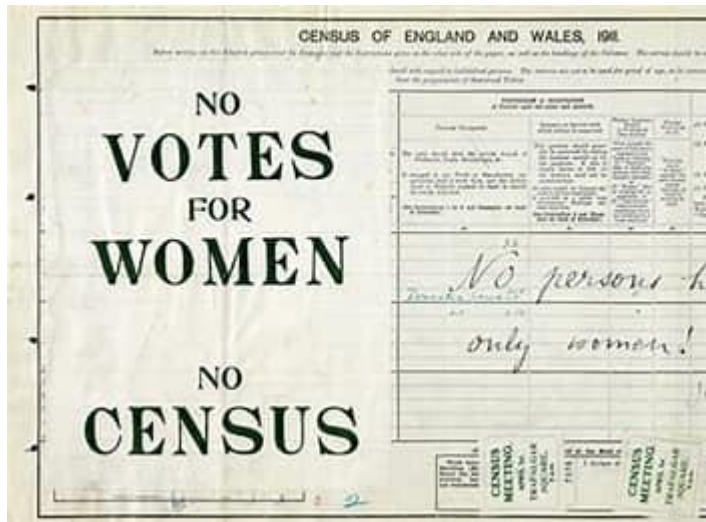


Meeting Report 18th March 2025

The meeting opened with Mary G introducing us to Colin Evans' new book 'The Knutsford Suffragists', to be launched on 12th April by the author at the Heritage Centre. Mary read us a taster, reading from the opening pages featuring a polite (but firm) confrontation between a Census Enumerator and a family whose objective was to seek official recognition of the inequality of the disenfranchisement of women at the time of the 1911 census. Civil disobedience at its most genteel.



'Ella Blackwell Weston Foster'

The meeting continued with Tom W's maiden speech, and an excellent one it was too. Amply illustrated and documented, followed by a great Show and Tell hands on experience, with Great war medals, memorials and more, on display. He presented the fascinating life story of his paternal grandmother, whom he knew as a child. Her life started in Buxton, but moved on to Toronto, sailing on the SS Dominion to Portland, Maine. Ella spent the Great War in Canada, returning in 1920. Her brothers Herbert and Harry had joined up for King and Country, both laying down their lives within weeks of each other in 1917, in separate areas of the Front, just 25 miles apart. Ella became a court stenographer in 1920, and married Thomas Walter Weston in 1926, in Buxton. Their families had been close neighbours. Our Tom and Fiona took on the task of identifying and restoring Walter's grave, learning some tricks from a professional, along the way. After Walter's death, Ella married again, to Sydney Foster, in 1963. Tom's shared a birthday with his grandmother, and we were treated to a photograph of the little scamp at his 5th birthday party, with granny. Lovely! In the discussions that followed, we learned that the artist Alfred Munnings painted scenes from the Great War featuring the Canadian Horse Regiment. Tom recommended Forces War Records via Ancestry in pursuit of military ancestors from that era.

The meeting was rounded off with Roger's feature of A Quaker Marriage from 1764, in Scarborough. The happy couple are Roger's four times great grandparents. It was his (Richard Hillary's) 61st birthday. His bride Hannah Wynn was 27. Bachelor and spinster. Hannah Hillary was safely delivered of six children over the next few years, one of whom, Richard junior, inherited a Jamaican sugar plantation along with its labour force of slaves.

These days, the estate produces Adelphi rum, which is worth trying, apparently. The inheritance came via Isaac Lascelles Wynn, Hannah's brother, also a Quaker. No moral maze in those days, seemingly. Indeed, the estate was viewed as progressive because it had a school, mainly to instruct the slaves in good Christian values. Seriously? Back to that marriage ceremony. The whole thing was recorded verbatim, to avoid any challenge to its legality, and there were 45 witnesses who put their name on the document, 17 of whom were women. In addition, there were the signatures of 11 family members! They obviously had me in mind when it came to facilitating genealogical research.

