

Minutes of the Stoneleigh History Society Meeting November 27 2018

1. Apologies: Margaret Wallis, Pam Baker, Shirley Ball, Avril Newey.
2. Next year's programme. Paper copies were handed out with the hope that current members would be pleased with what is in store. The programme is also available to view on the website.
3. Finances: the committee had agreed that after 8 years of the SHS's existence it is time to increase the membership subscription to £12 a year. This is commensurate with other similar societies and reflects the fact that we now have many more outside speakers than we used to, the hall costs have increased and we now have to pay annually for public liability insurance. Sheila hoped members would be happy with this. Subscriptions are also another way of supporting the work of the society in putting together exhibitions, printing booklets, paper, running the website etc.
4. Last year at renewals time there was some confusion among members arising from the switchover following Lisa's decision to resign as treasurer but retaining the role of membership secretary. Sue had become the new treasurer. Some members still paid Lisa, some paid Sue, and it took a while to sort out a complete up-to-date membership list. There will be a different system from now on: all subscriptions should be paid directly to **Sue**. It will work thus:
 - With these Minutes members will receive a membership renewal form which they are asked to download, print and complete.
 - Bring the form in an envelope with cash/cheque and hand it to Sue at the December Social.
 - Alternatively post the form to Sue Crofts at North Lodge, Coventry road, Stoneleigh CV8 3DT.
 - Sue would also be happy for members to pay by BACS, as some have done in previous years. The society's bank details are given on the form.
 - All subscriptions should be in **by 31 January at the latest** (NB we have no meeting in January)
 - Sue will then hand on the batch of forms to Lisa at the beginning of February and Lisa will compile a database of members and issue your cards at the February meeting.

We very much hope that this will clarify the system.

5. Sheila then thanked all those SHS members involved in the WW1 event, held jointly with the church and the male voice choir: principally Maggie Moorhouse who, with Sheila, had compiled the readings; Jane Taylor and team for refreshments; Anthony, who had secured a grant of £500 from WDC and who read; other readers from SHS were June Burr and Lisa Reay. Pete James supervised the technicals and Adrian Clarke played the Last Post; the evening was rounded off with the video Pam Baker had made in 2014. Ultimately we made a profit of £1742, half of which went to the church and the other half to the British Legion. Sheila read out a very complimentary message from Councillor Trevor Wright, which was just one of many messages received by her, Maggie and Phil Jones of the choir. Thanks to all!
6. Sheila then introduced the speaker, Mike Sharpe.
Mike's talk was on "Writing Your Family History" and he described how he helped people who wanted to put down their research on paper but were unsure about where to start. He spoke about the kinds of documents available online and in archives, which would help with initial research; how to make some order out of these researches; how to construct a narrative: should one concentrate on just a few of one's more interesting relatives? Does one begin with 16thc relatives and work forwards, or the other way round? What about writing one's own life story for one's children/grandchildren? Some people liked to fictionalise their ancestors' stories a la Hilary Mantel... others liked to choose one particular ancestor's story and simply write about that. He also talked about writing for different audiences, the narrative voice, and the crucial importance of proof-reading; he spoke, too, about the extent to which illustrations would help bring a story alive. He had brought along some beautiful books which he had helped family historians put together.
There were several questions after this interesting talk and after refreshments (provided by Jean Vaughan and Mel Dearing – thanks go to them) the meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

SLW 28.11.18