

NOTES OF THE SHS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2020 at STONELEIGH VILLAGE HALL

Present: 29 members and 17 visitors.

Apologies: Shirley Ball, Margaret Brown, Liz Sykes, Sarah Ballinger, Adrian Clarke, Clare Clarke, and Sarah Ballinger.

Welcome: Sheila Woolf welcomed everyone to the meeting, the SHS's first one in January.

- The Blue Bag containing refreshment provisions has been found, thanks to Joe Ball.
- The SHS outing to Maxstoke would be on 19 May and Sheila was now taking bookings (20 needed to make the visit viable).
- Members were asked to move their chairs to the side of the room once the talk had finished.
- Members were asked to consider offering help with events through to 2021.
- SHS had been asked by the Club for help with various events planned for VE Day on 8 May. SHS member Adrian Clarke was the designated Club Co-ordinator for the day. Various commemorative events had been suggested for SHS input e.g. story boards about village life/residents' memories about the Coventry blitz/memorabilia e.g. ration books/the American camp. Margaret's book about VE Day might jog some memories. The film 'Mrs Henderson Presents' (the story of the Windmill Theatre during WW2) would be shown in the Village Hall in the evening.
- The next meeting, our AGM, would be on 24 March, the speaker being Jill Kashi who would speak on 'The Little Maids and the Wandering Butler' – life in domestic service at Baddesley Clinton, 1880s – 1923'. This year the Committee was up for election, nomination forms had been circulated and members interested in standing for election to the Committee were asked to submit forms to Sheila by 8 March.
- Nora Blagburn reported that the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust were planning to convert the site of Binley Colliery to a wildlife project. The Trust was interested in hearing from anyone who worked there or had links to the families involved.

Sheila then welcomed Jan Cooper, chair of the Kenilworth History and Archaeology Society, to speak on - 'John of Gaunt – The Power and the Passion'

Jan's talk was a very complex description of the association of John of Gaunt (Ghent) and his family with this area, in particular with Kenilworth Castle. The talk was interspersed with fascinating details about the architecture of the Castle. Married three times (most interestingly to his third wife and long-term mistress, Kathryn Swynford), and with many children, the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, would have been of great interest to 'Hello' Magazine had there been such a thing in the 14th c ! The to-ings and fro-ings of the family inspired several Shakespeare plays. John of Gaunt had links with most of the great families of England and, through marriage, with European families too. Those SHS members who would like to follow this interesting history in more detail are directed to John of Gaunt's entry in Wikipedia.

Thanks to Jan and also to Mel Dearing and Anthony Bianco for providing the refreshments.

MSW/3/20