

This is the newsletter for the One-Name Study of the surname COLLOFF. It will be published twice a year, Summer and Early each Winter and used to keep the other interested Colloff relations up to date with the latest research, whether completed by me, or by one of the other Cousins.

John Colloff, December 2007

COMMENT

I apologise if the last item in this issue is not something that you expected to find and/or do not want to read. Unfortunately, I can only write what I can generate in my own mind, and my son Will's forthcoming Court Case fills my mind a great deal.

I must further apologise for the many errors that I am now finding in the last full issue of *Colloff Cousins* vol.III No.3. I know that I found it very hard to put together and my only consolation is that I had the good sense not to try to make the next issue, and just omitted it, as that would have been even more rubbish.

I hope that you like our scallywags, or lack of them and share Lynn's joy in her new found cousin and the photos she brought with her.

John

CONVENTIONS

There will be no publishing of personal details, dates, addresses, etc. of living people without their express permission. If you want to see the details of you and yours on the trees, you will have to write to me giving me express permission to do exactly that. You might like to include your comments on this enterprise as well. ☺

Should you choose to send me a photo or two to include I will take that as permission to publish unless you expressly forbid it. Contributions in the form of letters, articles and/or photos by any of you would be a very welcome addition for me to include in forthcoming issues.

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Success and Distribution of COLLOFF COUSINS.

I encourage you to photocopy any of CC and send it on to anyone that you think might be interested. For computer owners I can provide a copy in colour in Adobe <*.pdf> or M\$ Word .doc format so that you can print off your own copies. I still hope to have my web page www.colloff.org.uk up and running soon. On it, I hope to have coloured downloadable issues of COLLOFF COUSINS in .GIF and .html browsable formats.

If possible the pages containing living family information will only be accessible with a password freely sent to all family members, mainly to avoid Data Protection Act registration.

DISTRIBUTION. I have split up the list of 24 copies to the three (and-a-half?) branches as follows.

Benjamin (c.1760 – 1834). Kenneth Edward Colloff, Rainham. Roy William Colloff, Alderholt. Mildred, wife of Reginald Percival Colloff, Dagenham.

Thomas (c.1790 – 1839+). Matthew via John & Mary Colloff, Portugal.

Joseph (c.1814 – 1876). Hilary Colloff, Seattle, USA. Charlotte Hinde, West Sussex, Jack Colloff, Littleboro', Audrey Palin, Phyllis Colloff, Christine & John Wilson, Brian & Pauline Colloff, and Lyn & Garry James, Birmingham. Derek Colloff, Worcester. Audine & Jamie Watson, and Sheila Kirk, British Columbia. Tracey Colloff, Bromley. Trevor Rogers, Shotton. Beryl Colloff, Alcester, Helen Williamson, Witney.

Kohlhoff Elizabeth Kohlhoff in Kelso, Australia, Katy Kohlhoff, Germany.

Other. The British Library. Guild of One-Name Studies, file.

Skeletons in the Closet

What? No Rogues, Vagabonds or Criminals?

In September there was an article in the Daily Mail with the following sub-heading;

Family Tree Boom unlocks secrets Some may rather not have known

The subsequent article then discussed the "fallen branches" that an estimated 1.4 million amateur genealogists were finding in their family trees in the current boom in this popular family history hobby. It went on to discuss some of the things that were being discovered, having been well concealed in the past by family members. The following table of 'Top Family Secrets' was given;

Illegitimate children	18%
Changed Names	14%
Secret adoptions	6%
Missing Persons	6%
Unmarried Parents	6%
Unmarried Grandparents	6%
Links to Royalty	4%
Convicted Thieves	3%
Convicted murderers	2%
Bigamy	2%
Other convicted crimes	2%

Whilst we do have our fair share of the top half of the list I realized that in the lowest part of the list the Colloff family history seems singularly lacking in such incidents.

As far as I know, both Ken's extensive researches, and Internet searches by both Lyn James and myself have failed to disclose any hardened criminals or wrongdoers. If I am wrong I would be delighted to be corrected, but I believe that the worst recorded Colloff crimes were in the 19th century and only considered crimes in those days, and to the morals of those times. They were based simply on where children were born out of wedlock.

Only by the standards of those times were they held to be crimes. Today they are looked back on as acceptable recurring common human failings. Indeed many people today commit similar acts as personal statements of their individuality and freedom from the constraints of yesteryear.

However there is one exception in my own family. This was a secret that it took me a lot of hard work to unravel only to find that the oldest female relative on my father's side had known all along all of the details **and** had been aware of my search.

This was to find the details about the death of my Great Grandfather Joseph Colloff (c.1814 - 1876). Today it would be simple on the Internet, even to find what happened to my grandfather who was only aged 6 when his father died. It only takes seconds to search the 1881 census using the range of frequent variants of the spelling of our name, and there he is mis-spelt as Calloff and stepson to his mother's new husband, William Cook.

But back to my (well, 'our' for over half of my readership) Great Grandfather Joseph Colloff, [hereafter referred to GGJoseph, and GGGJoseph in fact, to most of you. ☺]

Searching in abstracts from the British Library records I found a mention of our elusive name in an issue of '*The Gentleman's Magazine*' of 1876. In family history research hope springs eternal. With some wishful thinking and misled by the name of the magazine I had hopes of finding a bit of class in this "fallen branch" and put a bit of effort into this lead. In the 1960s, it was just that, a hard, lengthy physical search. I had to make time, apply for, and get, a 'Reader's ticket' and visit London to go to the British Library to request that the magazine be fetched up out of the vaults for me to search through it. Finally I found two well-tucked away lines, and then the magazine only referred me to a fuller report in a Birmingham newspaper.

Another day off work and a visit to the newspaper offices in Birmingham and there in its day, was the truth for everybody to see. GGJoseph was apparently a hard drinker and had been almost disowned by his family. He worked in the building trade making bricks and after work he drank in a pub near to his work by the brick yard and its pits from which the clay to make the bricks was dug.

One evening, worse the wear for drink he finally began to make his way home across the brick yards only to fall into one of the flooded pits and drown.

He was found the following morning and, as is the case of a sudden death, the Coroner was summoned. He quickly made arrangements for the body of GG Joseph to be brought back to the pub, carried on one of the shutters from the pub windows. There he had GG Joseph laid out on the bar where he had been drinking the night before, and held his Court of inquest around his body.

The result of the inquest was recorded for posterity as 'Accidental death by Drowning', and fortunately there was no Health and Safety Executive around in those days to bleat about fencing off all the flooded pits. Otherwise they would still have been at it putting fences along the sides of all the canals as well as around every pit and well in the area.

Imagine how crestfallen I was when I triumphantly reported my findings to my elderly Auntie May! "Yes" she said, nodding sagely, "That's right!" Damn me! She had known all along.

I will always be grateful to Ken and Roy for sharing the work they uncovered in their studies. In this context I appreciated Ken's find of the extensive records in the Finchley Vestry Minutes, and his very professional interpretations of them and his sensitive construction of the first basic family trees, which included fallen branches and births out of wedlock.

The Latest Colloff Photo to be Unearthed

A very excited Lyn James phoned me, fortunately just as I was starting to put this issue of Colloff Cousins together. She had very kindly E-mailed to me a copy of the photo reproduced here and gave me some more of the background to it and some other photos she had been sent at the same time. Her excitement was because for the first time she could see a picture of her Great Granddad!



She had been contacted by Diane Loveridge who had been brought up by her Nan, Ada Saunders, née Colloff. After Ada's death she had found these photos and some certificates. Although Ada has no computer, a friend had shown her Lyn's excellent web site which encouraged her to make contact. A welcome reward for all Lyn's hard work on her web site.

Diane says that she believes that the photo is of her Great Grandfather Joseph Benjamin, his wife Jane née Barker and their four daughters and one of their sons

The following names were attached to the photo;

Back row, standing, left to right: Ada Colloff, Diane's grandmother, Jane Colloff, Alice Colloff

Front row, seated; left to right: Minnie Amelia Colloff, Jane (née Barker) Colloff, Joseph Benjamin Colloff, *and what was believed to be Sydney Colloff.*

Unfortunately we have yet to verify the last name and we have not yet had time to add the correct dates to the people shown.

Diane's Further Photos.



Here are two of Ada, unfortunately with no date estimate



Here is one of Minnie and Ada, later in life;



Diane sent some other family photos to Lyn, but was more unsure about names, so I include them here and hope that somebody can see a resemblance and date the photos in some way.



Alice and Child ?

Joseph Benjamin Colloff ?

An Update on Our Family Tragedy

In the last full issue of *Colloff Cousins* I gave brief details about the death of my son in a motorway accident. Perhaps the following account of the accident and subsequent legal proceedings will be seen as selfish and self indulgent on my part. If so, I suggest that you ignore this final article of this issue. I include it for the people who have been kind enough to send their condolences to Annette and I over our loss and expressed their sympathy and interest in some detail of the event.

The Accident Itself.

The accident occurred late in the afternoon of Monday 19th September. Will was driving the last load of his household goods from his old home in Walsden, Todmorden, to Westhoughton, Bolton. There he had bought a house and had set up home with his fiancée Lise Dootson. He had phoned Lisa as he left Walsden and she was waiting for him to arrive. Which he never did.



The photo is from the Bolton News showing the Aldi-owned articulated lorry that had been driving along the M62 motorway in the slow lane of the motorway away from you in the picture. Will was coming in the opposite direction towards you. Inexplicably the lorry veered onto its own hard shoulder then crossed the six motorway lanes to end up as seen in the photo.

The 18 inch high remains of Will's van can be seen on the grass at the far right of the picture.

Will was in the wrong place at the wrong time and met the careering lorry head-on and was killed instantly. His was the only fatality. The lorry driver was uninjured, two other cars travelling in the same direction as Will were damaged and their drivers injured.

The Police Actions.

The driver of the lorry was arrested by the Police and released on bail, returning several times to Bolton Magistrates Court whilst the Police carried out their enquiries. These were long and protracted and became very technical as they collected evidence to decide what charges the driver would finally have to face.

These started out as Causing Death by Dangerous Driving, swung towards Careless Driving and for a while it was considered as a pure accident when it was suggested that a fault in one of the lorry's wheels had caused the accident that ended up punctured after the accident. Wheel, tyre, valve, fastenings etc., all went for extensive critical forensic testing and examination. Finally the Police proved to their satisfaction, and what they believed could be upheld in Court, that nothing was wrong with the vehicle and the tyre was punctured as the vehicle mounted the crash barrier and was punctured on the barrier supports in the central reservation of the motorway.

Having ruled out an accidental occurrence the driver was charged with Causing Death by Dangerous Driving.

The Court Proceedings.

The severity of this charge moved the case from the Magistrates' Court to the Crown Court in Bolton, where after a few weeks the driver had to appear on 20th September 2007 to enter his plea of guilty or not guilty. This was a critical stage and we were warned that it could be very undramatic.

His hearing could all be over in seconds. He would be identified by the Court and asked to enter his plea, Guilty or Not Guilty. There would most likely be a simple response and it would all be over. In the event of a Guilty plea a date would be fixed in a few weeks when he would simply be sentenced. In the event of a Not Guilty plea a date would be fixed in several months time for his trial to be slotted into the busy Crown Court calendar.

All the advice was that most people found this part of the proceedings very upsetting. Particularly as it was likely to be over and covered in very few words, very quickly, many felt it a complete waste of time. Fully supported by Annette, we decided that the least we could do in Will's memory was to attend even these brief proceedings. Unfortunately, because of the uncertainty of the future proceedings, Lisa had to save her remaining holidays for the Crown Court trial, should it take place, and so she was unable to accompany us.

An Account of the Plea Process in Court.

The proceedings felt as though they took hours. In fact it was under an hour. So much was said and ideas developed that afterwards I wrote the following account for Lisa and Will's two sisters, Tracey and Charlotte.

Road Traffic Accident 18 September 2006

Summary

The accused, David Walsh, pleaded not guilty of causing death by dangerous driving when William Alaric Colloff was killed on the M62 in a collision with the Aldi articulated lorry driven by the accused.

The hearing was held before Judge Everett in Crown Court 3 of Bolton Crown Court at 10-30 a.m. on 19th September 2007.

A trial date of **4th February 2008** was set.

Description

The judge commented on the long time that it has taken for the case to come to court, noting the irony of the fact that it was a year and a day since the accident itself. He then addressed the material produced by the prosecuting counsel.

Following the Not Guilty plea, prosecuting Counsel, Mr Farrow addressed the now forthcoming trial. He said that he would be calling only one civilian witness - who was in a car travelling behind the accused. For the rest of the prosecution, he would be calling only expert technical witnesses. On this basis, the likely duration of the trial would be only 3 to 4 days.

The Judge declared himself satisfied that, based on the papers submitted, only one civilian witness be called, avoiding several different accounts taking a lot of time, giving different perspectives and leaving the jury with too many facts to easily and clearly assimilate.

He then asked if there was any further evidence than that submitted, and the defence confirmed that the current paperwork covered all of the live issues involved.

On that basis, the Judge agreed that the plans and photos gave a clear picture and asked the prosecution if they could be summarised to show the movements of the lorry based on the marks on the road, to clarify this for the jury. He said that the tachograph chart was quite clear showing the vehicle travelling continuously at a steady speed of 53 m.p.h. on cruise control right up to the point of the crash, and asked if computer imaging could be generated to demonstrate this and the movement of the lorry. A two dimensional diagram would be simple and he knew that the Crown Prosecution Services were not keen on incurring further expense for the three dimensional imaging that he preferred to clarify the real issues involved.

[Note; On reflection and considering the thrust of the rest of the judge's statements I believe that he is asking for a 3D animated film to demonstrate for the jury just how the driver's Scania tractor unit dragging Aldi's articulated trailer must have reared up in the air in hurdling the centre reservation crash barrier to end up in the other carriageway.]

He ensured that copies of the tachograph chart would be included in the jury bundles and it was agreed that the jury bundles would be finalised, including summaries of the evidence for the jury, and ready a month before the trial, that is by the 7th of January. The judge specified that the summaries of all the interviews would be available for 1st December, to be agreed between the Prosecution and Defence for inclusion in the bundles on 7th January.

The Prosecution.

At the judge's request Counsel briefly summarised the case for the prosecution as follows. ***The driver was marginally over his permitted hours and driving on cruise control, he had fallen asleep at the wheel.*** The judge accepted this statement saying that the tachograph chart spoke for itself.

The Defence.

The judge then asked the representative for defending counsel, Mr Prokofiev, what the Defence believed had occurred. Had the defendant fallen asleep?

Prokofiev; No.

Judge; what explanation is there?

Prokofiev; Mumble mumble

Judge; Is there no explanation?

Prokofiev; Not at this stage, the defendant does not know what happened.

Judge; Is there some medical reason for him not remembering?

Prokofiev. He has no recollection of events until he was coming round at the hospital.

Judge; But he was **not** unconscious after the accident. In the papers, the Police clearly recorded that he was talking at the scene, immediately after the accident.

Prokofiev's response was a bit indistinct but he appeared to be talking of finding a medical expert on a suggested phenomenon of 'Motorway Trance' from which the driver could have been suffering.

The Accused.

The Judge then addressed the accused releasing him on unconditional bail to return for trial on 4th February 2008. He then went on at quite some length to the accused saying that he was giving him a reality call about the matters in hand. He assured him that the case was not going to go away and warned him about two aspects;

a) The consequences of not appearing for the trial. If he did not appear, he would have committed a further crime by not appearing, and the trial and sentencing would still be held and completed in his absence.

b) Changing to pleading guilty.

Today, at this moment in time, was his last chance of getting the full tariff reduction of 1/3rd of sentence by pleading guilty and avoiding the time and expense of a trial.

From now on and right up to the morning of the trial any reduction was continuously diminishing down to 1/10th on the morning of the trial.

Discussion.

The judge then spoke again about the length of time it has taken to bring the case to court, dragging on and extending the distress felt by all concerned. Prosecuting Counsel explained that there had been doubts about the tyre and its wheel that was punctured after the accident that had taken a succession of different experts to clarify that neither the wheel nor tyre was defective and the vehicle as a whole was perfectly road worthy and not the cause of the accident.

The judge said that he wanted to see all of the experts' reports by the beginning of November when he expected that there might be a change of plea.

Mr Prokofiev asked for a delay for the production of the medical evidence that could need a suitable expert on memory loss.

Judge; No I will not allow any such delay. Such experts must be thin on the ground and the prosecution **must** have adequate time to obtain and consult their expert to consider such a submission. The defence must identify their expert in the next 14 days to allow the prosecution enough time to generate their own expertise in response.

Conclusions.

The judge then laid down the following requirements;

Names of all experts to be advised by 3rd October.

All experts needed at the trial to be so advised by 19th November.

A chronology of the events that caused the long delay must be produced.

He also said that he did not expect **(and would not accept)** a statement by the defendant that he had no knowledge of what had happened. He wanted a clear explanation from the defendant of why, as his vehicle proceeded along the motorway on cruise control, he then drove it first to the left, onto the hard shoulder of the motorway, and then, right across the three lanes of the motorway into and across the central reservation and over its crash barrier.

The defendant was then told he was free to go for the time being, and he left.

Comment

There was a bit more, mostly technical, and all this took over half an hour. The above, according to my notes is the gist of the proceedings to the best of my recollection and defective hearing.

We were completely misled by the Police about the anticipated brevity of it all and their advice that it was not worth attending. We were very glad that we went to see and hear the constructive comments and instructions given by the judge to all parties to ensure a fair and conclusive trial.

John and Annette Colloff, 21st September 2007.

Postscript and Update

We have heard nothing further from the Police, the Crown Prosecution Services or the Crown Court and we await the trial in February.

The Last Words.

I am very pleased to include these latest photos forwarded by Lyn and to welcome Diane Loveridge to our family circulation list. When we have verified the relevant names and dates, I may be able to add a small family tree in my next issue to slot her in among us all.

I am afraid that I still found it difficult to put this newsletter together and now I am beginning to wonder whether to close down this activity after the next Colloff Cousins. This will leave a neat three volumes of six issues each, sitting in the British Library and Guild of One-name Studies archives, awaiting some future researcher to put all my mistakes right. I wonder, with the universal use of web pages with their ease of access by all, has the family history newsletter had its day? The Colloff surname is very well served by the excellent efforts of both Lyn and Ken, which can be quickly and cheaply updated to be available to a world-wide audience via extremely powerful search engines.

Despite our best efforts so far we have not cracked the basic “Where did the name come from?” question. I now begin to think that this will remain a mystery until there are some more DNA results to be compared with mine.

We wish you all a peaceful and jolly Christmas, and hope for a Happier and Successful New Year.

John and Annette.

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