

TOUCHING THE PAST.

Helping people with learning disabilities to connect with their local community.

Community Futures led by Martin Chittell, the Sevenoaks Library and Museum and NWKFHS formed a partnership to deliver a series of family history workshops funded by The Heritage Lottery Fund called *Touching the Past*. The aim of the project was to make family history accessible to as wide a group as possible. To begin Martin showed how to trace the Family Tree of the Queen. Afterwards with the help of the volunteers the researchers started to build their own family tree using what they already knew. The resources of the library including Ancestry, Photographs and Certificates as well as heirlooms made the past come alive.

Together with the volunteers the researchers created a portfolio to record their past and share their stories.

The project finished in April with an evening buffet for the researchers and their families, carers and volunteers. Nick Barrett the President of the Federation of Family History Societies was the guest of honour and shared stories about his life, and experiences on the "Who Do You think You Are" programme, which the audience enjoyed immensely. David Cufley President of North West Kent Family History Society talked about how important it was to make connections. The panel of Emily Knight; one of the students; Nick and David answered questions from the audience on starting family history research.

The evening ended with the Society Volunteers being presented with a plaque from *Community Futures* acknowledging their help and advice. Everyone agreed that it had been a pleasant and rewarding experience becoming involved with a part of the community that they would not normally meet.



The panel left to right David Cufley, Emily Knight and Nick Barrett.