

HERITAGE CIRCLE

Geoffrey Robinson – When Buffalo Bill came to East Anglia

The speaker at the January meeting of the Heritage Circle was Geoffrey Robinson, his subject was When Buffalo Bill came to East Anglia. William Frederick Cody was born in 1846. His early life was spent carrying messages along the wagon trains, and hunting buffalo. In 1866 he married Louis Frederichi, but mostly left her to go hunting. The legend of Buffalo Bill was born in 1869 when he joined Wild Bill Hitchcock and Nat Buntline touring with a temperance show. Cody then formed his own theatre group, and produced blood and thunder dramas. He then progressed to outdoor shows, hiring Native Indians and cowboys performing Rodeos

In 1903 Buffalo Bill brought his show to East Anglia, performing at Great Yarmouth and Bramford, near Ipswich. He employed 700 people. He treated them well, and all received three hot meals a day. The shows were large with arenas and tented areas which seated 1000 people, who paid between 1 and 5/-. The show had black cavalry members, Asian and Cossack riders, and the female sharpshooter Annie Oakley. Three trains transported the show, which could be packed up and transported to its next destination in an hour. Cody was the most recognised Celebrity in the world. In 1908 a black and white film of him was made. By 1917 Cody was heavily in debt. He died that year. He had a presidential style funeral, with hundreds filing past his coffin. He was buried on Look Out Mountain in Denver, Colorado.

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