

Genealogy - July Report

We welcomed members of the Bishop Auckland u3a to the July meeting and we hope they will be permanent members of the Genealogy group. The meeting was held by Zoom and the topic was 'Tracing those elusive female ancestors'.

The group members had watched two online presentations on the subject before the meeting – one from RootsTech22 and one from FindMyPast – and discussed the points raised. It was interesting to contrast the American approach in the first presentation and the British approach in the second.

Both talks emphasised the need to target and organise all information available from as many sources as can be found, not just the stalwarts of census records, wills, church records (weak in the USA), and civil registration (again weak in the USA before Social Security records) but also newspapers (not just obituaries), land records, tax records etc. North Americans are well advised to consult town directories while UK Rate Books are under-utilised.

Targeting means searching for information where you might expect to find it both as regards geography and time period. This makes the search process more efficient and is the only practical process once you are looking for information not (yet) available online. As a picture builds up of the ancestor – using a timeline was recommended – the search can be focussed even further.

An American technique new to many in our group is the FAN group; identify as many **F**riends, **A**ssociates and **N**eighbours as possible and research them as well for clues to your ancestor.

In August the topic will be "Using the Census". The meeting will be in person at 2pm on August 4th in the Dales Room at Enterprise House on the Harmire Estate in Barnard Castle. A one-hour tutorial will be followed by a one hour practical session.

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