

The estate of Joan Barbara Schofield

STATUS — NO HEIRS · *Bona Vacantia* reference BV966153/1 · died Lincoln, Lincolnshire, 22 August 1996

Conclusion: Joan Barbara Schofield, born Joan Barbara Steele at Grimsby in December 1922, died a widow at Lincoln on 22 August 1996, and no person is entitled to her estate under section 46; it remains *bona vacantia*. The purchased grant certifies that she died intestate, that no kinsman took the administration, and that her estate was sworn at a gross value not exceeding £180,000 and a net value not exceeding £10,000 — so the Crown's interest is the whole net estate, not a lapsed share. Her husband died five years before her and she left no child. The wartime register records her as the only child in her parents' house, and each of her parents had exactly one sibling: her mother's sister never married, and her father's sister was still childless eighteen years after her own marriage. Both sets of grandparents married once and once only, so there is no uncle or aunt of the half blood and no issue of one. Every class section 46 recognises is exhausted on the record read, and the next class entitled is the Crown. Three points rest on index entries rather than certificates, and one rung — brothers and sisters of the half blood — is excluded by the household return of 1939 rather than by a separate reading of the marriage index; none of these would change that result. The thirty-year claim bar fell on 22 August 2026, 39 days ago; the case has since left the Crown's published list, and no claim by anyone is now possible.

HD Genealogy & Technology · 30 September 2026 09:58 BST, third edition · claim bar 22 August 2026, now passed
 What this edition adds, and what it corrects. This edition brings the second edition of 18 September 2026 to the house standard. The status now stands on the top line, and the conclusion is restated in the house form. The summary that opened the second edition is folded into the conclusion and into the sections on what remains open and the decisive documents, so that nothing is said twice. The ladder now states every rung, including one the earlier editions left silent — brothers and sisters of the half blood — which is recorded as not separately read rather than as closed. The findings, the grant and the rest of the ladder are otherwise carried as they were, and the second edition's withdrawal of the first edition's property-based estimate stands. The references are carried under the same numbers and with the same elements. No finding is added and none is withdrawn: every finding, control and negative of the first and second editions stands, and both remain on file exactly as issued.

Supplied complete and without restriction on internal circulation. No living person is named in this file.

The thirty-year limit on claims against this estate ran out on 22 August 2026. The case no longer appears on the Crown's list, and no person — heir, firm or stranger — can now claim any part of it. This file is retained as a worked example of how this practice closes a case, and not as an opinion on entitlement. Nothing in it entitles anyone to anything.

THE WOMAN ON THE LIST

The published list gives a name, a date and a place. It does not say who she was.

She was born **Joan Barbara Steele on 7 December 1922 in Grimsby**, the daughter of William Arthur Steele and Doris May Steele, formerly Broughton; her birth registration prints her mother's maiden surname.¹ By the autumn of 1939 the family were at 26 Parker Street, Cleethorpes, where the wartime register records the household in full: her father, born 3 October 1895, a master window cleaner; her mother, born 26 June 1897; and Joan herself, sixteen, a grocer's shop assistant.² There were **no other children in the house** — and none anywhere else, as this account will show.

She married **Harold Schofield at Huddersfield on 30 January 1943**.³ He died at Lincoln on 25 May 1991,⁴ and she died a widow at Lincoln on 22 August 1996.⁵

Three women named Joan Schofield died in England in 1996. The other two left wills and are different people; this account concerns the one who died on 22 August, and every record below is tied to her by date.

NO CHILDREN

Joan and Harold's marriage of forty-eight years produced no child. **No birth was registered anywhere in England and Wales to a Schofield father and a mother whose maiden name was Steele in any year from 1943 to 1965**, the whole of her childbearing life — while the same reading with the maternal surname removed returns 7,647 entries, so the index was answering.⁶

NO BROTHERS OR SISTERS

She was an only child. The 1939 household stands as the first-hand statement of that,² and the civil registers add nothing to contradict it.

One line was pursued and abandoned, and it is recorded here because it matters. Three Steele children — born 1930, 1932 and 1935 to a mother named Broughton — looked at first like her siblings, and a further generation was traced from them. **They were a different family.** Their births were registered in Yorkshire, hers in Lincolnshire, and the 1939 household admits no brothers or sisters at all. The line was withdrawn in full before it reached this page. A shared surname and a shared mother's maiden name are not kinship, and a firm acting on that first appearance would have contacted strangers.

HER MOTHER'S FAMILY — ONE AUNT, WHO NEVER MARRIED

Joan's mother was one of the two surviving children of **Walter Broughton and Annie, formerly Maddison**, who married at Saffron Walden on 26 June 1892; the parish register itself names the groom's father as Henry Broughton.⁷⁸ In 1911 the household at Clee, Lincolnshire gave the answer directly: Annie declared **eighteen years married, three children born alive, two still living, one died.**⁹ The two survivors were Doris May, Joan's mother, and Edith Annie Broughton, born 22 March 1893.

Edith Annie never married. In September 1939 she was living with her elderly parents at Pasture Street, Grimsby — **single, aged 46, and recorded as incapacitated.**¹⁰ The national marriage index carries no marriage for her: every entry for the surname and forename across her lifetime was opened and read, 136 of them in all, and not one is registered in any Lincolnshire district.¹¹¹² She appears to have died at Sleaford in 1966, aged 73.¹³

That line ends with her.

HER FATHER'S FAMILY — ONE AUNT, WHO LEFT NO CHILDREN

Joan's father was one of two children of **William Steels Hawksley and Bridget Willson, formerly Holmes**, married at Sleaford in the autumn of 1891.¹⁴ Bridget had not been married before: all eleven earlier entries for the name between 1879 and 1891 were read, and the only two candidates are brides of thirteen and seventeen, in South Shields and Leeds, neither of whom can be the woman born about 1865 who married in Lincolnshire.¹⁵ In 1911 the family kept a window-cleaning business at 28 Albert Road, Cleethorpes, and Bridget's return is again explicit: **two children born alive, two still living, none died.**¹⁶ Joan's father, and one sister.

That sister, **Mary Ellen Steele, born in Manchester in 1894**, married William H. Gooderham in the Grimsby district in the spring of 1921 — in the same quarter, the same district and the same part of the register as her brother's own marriage.¹⁷²⁰ By September 1939, eighteen years married, she kept house with her husband and her widowed mother, **and there were no children.**¹⁸ Nor was any birth registered to her: 343 Gooderham births between 1922 and 1940 were read, the ten falling in the Grimsby district were opened one by one to read the maternal surname, and those surnames are Pickett, Willerton, Parker and Barr — none of them Steele.¹⁹

That line ends with her.

NOTHING ON THE HALF BLOOD

Both of Joan's grandparents' marriages were first marriages, entered at ordinary ages, with no widow or widower recorded on either side.⁷¹⁴ Walter and Annie Broughton were still married to one another in 1939, forty-seven years on.¹⁰ No earlier marriage exists for Bridget Holmes.¹⁵ There is no half-blood uncle or

aunt, and so no issue of one.

A NOTE ON THE SURNAME

Joan's father appears throughout her own records as **Steele**. On his own marriage he is entered as **William Steels Hawksley**,¹⁴ and the two are the same man: the date of birth given in the wartime register and in the register of his death agree exactly, 3 October 1895.²²¹

The point is made here because his generation cannot be found under the plain surname alone.

THE GRANT, AND WHAT IT CERTIFIES

The grant was bought and read in full, both pages of it. It recites that **Joan Barbara Schofield of 6 Longacre Park, Wood Lane, South Hykeham, Lincoln died on 22 August 1996 domiciled in England and Wales**, and prints the word **Intestate** alone beneath the domicile line. Letters of administration of all the estate were granted on **27 November 1997** by the Principal Registry of the Family Division to the **Solicitor for the Affairs of Her Majesty's Treasury, for the use of Her Majesty** — the Crown's own solicitor taking the grant, which is what happens when nobody entitled has come forward. **No kinsman, no administrator's address and no next-of-kin recital appears anywhere on the document.**⁵

The grant is sworn on the Registry's printed form, on which the alternative wording "amounts to" is struck through in both places, so the two figures are the brackets sworn rather than valuations: **gross value does not exceed £180,000, and net value does not exceed £10,000.**⁵ The gap between the two is the measure of what the estate owed.

She left no will, and this is certified rather than inferred. The covering letter bound with the grant states that no copy of a will can be provided because the grant that issued was a grant of letters of administration, issued where a person has died without making a valid will. The same certification was issued a second time, separately, against an order placed in the will-copy slot for this probate number — so the absence of a will has been certified twice by the office that would hold one.⁵²⁴

Because she died intestate, the Crown's interest is the **whole net estate** and not a share of it: there is no will, no gift and therefore no lapsed share. No property in her name is shown by any record read, and the net value sworn on the grant is the figure this estate is measured by.

A PROPERTY-BASED ESTIMATE

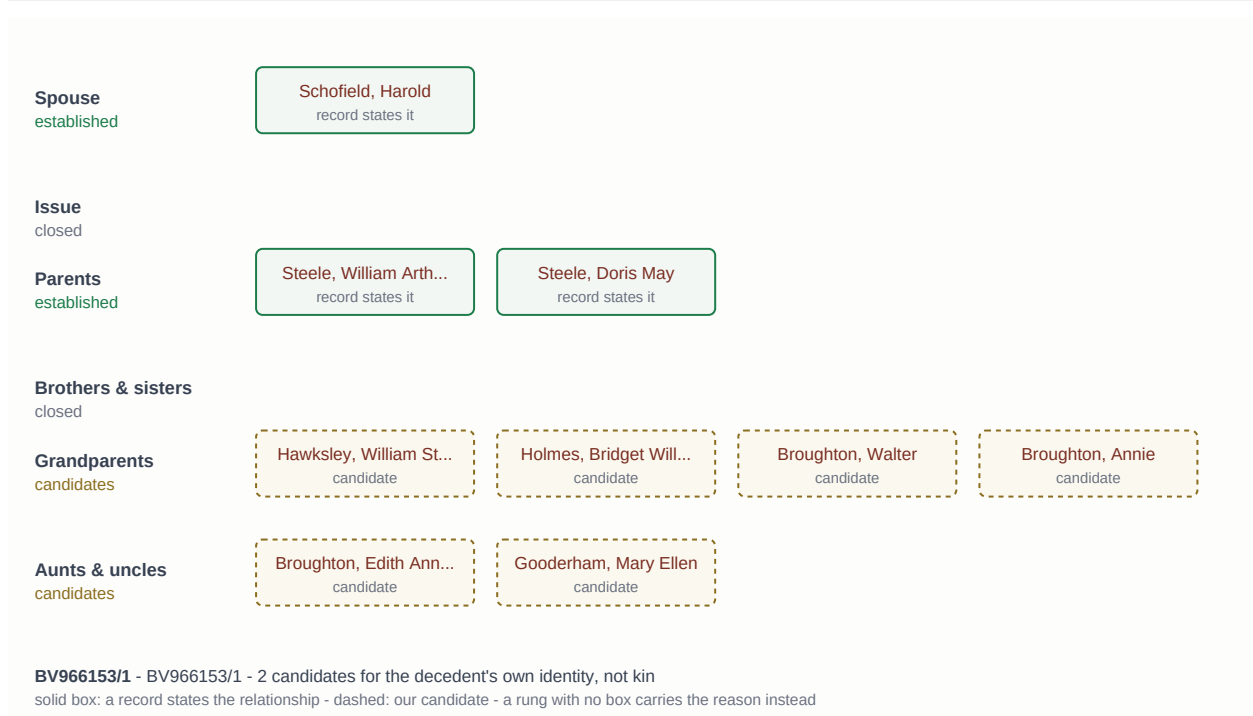
The first edition gave a property-based estimate of **£70,000** for her last address, taken from another unit offered for sale on the same residential park-home site in August 2026.²² **That figure was withdrawn in the second edition as a measure of this estate, and stays withdrawn.** The grant states the value, and a comparable does not sit beside a document that does.

The negative behind it stands and is worth keeping. Her last address, printed in the grant itself, was 6 Longacre Park, Wood Lane, South Hykeham — a unit on a residential park-home site.⁵ **No sale of any unit on that site has ever been registered:** the price-paid data for the site's own postcode returns no transaction at all, against fifteen for the adjoining conventional postcode on the same reading.²³ Pitches on a site of this kind are licensed rather than conveyed, so the register structurally cannot see them, and **tenure is unknown** — no record read states whether she owned the unit outright, held it on hire purchase, or occupied it under a pitch licence without owning it at all.

THE BAR, AND THE LIST

The thirty-year limit ran from her death and expired on **22 August 2026**. The published list, read again on 18 September 2026, no longer carries her.²⁵ The 2022 archived edition, which is where this account's starting particulars came from, still does.⁴

HOW FAR THE LADDER IS CLIMBED



THE SECTION 46 LADDER, RUNG BY RUNG

— **Spouse** — CLOSED: her husband died five years before her.⁴

— **Issue** — CLOSED: no birth registered to the marriage in any year of her childbearing life, on a proven index.⁶

— **Parents** — CLOSED as takers: both identified and both predeceased — William Arthur Steele (1895–1977) and Doris May Steele, formerly Broughton.²²¹

— **Brothers and sisters of the whole blood, and their issue** — CLOSED: the wartime household records her as an only child.²

— **Brothers and sisters of the half blood, and their issue** — NOT SEPARATELY READ: no record read shows a second marriage of either parent, and the 1939 household holds no child of any other union,² but the marriage index was not read for a later marriage of either parent. It is named below among the points that remain open.

— **Grandparents** — CLOSED: identified and long predeceased on both sides.⁷¹⁴

— **Uncles and aunts of the whole blood, and their issue** — CLOSED. One maternal aunt, unmarried and dead in 1966;¹⁰¹¹¹²¹³ one paternal aunt, married in 1921 and childless.¹⁶¹⁸¹⁹

— **Uncles and aunts of the half blood, and their issue** — CLOSED: both grandparents' marriages were first marriages on both sides.⁷¹⁴¹⁵

There is no spouse, no issue, no brother or sister and no issue of one, no half-blood sibling, no surviving grandparent, and no uncle or aunt of the whole or half blood leaving issue. **The next class entitled is the Crown**, and the estate stays where the Treasury Solicitor placed it in 1997.

WHAT REMAINS OPEN

Three points are strong rather than certain, and none of them disturbs the conclusion. Edith Annie Broughton's death at Sleaford in 1966 is identified on age and county alone, the index of that period carrying no date of birth.¹³ Her parents' and grandparents' marriages are identified from the index and from a corroborating parish entry rather than from certificates.⁷⁸¹⁴ Mary Ellen Gooderham's childlessness rests on the 1939 household and on the district's birth registrations — strong, and one certificate short of absolute.¹⁸¹⁹

A fourth point is not a purchase. Two prior-marriage readings, for the paternal grandfather and the maternal grandmother, were closed on the parties' ages — each having been in their early twenties at the marriage that produced Joan's parent — rather than by reading the index out in full as was done for the other two grandparents.¹⁵

A fifth is stated here for the first time, so that no rung is silent. The marriage index was not read for a later marriage of either of Joan's parents, so a brother or sister of the half blood is excluded only by what the 1939 household shows — her parents together, and Joan the only child in the house² — and by her father's death in 1977 under the surname of that marriage.²¹ No record read suggests any other union.

On this estate none of these would move anything: the bar fell first.

THE DECISIVE DOCUMENTS

These are the documents this account has not obtained, in the order in which they would matter. Each closes the last gap between an index entry and a certificate, and none is expected to change the conclusion.

Edith Annie Broughton's death certificate — the entry indexed at Sleaford in the second quarter of 1966, in the name Edith Broughton, aged 73; the index reference is given at the citation.¹³ It states a date of birth, an address, a marital condition and an informant, and so would settle both that the entry is hers and that she died unmarried. General Register Office, £12.50.

The two grandparents' marriage certificates — the entries indexed at Saffron Walden in the second quarter of 1892, in the names Walter Broughton and Annie Maddison, and at Sleaford in the third quarter of 1891, in the names William Steels Hawksley and Bridget Willson Holmes.⁷¹⁴ Each states both parties' ages, conditions and fathers, which is what would turn "no widow or widower recorded" into a certified first marriage on both sides. General Register Office, £25 the pair.

Mary Ellen Gooderham's marriage certificate — the entry indexed at Grimsby in the second quarter of 1921, in the name Mary E. Steele.¹⁷ It names her father, and would bind her to the 1911 household directly rather than through the register page she shares with her brother's marriage. General Register Office, £12.50.

None has been ordered; the estate is time-barred, and the documents are named so that the reader can see exactly where certainty would come from.

ABOUT THIS ACCOUNT

This file was prepared by HD Genealogy & Technology from public and archived official records, to Genealogical Proof Standard discipline: every assertion above carries its source; every negative is dated and carries the check that makes it trustworthy; no living person is named; nothing is inferred beyond what a cited record states. Index entries are described as index entries, and the registers themselves remain unread except where a document was obtained.

This is the third edition. The first, of 16 August 2026, and the second, of 18 September 2026, remain on file exactly as issued; nothing in either has been rewritten. The one figure withdrawn, the first edition's property-based estimate, was withdrawn in the second edition and is named above.

This is genealogical research and **not legal advice**; entitlement is a question of law for the reader to determine. No living person has been approached and no contact details are supplied. A negative finding is dated rather than permanent: records are digitised and released continuously, and this account speaks as at the date on its first page. And once more: this estate is time-barred and cannot be claimed.

REFERENCES

References follow the University of Strathclyde standard. Where one records a negative, the control search proving the instrument was answering is stated with it.

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- 3 Marriages index (CR) England & Wales. RD Huddersfield, Yorkshire. 1st Q., 1943. STEELE, Joan Barbara. [Transcription] Collection: England & Wales Civil Registration Marriage Index. www.freebmd.org.uk : accessed 15 August 2026.
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- 5 Testamentary records. England and Wales. 27 November 1997. SCHOFIELD, Joan Barbara. Letters of administration, digital copy of the grant. Principal Registry of the Family Division. Probate number 9751111530. HM Courts and Tribunals Service. Collection: Find a Will. probatesearch.service.gov.uk : accessed 16 August 2026.
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- 7 Marriages index (CR) England & Wales. RD Saffron Walden, Essex. 2nd Q., 1892. BROUGHTON, Walter. Vol. 4a. p. 802. [Transcription] Collection: England & Wales Civil Registration Marriage Index 1837-1915. www.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 16 August 2026.
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