

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY HELD ON TUESDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2014

Apologies: Sue Crofts, Roger Gilbert

Welcome: Sheila Woolf welcomed 24 members and 11 guests (including some former Stitchers) to the meeting. Quite a lot had happened since the last meeting (the very successful WW1 display and slide show).

- The WW1 display had been moved to the Leigh Chapel and had attracted many visitors during the Duck Race and the Craft Market. Positive feedback had been received. Thanks to all who had helped.
- The Stoneleigh Calendar was now available, £7.50 each. Proceeds would go towards the Henry Parkes plaque and associated activities.
- Notices of meetings of the Warwickshire History Society had been received (to be attached to the minutes when circulated).
- Next meeting on 28 October would feature 'Humphrey Repton at Stoneleigh Abbey' by Hazel Frye of Ashow.

The Church Cushions

Margaret Wallis particularly welcomed former Stitchers to the meeting – Shirley Ball, Mary Beagrie, Jayne Brooks, Ann Ecob*, Marian Murray and Madeline White – together with Rev. Sharon Goble.

The idea of the session was that the cushions represented living history – a record of the village and church community prepared by a dedicated team who had worked over many years.

She referred to the NADFAS Record of the Church which contained full details, with photographs, of each cushion and their designers and stitchers, to the sketches for the childrens and bells cushions and various photographs. The slide show prepared by Sheila from Shirley Ball's photographs would be re-shown at the end of the formal session.

Shirley read out a recollection submitted by Lena Crockett, whose chance remark led to the project; unfortunately Lena was in hospital and unable to attend in person.

Sarah Ballinger then read out recollections of Eileen Burman who sadly died earlier this year. Her daughter Clare had recently found some notes that her mother had written about the cushions. Clare had mentioned that her mother had always intended to write a book about the project and she had left a legacy to the church to enable this to happen; in due course discussions will be held about how best to progress this.

Mary Beagrie then described a strange coincidence when work was carried out in the church in 2003 and a motif was found which was exactly the same as one she had designed for a cushion a decade previously.

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Jayne Brooks highlighted some of the design and stitching challenges she had faced and then Shirley Ball read contributions from Sheila Rench and SHS member Sheila Skinner whose mother, Frances Twigger was an occasional stitcher. Shirley then added her own recollections.

Other stitchers were invited to contribute formally but they declined. Margaret then mentioned that Pam Baker had commented that when it came to transferring her daughter Allyson's drawing of a fox's head, Marian Murray had used 32 shades of brown to get the colours right. This symbolised the dedication of the stitchers whose wonderful work had contributed so much to the life of the church and community and for which much gratitude was owed.

Margaret thanked all those involved with the evening, especially Shirley for being such an effective collaborator, Sheila for the slideshow, the church for hosting the meeting, and to Rachel and Liz for refreshments.

Refreshments were then served and there was plenty of opportunity to look at the cushions and the materials, and to ask questions of the stitchers.

*Colin Ecob also attended – he had made the trestles for the canvas frames

Msw/2/10/14