History 1 Group Report 2026

This group has now been running for 18 years, and although the members have changed over those years, there are still some who have been in the group since the beginning (including the Group Leader).

We choose a topic, and then each research an aspect of the topic, and present a paper to the rest of the group. This proves to be very successful, and although some members were anxious about presenting, they are all now quite used to it, and at a recent meeting, one of the group commented that he gets the most enjoyment out of the research.

This year, our topics have been Consorts (The wife or husband of a Monarch - although one of the group stretched the interpretation of "consort" quite a lot and represented a fascinating paper on Emma Hamilton. She might not have been the wife of a monarch, but she certainly "consorted"! We also heard about some very unusual consorts, and in at least two cases nobody in the group had heard of them!

Marine disasters. Although some members of the group were not thrilled with this choice of topic, they all produced some fascinating papers. Interestingly, this topic was stimulated by a paper that one of the new group members presented on the history of the shipping forecast. Robert Fitzroy was actually a local lad, and he is buried in South Norwood, quite close to the spot where Pickles the dog found the list world cup in 1966. 5 of the group members decided to try to find it - which we did! There was a second local connection which was uncovered studying this topic. It seems that the radio operator, who bravely continued to send out distress messages from the doomed Titanic was from Surrey, and there is a memorial park to him.

In the New year, (after our traditional Christmas party) we start our next topic, which is "Borders".

Mike Bridgen
Group Leader
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