

Family History

U3A Family History Workshop - an outstanding Success.

Last year 15 family history group leaders from various U3As around Buxton met to form a 'network' and exchange ideas. These U3As were from three Regions (EM, WM & NW) and from this emerged the idea of a workshop or conference. On Saturday 27th April, 165 delegates travelled to the beautiful Dome building in Buxton for this event and were treated to a very professional medley of lectures on all forms and histories of genealogy.

After a reception and refreshments in the Main Hall, the first speaker Mark Bayley began the day with a talk titled 'Breaking Down Walls'. With the help of his online company, The Genealogist, he covered the many ways to go ancestral searching. Mark's lecture covered Census records, early prison marriages, and via a large screen we viewed celebrity marriage certificates of Paul McCartney amongst others

Cliff Housley delivered our second lecture on Military Museum Archives. His pride in his old regiment the 'Sherwood Foresters' was evident. After detailed instructions on how to contact the various museums, he displayed via the screen a most interesting collection of uniforms, badges, and photographs of which his archive held as many as 11,600. Cliff said it was very touching, when he was able to pass on the first photo of a long lost relative. Lovers of art were treated to a viewing of regimental watercolours, some of which were of the camps connected to the Zulu war. Finally the photo of Cliff in military uniform confirmed, he was not only a fine old soldier but a darned handsome young one too!

After a delicious buffet lunch, the next speaker was a complete contrast. With the title of 'Hatched, Matched and Dispatched' Raymond Rush tried to fool us into believing he was the character he came dressed as. Wearing a long white smock and battered old hat adorned with ears of corn, he only fooled us for a few moments.

Raymond gave us details of how our great g, g, ,g,Grandmothers gave birth, telling us all about it in the most hilarious Ken Dodd style. With a very naughty grin he told how wives were sold at cattle markets. His detailed instructions on how to hasten the death of a suffering 'loved' one with a hammer, brought his hilarious floor show to an end

Our final speaker- lawyer David Lambert brought us back to sombre mood, with a title of 'In the name of God'. We did not stay sombre for long however, as David revealed that a sense of humour was very often recorded in wills throughout the ages, some people used poetry to record their wills. Also sarcasm was evident – the final word to the Taxman in one will was 'you've squeezed me all my life, now squeeze this' and enclosed a lemon! David's interesting talk led us through the laws of inheritance, how land had been a separate entity years ago as far as will writing was concerned. Pet lovers were instructed on animal legacies

and the length of wills was identified. The short version was 'All to Mother', the longest contained 95,940 words. All the speakers gave us a varied and interesting overview of ancestry, and we all look forward to the next workshop.

56% of those attending travelled under 30 miles and 82% within 40 miles. 4% came over 100 miles from Ashted (Surrey), Newbury, Welland, Wellingborough and Scarborough. Liz Wilson (EM Development & Education Officer) was able to attend for the morning session and reported that she was very impressed with what she saw and hopes other groups arrange similar events.

A couple of 'trade stands' attended and gave the delegates a great opportunity to view their various products as well as taking advantage of 'special' discounts.

The Family History Workshop was organized by Ian Taylor from the Buxton Family History group ably assisted by Kim Liddle, also from Buxton and Carole Williams from Leek. Ian thanked everyone who had given him support, especially those volunteers from Buxton with the various jobs before and on the day on what was originally just an idea, which as all of those who attended declared- it was an outstanding success!