

**NOTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY, held in the
Village Club on Thursday 24 March 2011**

1. Present: Sheila Woolf, Lisa Reay, Margaret Wallis, David Vaughan, Jean Vaughan, Pam Baker, Beverley Mills, Anthony Bianco, Eileen Burman and Jenny Skidmore

2. Apologies: Jayne and David Brooks, Shirley Ball, Betty Craddock, Philip Gill, Rachel Gill, Liz Sykes, David Sarginson and Eithne Sarginson

3. Notes of previous meeting: These were accepted as a correct record. Margaret pointed out that David Brooks' name should have been included in the list of those present.

4. Welcome by the Chairman: Sheila welcomed everyone. Best wishes for a speedy recovery were received for Shirley Ball. David Vaughan was thanked for all his work on the Constitution, Pam for designing and printing membership cards, and to Margaret and Lisa (and Pam) for setting up administration for the Society. Sheila also congratulated those who had already started work on their projects.

5. Subscriptions and Application Forms: Margaret and Lisa had registered 15 members before the meeting and allocated cards and membership numbers to them. Additional members would be welcome (Peter Freeman's name was mentioned as a possibility); Margaret would keep application forms and allocate membership cards, and Lisa would handle payment. Dick James and Rosemary Williams had said that they did not want to join at this stage after all. Although initial interest had been recorded, nothing further had been heard from Chris and Judy Hadfield or Barbara Gee although they had each been sent all relevant papers.

6. Constitution: David went through the changes that had been proposed since the circulation of the first draft. Of particular note was the proposed rotation of Committee members, to ensure continuity.

7. Visit to the Warwick Records Office: Members thanked Sheila for having organised such interesting and useful visits. She in turn had written formal thanks to the two members of staff who had led the groups. Sheila offered to guide any member through the online catalogue of the WRO should they require assistance.

8. Progress Reports on Projects: A considerable amount of progress had been made in a very short time.

- i. Oral History. Pam had donated a digital voice recorder. It was noted that there had been a project in Nuneaton and Bedworth about industrial workers in the 1930s and there was a 26-page report online outlining how the group had approached the task. It was felt that this could provide useful guidance about procedures when taping interviews. Sheila offered to investigate this and to share findings with Shirley and Betty.
- ii. Sheila noted that 2011 was the 160th anniversary of the opening of Stoneleigh Forge. There was a possibility of an exhibition in the Forge later in the year. Sheila would liaise with Peter Whitehouse, Miriam Fardon and Shirley.
- iii. Anthony had begun investigating maps of the Stoneleigh area, and how far back they went. Sheila suggested that he and David arranged to visit the

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Abbey to check what is available there (Sheila would organise). It was noted that the WRO had advised that photographs of maps (standing on steps if necessary!) be taken rather than asking for photocopies.

- iv. In collaboration with Philip and Rachel Gill, Lisa had begun an investigation of the properties in Birmingham Road between Stoneleigh Close and the post box, using the internet to check when they were built, materials used, when altered (e.g. No 16 rebuilt in 1766), who lived there etc. Some material was available from the 1881 census as house numbers were used, but Nat Alcock's card index records of the history of Stoneleigh houses would be an invaluable source of information. Lisa would arrange to speak to Miriam Farndon who knew what developments had taken place in the past 50+ years.
- v. Eileen was preparing the story behind the stitchers over the past 20 years.
- vi. Pam was collating details of information sources on a database. Members were asked to let her know as and when they identified sources, with a record number (from WRO etc) so that an accurate record could be compiled. She was also checking census records since 1841, transcribing the pages into a table so that other pieces of information could be added later. Eventually houses and families would be matched to maps so that eventually there could be a complete picture of who lived where and when (n.b. liaison will be needed re (iv) above).
- vii. Beverley planned to follow up the visit to WRO with further investigation of the history of Phoenix Cottage, and the history of the Mills family in Stoneleigh. She would liaise with Shirley over her photographs, trying to identify more of the villagers featured.
- viii. Sheila had just received absolute permission to write a biography of Cordelia Leigh to whom many letters were sent by Stoneleigh men serving in the Great War.
- ix. David Vaughan explained the recent history of Stoneleigh Meadows. In the early 1980s the Stoneleigh Estate tried to sell the Meadows (from the bridge to the pumping station), offering lots of land for pony grazing, allotments etc. The Meadows Society was formed in order to preserve the Meadows as an open space for public use, and they subsequently bought the land (including the Meadows Hut, for £500).

9. Resources:

- i. The Society now had a digital recorder, thanks to Pam.
- ii. Sheila had ordered the Stoneleigh Parish Registers on CD, available from the Coventry History Society for £15.
- iii. It was considered worthwhile obtaining a data projector eventually, if not hiring one then possibly sharing one with the WI/Village Hall etc. as a village resource.
- iv. Eventually the Society would need somewhere to store materials some of which (e.g. maps) could be quite bulky. This would be kept under review.

10. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 25 May, 7 pm in the Village Club

(Margaret gave apologies in advance)