

## U3A Family History Conference - another outstanding Success.

On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 230 delegates travelled to the beautiful Dome building in Buxton for this event and were treated to a very professional mix of lectures on all forms and histories of genealogy. The delegates were welcomed to Buxton and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Family History Conference by Marge Rose and a vote of thanks given at the end by Sue Burfitt.

After registration and refreshments in the Main Hall, the first speaker Professor Rebecca Probert from Warwick University began the day with a talk titled 'Sex, Illegitimacy and cohabitation, 1700-1960s'. She pointed out that prior to online data a search through volumes of record books made it difficult to check and evaluate some of the information about couples living together. A study of births outside marriage in the 1700s now is estimated at about 2%, whereas since the 1980s it is nearer 30%!!

Dr Nick Barrett from The National Archives at Kew delivered our second lecture on "The Future of Family History". Nick had spent quite a bit of time with the early *Who Do You Think You Are* programmes and he stresses the value of standing in the footsteps of where your ancestors lived and worked. He said that funding for all Archives is being cut and as a result many are entering into financial agreements with commercial companies. They then scan and transcribe the records and 'sell' access to their members. This brings in some funding but with the result that there is less need for us to visit the Archives and therefore fewer Archivists are needed. The 1921 census will be available in 2021 but then there is a gap until 2051 as the 1931 records were lost in a fire and there was no census in 1941.

A break for a delicious buffet lunch and time to look at the various 'trade' stands in attendance. My History, Chris Makepeace (Maps), Philip Jones (Memorial cards), UKBMD, Picture the Past, DCC CRO, FamilySearch, Notts FHS and M&L FHS. The trade stand and various family history related organisations had kindly donated prizes and or items for inclusion in the 'delegate' bags.

The next speaker was John Titford who presented an entertaining talk about "Barking up the wrong Tree" which he defined as "producing an excellent pedigree which turns out to be someone else's". He gave some examples and pointed out that it is worth looking at what else was going on in the year concerned. He advised us to always look for a burial as many children died young and parents sometimes used the same name for a later child.

Our final speaker- Elder Smith from the Church of Latter Day Saints and is from Salt Lake City in America, talked about the history of the FamilySearch.org site. He told us that their church started in collecting information in 1894 and how it progressed through microfiche and microfilm images to the current digital media. These are all stored underground in a specially designed store within the Granite Mountains. He finished with an example of how to use the search and upload facilities.

53% of those attending travelled under 30 miles and 81% within 50 miles. 9% came over 100 miles from Cumbria, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Bedfordshire, Oxon, Hertfordshire, London, Essex, Suffolk, Sussex, Scotland and Spain. Can I now claim that it's an INTERNATIONAL conference?

We had 94 from East Midlands, 46 from West Midlands, 63 from North West and 27 from elsewhere. The majority of those who came over 90 miles incorporated at least one overnight stay in the district and some even longer.

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. Now off to set up the 2015 event. Watch this space.