

# LoveLeisure | Freetime

## Traveller discovers a long

**ROBIN Bayley set out to follow in his great-grandfather's footsteps and uncovered a family secret. SIOBHAN MILLAR speaks to the author, who is set to appear at next month's Words by the Water festival in Keswick**

**W**HEN Robin Bayley set out on a trip to Latin America to find out the truth behind childhood stories about his great grandfather he discovered an unexpected but incredible legacy.

Robin was born against the backdrop of the north Yorkshire moors and grew up in Sheffield. After leaving college, he moved to London where he worked in advertising and children's television.

As a boy, he had always been fascinated by his grandmother's stories of his great grandfather Arthur (or Arturo) Greenhalgh's journey through the Americas.

The tales included brushes with bandits, exciting adventures and even a role in the Mexican Revolution.

The legends were to pave the way for Robin's own journey through the USA, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico to find out what really happened a century before.

He says: "My original motivation for the journey were the stories that I had heard during my childhood. In my mid-20s I discovered an old suitcase belonging to my great grandfather.

"This coincided with an offer to take voluntary redundancy from my job. I was inspired and it gave life to a hunch. I was certain that there was something to be found."

It seems that fate had a hand in deciding that Robin was to retrace Arturo's steps. So it was that in the early 1990s Robin sold his flat and set off across the Atlantic.

He explains: "I had no idea where I was going. I knew that my great grandfather lived and worked in a small town. I found out what he did for a living and went from there. It was a case of luck and chance.

"I found someone in a tourism office that spoke English – though I do speak Spanish as well – who knew of the mill that I was trying to find and pointed me in the right direction."

The journey wasn't always so smooth. When he first set out to Latin America, Robin and his family expected that he may find the places where Arturo lived and worked, but little more.

At the most, it was expected that he would find the family of a relative through marriage who had emigrated.

As anyone who has attempted to find information about their ancestors will be aware, the process can be arduous and frustrating. Robin's story was no exception: "I came across a lot of dead ends. But I never doubted that there was something there and I always knew that what I was doing was worthwhile.

"It was a relationship between intuition and destiny. I only had to go at the right time.

"If I had gone at a different time, and spoken to different people, I might not have found anything."



**GREETINGS:** Robin Bayley with some of his long lost Mexican relatives

## Festival celebrates its 10th anniversary

**T**HE 10th Words by the Water festival at the Theatre by the Lake in Keswick, runs from March 4 to 13 this year.

This special 10th anniversary festival promises to be bigger and better than ever with some big-name guests attending including Maureen Lipman, Raymond Blanc, Melvyn Bragg, Roy Hattersley, Peter Snow and Michael Buerk, to name just a few of over 100 speakers.

Also for the first time this year Sky Arts will record two editions of *The Book Show* at the festival, both presented by Mariella Frostrup.

### Some Highlights:

- Raymond Blanc  
Kitchen Secrets  
Friday March 4, 5.30pm.
- Melvyn Bragg

Back Then – Remembrance of Times Past in Wigton

Saturday March 5, 10.30am.

● Lesley Garrett

Amazing Grace and Amazing Lesley Garrett

– interviewed by Melvyn Bragg

Saturday March 5, 6pm.

● Maureen Lipman

A Long Shelf-Life

Sunday March 6, 2pm.

● Brian Moore

On and Off the Pitch

Monday March 7, 7.30pm.

● Peter Snow

To War With Wellington

Tuesday March 8, 2.30pm.

● Justine Picardie

Coco Chanel: The Legend and The Life

Wednesday March 9, 7pm.

● Roy Hattersley  
David Lloyd George – The Great Outsider  
Thursday March 10, 2.30pm.

● Joanna Trollope

Daughters-in-Law

Friday March 11, 7.30pm.

● Broadcast: *The Book Show* with Mariella Frostrup

Television recordings for sky ARTS HD

Saturday March 12, 9.40am - 11am.

● Broadcast: *The Book Show* with Mariella Frostrup

Saturday March 12, 12.10pm - 1.30pm.

● Michael Buerk

The Whole World – Follow-on Discussion

Sunday March 13, 3.45pm.

For a full programme of events at the festival and ticket prices, visit [www.theatrebythelake.co.uk](http://www.theatrebythelake.co.uk).

What he found when he finally arrived in a small village near Guadalajara, Mexico, is so unbelievable that you simply couldn't make it up.

He discovered that, while living in the village, his great grandfather Arturo had met a partner and fathered an illegitimate daughter.

The children of this union had

multiplied into a family that included 300 people.

And he was told that, amazingly, he shared the surname "Greenhalgh" with all of the village's residents!

The descendants of Arturo believed that he had perished on the *Titanic* while trying to return to them, and they remembered him affectionately.

Robin says: "They had pictures of him and some of his possessions, such as his cane and silver cane head. They remembered him through bits of his history.

"It was up to me to unite them with their heritage and it gave me great joy.

"I was accepted by them because of the stories they had been told about my great grandfather. He was fondly remembered

**Have you discovered any long-lost relatives? Leave your comments at**

# lost family in Mexico

## Out&About



ULVERSTON will be playing its part in raising awareness of a global issue when Fairtrade Fortnight begins on February 26.

The event starts with a coffee morning at Coronation Hall with raffle prizes donated from local businesses.

The aim of this year's event is to highlight the injustice of trade against farmers in Africa and Asia, particularly the cotton trade. Retail companies are competitive and press for lower prices for the farmers' produce. The European Union subsidises European cotton growers; this means that cotton farmers from around the world now get a lower price for their goods than they did 20 years ago.

Mary Searle Chatterjee says: "The aim of Fairtrade Fortnight this year is to increase awareness of the value of supporting Fairtrade products by buying them where possible and requesting that shopkeepers stock them, and the importance of lobbying our Members of the European Parliament before the end of March when the consultation period ends for the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy that upholds the unfair subsidies. Unfair trade nullifies the effects of aid."

Ulverston is a Fairtrade town, and ethical produce is available from Booths, the Co-op, Gillam's, Appleseds, Boots, Libra and The Deli.

Fairtrade drinks and snacks are available at several eateries in the town including The World Peace Cafe, the Coronation Hall and Natterjack's Cafe at Sefton House.

To highlight Fairtrade Fortnight, Boots will be stocking a display of Fairtrade creams and gels. There will be a book display at Oxfam and Appleseds, the Cooperative and Gillam's will have special displays.

For more information about Fairtrade and how it benefits people around the world, visit [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)



TRAVELLER: Robin Bayley's great grandfather Arthur Greenhalgh



DISCOVERY: Robin Bayley follows in the footsteps of his great grandfather Arturo



GUEST: Melvyn Bragg

the long lost relatives to his British family, particularly his grandmother: "I played it very carefully at first by showing her photographs and telling stories. My grandmother showed enormous courage. She found it hard to believe as she said that her father had been so proper."

Robin's grandmother finally visited her Mexican relatives at the age of 90 and she was greeted with a mariachi fanfare.

Robin began to write the story of his incredible journey in 2004. Before he began to recount the story, he once again retraced Arturo's footsteps to acquaint himself with the details.

It took five years to get everything that he had experienced on to paper, and the resulting book *The Mango Orchard: The Extraordinary True Story of a Family Lost and Found* is published on April 7.

His grandmother read the manuscript twice before she passed away, shortly before her 103rd birthday.

Robin will be appearing at the upcoming Words by the Water festival at the Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, next month on March 11 at 5.15pm in the Studio.

The author will be discussing his experiences and sharing images from his journey and there will be copies of *The Mango Orchard* available for purchase exclusively at the festival, so you can be among the first to own an edition.

It is a truly remarkable story but one which Robin thinks will appeal to a wide audience: "After all it is a universal story of uniting a family."



VISIT: Robin Bayley and his grandmother on their trip to Mexico

and I learned the value of being a good ancestor.

"I couldn't believe that I had found them. I felt very surprised, but once the idea had settled in my head I felt a sense of responsibility; I was the link between everyone's pasts."

After making the discovery, it was up to Robin to break the news of the existence of