American genealogist tracks down his family roots in local villages

By Matt Jackson

A leading genealogist from the United States has tracked his own family history and discovered links to Brereton and Holmes Chapel.

David Lambert, chief genealogist from the New England Historic Genealogical Society, based in Boston, Massachusetts, has been tracing his family tree with the help of Rodger Burgess, from the Holmes Chapel University of the Third Age (U3A).

A keen genealogist, Mr Lambert has worked in the field for more than 20 years and first took up a post at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in 1993.

Mr Lambert found his family originated from Cheshire, with links to Brereton, where some of his distant relatives are buried at St Oswald’s Church, as well as in Holmes Chapel and Willaston.

His family crossed the Atlantic and moved to Canada more than a century ago.

Having arrived in the UK last week, Mr Lambert, an expert in DNA research and military history, attended the Who Do You Think You Are? Live conference in Birmingham before heading to Brereton on Saturday looking for his ancestors.

Mr Burgess said: “It went very well. Mr Lambert came over and was able to track down his great-grandparents, great-uncles and then I was able to show him around the graveyard. He was able to locate further relatives of his and traced them back to the 18th century.

“We had another family once come across from America and they are visiting again later this year. Mr Lambert will now be helping me trace my family.”

Mr Lambert’s great-grandfather John George Lea was born in 1876, in Blackenhall, the son of dairy farmers who lost most of their herd to foot and mouth disease.

Mr Lea left England in 1910, heading to Toronto, Canada, before being joined by his family a year later. In 1915, Mr Lea enlisted into the 124th Canadian Overseas Battalion and, after completing his training in Ontario, joined the SS Cameronia that arrived in Liverpool during World War One.

Mr Lambert at the grave of his great grandfather George Wilkinson who died in 1877. (“Chronicle” photo. 1614b/16).

Mr Burgess (left), joint leader of the Holmes Chapel U3A family history group, with Mr Lambert, chief genealogist of the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston. (“Chronicle” photo. 1614a/16).