

**Ken  
Buttall**

**Bob  
Buttall**

**Philip  
Buttall**

**Steve  
Buttall**

**Mel  
Buttall**

**Bex  
Buttall**

**Grace  
Buttall**

**Jenny  
Buttall**

**Viv  
Gill**

**Joan  
French**

# Meet the BUTTALLS



## MEET THE BUTTALLS

If you happened upon my website by using a search engine, you may well have noticed that, in addition to references to myself as a musician, another 'Buttall' appears to be equally, if not more prominent!

In fact, if you're looking for one of those seemingly 'useless' pieces of information, which occasionally crop up in pub quizzes, then you might certainly have come across this particular ancestor in the following question:

*Who was Master Jonathan Buttall?*



He is assumed to be the 'Blue Boy' in Thomas Gainsborough's eponymous oil painting, which dates from around 1770, and which now resides in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Jonathan Buttall (d. 1805) was the son of a close friend of Gainsborough (1727 – 1728), who owned an ironmongery business in London's Soho.

*[For further information on this, and for other relevant sites, please follow the **links** on the final page]*

Whether all this is accurate or not, the Buttall family has an interesting family tree, and this was extensively researched by my first cousin once removed, Kenneth Frederick, with the assistance of his first cousin, Doreen Mary (better known as 'Peggy', apparently because of her single tooth at birth!).

Ken was a scientist with the former Gas Company, and lived for many years in Woking, Surrey. But, at the first opportunity in his subsequent retirement, he decided to move himself back to his 'spiritual' home of Topsham in Devon, a small town on the River Exe, not far from Exeter, where many of our ancestors actually hail from.

My father, Albert Frederick, was born in Tottenham, and, for his sins, is thus an ardent lifelong supporter of Tottenham Hotspur ('The Spurs'). His wartime service in the 'Buffs' (141<sup>st</sup> Regiment Royal Armoured Corps) by chance brought him down to Devon, and where he met my mother in Kingsbridge, where he was stationed in training. To his army colleagues and family he is Alb, Bert, Tilb to Cousin Joan, even Bertie! But when asked by my mother for his name, decided that something perhaps more upmarket was needed, and so lit upon 'Bob', by which he has been known by everyone else, ever since, and from where I got my middle name of Robert – to make things sort of 'official'!

The interesting thing is that my father married into a Devonian connection, which saw us gradually moving westwards from London to Bristol, Bristol to Exmouth (which is close to Topsham), and finally to Plymouth, where we now actually live adjacent to the A379, in fact the main road from Plymouth to Kingsbridge!

I'm a firm believer in things coming around full-circle, with but little outside manipulation, and last year we went up to Topsham to visit Ken, when he himself was being visited by Stephen James Buttall, Ken and Dad's first cousin, once removed, and thus my second cousin – and who, bizarrely, has the same initials as my dear late mum (SJB). Stephen and his family live in Ware, Hertfordshire, and when we met, we said we must have a Buttall Reunion in Topsham in 2007, to involve his family, his aunt, Joan May, his sister Vivien Gill (née Buttall), especially as I had never met any of my relations before, and dad hadn't seen his cousin Joan, for such a long time.

Stephen was left to organise things from the Home Counties' end where he and Joan live, together with sister, Vivien, who now runs Emerald Stables, just outside York at Nun Monkton. The reunion was set for Easter Sunday, 2007 – again a significant date for dear mum passed away the same day, back in 2004, although it was then April 11 – perhaps one chapter closed as another one was destined to open?

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## The Buttalls' Reunion in Topsham, Easter 2007

It was fortunate that Stephen had a large *Volvo* 4x4 to make the journey down from Ware, in Hertfordshire, to Exmouth, where they had rented an apartment in the marina, for not only had he his wife, Melanie and three daughters, Jenny, Bex and Grace on board, but also they were bringing dad's first cousin Joan along with them. Joan lives in Brightlingsea, Essex, where she still helps out occasionally in the family business, *French Marine Motors Ltd*, which was started by Joan's late husband, Verden, and his brother, Colin. Dad and I had the relatively short journey up the Devon Parkway (A38) to Topsham, where we all met up in Ken's retirement flat in St Margaret's Court.



The plan was then to adjourn to a local hostelry, *The Lord Nelson Inn*, just around the corner from Ken's flat, where we all had a lovely lunch together for the first time.

As you can imagine, there was so much to catch up on, especially for me, as I was meeting all but Stephen for the very first time in my life! It's certainly a strange, but great feeling to discover that there were now three more people with the Buttall surname, namely Steve's three daughters.





After a lovely lunch, and since we were enjoying some of the best Easter weather ever, it was decided that we'd have a little walk around Topsham on our way back to Ken's flat. This naturally allowed time for two pictures for the 'family album', one which I took, and the other taken by Steve's daughter, Bex, which then allowed me the rare opportunity to get in the shot!



Left to right above: Ken, Bex, Grace, Jenny, Steve, Joan and my Dad, Bob, or should we more correctly say 'Alb'!



Left to right above: Ken, Jenny, Grace, Joan, Steve, Dad, Steve's wife Melanie and myself in the shades – not trying to be 'cool', simply my photochromic lenses!



Naturally during our Topsham 'walkabout', we wandered into the town's museum, which was most interesting, and included one item of 'Buttall' memorabilia, which showed the occasional alternative spelling of our surname. The more common spelling of 'Buttle' is seen too, but unfortunately this does not permit membership of our own exclusive club!

After repairing to Ken's flat for a refreshing cup of his favourite blend of tea, it was decided that, having had such a great time together, we should repeat the experience at the earliest opportunity, so the following Tuesday, we returned to Topsham again. The glorious weather was still holding and, as this time we were going to enjoy an evening meal together in the same venue, we all went for a further on-foot investigation of Topsham and its *environs*.

In the meantime, Steve's sister, Vivien (right of picture below), had driven down from Yorkshire to join in the proceedings and even though we had only met that day for the first time, it seemed as if we'd all known each other for years! Ken took us all first to the Goat Walk which runs along the north bank of the Exe Estuary.





Ken, in fact, walks the circular trip most days, which gives him an opportunity to network with the locals, many of whom have become great friends of his, and have welcomed him to their fold, rather than treat him as a former home-counties yuppie, who decided to retire to a quieter part of the world – his Buttall pedigree ensured his quick acceptance into the community.

In the picture below you can see Ken striding along the Goat Walk, with Viv on his right, and Steve, immediately recognisable by the red jacket, a few paces ahead.



Whilst on the walk back, Ken, Dad and I were able to meet up with one of Ken's new friends, Eric (below right), who is a superb artist, amongst other skills.





Whilst out, Ken had also mentioned that Topsham Cemetery had a joint grave where more than one of our ancestors was buried. The cemetery was in the opposite direction to the Goat Walk, so it would have been difficult to have combined a visit to both parts of the town, without incurring a long walk. On our return to Ken's flat, Dad, Joan and I asked Ken whether he would take us to see the grave, whilst the others could chill out in the flat – Mel and Viv had meanwhile decided to look around the Topsham shops, and thereby swell the coffers of some of the local traders.

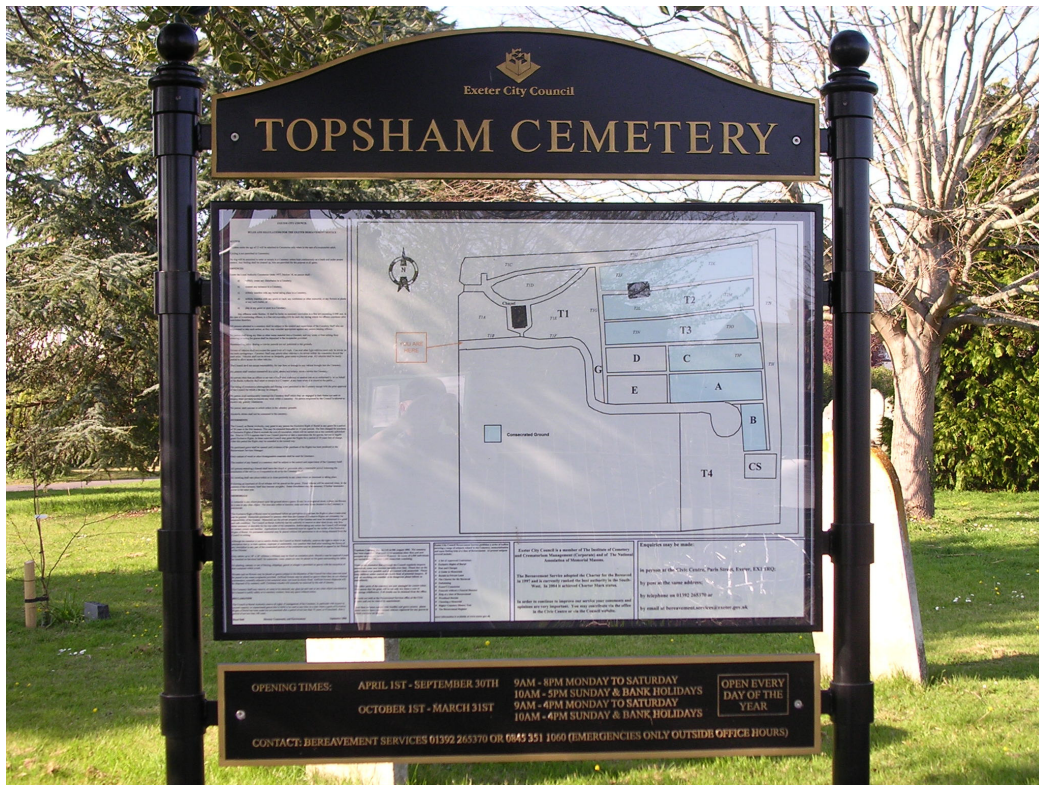
One thing you should remember, when you ask someone like Ken, who despite being in his early 80s is a very keen walker and cyclist, how far away something is, is that “just on the other side of the railway line” is a distinctly relative term! In fact it turned out to be quite some considerable way from his flat, as Dad, Joan and I discovered, after we had set out to find it!





Anyway, after a fairly vigorous walk across the main railway line which runs between Exeter and Exmouth, and past the immaculate bowling green and swimming pool, we eventually arrived at the entrance of the cemetery, and made our way up towards the Buttalls' tombstone.





Dad, Ken Joan and I eventually got there, too!





Unfortunately the gravestone itself needs cleaning up, in order to make it legible, but Ken has it on good authority that, if he cares to do it, the job is his, so before long we should be able to make out the legend clearly. Steve, who was quite happy to see a picture of the grave, rather than join us on our march, came up with the idea that Ken might like to organise a 'Topsham Gravestone Tour', or 'Meet the Buttalls' trip, which might provide him with an additional source of income – not that he needs this, we understand!



Despite the weathering of the stone, it is still, however, possible to make out some of our ancestors' names thereon – in the meantime, however, Ken has kindly provided the following transcription of the legend:

**Benjamin Buttall born Feb 2  
1793 died Feb 11 1865.**

**Also of his children**

**Harriet Harrison Buttall born  
April 8 1822 died May 2 1830.**

**Benjamin Harrison Buttall born  
Nov 10 1820 died at San  
Domingo,  
Port au Prince, West Indies,  
March 7 1839.**

**Richard Harrison Buttall born  
March 20 1824 died at  
Bridgewater Dec 16 1864.**

**Henry James Buttall born May  
14 1828 died Dec 6 1872.**

**Francis John Rogers Buttall  
born Jan 13 1827  
Died at London July 24 1873.**

**Eleanor Swale Buttall wife and  
mother of the above  
Died May 9 1889 age 94.**

**Elizabeth daughter of the above  
and wife of  
Algernon John Hearne of  
London  
Died at Gosport Jan 31 1885.**

Although it might have been a tad further than Ken had suggested, all three of us were really glad to have made the effort to see it, as it really brought home the strong ties our family has with the town of Topsham and, for me personally, who up to this point was aware of the family tree, but really had no significant feelings either way on the matter. The one thing which our reunion did firmly bring home was that I was one of only four remaining male descendants. Ken and Dad are both in their 80s, and Steve has no thoughts now of trying for a boy, after having produced three daughters! Certainly it would appear that the onus is now on me, so any help, particularly of the material kind, would be greatly appreciated – I can be reached by email!!

We now intend to remain in close contact, and make up for all the time we've missed over more years than I care to remember! Here are a few more pictures of the main protagonists in our alternative Easter story!

Those who still bear the Buttall surname direct:





Stephen Buttall (my second cousin)



Jenny Buttall (Steve's eldest daughter)





Bex Buttall (Steve's middle daughter)



Grace Buttall (Steve's youngest daughter)





Ken Buttall (my first cousin once removed – 'Squire' of Topsham!)





Alb Buttall (my Dad – known to the rest of the world as 'Bob'!)



Yours truly – the only way the photographer gets a picture of himself!

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And now for our close relations:



Mel Gates (Steve's wife, and now a Mrs Buttall, of course!)





Viv (née Buttall, Steve's sister, with my Dad)



Joan (née Buttall, with my Dad, her first cousin)

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Sadly, there was, of course, one more Mrs Buttall whom we would have loved to have been with us – my dear late mum, Sylvia.

Mum and Dad celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004, and exactly a month later, which was Easter Sunday, Mum passed away.

Dad and I knew that she would have loved to have been with us all at Topsham, and I'm sure she was certainly there in spirit!

Dad passed away in March 2015, just a few days short of his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Below is a picture of Mum & Dad which I took on their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and which also appeared in the local paper, *Plymouth Herald*.





Mum and Dad on their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary – March 11, 2004



And 60 years earlier, in his 'Buffs' uniform – Dad's own father looking on!

Philip R Buttall  
Plymouth, April 2007

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# My Outline Family Chart

## FIRST GENERATION

- Philip Robert **BUTTALL** was born in Plymouth, Devon. He is a Musician, Teacher, Composer & Music Writer.
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## SECOND GENERATION

- Albert Frederick ('Bob') **BUTTALL** was born in Tottenham, London. He was a retired Architect. He was married to Sylvia Joyce ROPER in 1944 in Tottenham, London. He died in 2015 in Plymouth, Devon.
  - Sylvia Joyce ROPER was born in Kingsbridge, Devon. She died in 2004 in Plymouth, Devon.
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## THIRD GENERATION

- Albert James **BUTTALL** was born in 1888 in Hoxton, London. He died in 1976 in Tottenham, London. He was a French Polisher. He was married to Louisa Florence KRANZ.
  - Louisa Florence KRANZ was born in 1893. She died in 1967 in London.
  - Edward Robert ROPER died in 1976 in Kingsbridge, Devon. He was born in West Charleton, Devon. He was married to Gladys Jane Hill OLVER in 19?? in Kingsbridge, Devon.
  - Gladys Jane Hill OLVER died in 1973 in Kingsbridge, Devon. She was born in Goveton, Devon.
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## FOURTH GENERATION

- Harry **BUTTALL** was born in 1861 in Bridgwater, Somerset. He died in 1917 in Tottenham, London. He was a Stableman. He was married to Elizabeth DUBBIN in 1883.
  - Elizabeth DUBBIN died in 1933 in Edmonton, London.
  - Charles Henry KRANZ was born in 1857. He was married to Annie Mary Ann HUDDLESTONE in 1890 in Haggerston, London.
  - Annie Mary Ann HUDDLESTONE died in 19. She was born in 1866.
  - Albert ROPER was born in 18?? He was married to Caroline? in 18??
  - Caroline? was born in 18??
  - ? OLVER was born in 18?? He was married to Mary DOWNING in 18??
  - Mary DOWNING was born in 18??
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## FIFTH GENERATION

- Richard Harrison **BUTTALL** was born in 1824 in Topsham, Devon. He died in 1864 in Bridgewater, Somerset. He was a Ship's Carpenter. He was married to Martha SNOOK in 1853 in Bridgewater, Somerset.
  - Martha SNOOK was born in Bridgewater, Somerset. She died in London.
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## SIXTH GENERATION

- Benjamin Ward **BUTTALL** was born in 1793 in Topsham, Devon. He died in 1865 in Topsham, Devon. He was a Master Mariner. He was married to Eleanor Swale HARRISON in 1818 in Topsham, Devon.
  - Eleanor Swale HARRISON was born in 1795 in Topsham, Devon. She died in 1889 in Topsham, Devon.
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## SEVENTH GENERATION

- Benjamin Ward **BUTTALL** was born in 1767 in Topsham, Devon. He died in 1818 in Exeter, Devon (on ship at Exeter quay). He was a Master Mariner. He was married to Margaret HEARDEN in 1788 in Topsham, Devon.
  - Margaret HEARDEN was born in 1766 in Topsham, Devon. She died in 1822 in Topsham, Devon.
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## EIGHTH GENERATION

- Benjamin **BUTTALL** died in 1779. He was born in Topsham, Devon. He was a Master Mariner - Privateer. He died at sea (presumed). He was married to Sarah WARD in 1764 in Topsham, Devon.
  - Sarah WARD was born in 17??
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## NINTH GENERATION

- Benjamin **BUTTALL** was born in Topsham, Devon. He was a Chirurgeon\*. He was married to Mary HODDER in 1742 in Exeter Cathedral.

- Mary HODDER resided in Topsham, Devon.  
*\* a medieval term from which the modern 'surgeon' is derived*
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## TENTH GENERATION

- Benjamin **BUTTALL** was born in Topsham, Devon. He was a Sugar Baker. He was married to Mary HODDER in 1714 in Heavitree, Exeter.
  - Mary HODDER resided in Topsham, Devon.
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## ELEVENTH GENERATION

- Samuel **BUTTALL** was born in 1641 in Wrexham, Clwyd, Wales. He died in 1723 in Topsham, Devon. He was a Sugar Baker.
  - Mary WOODS died in 1730 in Topsham, Devon.
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## TWELFTH GENERATION

- Randle **BUTTALL** died in 1683 in Wrexham, Clwyd, Wales. He was born in 16??. He was a Smyth\*.
  - Jane? died in 1679 in Wrexham, Clwyd, Wales.  
*\* an older form of 'Smith', i.e. a Blacksmith*
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## THIRTEENTH GENERATION

- James **BUTTALL** was born in 16?? He was a Smyth\*.  
*\* an older form of 'Smith', i.e. a Blacksmith*
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