

Meeting Report – March 2023

'Transport'

Seven group members were keen to talk about their ancestors' occupations and circumstances.

Mark presented George B., most of his life as a Coachman, dealing with managing the stables of 'great houses', particularly Lincolnshire. Ended his days running a hotel in Louth. The loose end – where was he buried, and with whom, first or second wife?

Tricia chose Joseph William F., living south of the river, became a 'Carman' i.e. tramcar driver, Brixton area. He lived through transitions from horse drawn to electric (1903 in London) and finally became a Porter (that is, house removals) died 1922.

Allan spoke on behalf of Christine who was unable to attend. Great uncle Hugh R. born 1871 near Holyhead, went to sea, worked on passenger vessels – so there are only scant census records – became the hero when his ship the 'Republic' sank after collision with MV Florida off New England, then made tragic headlines in 1912 when he was one of the 1,500 who died when 'Titanic' went down, his photo and obituary featured in the Liverpool Echo and Liverpool Daily Post as, by then, his adopted home was Bootle.

Dot showed us grandfather Harry H. of Darwen, whose father rose from factory floor to manager of a haulage company, moving with the times as horses made way for mechanical transport, expanding into a taxi business, becoming a partner in two other companies, ending his days in Keswick and died in 1950.

Karen and her sister had discovered a mystery in their mother's loft as they were emptying the house after her death – a framed photograph of HMS Warspite, the longest serving British warship in the 20th century. They investigated. To their surprise they found that grandfather Albert P. joined up aged 17 in 1917 and travelled the world with the Royal Marines, as based in Plymouth, and served on Warspite for several years.

Jane's grandparents became missionaries, sailing out to Gold Coast (now Ghana) and travelling in surprising style, first class, dressing for dinner, her research into passenger lists from 1878 to 1960 showing their to-ing and fro-ing, including visits to Cameroon.

Margaret told us about Harry E. whose life with horses and haulage started at the Bear Inn, a coaching inn in Essex. Married granny, moved to East Ham, worked for a landlord with stables, was a coachman, taking brides to their weddings and the deceased to their funerals, the wedding car or hearse being decorated accordingly, by granny and her sense of design and decoration. Margaret's parents' wedding photo shows the stable yard in the background. Harry suffered kick injuries over the years, so moved over onto diesel powered buses, out of East Ham bus depot. He died soon after their Diamond Wedding in 1960.