

Chapter 3

The Jephcott Society

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Our Formation

In 1983, with the support of June and Archie Jephcott of Stratford upon Avon and Sue McBeth and Bob Jephcott of Melbourne, Australia, we formed what is known as a 'one-name society' which we entitled 'The Jephcott Society'. Newsletter 1 was put together, a mailing list of all interested persons formulated and the letters were sent out to around forty people.

We applied for membership of the Guild of One-Name Studies. To enable us to cover costs, we invited people to send a subscription and a Building Society account was opened. People seemed very interested in receiving further information and, over the span of five years, a total of twenty newsletters were compiled and sent out.

With the aid of society funds, we sent out what seemed to be hundreds of introductory letters, to the Jephcotts (and then later Jephcotes, Jeffcoats, etc.) that were listed in telephone directories for the country.

Word got around slowly and replies started to come-in in a steady stream. We kept ourselves quite busy with collating all the information into a workable system.

We felt that it would be a good idea to arrange a gathering of the clan, and the first was held in the village of Shilton, near Coventry. With the assistance of press coverage, the affair went off very well and it was particularly enjoyable to meet so many previously unknown 'cousins'. We subsequently held another five gatherings.

Due to changes in the president's personal life including forming his own company, getting remarried and starting a family (in that order), his free time became less and less. He resolved to scale down the operation and only compile a news sheet on an annual basis. His enthusiasm was still there but his free time was not.

We maintained a list of about 100 people to whom we send out news sheets. Those persons who did not keep in touch with us were removed from the list, periodically. By 2000, the society was effectively ended. However, some twenty years later, in 2020, the president retired, the children all flown the coop, a revival of interest came about and a new technology, Jephcott Society was created, now taking full advantage of email, web pages and social media platforms (Facebook).

The intention was to republish 'The Jephcott Family' book (that had long been out of print), in an electronic format, accessible to all from the internet. Gone were the paper family trees and newsletters; in came new technology.

By April 2020 (the year of the Covid-19 pandemic), over 6100 Jephcott/Jeffcoat holders of the name were entered onto 88 computer generated family trees, known as 'gedcoms'.

By April 2021 (the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic), over 7400 Jephcott/Jeffcoat holders of the name were entered onto 109 computer generated family trees, known as 'gedcoms'.

The Guild of One-Name Studies had created a 'legacy' website page where researchers like us could place our computerised research material, safe for generations to come – long after the demise of its creators and fully accessible to other researchers and enquirers in perpetuity (we believed). What was to become of the older, paper based research papers, letters, photographs, books, etc. was not clear.

At the time of writing this, the web address for our research was to be found at <http://jephcott.one-name.net>, but also accessible via <http://www.camulos.com/tjs.htm> for however long that address lasts.

Our Constitution

The Jephcott Society is a non-profit making organisation which aims to further the genealogical knowledge of the Jephcott family and its recognised surname variants.

It is operated by Jess Arthur Jephcott (contactable via email at jessjephcott@aol.com) who acts as its president, and it has no other officers. The original finances of the society were recorded in full and these records were open for inspection by any person who had contributed financially to the society in the past. The funds have since been depleted and no longer are financial expenses applied to the society.

Our Degree of Commitment

As a category 'B' member of the Guild of One-Name Studies, Jess Jephcott representing 'The Jephcott Society' was designated as 'a Guild member who researches and collects all references to a specified surname and who had accumulated a substantial body of worldwide data over a period of years. The member may or may not produce a newsletter.'

As a member of the Guild of One-Name Studies, we am required to deal with all enquiries which relate to our registered surnames. We committed to the following more specific responsibilities:

- a) to receive and respond to all reply paid enquiries concerning the Jephcott name and its recognised variants, in as complete a manner as possible. This includes, where desirable and appropriate, putting the enquirer in touch with others, or others in touch with the enquirer.
- b) to compile and publish an annual news sheet for distribution to interested persons, giving news of research breakthroughs, general items of interest, etc. The funding of the publication and postage being reliant upon voluntary donations and personal expense, where possible.
- c) to continue to pursue my own research into the surname in as complete a manner as possible. In this context, the availability of free time, difficulties of accessibility of records, cost implications and other constraints are to be taken into consideration.
- d) to endeavour to publish or otherwise reproduce my research material and, where possible, to acknowledge the source of information so as not to take credit for the work of others. This reproduced material then to be offered for sale or otherwise to interested persons.
- e) to respect the sensitivity or confidentiality of certain material and to not make such information available to others, without consultation where necessary.
- f) to organise, from time to time, a gathering of the clan, to bring together interested persons for discussion, viewing of research material, display of family documents and memorabilia, etc.
- g) in the event of a termination of my interest in, or involvement with, this genealogical research, to ensure that any and all accumulated records of interest to others of my surname and its variants, are deposited with a recognised record repository for the continued use of others.

Gatherings of the Clan Jephcott

The **first** gathering of 'The Jephcott Society' was held at Shilton Village Hall, near Coventry, on Sunday 28th August 1983. About 50 people supported the event, most of them being members of the society, but some seeing advance reports in the Birmingham and Coventry newspapers and coming along out of curiosity.

The **second** gathering was also held at Shilton Village Hall, on 26th August 1984. About 70 people supported the event, with many new faces that had not attended the year before.

The **third** gathering was held at the different venue of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, on 31st May 1986. A little over 20 people attended, with four persons from Australia or New Zealand.

The **fourth** gathering was held at the family's ancestral village of Ansty, near Coventry, at the Ansty Social and Working Men's Club, on Sunday 30th August 1987. Around 70 people supported the event, with many of those being new members of the society.

The **fifth** gathering was also held at Ansty, on Saturday 30th May 1992. Around 50 people attended.

The **sixth** gathering was held at Chatham Historic Dockyard, on Saturday 19th May 1996 and on a theme connected with an interesting naval ancestor.

All of the gatherings were held on an informal basis, with display material being placed around the room in each case, refreshments being served and much discussion and furthering of knowledge about the family, coming about. The fifth gathering was differently organised in that a programme of lectures were planned, including a talk from the chief archivist at Coventry Record Office.

We thoroughly enjoyed each gathering and hoped that there would be more as time went on.

June and Archie Jephcott of Stratford upon Avon, kindly donated a visitor's book to the society, in which participants at the gatherings were recorded. This book is available for inspection by any interested persons.

On the following pages are press-cuttings, photographs and identification charts covering the six gatherings. There are gaps in the identification sheets, as we cannot now identify all of the individuals, and any help in this respect would be appreciated.

Please go to the relevant files for further details.

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