

Merry Christmas

All of us here at Oswestry Family & Local History Group would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your enquiries and the information you have sent us throughout the year.

2016 started off for us on a very sad note, following the death of our group leader Tony Harrison last Christmas; but we were all determined to see the group continue as Tony would have wished and it has certainly been a very busy year for us.

Thanks to you all we have been kept busy answering many interesting questions. The card index to births, marriages and deaths in the local newspapers has finally been completed and the digitisation of newspapers currently held in paper format is continuing. There have been many new additions to our website, including more photographs and information on soldiers who served during the Great War. Another project to produce information on past Burgesses of the town is nearing completion and should appear on our website early in 2017. We have also moved on to several new projects researching breweries, schools, local houses and hospitals in the Oswestry area. During Oswestry's Heritage Week, one of our members also gave a fascinating talk to visitors about what it would have been like to walk down Church Street in Oswestry at the beginning of the 20th century.

This year has also seen us embark on an attempt to raise funds to ensure future access to our wonderful newspaper collection and last month we enjoyed a fun evening in Oswestry Library when we invited along 4 local people, including the Town Mayor Paul Milner, to reveal their family histories in our own version of Who Do You Think You Are? At present our newspapers are stored on microfilm but the machines we use are very old and we often experience problems with them. We initially hoped to raise sufficient funds to buy a new machine but this now appears to be beyond our means, so we are now looking at the possibility of re-digitising the films into pdf format. We must at all costs preserve this wonderful source of political, social and family history not just for our use, but for the many researchers who will come after us. If you feel able to help us financially in this project, we would be extremely grateful.

Finally, it only remains for us to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year. Let us hope that in 2017 you will be able to break down some of those brick walls and find even more ancestors. We look forward to hearing from you.

Pam Willing