

# Family History Group Visit to the Society of Genealogists

29th January 2019



Entrance to the Society

Last month our Family History Group visited the Society of Genealogists, which is situated on the edge of the Barbican in the City of London. We were very excited about our visit, as the Society houses many unique family history collections, and we were all hoping to uncover some new information for our family history research.

Upon arrival, having stored our coats and possessions in the locker room we were greeted, in the common room, by Else Churchill, the Society's head resident genealogist who outlined the tour she was about to take us on.

The tour started in the lower library which houses a bank of computers allowing free access to the major genealogical Internet sites and also the Society's internal intranet SOGNET. Else demonstrated how to search the catalogue and explained how we could access all the documents, books, microfiches and microfilms the Society holds for our research.

The lower library also contains the Societies enormous document collection donated by genealogists over the years. Here it is possible to request the surname you are interested in, and be given a large box containing anything from birth certificates, photographs and even private letters that have been given to the Society over the past 100 years or so.

The tour moved to the middle library which has the look of a traditional library with rows of shelving housing thousands and thousands of books. These books which are ordered by English County provide a great amount of family history information e.g. parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, transcripts of grave stone inscriptions, census indexes, poll books and much more that are not available on Internet sites like Ancestry or Find My Past. The idea is to search the catalogue on the computer and find perhaps the parish you are interested in, you then take the reference and go and find the book on the shelf and hopefully discover some information about your ancestors. In the middle library there are also books giving information on Wales, Scotland and the Channel Islands.

For the final stage of the tour we moved up to Upper Library, again laid out with traditional library shelving. These books can also be searched via the catalogue. The Upper Library contains information on Ireland, wills, marriage licences, apprenticeships records and the Armed Forces, to name but a few.

After our tour and a brief lunch break we were able to use the library to conduct our own research. Because of the vast array of information available many of us found it a little overwhelming especially at first, but I am happy to say we all got to grips with it and were able to gain further unique insights into our family histories. We all had a very enjoyable day and look forward to our next Family History Group outing. Our thanks go to Sue Meredith for organising the trip.

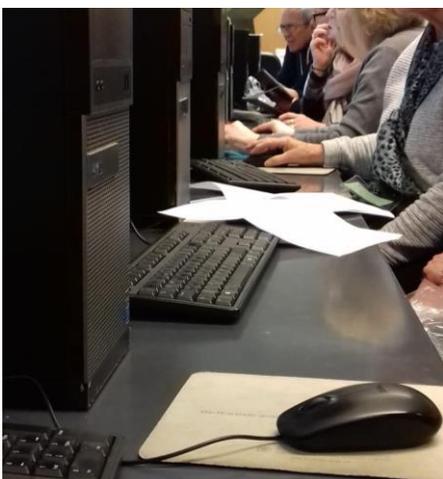
*Robert Clayton*



Middle library book collection



Listening to Else's talk in the Upper Library



U3A members searching the internet.