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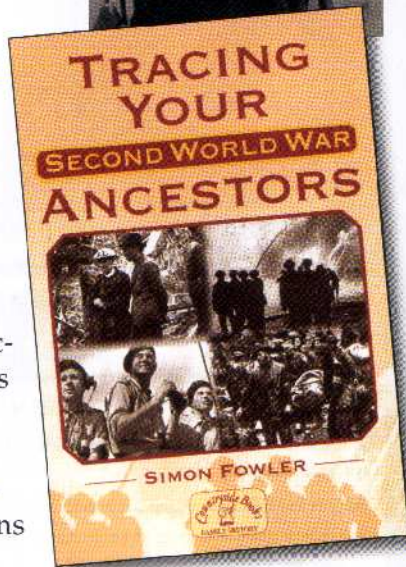
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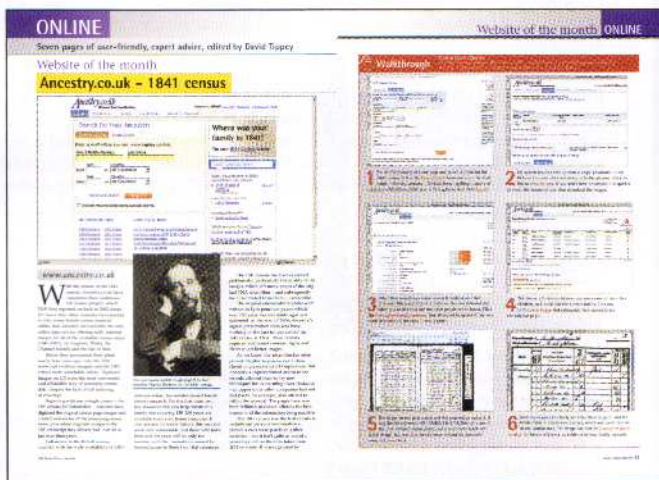
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In Brief

● **Who does Dr Who think he is?** David Tennant, the latest man to don the Time Lord's mantle, will be appearing in the third series of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, a spokesperson for the star has confirmed. The show will begin filming soon and be shown sometime in autumn 2006. Look out in the pages of *FHM* for future updates.



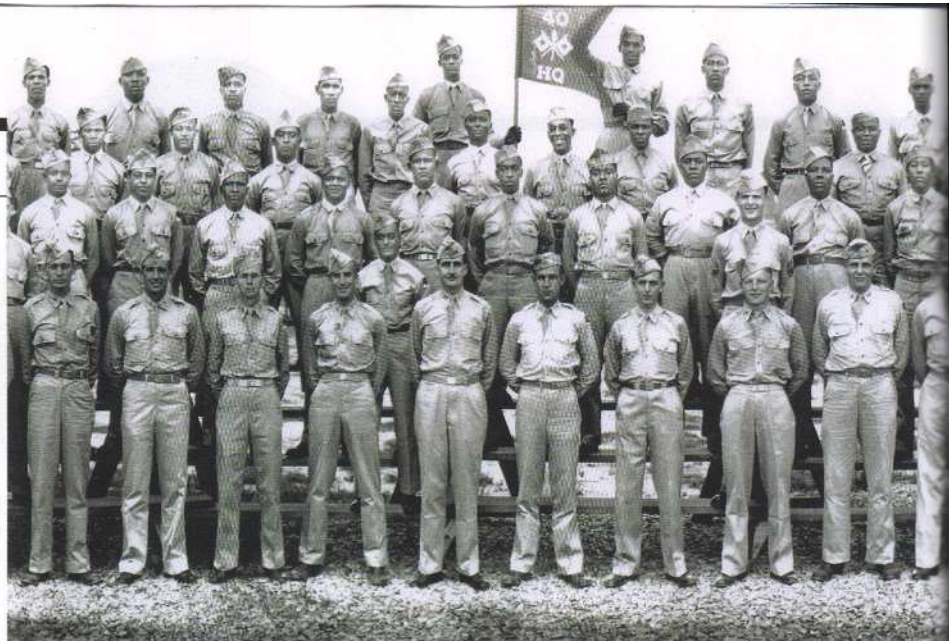
● **What's it worth?** Family historians will be able to compare the value of old and new money using a new online currency conversion program launched by The National Archives.

You can convert old sums of money into their equivalent value today, and see what the relative buying power of money was in days gone by.

Jane Austen, for example, bequeathed £50 in her will in 1817. Fifty pounds then was about equal to a spending power of £2,096 today. Her benefactor could have spent the money on 318 days of craftsman labour; 53 stones of wool; eight quarters of wheat; nine cows; or four horses.

Dave Annal of The Family Records Centre said: "This will be of interest to family historians and to anyone wanting to know more about how their ancestors lived."
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency

● **Site for sore eyes:** Just hours before this year's family history fair at London's Horticultural Halls, the Society of Genealogists launched a redesigned version of their helpful website. Still at its old address, the new site is better-looking and easier to use and navigate. View the changes at www.sog.org.uk



Who were the 40th?

A FRUSTRATED FAMILY HISTORIAN is appealing for help to find survivors of a 'forgotten' World War II battalion.

Erik Westerman's research into his father's military service spiralled into a ten year quest to uncover the story of the 40th Signal Light Construction Battalion – one of the few WWII units to be staffed almost entirely by African American soldiers. But so far he has been unable to find any of the men who served with the unit.

George F Westerman was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 40th, which consisted of 19 white officers and 423 African-American enlisted men. "[Their] primary role was to set up communications lines between troops on the front line of battle," says Erik. "Their secondary role was far less pleasant – to remove landmines and booby-traps left behind by the retreating Nazi forces."

Erik, who lives in Berkshire, is determined to see that their contribution is brought to public attention. "I think it's fair to say that the bravery of these men was unparalleled," he says.

The communications unit served within the 12th Army group, the largest and most powerful American formation ever to take to the field. They were part of the "big push" of Allied forces towards the heart of Third Reich", says Erik.



George later served in Korea and Vietnam

But despite the high level of risk involved in their work, Erik knows of only two who were killed, "an incredibly small number considering their exposure to the front lines, and the dangerous tasks that they were assigned," he points out.

Nevertheless, Erik's hard work in the archives has so far failed to turn up any survivors. "The biggest piece to this jigsaw would be if I could get hold of a duty roster list," says Erik. "It would have the names of all of the soldiers."

"It was not in the archives of documentation that I found at The National Archives and Records Administration." His attempts to contact the battalion's historians have also become more difficult, as the unit are now stationed in the Middle East.

Over nine years Erik has accumulated a vast collection of information and ephemera (see his website at www.benefactum.org), but says there is no substitute for hearing their stories first hand. "With very few names, it has been near-to-impossible to get any realistic leads. If I did, I'd been on the first plane to the US to interview any surviving members."

He hopes one day to make a film about their story. "I only wish I could hear more stories from the honourable men who served in this battalion."

Three of the Ypres fallen found

AMATEUR ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE discovered the remains of three British soldiers who died at Ypres in 1914.

The team used an ID tag found on one of the soldiers, featuring his surname and number, to provisionally identify the body as Private Richard Lancaster from the Royal Lancashire Fusiliers. No clues remained as to the identity of the other two men.

They also investigated the 1901 census to discover Pte Lancaster's

birth place – Preston – and date, 1883. He died in November 1914, during the first months of the war.

The remains were found in a sector of the Ypres salient called Plug Street Wood. Pte Lancaster's name is on the memorial to the missing there, but if the identification is confirmed his name can be removed and his body buried in one of the war cemeteries.

The remains may be reburied in Ypres

