



KENILWORTH FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Midlands Ancestors: Kenilworth & District Branch

Committee's Review of the Year 2020/21 To be presented by circulation to members

No Annual Business Meeting [ABM] was held in 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. In accordance with the minutes of the Midlands Ancestors' [MA] meeting on 13 January 2021, which reads, "*Local Groups: In line with Charity's Commission recommendations, the Trustees are advising local Groups that they can carry on without having an AGM/BGM [ABM] as long as their decision is documented. Each Group can make the decision as to whether their accounts are audited, but their figures should be submitted to the Treasurer before the end of January.*", The Kenilworth Branch Committee has made the decision not to hold an ABM in 2021. This report is a summary of the Branch's activities since its last ABM.

2019/20

At the 2019 ABM the Committee was re-elected en-bloc and will continue to serve the Society as a group, with no Chairman, but sharing roles and meeting regularly. The Committee is: Helen Eldridge (Contact/Publicity), Nick Parker (Research), Lesley Plant (Programme Secretary) and Chris Sykes (Treasurer).

After the ABM was closed, Jackie Cotterill and Caroline Mason, Secretary and Librarian at MA, at the Birmingham & Midland Institute in Birmingham [BMI], told us how MA can support us, and about the resources available to us both at the BMI and via the members' online website. In June Vanessa Morgan spoke to us about **Kenilworth Rogues and Villains** and in July we had our first workshop session with Jacqui Kirk, which was a first chance for Jacqui to meet the group, when she gave us some tips about presenting research. This was also our summer social. In September we had hoped to have a talk from a probate researcher, but the speaker was unable to attend, instead Nick Booker told us **The Story of James Cholmeley Russell**, a London-born barrister, expert on family law, financier, property developer and railway entrepreneur. In October our own Lynn Hockton and Lesley Plant spoke to us about the **Civil War Loss Accounts Project** that they had been working on. In November Barbara Griffiths gave a very enlightening talk about **DNA and Family History Research**. In December Jacqui Kirk returned to facilitate a workshop on **Storytelling** with a view to developing members' projects to write up their research in an engaging way for their family to keep. In January 2020 Paul Baker spoke to us about **The Lost Railway** and the efforts of the townspeople of Henley-in-Arden to bring the railway to their town. In February we had a most entertaining talk from Dr Mike Haynes, **Getting Rid of the Stink** and the public health revolution and how the introduction of clean water helped rid us of some unpleasant diseases. In March Jacqui Kirk returned again to facilitate another **Sharing Our Stories** workshop.

The March 2020 meeting was the last face-to-face Branch event, as the first Coronavirus lockdown came into force.

During 2019/20 the Committee worked on the 2021 Programme and continued to work to engage new members, exhibiting at the Warwick Words History Fair in October 2019 and Kenilworth Community in Action in February 2020. The use of several Members' evenings spread through the year have helped to conserve the speakers' budget and with the help of Jacqui Kirk a new series of workshops was begun.

During 2019/20 Phil Lamb of MA was keen to get all Branches to have a more pro-active involvement with the MA website and Committee Member, Helen Eldridge, was given Editor rights to the Calendar and Kenilworth Branch section of the website. A communications issue had grown out of not being able to communicate effectively at short notice about cancelled talks, so it was hoped that by giving the Branch access to its own information on the central website, this would be resolved.

Sadly, the Coronavirus lockdown had brought a sudden halt to meetings, but the Programme Secretary, Lesley, worked tirelessly throughout the varying restrictions to engage with our speakers

and most were re-booked for the 2021 Programme. The Branch was also fortunate to be included in Jacqui Kirk's circulation list for her weekly Coronavirus Newsletter, containing various articles and excellent tips, which began on 1 April 2020 and she continued until the end of March 2021.

2020/21

The Committee followed the guidelines set out by MA and has not been able to hold physical meetings. Through the circulation of Jacqui's newsletter, the Committee was able to keep in touch with the regular Kenilworth Members and gauge the need for online meetings.

MA ran its first online event in May 2020 and by September the Bromsgrove Branch ran its first online event. Our October 2020 meeting speaker was to be Jacqui Kirk, who was going to speak about her experiences as a professional genealogist (pro-gen), but that meeting was cancelled along with all physical meetings. Jacqui offered to deliver her talk the next month via Zoom, which required Zoom access and Lesley explored the idea with Phil Lamb of MA, who was behind their online events and became an MA Zoom Licence Holder, enabling her to facilitate Committee meetings and Branch meetings.

After a few teething problems, the Committee first met in October and has continued to Zoom between branch meetings. In November the Zoom talk **Jacqui Kirk: Roots Investigator**, being an online event, was open to all MA Members and promoted on its website, which resulted in an attendance of over 50 people.

In December the Committee decided to try a 'private' group meeting for its Christmas Social and invited Members to a Zoom meeting and to bring along a glass of wine and mince pie. As a point of discussion, it was suggested that we talk about what research we had got done during lockdown and it was interesting to hear.

The 2021 Programme, published in November, was mostly populated by postponed talks from 2020. Due to ongoing restrictions, the Committee decided to adopt a meeting-by-meeting policy of discussing with the speaker whether they would like to give their talk via Zoom or postpone, if restrictions are still in place. The speaker for January 2021 opted to postpone, so the January meeting was another Members' evening and, despite having two such meetings in a row, we found plenty to talk about. Our February speaker, Mary Bodfish, chose to give her talk online and **The Baby in the Locket** was again advertised on the MA website and well attended by 57 people. In March the scheduled Members' meeting went ahead with a theme of Censuses.

The Committee would like to thank our speakers for their understanding throughout this difficult time, especially those who have agreed to reschedule, sometimes more than once.

The Committee would like to especially thank Jacqui Kirk, whose efforts to produce the Coronavirus Newsletter every week gave the Committee a chance to keep in touch with our regular members that we otherwise would not have had. She has also provided guidance for Members on using Zoom and given a massive choice of online talks, etc.

Helen Eldridge
Contact/Publicity

Treasurers Report for the year ended 31st December, 2020

The profit and loss report is below and compares this year with the previous year.


I can report that the branch is in a reasonable financial position, although there is a steady decline in our bank balance due to losses in income.

We thank the MA Executive committee for refunding room hire but there was no general grant this year. A finance meeting this month may look at support of branches. Phil Lamb is considering refunding speaker fees for virtual meetings where it is open to all MA members and is a topic of general interest.

Donations at the door remain an important source of income. However, with few physical meetings during the pandemic, this was not available, and meetings that we were able to hold showed falling attendance. In addition, we still have to pay for speakers who give virtual talks.

The committee thanks you all for your continued support.

Chris Sykes
Honorary Treasurer
March 2021

Midland Ancestors (MA)	Kenilworth & District Branch	
Income Expenditure Statement	Year ended 31 December 2020	
	2020	2019
Income		
MA Room Hire Funding 2019	£0	£389
MA Room Hire Funding 2020	£90	£0
MA Grant	£0	£250
Donations (members & visitors)	£49	£169
Sale of Memory Sticks	£0	£3
Total	<u>£139</u>	<u>£811</u>
Expenditure		
Room Hire	£90	£389
Speakers	£170	£365
Newsletter & Printing	£28	£37
Refreshments & Consumables	£7	£46
Stationery	£0	£30
Purchase of projector and accessories	£0	£0
Purchase of Memory Sticks	£0	£25
Other Items	£0	£12
Less un-presented cheque	-£40	£0
Total	<u>£255</u>	<u>£904</u>
Opening Bank Balance	£2,006	£2,099
Net Income/ (Expenditure)	<u>-£116</u>	<u>-£93</u>
Closing Bank Balance	£1,890	£2,006
Notes		
Approved	Examined	
C.J.Sykes		Date 3/1/21