

S.H.S. Newsletter.

Dear Members,

Let me start by saying thank you to all who were able to attend the AGM. It was probably the best AGM we have had so far, thanks to the fact that we have two members whose birthdays coincide with the AGM dates. Happy birthday to Kay and our new member Gail. Thank you both for the contribution to the wine and snacks and for making the AGM evening most attractive. With 16 members able to be present and apologies from the rest.

We have pleasure to welcome another new member Caroline Leslie. We need to say little about Caroline as her little children are legendary in Sherington, I feel she must have the largest family it is possible to have, except for maybe Beatrice Potter. But Caroline is still young yet. I also think that we may have another set of Sherington notelets in the pipeline.

You will be relieved to know all of your committee members were re-elected, without any need for new volunteers!!!!

Being that family history has become the fastest growing leisure activity in the country at this time, two of our members volunteered to talk briefly on the subject after the AGM business was finished.. A subject that can bore non-believers to distraction. A word here, our theme for the stand at the village fete this year, will be *"Who Do You Think Your Ancestors Were"* obviously family history orientated. So if any of you Sheringtonians have some thing to add to our theme please let us (Committee) know.

Now a brief synopsis of the two talks:-

- Norman started by saying how important it was to get as much information from your immediate family members NOW!!!. Not tomorrow or next week DO IT NOW. The information from these relatives may be partial fiction and distorted with time and memory but it was usually based on fact. But if fact or fiction family anecdotes do add colour to the families' history and can be tempered with *"This is what I was told by...."*. It was about 2 years after Normans mother had died that he decided to start investigations for his family tree. That was his greatest mistake as his mother had a fantastic memory and could remember every little detail. He had one remaining aunt left, his mother's youngest sister, only 90 at that time, she was stone deaf, (a family thing) and he had to use his cousin, her son, to act as interpreter to obtain any information from this aunt. There were two old photographs in the family album, a man and a woman Norman thought these might be his paternal grandparents By a stroke of good fortune a distant cousin sent some other photos they arrived by post, on a Saturday morning, pictures of a wedding in 1901 and this confirmed the fact that these two people were in fact his grandparents. But they also raised other queries, that have not been resolved. An old change of address postcard found among his mother's papers gave an address of a cousin who had moved to Sheffield and was fortunately still at that address. This put him in touch with a relation in Hayes, Middx, this cousin led to a whole heap of relations in Wigan.
- And then there was the old boy he found in Harefield, he had never met this relation before who loaned Norman two photos of his maternal grandparents and then died before the

photos could be returned.

- It just illustrates that this family tree business needs to be done NOW, while you are still young enough to run about, you will get some knockbacks, people who do not answer your letters, phone calls never returned, etc. But that's family.
- Norman displayed his family tree, which showed 600 plus relatives. Research he said had become easier using the Internet and a new programme on the BBC called *'Who Do You Think You Are?'* had created great interest for any one and every one to start researching their family history.

Gail's Talk On Researching Family History

- Gail started by saying, *"Where do you go for the information to get you started?"* A question asked by any one who wants to research family history. There are all sorts of publications, local newspapers, parish registers, information on birth and death certificates, places such as the local studies centre at the MK library, local record offices the county records office in Aylesbury. The Northampton R.O. is in Weedon. Bedford has a good library for research. The biggest library is the Church of Latter Day Saints. There are lists giving info about cemeteries and peoples occupations. Also like Norman Gail could not stress too much, the importance of asking questions of family members, but she also gave a cautionary warning that people lie, but not necessarily deliberately. People do remember things and events differently.
- People who wrote information down could have made mistakes, either by misspelling or not writing down properly what they think they may have heard. This could be because of a local accent. Lots of your 18th C and 19th C relations would not have been able to read or write, so they would have relied on the official presiding at the time, Vicar, Registrar, census taker, etc to write down their particulars, if one came from Northants and one from Bucks with totally different accents, no wonder the spellings were a bit different.
- Gail circulated a photograph given to her by her mother of her maternal Grandfather John Jenks, Jinks, Jinx, Jints, Jincs, Jelks, (a name she found spelt differently on several occasions), one of 13 children, who lived in Devon. The photo was taken in 1883. In the photo was a child dressed in black, and a man, who was a stonemason who was smartly dressed.
- Gail finished her talk by giving an example of mispronunciation and misspelling of a girl's name, Elsie Dawn Hobbs was mistakenly written and pronounced *"Elsies door nobs"*. So remember, do try to speak clearly and check what is written.

Our next meeting will be on 12th April at 8pm in the village hall and will be a *"Byegones Evening"* masterminded by Philip Smith.

N.A.