

The Census Makes No Sense-us!

Following last week's meeting I decided to look up the 1921 Census, not as straightforward as I thought. Burning some midnight oil and a few Paypal clicks later, I located my Grandmother, Annie Elizabeth Gittoes, born in 1921.

I spent a lot of time with Nana, she spoke fondly of her many brothers and sisters and her mother. Sadly her father passed away when Nana was just 4 and her mother was expecting Uncle Fred, child number 8. So my great grandmother bought up all the children on her own, plus two grandchildren after the war. But that's another story...

One of the things I always found interesting was that the names the siblings were registered with, were not the names they were known by. The first child on the census is William John, born in 1916, known as Jack, the next is Albert David, Uncle Bert, then comes Auntie Nell, registered as Gertrude Eleanor. I could carry on with the ones born after the census!

Going back to the records I managed to locate my great grandfather, John Gittoes, listed as a farm stockman in Kington Herefordshire, he is head of the household aged 39. His wife Gertrude is 28 and her occupation is household duties, having a child almost every year would have kept her busy. I knew there was a fairly large gap in age between them. Also listed is:

'Ellen Williams aged 75, Mother'

My immediate thought was this was my maternal great-great grandmother, however this would have made her 46 when Gertrude was born, and I knew her maiden name was Bounds. Why did John's mother have a different surname to him? Did she remarry at some stage? Further investigation is needed.

I carried on looking at the records and expected to see Nana, the baby as the last entry, however following her is;

'Florence Eleanor Price, aged 11....adopted'

I was genuinely shocked, I racked my brains, I had never heard Nana mention an older adopted sister. Why was Florence's surname Price? Another mystery. It was now gone midnight so I went to bed to sleep on it. The following morning I contacted Uncle Robert, my mother's cousin, whose real name is Patrick! He was one of the children bought up by my great grandmother in Kington and knows a lot about the family. He knew nothing about Ellen, the mother or who Florence was. He came up with the theory Florence may have gone into service at 14, the younger children wouldn't have known her. Robert telephoned another cousin June, real name Veronica. She remembered an Auntie Flo, who as far as she knew, was a relative of her Grandfather's.

I have tried to find out more about Florence, she was born in 1909, her mother's name is registered as Price, so it would suggest Florence was illegitimate. Did her mother pass away and the Gittoes adopt her? Was it an 'official' adoption if her name wasn't changed? Or, I have since discovered there are two marriage records for John Gittoes, did my great grandfather marry and have a child before he married Gertrude? All of this may be answered if I upgrade the 'Find My Past' membership. How much do I want to know the answers? If the 1921 census hadn't been released, I would never have known anyway!

