

NOTES OF THE SHS MEETING HELD ON APRIL 26, 2016, IN STONELEIGH CHURCH

Present: 34 members of the SHS and the congregation.

Apologies: Sue Crofts, David and Jean Vaughan, Clare Baly, David Gibson, David Brooks

Welcome on behalf of Stoneleigh Church: The Rev. Sharon Goble welcomed everyone to the event, thanked the SHS for its work on the churchyard project, and observed that in our current society there was too little reflection on death and the long term impact of people's lives.

Welcome on behalf of Stoneleigh History Society: Sheila Woolf welcomed SHS members, members of the congregation, and Eileen Creed in particular. (Eileen had been a member of Stoneleigh WI in 1981 when a survey of graves had been undertaken). She reminded everyone about the forthcoming concert on 7 May and the next SHS meeting on 24 May when David Fry would talk about old photographs from Warwickshire, and Stoneleigh in particular. Avril Newey announced an event being organised by the Earlsdon Research Group in St. Barbara's Church on 1 July which would be a mixture of music and readings to commemorate the end of WW2 (more details will be circulated shortly).

Background to the Churchyard Project: Sheila explained that the project was inspired by comments by Jacquie Cubitt, the Parish Administrator, who reported that many visitors came looking for family graves. Attached to these notes are copies of the overheads which explain the project and plans for the future.

Sheila paid particular tribute to Lisa Reay whose enthusiasm and hard work had been a key to the project. Derek Robinson had photographed all the gravestones. Rob Orland had compiled the relevant section of the SHS website so that graves were searchable by name. Pam Baker had compiled the display which would be in the Leigh Chapel until major building work begins in August. Peter James had assisted with research on gravestones.

Sheila and Lisa then highlighted a few of the people who had been researched to date. Some fascinating stories had emerged*. This research had illustrated that death was a leveller! Shepherds, bankers, factory owners, bellringers, estate workers, butchers etc. etc. lay side by side. It was also noticeable that not all were Stoneleigh residents although of course the parish itself had covered a much wider area than it does now.

People were invited to look at the display and to ask questions of any of the project team. More help was needed so further volunteers would be welcomed.

The refreshment team was thanked.

Sheila and her team were congratulated on their impressive efforts to date.

*Fredereck Loisel, Jane Savory, Frances and Alfred Wardell, Harold and Mary Kirby, William Fletcher, The Naylor's and The Pridmores.