

## NOTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY HELD 22 JUNE 2011

**1. Present:** Sheila Woolf, Shirley Ball, Betty Craddock, Roger Gilbert, Lisa Reay, Pam Baker, David Vaughan, David Brooks, Anthony Bianco and Margaret Wallis

**2. Apologies:** Jean Vaughan, Jenny Skidmore, Liz Sykes, Beverley Mills, Rachel and Philip Gill. Sheila reported Beverley's recent kidney transplant, and Philip's hospitalisation. Cards had been sent to both on behalf of SHS.

**3. Notes of previous meeting on May 25th:** These were accepted as an accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising:** Sheila reported that the Warwick Local History Society had sent materials, including a diary of events and listings of lectures and visits which local societies were welcome to attend for free or reduced rates respectively. A bulletin was published twice a year. They were planning a website which could publicise events of local societies. SHS had already paid a £12 pa subscription so would receive information about future activities.

### 5. Progress Reports

- i. *David Brooks* was investigating the background to agricultural activity in the area, leading from the Enclosures Acts which had affected the Stoneleigh Estate. He had identified numerous sources of information, including the Ashow website (David Clark was involved with this), and the Stareton website; investigating these would take some time. There was a side discussion about the use of the 'Massey site' during the Second World War as a base for North American soldiers and ultimately as a rehabilitation centre. Older Stoneleigh residents remembered this well. Sheila would obtain information for David about the origin of the details about the Base.
- ii. *Pam Baker* had amalgamated the census returns and matched names and dates of birth to houses in the village, so it was becoming possible to identify dwelling occupancy over the decades. It was subsequently agreed that building on the grid she had already developed, she would develop a flexible grid which would reflect the changing designation and identification of different dwellings and occupants, with the relevant sources, so that different names/numbers etc could be identified over time. Pam had also prepared a booklet 'Village People 1851' as part of the celebrations to note the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the forge.
- iii. *David Vaughan* had located an estate map dated 1810 which lists the dwellings and names of occupants before the first census. This was an invaluable addition to Pam's findings. It also inspired a discussion about maps and other possible sources of information e.g. the Vicar's books in the Warwick Records Office, and the rather unkempt estate map currently held at Stoneleigh Abbey. ***It was agreed that a small group would go to the Abbey on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June to see this map, at 2.30 pm, after Sheila's regular tour.*** David was continuing his investigations about Wentworth House and planned to prepare a ring folder containing all the records.

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- iv. *Sheila Woolf* had taped interviews with Betty Craddock and with Dot and Dennis Craddock. These and other interviews meant that 20<sup>th</sup>.c personnel in the village were now much better documented. She and Shirley had interviewed Mary Allison about Tom Allison and other blacksmiths; she had obtained information about John Goode from a descendant. Her book on Cordelia Leigh was progressing well.
- v. *Lisa Reay* had continued work with Philip and Rachel Gill about Birmingham Road houses. She had put Shirley's photographs of that road in chronological order. Shirley has passed a collection of Parish Magazines dating from 1993 – 2000, to Lisa who has noted births, marriages and deaths and any funeral notices that appeared in them. This in turn could help to elaborate some of the census returns. Lisa then made a form of which editions there are, and which are available to anyone who would like a copy. She had visited the SBT and researched another blacksmith, Thomas Howlett, and had begun a "Stoneleigh Family Tree", using Ancestry. Together with Jean Vaughan she had taped an interview with Sheila Rench and Miriam Fardon (n.b. there is a Fardon family website, and their previous home was where Eileen Burman now lives; Sheila has obtained permission from them to use material for our display).
- vi. *Roger Gilbert* is currently committed to preparing a guide to the church but would return with proposals once this task had been completed.
- vii. *Margaret Wallis and Liz Sykes* hoped to investigate the history of Walkers Orchard when it was land belonging to Manor Farm (Margaret Farmer et al.). The Paulings had some photographs of the land, and older village residents recalled a rick fire there. Betty Craddock recalled the delivering of potatoes to the farm, from a farm at Gibbert Hill.
- viii. *Shirley Ball* is happy to provide a slide show for interested members of the group.

### 6. Arrangements for Duck Race Day, 9 July

The church had offered use of the font area for the display about the Forge, and any other SHS materials, including membership forms. **It was agreed that a final planning meeting/assemblage of display material for the event would be held on Thursday 7 July at 2.30 in the church - Sheila, Shirley, Lisa and any other volunteers to be involved.** It was noted that careful planning re personnel availability would be needed given the overlapping membership of the SHS and the StAG groups.

### 7. AOB

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- i. David Vaughan reported on a recent visit to the new headquarters of the British Horse Society in Stareton. This included conference facilities, including meeting rooms which could be rented.
- ii. It was noted that the RASE library in the Arthur Rank Centre contained several materials which were relevant to the work of SHS, and it was agreed that a visit be organised there in due course.

### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

It was provisionally agreed that this would be held on Wednesday 31 August, at 7.30 pm in the Village Club.