

## **NOTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY, MAY 25<sup>TH</sup> 2011-05-26**

**Present:** Sheila Woolf, Eileen Burman, Betty Craddock, Pam Baker, Shirley Ball, Lisa Reay, Anthony Bianco, Jenny Skidmore.

**Apologies:** Margaret Wallis, David and Jean Vaughan, Philip and Rachel Gill, Roger Gilbert, Liz Sykes, David and Jayne Brooks, Beverley Mills

1. Sheila welcomed the group and noted how much work had been accomplished by its members since the previous meeting.

### **2. Warwickshire Local History Society.**

Sheila had received an invitation to attend a meeting on 7/4/2011 at the Quaker Meeting House, Warwick, of representatives from several local history societies in Warwickshire. The principal aim of the meeting was to discuss ways in which these societies could liaise with one another and co-ordinate projects, with the WLHS providing advice and assistance. Sheila's report is provided as attachments 1a and 1b. Members present agreed to affiliate ourselves to the WLHS (cost: £12 per annum) in order to avail ourselves of their expertise, opportunities for lectures/visits and to make contacts within other societies. (Lisa has actioned and materials have already arrived).

### **3. Progress reports:**

- Pam had created an extraordinary archive of transcribed census returns for the village, between 1841 and 1911 – fully searchable within an Excel spreadsheet format. She talked us through the results with all the attendant interest ...and anomalies! See attachments 2-4. She has also produced a number of CDs for members' private use: an invaluable resource. (At the end of the meeting Pam demonstrated a variety of applications on her laptop!)
- Lisa reported on her research so far, together with Rachel and Philip, on properties on Birmingham Road. One of her aims is to sequence photographic evidence of the buildings to provide a chronology showing changes, both to the buildings themselves and to "in-fills." She had consulted maps at Kenilworth Library and visited the WRO to look at maps and drawings as well as the Rate Return Book of 1910. Rachel and Philip had visited the SBT in Stratford, though the arrival of a new archivist (John Benson) had been a slight handicap. Lisa had also researched the Stoneleigh Parish Magazine of 1871 at the WRO with a view to integrating information with Pam's census returns. She had also visited Miriam Fardon (see later) along with Jean Vaughan and been to see Shirley's vast Stoneleigh collection!
- Sheila noted the arrival of the CD of Stoneleigh Parish Registers which is available for members to borrow. It, too, will provide material to amplify census findings. It includes the Monumental Inscriptions Project carried out by the W.I. some years ago, and Lisa suggested that digital photography might be useful as a supplement now, owing to the gradual deterioration of some of the gravestones.
- Eileen provided a copy of her "short version" document (attachments 5/6) on the pew cushions in the church and continues to work on the longer version. This will undoubtedly supply a wonderful addition to the history of our church.

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- Anthony had, along with David Vaughan and Sheila, visited the Abbey to view some old maps. Unfortunately, one particularly interesting one had been unavailable that day, but he continues to pursue the history of Crewe Farm, and documents are available at the RO. He felt that we might form closer relationships with the Abbey, and it was agreed that at some point a meeting – perhaps our AGM? – might be held there.
- Shirley had hosted a visit by Lisa, Rachel and Philip and Beverley, who had all benefited by discovering the treasures in her collection! She continues to write up her own memories of village life, and had visited Mary Allison, with Sheila, to learn more about the Forge. (see later)
- Betty had brought a fascinating news-cutting about her late husband's grandfather, and as usual had a fund of stories! (Sheila will be interviewing her soon!) She, too, has many pictures of "old Stoneleigh" which she has offered to let us see.
- Despite their inability to attend the meeting, Roger Gilbert and David Brooks had provided some information about their current researches: Roger had provided a draft of a leaflet on village history which will become part of a new booklet for the church, and some news-cuttings on Sir Henry Parkes; David had emailed an outline of his work so far on land-use from the time of enclosures. "17 aspects of research were initially identified covering the full spectrum of the impact agriculture had on the community and vice versa from the act of enclosure to crops, marketing, plus the infrastructure developed locally as a result." We look forward to hearing more!

### **Future Activities:**

Sheila had contacted Peter Whitehouse about material for a display/ booklet to celebrate the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the current forge building. He had provided a summary of its history and recommended a visit to Mary Allison. Mary's late husband Tom, a farrier, was the last occupant; Mary has offered photographs. We are now beginning to assemble some material for a display, and it was agreed that the occasion of the Duck Race would be an appropriate opportunity for this. Accordingly...It was agreed that the chief topic of the next meeting would be assembling something of our research for the village to see on Duck Race Day (9<sup>th</sup> July). There is also material on Fardon, for example, (plans/drawings etc..."the real inventor of the bicycle") and we could make the census material available. This would be an excellent opportunity to involve members of the community in our work. Sheila would discuss an appropriate venue with Peter (the Forge?) and Jim/Craig (the Club?)

The meeting closed with congratulations all round on a terrific start to our researches!

### **Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm in the Village Club**

(Anthony gave apologies in advance)