

“THE IMPROBABLE FIND”

Each of us has had the thrill of a "find" during our family research but I think we would be hard pressed to equal the treasure hunt of Ruth Spalding. Ruth is the author of "The Improbable Puritan" A Life of Bulstrode Whitelocke 1605-1675. During her research she found several of the manuscripts were missing and set about tracking them down. Her "Needle in an Irish Haystack" took her all over Eire and on the way she found other Whitelocke articles, including the terrific portraits of Bulstrode and his father James that, thanks to Ruth, are now in the National Portrait Gallery. Undaunted by dwindling resources, flat tires and countless dead ends Ruth's searches were finally successful, uncovering the first volume of Bulstrode's diary, James Whitlock's 'Libre Familicus' (a family history started in 1609), Bulstrode's diary for 1653 when he was preparing to go to Sweden and lastly a collection of sermons preached by Bulstrode in the last few years of his life.

On a trip to Dublin Ruth revisited the house in Dublin where these treasures had been uncovered - she was greeted by cranes, concrete mixers and scaffolding, the house was gone. Imagine if she had put off her search and this had been another dead end!!