

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY HELD ON 26 October 2021

Present: 15 members of the SHS and 4 guests attended.

Apologies: Adrian and Clare Clarke, Phil and Kate Jones, Mel Dearing, Anthony Bianco, Jane Taylor, Liz Sykes, Gill and Clive Watson, Pam Baker, June Burr

Welcome: Sheila Woolf welcomed everyone to the meeting. The main announcement was about the celebratory evening planned for 30 November. This would include the premiere of the You Tube video of the 1000 years of Stoneleigh History show, celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Society; this had been compiled by Bill Crofts. There would be cake and fizz provided by Sheila in thanks for members' support. This would be a red carpet event and everyone was asked to dress up appropriately. At the end of the evening there would be an Oscars presentation to all who were in the show. N.B. The evening would begin at 7 pm, with slides of the work undertaken during the history of SHS – exhibitions, research and events

The video would be shown at 7.30 prompt. The evening would last rather longer than usual. (Note that this event would replace the Christmas Social this year). **N.B. This meeting is for members only. Others will be able to access the You Tube video afterwards.**

Renewals of membership would begin in January. As all banks were now charging 40p for each cheque cashed, members were asked to pay by bank transfer. The Treasurer would circulate details in January.

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Sheila then introduced Dr Richard Churchley to speak about 'Old Pubs and lost hostelrys – their history, strange names and stories'.

Dr Churchley began with a brief history of public houses, dating from Roman times when ivy or holly was hung outside taverns (hence variations on the name 'Old Bull and Bush). In the Middle Ages, they often had religious names eg. 'The Angel', 'Jerusalem', 'Saracen's Head'. Later 'The King's Head', 'Rising Sun', 'The Unicorn' and 'The Boot' (after the Duke of Wellington) became popular. 'Marquis of Granby' was of particular interest as he was chief commander of the Army in mid 18th and was very popular as he gave his retiring officers a guinea if they wanted to open a pub; unsurprisingly he died in debt! Later names associated with sporting events became common – 'The Cock', 'The Bear', 'Cross Guns', 'The Stag', 'Roebuck'. 'Falcon' indicated allegiance to Ann Boleyn or Queen Elizabeth!.

It was common for women to run pubs, often named after their husband's profession – 'Bricklayers' Arms, 'Three Horses', 'The Fleece', 'Golden Fleece', 'Coach and Horses', 'The Packhorse', 'Railway Inn' and so on.

Ale/Beer Houses became popular, often in someone's front room (so only 5 or 6 people) following a Government Act in 1830 which only allowed beer to be sold (in an attempt to discourage gin palaces). Licences were granted for one year only. In 1869 a health and safety requirement was introduced whereby it was essential for any ale house to have a urinal.

There was then a Quiz in which the audience's knowledge of old pub names were tested.

There are many sources of information on the history of pubs. The actual pub and/or its sign, parish and probate records, Quarter sessions records, trade directories, electoral rolls, censuses, old photos/ magazines/newspapers/maps, oral history, property deeds. Archives showed that the ratio of pubs to ordinary houses was very high eg. in Alcester in 1906 there was 1 pub for every 23 houses.

The final part of the talk included numerous photos of pubs.

‘Ye Old Trip to Jerusalem’ in Nottingham. ‘Bar Bach’ (smallest pub in Wales. ‘The Crooked Houses’ near Dudley. ‘The Antelope’, ‘Cape of Good Hope’, ‘The Globe’ and ‘Zetland Arms’ in Warwick. ‘Fleur de Lys’ on the Birmingham Canal, famous in the 1950s as one of the first pubs to serve meals (pies). ‘The Black Horse’ (named after highwayman Bendigo Mitchell). ‘Tipperary Inn’ near Balsall Common, named for the composer of the popular World War 1 song. ‘Black Boy’ in Knowle, named after Charles II who was quite dark-skinned. ‘The Orange Tree’ in Hatton. ‘The Case is Altered’ in Shrewley, (Ben Johnson wrote a play with this title). ‘Oak and Black Dog’ in Stretton-on-Dunsmore, named when two pubs amalgamated. ‘Friendly Inn’ in Frankton. ‘Dun Cow’, ‘Green Man’ and Ye Olde Thatched Tavern’ all in Dunchurch. Bulls Head’ and ‘Navigation Inn’ in Wotton Wawen. ‘Green Dragon’ in Cambourne. ‘Bell Brewery’ and ‘Barley Mow’ in Studley.

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Sheila thanked Dr Churchley for a very informative and enjoyable talk. Sarah Ballinger and Maggie Moorhouse were also thanked for providing the refreshments.