

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to another and increasingly rare edition of The Folker Phyles. Have seemingly exhausted all the easy avenues of research into this family, I have been reluctant to try following any more difficult routes. However, the increased amount of information available on the internet has led me without effort into some unexpected and important discoveries.

JOHN HERBERT FOLKER

John Herbert Folker (1861-1936) was a professional photographer who had a studio in Tottenham Court Road in London. He was my mother's uncle and I have several photographs that he took of her as a child.

Just as a last fling on my computer one night I made a search on his name and came up with a result. It transpires that there is a photographic portrait taken by him held in the National Portrait Gallery. The portrait is a sepia study of the authoress Katherine Mansfield taken in 1917. It can be found on the gallery's website under reference NPG P1009.



SYDNEY NEWTON FOLKER

Sydney Newton Folker (1888-1955) was my grandfather. An internet search on his name resolved two mysteries in one go.

In the days of silent films he became a well respected actor and took part in many 'one reeler' productions. It was understood that a picture of him had been included in a set of cigarette cards depicting an A-Z of actors and actresses. Sydney had jokingly told his family that he only featured in the set because there was no-one else whose name began with letter F. I have been trying to locate the set of cards for some years without a hint of success. The internet search revealed that such a set does exist, produced by BAT in 1928.

The second find also involved Sydney's G-G-Grandfather SAMUEL FOLKER (c1758-c1824), and was in connection with a 'Tappee' which had been brought home from overseas by Samuel around 1780. The family believed it to have come from the Caribbean but it transpires that it is a Maori ancestral figure. 'Tappee' is a misnomer, probably derived from the Maori word 'tapu', meaning taboo.

The internet search revealed that the figure was on display in the Kelvingrove Museum in Glasgow who have a specialist collection of such items. This particular figure is apparently very rare, being only one of six known to still exist.

The family knew that Sydney had donated the figure to a museum, but assumed it was somewhere close to where he lived in London. It had been kept on display in his house, however, his wife Vera was somewhat offended by the figure's naked masculinity and had made a leather apron to cover the offending parts.



The figure is item A.1948.105 of the museum's collection and my wife Brenda and I went to view it at the end of November. It was quite eerie looking at it and thinking that my ancestor would have had it in his hands well over 200 years ago.

AMBROSE FOLKER

The last discovery related to Ambrose Folker (b.c1792), son of Ambrose and Catherine Folker of Stepney. I have not been able to connect Ambrose to other branches of the family.

On 22 May 1822, he was indicted at the Old Bailey for stealing, on the 12th of May, 40 lbs. of hemp, value 12 s., the goods of William Dunbar, Jun., of Mount-street, Whitechapel.

A police constable, Richard Carter, gave evidence. On the 19th of May at six o'clock I saw the prisoner in Mill-yard, Rosemary-lane, with this bag of hemp; he said he brought it from his master's in Red Lion-street, and was going home. I took him to the office. He threw it down and refused to carry it - I said if he did not I would handcuff him, he then took it

up. Shields came up; he then said he was taking it to a man, whom he did not know.

A witness, John Shields, said he found Carter with the prisoner, and asked him where he got it, he said from Mrs. Essex's son, Red Lion-street, and was taking it to Stepney, but he did not know the man.

Eliza Essex said the prisoner was once in her employ; but she gave him no hemp. Her son James also denied giving him hemp.

Francis Batchelor, a servant to Mr. Dunbar; said he has some sheds in Gower's walk, and on Monday morning about seven o'clock, he found the staple of the lock drawn, and missed this hemp, which was safe on Sunday night, at six o'clock.

(Property produced and sworn to.)
Prisoner's Defence - I have a wife and four children. GUILTY . Aged 39. Recommended to Mercy. Confined Six Months First Middlesex Jury, before Mr. Recorder.



ANEMONE FLOWER

Did you know that there is an Anemone flower called Mr.Folker ? No? Well, here it is

Anemone - De Caen - Mr. Folker

I suspect the origin of the name is European or Scandinavian as I have seen two other spelling - Fokker and Follker.

FAMILY BRANCHES

I have made absolutely no progress in finding a link between the two main branches of the Folker families. Barring another stroke of luck I am not too hopeful.

However, a new method of genealogical research is coming into play, that of DNA matching. Such an experiment could produce results and may be worth persuing.

I am spending more time on my general family tree, in particular my direct ancestors. I have created a new website at www.14november1940.com and am using it to display everything I know about my family. I include scans of documents where they exist and copies of all photographs. I also photograph keepsakes .

This website will therefore have detailed information about those Folker's to whom I am most directly related. It will not replace my Folker website which is at www.geocities.com/heartland/woods/7208/ although the latter is not likely to be updated very much in future.

And that's about it for now.

We have moved house and now live at :

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Finally, I wish you a Happy Christmas and all the very best for 2007.

