

PULVERTAFT PAPERS

A Newsletter on the Pulvertofts & Pulvertafts

*Published by Rear Admiral D.M.Pulvertaft
Tucketts, Trusham, Newton Abbot, TQ13 0NR.*

Vol 4

December 2005

No 10

EDITORIAL

In last year's Editorial I told you of my decision to make this edition of *Pulvertaft Papers* the last one of the series; my reason being that I did not want to embark on a new volume that would take ten years to complete when I believed that there would not be enough material to fill it. Of course new details of the Pulvertoft family will emerge as more records are published and there will be "matches", "hatches" and "dispatches" within the Pulvertaft family to record.

As I suggested at the time, the solution seems to me to lie in modern technology and I am delighted to tell you that Robert Pulvertaft [M64T] of Heytesbury, Wiltshire has volunteered to create the web site and maintain it in line with some guidelines on its style - and issues such as privacy - that he and I have agreed.

Those of you with access to the Internet will find this 21st century continuation of *Pulvertaft Papers* at:

www.pulvertaft.co.uk

THE FINAL CHAPTER

My own long-standing interest in family history started in 1963 when I came across a handful of letters, written in 1944 by an amateur historian, Michael Tunnard. He had seen the name of Lt Col Robin Pulvertaft [M30R] mentioned in a newspaper article and had written to say that he felt that there must be some connection with the ancient Lincolnshire family of Pulvertoft. He explained that members of the Tunnard and Pulvertoft families had married during the 18th century and that he had a large number of references to the family that he would be happy to share. Robin had clearly answered the letters but only the Tunnard half of the correspondence was handed on to me all those years later.

I was able track down Michael Tunnard and he became the first of my family history "mentors", being most generous with his time and the information that he had gathered over the years and allowing me to make copious notes from his extensive family records. In one of his early letters, he also warned me of the dangers of genealogy as a hobby; writing "*If it gets you badly - as it did me - it will alienate your friends and endanger your career!*" What he didn't say was that it would also take you to places that you would otherwise not visit and that you would meet some fascinating people in passing.

An appointment to my first submarine, HMS Anchorite, based in Singapore then intervened and it was not until my return in 1966 that I picked up the traces again and began exploring the Pulvertofts in the County Record Office, Lincoln and trying to find out more about the Pulvertaft family of Cork. I joined the *Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* and the *Society of Genealogists* and, through their magazines and some personal contacts, began to build up quite a portfolio of papers relating to the two families.

In 1977 I read of the *Register of One-Name Studies* that had been formed to enable individuals specialising in one surname to place their interest on record. As this seemed right up my street, I registered PULVERTOFT and PULVERTAFT and attended an inaugural

conference in May 1978 at which it was agreed that *The Guild of One-Name Studies (GOONS)* should be formed. The Guild has provided a wonderful focus for so many researchers, giving their work visibility in return for which they undertake to answer questions by other interested people about their registered surname(s). Through its journal and through regional and national conferences, friendships are forged and research methods and techniques are shared.

The idea of producing a newsletter to cover the Pulvertoft/Pulvertaft families stemmed from a GOONS conference held at Leicester in 1980 when, after dinner on the Saturday night, one of the founding fathers of the Guild – Frank Higenbottam – spoke about his success with a newsletter. He suggested that, rather than sitting in our studies or the garden sheds, recording facts about the family name and filing them away, we should each start publishing our findings on a regular basis. By telling others what had so far been found, we would broaden the net and allow others to contribute to the work. He also had lots of helpful suggestions; "Don't overreach yourself in the first flush of enthusiasm!", "Why not link the distribution to Christmas cards as the two address lists will undoubtedly overlap?", "Establish a house style that will endure", etc. The seed of *Pulvertaft Papers* had been sown!

I decided on a format of folded A4 paper to be distributed in June and December each year, with numbered pages, ten issues to a volume and an International Standard Serial Number to ensure that it was recognised as a formal publication. To keep my production costs low I acquired a proofing press and some trays of type and set about printing the newsletters myself in the barn at Tucketts! This was a time-consuming process for each edition but, in the days before personal computers and cheap photocopying, it was the best solution at the time.

And then I met Michael Leader, the second of my "mentors" and just as generous as Michael Tunnard had been. I was searching

some records in the library of the *Irish Genealogical Research Society* - then in the basement of The Irish Club - having paid my search fee and signed the visitors' book. A voice from the reception desk asked "And which is the Mr Pulvertaft?" Having confessed that it was I; he approached me with a beaming smile saying "I've been looking for one of you without success for twenty years!"

Michael had for years studied Cork families through the city's parish registers and had a unique collection of manuscript and typescript volumes that he had painstakingly transcribed in many a draughty vestry. These he allowed me to search for Pulvertaft entries and thus the bare bones of the Cork family were assembled.

I decided to give each individual a unique alpha/numeric reference number. The initial letter identifies from which group he or she comes. The two or three digits are unique to the individual within the group and a final letter identifies the 30-year period in which the individual was born. Thus Pulvertofts of Algarkirk have their numbers starting with an "A", Pulvertofts of Swineshead start with an "S", Pulvertafts of the "Modern" family start with an "M" and those found in early Cork records start with a "C".

The "Generation Grid" from which the final letter is drawn is a well used discipline that happens to use the letter "S" for those born between 1920 and 1949, with R, Q, etc being used for earlier generations and T, U, V, etc being used for subsequent ones. These are quite crude blocks within which to separate generations but they do avoid wrong connections being made and make it much easier to identify people with the same Christian name from one another.

Volume 1 included Pulvertoft family groups from Boston, Algarkirk, Horncastle, Swineshead, Fosdyke and Dorset; the first edition of the "Modern" Pulvertaft family and others from South Africa as well as a piece on Pulvertoft Heraldry and some biographical notes on the "father" of the Cork family - Thomas Pulvertaft [M01O].

After five years of the labour-intensive process of letterpress printing, I decided that with the start of *Volume 2* I should switch to more modern methods and I used an electronic typewriter controlled by a rather primitive personal computer. This certainly reduced the time and effort required to design and print the papers twice each year and allowed me to venture into illustrations when I included the short biographies; Thomas John [M14Q], William Godfrey [M36R], Robert Guy [M38R] and Robert James Valentine [M30R] being the first four.

I also introduced self-standing articles on subject such as the research that I had done on Swan Marks - an interesting sideline to a family's history, particularly where its members had lived in the wetlands or by the estuaries of England.

By the time that *Volume 3* was started in 1991, other Pulvertoft groups had emerged, such as those from Kings Lynn, Kirton, and Witchingham in Norfolk. Pulvertaft groups, such as those in the United States of America, had been identified and marriages - such as those of Roz [M67T], Lucy [M71T] and Rupert [M69T] were recorded. Furthermore, sufficient extra branches had been added to the "Modern" family to update that part of the Pulvertaft Family Tree.

By 1996, the material on the Pulvertoft family was beginning to get a bit thin and I decided to distribute the papers only once a year, resulting in *Volume 4* running for ten years rather than five. Technology changed once more and I was able to switch to a personal computer with Microsoft programs that made the production process even easier. I also sought the help of other members of the family to write short biographies of their direct ancestors and, partly thanks to them, notes were included for Robert, John and James [M04P, M07P & M08P], Thomas Charles Bryan [M32R], Amos William and Clara [M18Q & M19Q], Charles Norman [M40R] and Nancy McFarlane [M33R]. The marriages were also described for Belinda [M68T] and Sarah [M70T]. What this review shows is that over the years the balance has shifted from recording the Pulvertoft family of Lincolnshire to the more recent history of the Pulvertafts of Ireland.

It has been most rewarding in the last few years to discover how the Pulvertafts who emigrated to the United States of America in the early 19th century can not only be linked to the Cork family but also to the Pulvertafts who now live in Arizona and Florida, particularly as they had no idea until ten years or so ago that there were any others still around!

If there are any more Pulvertafts who have not yet been connected to the rest of the family tree, perhaps the fact that we will soon have our own web site will allow them to make contact but I suspect that the law of diminishing returns applies!

The one thing that we have not established in the 25 years since *Volume 1* gave the two families some publicity, is when and how the change was made from Pulvertoft to Pulvertaft. In all probability it was in the mid-17th century and one day, perhaps, the man who crossed the Irish Sea and established the Irish branch will be identified.

My own feeling is that, while this would be a tidy link with which to close the printed version of this work, *Pulvertaft Papers* have served their purpose in recording details of the Pulvertoft and Pulvertaft families as they have emerged and have acted as an easy form of communications between the generations that I hope the web site will continue. The four printed volumes between them have enough material to constitute a book on the family but it is certainly not my intention to re-arrange the material into chronological order rather than the order in which it emerged.

Should any of the long-term recipients of *Pulvertaft Papers* find that they have odd copies that they have mislaid and would like to replace, please let me know as I have spare copies of some issues but I will not be storing these for too long. Similarly, I have produced an index for Volume 4 in case there are those who plan to bind their copies or keep them in volumes in some other way. If you require an index, please let me know.

NOTES & QUERIES

Old Newark, New Jersey

Whilst "Surfing the Internet" last summer for Pulvertaft references, I discovered several entries in the www.oldnewark.com web site. The web site is produced by the *Old Newark Web Group* of Newark, New Jersey and has much historical information from that town. As it happens, it was only in the 2004 edition of these papers that Newark was last mentioned in the article on *The New York Connection*.

Under the heading "Newark Births from the late 1700s to the early 1800s" were included:

Thomas Pulvertaft, born 1851.
Mary Ann Pulvertaft, born 1853
John Pulvertaft, born 1855
and
Emmam (sic) Pulvertaft, born 1858.

While the parents of these four children are not named in the web site, it is reasonable to assume that the four entries were for brothers and sisters and, when one looks at the scrap pedigree on pages 68 and 69 of the last issue, three of the four are easily identified; Mary, John and Emma. The eldest, Thomas, was not remembered by his great nephew, Wilder George Beer, presumably because he had died or moved away by the time that George had grown up.

From the corresponding list of "Newark Marriages", two are included:

1880.
Emma PULVERTAFT – Theodore WATSON
1880.
Mary Ann PULVERTAFT – Edward Archibald DUNNING

There was an equivalent section of the web site for "Deaths" but this did not record any Pulvertaft information so the assumption about Thomas Pulvertaft cannot be confirmed. Nor has a Pulvertaft interest in these entries been registered with the Old Newark webmaster who may well be able to provide more information.

What is interesting is that, so soon after discovering the detail of the "Irish/United States Connection" and publishing it in *Pulvertaft Papers* last year, more information has emerged and, of course, the Watson and Dunning descendents may well be able to add to it if we can find them.

I look forward to seeing what emerges on this front and on others when the Pulvertaft web site is given full visibility. Meanwhile, for the last time through these papers, I wish my readers a Happy Christmas.

D.M.P.

