

# Western Daily Press

At some time in our lives we all look up our own names in the telephone directory. We may pause and fantasize about long-lost rich relatives - but rarely does it change our lives. When airline pilot Doug Burgum found himself in a Manchester hotel he decided to see if there were any Burgums in the book.

The resulting genealogical trail stretches back four centuries and includes some spellbinding stories including the tale of Siddy Burgum who was crushed under a bag of sugar and Henry Burgum who was incarcerated in a London jail.

"The chance discovery of two Burgums in a Manchester telephone directory sparked my curiosity," said Doug, of Blakeney in the Forest of Dean.

I ended up going to a library and searching through every telephone directory for Burgums. As a result of that research I discovered there were Burgums living all over the world." Doug, aided by his wife Vicky and sons Jason, 12, and Ashley, 15, now runs the global Burgum Family History Society.

Later this month 100 Burgums from as far away as Australia will descend on the Forest of Dean. The name Burgum literally means "the keeper of the farmland within the enclosure". And it is his family's history, which eventually convinced Doug to move to the homeland of his earliest descendant - William Burgum, 1580.

"I knew nothing about the Forest of Dean but I soon fell in love with it.

Initially we bought a holiday home here and then we saw a house in Blakeney which we had to have."

Doug has now created an exhibition of his family tree at the Dean Heritage Centre in Soudley, which runs until August 7.

## **SIDDY BURGUM 1906-1999:**

Tragic Sidney Burgum was 20 years old when he was crushed by a huge bag of sugar. Sidney - known as Siddy - was later sent to a mental asylum and spent the next 50 years without seeing any of his family. Then in 1998 his brother Whit and his sister Mabel enjoyed an emotional reunion with Siddy.

## **ANTHONY THOMAS BURGUM 1834-1913:**

Anthony Thomas Burgum became one of the most visionary travellers of his day. In 1871 AT and his wife Ann, who gave birth to seven children, emigrated to America. Ann died in childbirth in 1874 and AT took his children to North Dakota in three covered wagons. He later married Lizzie Hall and had a further three children and established a thriving farm.

## **HENRY BURGUM 1739-1789:**

Henry Burgum was born in Littledean in the Forest of Dean in 1739. He rose from a position as a pewterer's apprentice to deputy governor and treasurer of the Corporation of the Poor and President of the Grateful Society. He was discovered to hold a fake pedigree and was excluded from Bristol society. His debts mounted and - having lost the use of his limbs from gout - he was sent to languish in a London prison.