

## **NOTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY HELD IN STONELEIGH VILLAGE HALL ON 30 APRIL 2013**

20 SHS members attended + visitors Jayne Brooks and Peter Shrimpton

Apologies: Jane Taylor and Sarah Ballinger

Sheila introduced the meeting. The visit to Bagot Castle and Baginton Church would be held on 25 June; money would be collected at the next meeting - £4 per person. List now closed

Thanks to Pam Baker for her contribution to the Timeline Document of Stoneleigh's history which would be placed on display in the Leigh Chapel together with other documents and displays, some old, some new (including /Roger Gilbert's on Stoneleigh houses). Lisa Reay was also thanked for undertaking a great deal of photocopying. The display would be mounted as part of (and marketed by) the Leamington History Festival, (18 May to 2 June). The Church was opening for tea and cakes on Saturday 25 May between 2 and 4 pm. The display would be available continuously during church opening hours (10am – 4pm) from Sunday 19 May. It would be ideal if members might be available for a short time on a rota basis on the weekends of 25 and 26 May (Bank Holiday) and 1 and 2 June to answer questions –volunteers to contact Sheila please. An array of folders including old photographs would be available and visitors would be asked to help to identify some of the people featured. Leaflets about the club, the Swan Inn, blacksmiths and E.L.Fardon would also be available for sale, and an honesty box available. Sheila, Margaret and Jane would erect the display at a date to be agreed.

Sheila explained that the main purpose of the evening was to review what had happened so far in SHS and to consider what might be done in the future. Members were divided into smaller groups for discussion of various questions/issues outlined on a sheet (re-attached for information). As a result of this discussion and the resulting plenary session the following points emerged (in no particular order).

In general the format, timing and frequency of meetings and the balance of their content was felt to be appropriate. Some members would like shorter talks with more time for interaction. A large amount of work had already been undertaken but there was plenty more to be done. It was recognised that some members had very clear ideas about which areas they wanted to investigate whereas others were more interested in attending meetings and visits; a balance needed to be struck between these interests, also recognising the varying talents and IT skills represented in the Society. It was accepted that *everyone* could make a practical contribution to SHS if they wished, although there was no compulsion to do so.

An ongoing list of research was requested. Everyone needed to know what was being done and by whom, and where and how to access useful material; also, everyone needed to know where material (both home and commercially produced) was being kept (currently in various receptacles in members' houses!). Online storage, fireproof cabinets in the Leigh Chapel - and other suggestions made for such storage; Community Forum and other funding sources to be investigated. Ideally, full details of research might be given as part of our own website,

MSW/5/13

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linked to the Village website but as yet no qualified volunteer had been forthcoming to undertake such a project.

It was considered vital to have someone acting as custodian/archivist, and also someone prepared to collate research being undertaken so that work is not unnecessarily replicated.

Various additional areas of research were suggested:

Gravestones (updating the previous WI survey. N.B. there are maps of where each stone is). Roger Gilbert is prepared to work on this. Other members offered to help. He is also researching the School.

Pete James is investigating each house in Stareton.

Nora Blagburn is expanding her talk on Stoneleigh Close. There is scope for other neighbourhood investigations e.g. Hall Close/Acorn close, Walkers Orchard (Margaret and Liz will try to something on this eventually).

Someone at Warwick University had conducted a project on fulling in the area, which had including the transfer to corn-milling.

There was general agreement that verbal history was crucial and that, given the age of some inhabitants, was urgent. Just some: the Mills family on The Bank, Wareing family in Ashow, Wrists, Ball, Neale, Morris. Miriam Fardon, Betty Craddock and Dennis and Dot Craddock had already been 'done' but the interviews need transcribing. In addition to interviews, general reminiscences about recent village life and events - preferably with photographs - would be of interest. Also changes in family life, the role of charities in the community. Some members had begun to investigate their own house e.g. Sue Crofts - North Lodge on Coventry Road.

The various options on the list provided were also considered, including transcribing records such as the Stoneleigh Charity Apprenticeships Indentures, Heath Tax Records, Jury Lists etc. - and learning more about the people involved. More research about Roman and Medieval times in the village would be worthwhile.

A future opportunity to discuss how members undertook their research, and the pitfalls encountered would be useful. Professional guidance might also be sought. Pete James mentioned the National Archives website which has a section on palaeography (reading old handwriting) [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/reading-old-documents.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/reading-old-documents.htm)

It was agreed that a list of research undertaken, ongoing and planned would be compiled (attached – but probably incomplete! – please let us know if you have worked on/are working on other projects not mentioned).