

## Meeting Report 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025

Judy P brought along a selection of publications for people to borrow or keep. She also showed her remarkable family tree, drawn up by her father, covering not only ancestors but all their siblings too. Not only that, a timeline of social, political and economic events of the time, to give the families context in each era. And all before the advent of online research. Truly extraordinary.

Jenny C provided us with another of her finely researched stories about Knutsford folk, this one being the somewhat overshadowed figure of **Mary Ethel Watt, Her Life and Times**. Mary Ethel nee Armitage was the wife (eventually) of the more celebrated Richard Harding Watt, who did so much for our built townscape. Ethel's life was truly exceptional. She was well travelled, she was courted by RHW and refused his proposal of marriage in 1882. She became one of Cheshire first women magistrates, after a gruelling battle against The Establishment and male bigotry. A Suffragist during those campaigning years, she put her passion into just causes, keeping RH Watt waiting 24 years before accepting his hand in marriage, in 1906. She was 45, he 63. They honeymooned in the Italian Lakes, then lived at The Croft, Legh Road. After his sudden and accidental death in 1913, she continued her remarkable fight to be recognised as equal. In 1919, seven women became JPs in Great Britain. 172 more were added to the list in July 1920 and Mary Ethel Watt was appointed in October 1920. She was chief beneficiary of Richard's estate, and channelled her wealth into good causes, e.g. the War Relief Committee, the Hospital Supply Depot in Knutsford. She died in 1941 in her 80<sup>th</sup> year, whilst staying at the Buckingham Hotel in Buxton.

Roger B offered a contribution about **The Kings of Chautauqua**. Not regal kings, just a family from Bradford making it, modestly, in upstate New York, a family called King. Joseph William King was Roger's granny's cousin, brought up by Aunt Woolford along with two of JWK's siblings, and granny Brown herself, in Wetherby. JWK found work in a Bradford woollen mill and became a dyer, a skilled occupation. Along comes William Broadhead, born in nearby Thornton (baptised in the same year – 1820 – as Anne Bronte), a man with a mission. To become the leading supplier of worsted in the U.S. Encouraged to visit Thornton by his wife and daughter, they make the journey from Jamestown New York to Bradford England in 1843. Bradford's star is rising, it's big in the finished wool trade, lots of civic pride and good times. William Broadhead wants some of that, so he buys mill machinery and recruits people who can operate them. Joseph William King is one of them. This explains how JWK managed to travel so far, with wife and five young children, to a new life on the shores of Lake Erie. He had a job offer, the opportunity of a lifetime. JWK and his wife Clara came back to England in 1924 to visit the folks from Wetherby who by then were settled in Starbeck. There's a family photo to prove it. The émigré couple returned once more, in 1933, a sentimental visit brought about by the terminal illness of granny Brown's cousin Emily Matilda, JWK's sister, one of the siblings brought up by Aunt Woolford. It must have been an emotional reunion.