

Western Daily Press



... and Doug's
found a world
full of Burgums

When Doug Burgum looked in a hotel directory for other Burgums he had no idea it would result in one of the biggest family reunions every seen. But 15 years later, Doug stood at his home in Blakeney among more than a hundred members of his extended family, many of whom he had never met.

His curiosity about his family history has led him to search for Burgums all over the world and now, aided by his wife Vicky and sons Jason, 12, and Ashley, 15, he runs the global Burgum Family History Society.

Doug, an airline pilot, said: "I started to contact some of them by letter but the response I was getting was too much to cope with so I decided to found the society and bring out a newsletter and communicate that way."



The hard work paid off and two busloads of Burgums descended on the Forest of Dean at the weekend to celebrate their mutual history. Family members from Sydney in Australia met others from Florida and California. Doug said: "Going into it I was concerned about how well it was going to go. But I have been taken aback by how successful it has been and everyone has gelled and developed new friendships. At the start of the weekend people were sitting in their own tight-knit groups but by the end people were mixing with each other really well. Everyone has said they have developed a new sense of family and their own identity."

During the weekend buses took the family on a tour of the Forest, where they were able to see where their ancestors had lived and died. Some saw the graves of their grandparents and great-grandparents for the first time. And they visited the Dean Heritage Centre in Soudley, where Doug has prepared an exhibition detailing the Burgum family history.

With all the family congregating at his house yesterday for the last time, Doug was sure they would keep in touch. He said: "We are all determined to search out other Burgums all over the world and continue the good work we have done already. We will be keeping in touch." The exhibition of the Burgum family tree at the Dean Heritage Centre will run until August 7.