - who was at Chapel on the night of the robbery - possibly Chas Cannon's Chapel? - Aiso, he couldn't get the surname right!!'

Letter from Thomas Dade, Broadway Rectory, Dorchester, 12th May 1835.

Sir,

I took the liberty, as committing magistrate, to address Lord J Russell, concerning Abraham Norster, convicted at the last Dorset Assizes, with his brother Samuel Norster, for burglary in the Island of Portland. To that letter I have not rec'd an answer. I requested that Baron Gurney, the Judge, might be applied to, to refer to his notes. My conviction is, that Abraham was not concerned in the robbery, tho' I think he knew of it afterwards, but then he must have informed against a brother. Under the case there was a necessity to commit Abraham with his brother for trial, tho' I fully expected he would have been acquitted & that was the

opinion of the attorney for the prosecution. Before I committed them for trial, I asked Samuel what he had to say, he gave a foolish defence of himself, but concluded by saying "my wife (who was acquitted) & my brother are innocent of the money". This expression was before the Judge, but I do not know if he made a note of it. You will excuse my saying I am extremely anxious on the subject, so fully am I convinced that Abraham was not concerned in the robbery, tho' I am unable to bring any evidence to that effect, but I earnestly desire to bring the matter under the consideration of the Home Secretary that if possible there may be mercy shewn him. He is now under sentence of transportation for life. He was removed last week to Portsmouth, & is now ill in the hospital. He perseveres in saying he is innocent, which I am inclined to think he is.

I am Sir, your obedient servant, Thos Dade.

Reply to Home Office from J Patteson, 33 Bedford Square, 19th May 1835.

My Lord,

I lose no time in replying to your Lordship's note of the 13th instant, which did not reach me till today, respecting Abraham Norster, who was convicted before me, & not before my Brother Gurney to whom the papers have been sent.

The case was shortly this. The prisoners Samuel & Abraham Norster lived in the same house, both married men. A burglary was committed at the house of one Pearce & a large sum of money stolen, amongst it a Guinea. Both the prisoners were proved to be in indigent circumstances. Three days after the burglary both prisoners were apprehended at their own house. Four sovereigns were found in Samuel's pocket after he had denied having any, & when he got to gaol a guinea two sovereigns & five half sovereigns were found in the pad of his neck handkerchief. No money was found on Abraham. On searching the house afterwards other money was found concealed in various parts of the house. As they both occupied the house, & were both together when they were apprehended & money found concealed on Samuel's person, the jury thought that both were concerned in the burglary. No evidence was given by either prisoner.

I cannot say that the jury was wrong, & at the time of the trial I was satisfied, otherwise I should have recommended a less punishment as to Abraham in my letter to his Majesty, stating the Capital convictions on the circuit.

The letter of Mr Dade, the Committing Magistrate, to your Lordship has certainly shaken my confidence in the propriety of the verdict as regards Abraham & the other letter of Mr Cannon does not contain any new facts, except that two persons were seen near the premises, but that it does not appear who they were.

Under all the circumstances I think it is possible that Abraham may not have been present at the burglary, but the impression on my mind is that he was. Had the Uncle been called at the trial, as he ought to have been by the prisoner, he would have been able to have proved whether the brothers were together or not, during the time of the prosecutor's absence, but whether he would have told a credible story or not I cannot even guess.

I am your Lordship's most obedient humble servant, J Patteson.

My note of the trial is already in Mr Phillipps's hands. This trial is on page 33.

Note on cover of 2nd letter from Thos Dade.

Inform Mr Dade that in complying with his request he has written to Mr J Patteson & that the judges report is such that he does not think himself warranted in issuing a pardon.

Inform Mr Patteson that Lord J proposes not to recommend a pardon or any mercy.

PRO Ref HO /17/55/iv 17

So, Abraham may have been innocent, but not wanting to drop his brother in on his own, stood by him. He died on 7th December 1835 and did not reach Australia.

As we know, Samuel did reach Australia, escaped, returned to London, was re-captured and re-transported to finish his sentence. This he appears to have done, and in 1850 marries Sarah Plowman, although he was still married to Joan who remained in England. He lied about his age, making himself 16 years younger than he really was, but it is possible that he was unaware of his true age, also, this did not make him too much older than his new wife. In November 1853 he was admitted to Adelaide Lunatic Asylum. His diagnosis was recurrent mania as a consequence of epilepsy and cause of death: diarrhoea. What happened to Sarah, I have yet to find out. Neither death nor re-marriage has come to light yet.

For those of you who have access to the Internet and e-mail, you can contact me on:



Family@norster.freemove.co.uk



Or, please visit our (your) website at: www.norster.freemove.co.uk/genstart.htm

which has recently been updated. It will now give you the opportunity to see your ancestors in a normal tree format. Please e-mail me, or write, or phone and let me know what you think of it.

I have registered the names Norster, Noster and variants with the Guild of One-Name Studies (GOONS), so that makes me the principal researcher in the world!