

NOTES OF THE SHS MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2020

Present: 29 SHS members and 13 visitors.

Apologies: Avril Newey, Liz Sykes, Ruth Oliver, Jane Taylor, David and Jean Vaughan.

Welcome and Announcements: Sheila welcomed everyone to the first SHS meeting to be held in January. It was a particular pleasure to welcome so many visitors.

Pam Baker was thanked for having set out the chairs. Sheila requested additional help with this in the future and asked for a few members to arrive early. Also, everyone was asked to return their chairs to the side of the room before refreshments were served this evening, and in future. (This was done, thank you).

Shirley Ball was thanked for having organised the refreshment rota in previous years. This role would be taken over by Sarah Ballinger in future and she would seek offers of help during the evening. Thanks to her and Maggie Moorhouse for refreshments this evening.

Sue Crofts was thanked for all her efforts in collecting renewals subscriptions. The deadline was 31 January. 'Lapsed' members are welcome to re-join after that date. New members are welcomed, as always.

Reminders had already been sent out by Margaret Wallis about the AGM to be held on 24 March. Election of the SHS Committee would be on the agenda and members were asked to consider whether they wished to serve. In addition to Committee duties, there were other ways in which members could assist with the running of SHS e.g. taking on tasks associated with the Society's 10th anniversary in 2021, such as merchandising notelets/calendar from the William Roseblade paintings. Ideas already suggested for the anniversary were an event in the church with involvement of the choirs, readings and so on, a dinner, an art competition for village children. More suggestions welcome.

The British Association of History Societies' conference would be held in Taunton on 21 March with the theme 'Unexpected sources for local history'. More information from Sheila.

On Monday 17 February there would be the first in a series of talks at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. This one would be on archaeology, and called 'Excavating the Collection'. Cost £14. Time 2pm and cream tea at 3pm.

The Dugdale Society was holding a conference on 16 May to celebrate its 50 years, with the theme Warwickshire's Changing Past.

This year's SHS outing would be on Tuesday 19 May to Maxstoke Castle. This would start at 6 pm and involve a 1 ¾ hour tour of the house and gardens by the owner, Michael Fetherston-Dilke. Limit of 30 places, £15 each. Anyone interested should contact Sheila.

The next SHS meeting would be on Tuesday 25 February when Jan Cooper will speak on 'John of Gaunt – The Power and the Passion'.

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Sheila then introduced Pete James to speak on **‘Salvation and Stoneleigh – two branches of the Fardon Family’**.

Pete said how pleased he was to see so many members of the Fardon family in the audience. He was descended from a branch of the Haddon family who had moved from Mancetter to Foleshill as silk weavers. A cousin, Nigel, had provided many family photographs which had supplemented the information that Pete had gathered via Ancestry etc. The talk was illustrated with 85 slides.

The Haddon family became involved with the Fardon family when Hannah Haddon married Charles Fardon in 1885. They had ten children, only five of whom survived. Charles was not only a ‘shoeing smith’ but a Salvation Army officer. He served the Salvation Army all his life, his final posting being in Luton as Commandant. Hannah worked for the Army after his death in 1927.

The Fardons were all blacksmiths or farriers, originally based around Temple Guiting and Hailes Cistercian abbey (dissolved in 1539). The Stoneleigh Fardons were descended from John Fardon who in 1715, the year of the Jacobite Rising, had taken an oath of allegiance to King George 1 who was nervous about the possibility of a Catholic uprising. John’s descendant, James, came to work at Stoneleigh Abbey in 1814 and records show that he was served with a ‘filiation order’ in 1818 and he and the child’s mother had to pay maintenance for the child. (See Ancestry for more details). He married Sarah Green (4 children) and then Mary Langley (5 children). As well as written records, several old photographs had been found of several Fardon blacksmiths, the most influential of which was Edward Langley Fardon (1839-1926). (Also see the SHS booklet on Stoneleigh Blacksmiths).

Edward was an engineer as well as an ‘ornamental blacksmith’ and his work includes the gates at Stoneleigh Abbey, Rothschild mansion in Geneva, and the Mirabell Gardens in Austria. He also designed an early bicycle, the velocipede, with spokes and rubber tyres. His contribution to this area is marked by ‘The Portrait Bench’ sculpture on the University of Warwick campus, commemorating him, Helen Martin (the University’s ‘anonymous benefactor’, and John Kemp Starkey (founder of the Rover Cycle Company).

Edward’s grandson, George, married Miriam Nicholls in 1948 and ran the Stoneleigh Arms in Birmingham Road (now Forsythia Cottage) and were bastions of the local community.

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Shirley Ball thanked Pete for a most interesting talk.