

Family History Interest Group – March Report

Pam Taylor gave “An Introduction to DNA and Family History Research”.

I find the subject mind-bending, but a greatly simplified summary follows:

Every cell in our body contains a copy of the 23 pairs of chromosomes which are made up of Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). The original pair are formed at conception, half from the father and half from the mother. The other half of the father's DNA and the mother's DNA is not passed on. This has happened at every past generation so I have inherited $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ of my DNA from each great, great, great grandparent – who would have been born around 1800. Any other descendant of that GGG grandparent will also have inherited DNA in the same manner so I and my fourth cousin on that family line may have matching DNA of around $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ of our total DNA. Conversely if I and some other DNA tester have matching DNA (albeit a partial match) we MUST have a common ancestor. How large that match is indicates how close is our common ancestor. We can then start using conventional genealogy to find out how we are related; clues such as surnames and locations provide short cuts. If both testers have good and large family trees the search can be quite brief so if you do have a DNA test, PLEASE connect it to as good a family tree as you can provide.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 10th of April at 13:30 in the Dales Room at Enterprise House. It will start with a 1 hour talk from RootsTech2025 “Learn Genealogy Faster and Easier with Artificial Intelligence” followed by coffee/tea and a one-hour discussion. May's subject will be on using FreeReg to find records in Church Registers.

Alan Swindale