

NOTES OF THE 10th MEETING OF THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL ON Tuesday 29 May 2012

Welcome: Sheila welcomed 15 members to the meeting.

Apologies: David and Jean Vaughan, Jane Taylor, Lisa Reay

Matters Arising since the last meeting:

- i) Thanks to David Brooks for having arranged a very successful visit to the RASE Library.
- ii) The meeting on 26 June had now been finalised for the Repton Garden Tour. Meet at the Gatehouse at **6.15pm for the 1 ½ hour tour beginning at 6.30pm.** £8 per person. The limit was 30 (14 had already signed up). Contact Sheila if you want to go.
- iii) Forthcoming Warwick Local History Society meetings included a walking tour of Coventry on 22 September, led by Nat Alcock.
- iv) Thanks to Mrs Joyce Taylor, the school logbooks had been transcribed and were now available on CD.
- v) Items for display* at the Jubilee event and for the 10 days of the Leamington History Festival had now been compiled by various SHS members. The display would be set up from 9.30 am on 30th; Anthony, Peter, Liz and Margaret offered to help.

Presentation by Peter James, Stareton

Peter's family have lived in the area for 450 years. He has traced his family back 11 generations. Stareton was one of the first villages in the UK to have enclosures and Joan James' 'mark' appears on the Stareton Enclosure Agreement in June 1598. There is a document held at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust which shows that as early as September 1565 most villagers had already sold freehold to Thomas Leigh. There are various blanks in the subsequent records but the record offices in Lichfield, Warwick and Stratford, and Nat Alcock's book had filled in many of the gaps. N.B. Peter had prepared a presentation which included many examples of the records but unfortunately gremlins attacked the equipment so this could not be shown as planned. Sheila has subsequently bought her own projector!

Presentation by Philip Gill, a Trustee of the Stoneleigh Almshouses

Philip had begun investigating the residents of the Almshouses. Surprisingly, there were no formal records of how people entered them, certainly no stringent criteria as today, but most were estate workers or their widows. Warwickshire Burial Records up to 1840

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show how some people died e.g. 'drowned in Finham Brook'! The Rev. Wentworth Leigh kept careful records of his parishioners, so some residents' records are more complete than others. Spellings are very variable and are difficult to trace with certainty e.g., Hirons and Hiram. There are numerous mistakes in transcription which makes tracing even more difficult. Not all women's maiden names are mentioned so some family links are lost. In the C19 some residents had daughters resident as their carers. There was much work still to be done but Phil had already unearthed several interesting case histories of Almshouse residents, some of whom had lived in several parts of the country; it is a mystery who and why so many had moved away and returned. Research will continue

Next Meeting, Tuesday 31 July

7.30 pm in the Village Hall. Two further presentations of work in progress.

***P.S. The Jubilee Display was a huge success with a steady stream of visitors throughout the afternoon of 2 June. Many visitors spent a long time looking at the display, hunting for mention of their families, reminiscing about the photographs, and generally expressing great interest. Many thanks to all who contributed to the displays, mounted them and were present at the display to answer questions during the afternoon.**

MSW/6/12