

Open Day and Family History Fair 2018

Taking the Past into the Future

by Linda Dart

On Saturday, 3rd Nov, the Society opened the doors at Woking Leisure Centre to waiting visitors for it's annual Open Day.

Visitors reported that they were pleased to see the return of other Family History Societies, Local History Groups and popular commercial companies. A slight tweak to the layout in the Hall enabled visitors to the Leisure centre to make their way more easily around the hall.



Woking Mayor Cllr. Will Forster and Mayoress Hannah Thompson joined visitors in the morning and were shown around the Hall by our President, Ray Anstis, and Executive Committee Member, Maura Sellars.



Stopping by the West Surrey Bookstall with Jean Follett, Bookstall Manager

Two new exhibitors this year were The Royal College of Nursing Archives and Sandra Danby, a local author; both commented on how successful the day had been for them. The Society's Research Desks were able to help both new and experienced Family History researchers with their journeys into their ancestors' personal histories. Captain Bandy, Army Research, said it had been one of his busiest days with lots of queries about World War One military ancestors.

Captain Bandy's display of Military Uniforms



This year is also an important Centenary for Woman's Suffrage; three ladies dressed in costumes of the era. One of the free talks, "The March of the Women; Surrey's road to the Vote", was about Surrey women and the part they played.



Jane Lewis, Jenny Mukerji and Holly Parsons

The free talks are always popular and this year's talks in Studio 3 were not an exception, with record numbers of attendees at the two afternoon talks – Monumental Inscriptions and Irish Research.

An event of this nature relies heavily on volunteers to make it such a success. This year we had a lot of new people coming forward to help out, both with setting up the hall on the evening before the Open day and helping on the stands during the day. Comments such as “I really enjoyed today and look forward to the next one” were noted on the day.

A very big thank you to everyone who helped out either on setting up the hall, working on the help desks or with behind the scenes administration.

Photographs by Maura Sellars and Richard Weatherhead