

Stoneleigh History Society

Minutes of the AGM held on the 26th of March 2024, 7.30 pm
at Stoneleigh Village Hall

1. Sheila Woolf welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were 21 members present and two visitors.
2. Apologies were received from Celia Baly, Ian Harrop, Pete James, Jane Taylor, Liz Sykes, Patrick Sawdon, Margaret Wallis, Pam Baker, Clive and Gill Watson.
3. Minutes of the 2023 AGM were accepted as a true record.
4. There were no matters arising.
5. The Chairman's Report was proposed and seconded without further discussion.
6. The Treasurer's Report was proposed and seconded. The treasurer commented that in order to keep the accounts in a healthy state the membership fee for 2025 would need to be increased.
7. There was no other business and the AGM concluded at 7.40 pm.

Minutes of the 26th of March meeting of Stoneleigh History Society, 2024

8. Notices: a. Following Sheila's request for ideas at the last meeting Nora had suggested that members introduce themselves to each other as new members may not know many people. Also 3 people had come forward to do a 10-minute talk about their personal research into family/ local history. This would be for the Feb '25 meeting. b. SHS pamphlets are for sale at the back of the hall. See Sue about payment. Over the Easter break members might like to show visitors the Leigh Chapel where further research material is available. Lisa has put records of the Coronation display in a new file. This will be available to view in the Leigh Chapel also. c. Sheila gave an update on her visit to Hamstall. The talk was very successful and the B&B most acceptable. The location is very remote, accessed via a 4-mile-long country road. d. Sheila thanked Clare and Adrian for providing refreshments. e. Adrian Clarke gave an update on the progress of the Fardon blue plaque. A group of four have been involved in the design and commissioning. e. Sheila gave an update on Margaret Wallis and encouraged members to get in touch via card or email.
9. The Speaker:

Richard Churchley

'Edburga to Elvis' – Unusual saints and their churches.

Richard began with a quiz to see how many popular saints members could recall. In England and Wales, the ten most commonly known saints/ churches are: St. Mary (2,368), All Saints, St. Peter, St. Michael, St. Andrew, St. Paul, Holy Trinity, John the Baptist, St. James, St. Nicholas(436).

After the quiz Richard began his talk. Explaining first that his area of research had been mostly confined to Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

His first saint was **St. Edburga**; she was a granddaughter of King Alfred and a nun at an abbey in Winchester. There are churches in Yardley, Birmingham and Broadway in Worcestershire dedicated to her.

St. Elvis was a monk and there is a church dedicated to him at a parish near Solva in Pembrokeshire.

St Lawrence's parish church in Northfield, Birmingham. He was probably born in Spain, and he is supposed to have been tortured over a grid iron. He is the patron saint of cooks, chefs and comedians.

St. Godwald's church is close to Bromsgrove station.

St. Editha was a Saxon saint and maybe the daughter of King Egbert of Wessex. The parish church of St. Editha in Tamworth is the largest parish church in Staffordshire.

St. Nicholas in Alcester is the only church in the country that has a clock placed on a corner of the tower. This was at the request of local traders as the church is right in the heart of the commercial area of the town. St. Nicholas was Bishop of Myra which is in modern day Turkey. He is the patron saint of merchants, children and brewers.

St Leonard was a noble in the court of the Frankish King Clovis 1. The parish church in Beoley is dedicated to him.

St. Kenelm's church is in the Clent Hills near Halesowen and is mentioned in the Canterbury Tales. St Kenelm was a martyred King or Prince of Mercia.

St. Cassian's church is in Chaddesley Corbett, Worcs. His origins are unclear.

Worcester has many churches close to the Cathedral, **St. Clement** a Pope, **St. Swithun** an Anglo-Saxon bishop of Winchester. He has a reputation for posthumous miracle working. **St. Oswald** who has Danish ancestry, **St. Richard** who was born near Burford near Droitwich, **St. Augustine** who was the first Archbishop of Canterbury and founder of the English Church, **St. Martin** of Tours a Roman soldier, St. Helen a Greek native who was mother of Emperor Constantine the Great, **St. Alban** the first Christian martyr and **St Margaret** of Antioch.

St. Denys was a third century Christian martyr. The parish church in Severn Stoke, Worcs. is dedicated to him.

St. Alphege was an Archbishop of Canterbury. Captured by the Vikings in 1011 he was killed after refusing to be ransomed. The parish church in Solihull, close to the town centre is dedicated to him.

St. Milburga was Abbess of Much Wenlock Priory. The parish church of St. Milburga is close to Ragley Hall in Warwickshire. A rare 'horse house' can be found in St, Milburga's Churchyard at Wixford. It is thatched and made with gorse walls.

St. Ecgwin was a Benedictine monk and member of the Mercian royal family. His parish church can be found at Honeybourne near Evesham.

The shrine of **St. Wite** can be found at Whitchurch Canonorum in Dorset. The shrine contains the relics of St.Wite. The bones found there are of a woman aged about 40 years old. It is believed she was a local woman who did good things and was killed by the Danes.

St. Eata was supposedly one of the original 12 pupils of St. Aidan of Lindisfarne. He became Bishop of Hexham. The parish church at Atcham near Shrewsbury is the only church dedicated to him.

St. Chad was a prominent 7th century Anglo-Saxon monk. He was born in Northumbria and became bishop of Lichfield. St. Chad's church is in the Stowe area of Lichfield.

St. Dunstan was born in Glastonbury and was the son of a noble man. He was a metal worker while a hermit at Glastonbury and is alleged to have grabbed the devil by the nose with his blacksmith's tongs. He was canonised in 1029 and is the patron saint of English gold and silversmiths.

St. Pancras was allegedly a 14-year-old boy who became a Christian. He refused to renounce his faith and was beheaded by Diocletian. He is the patron saint of children.

At this point Richard finished his presentation and invited questions. Some of the audience asked about **St. Giles**. There are two local parish churches dedicated to him. One is at Exhall, the other at Bubbenhall. Also known as Giles the Hermit, he was a hermit or monk active in the 7th century in the lower Rhone. He is the patron saint for disabled people, lepers, beggars and blacksmiths.

Sheila thanked Richard for his excellent talk and invited everyone to have some refreshment.

10. The meeting closed at 9.15 pm. Our next meeting is on the 30th of April and the talk will be 'Coventry murders – stories from the 1800s' by Vanessa Morgan.