

Censuses and the 1939 Register

The first full meeting of the year took place on Thursday 1st Feb at Gainsborough House Hotel.

After the usual Safety Notices and update on Records released online, the twenty present enjoyed two presentations on access and how to get the most out of the Censuses, and also the 1939 Register.

In the first talk Beryl Buckley explained the changing reasons behind the censuses and used examples from each to illustrate the different layout and content available, chronologically from 1841 onwards. We learned about the enumerators role, methods of recording ages and locations, and the errors in transcription. Then, by starting with the latest Census (1911), she investigated her ancestor, Reuben's family and life story, working backwards decade by decade to 1841, to build up a credible picture of her ancestor and his relatives, their movements and lifestyle. We discussed the importance of viewing original documents and recording our sources. We considered a way we can use missing information effectively, checking validity, and attention to detail.

After coffee break, the second talk from Jackie Cotterel introduced the 1939 registration, its origins, its value and limitations. We discussed how to access and interpret the record online by subscription or public access (the Hive or The National Archives), the next trip being in March.