



Newsletter

Summer 2013



Number 6

Hello and welcome to our Summer 2013 newsletter. It's been another exciting year for Highworth Historical Society and we hope that you've enjoyed the various events and lectures. However, we're always open to comments and suggestions so, if you'd like to make a contribution to the Society or have any ideas for us, contact us by e-mail to jacky@highworthhistoricalsociety.co.uk or write to us at the address at the end of this newsletter.

Chair's Report

Well, another year has slipped by at an alarming rate and soon we shall be enjoying a packed programme of events during our 42nd year. This year has seen excellent support from members and from casual visitors, I am sure, because of a very varied and



interesting programme imaginatively and ably put together by Denise Arnel. We started the year by exploring the Isle of Wight with Colin Brading and his Steam Railway talk and ended with Daniel Rose and his address about the Mechanics Institute. The

whole interspersed by Medieval Church Paintings, Courts Martial in WWI, Medieval Sword Play, the work of Swindon Photographer William Hooper and Snipers of the Great War. We



were fortunate too to have two extra talks - one about the Highworth Pot and the other about the geophysics of the market square. Our thanks to Denise for a stimulating and interesting programme.

Our new recruit Martin Summers has really earned his spurs by finding interesting field trips for members which have been thoroughly enjoyed by many. Opportunities to visit inter alia Inigo House, Westrop House, Inglesham Church and Bletchley Park were eagerly accepted by members and we hope to do more of this in the forthcoming months.

We also hope to have more Quiz nights too - this is such a good fund raiser and we are grateful to our Secretary Kay Brown for doing this and making them such fun.

This year has also been one of seizing every opportunity to sell our publications - Highworth Town Trail by Jo Clark and Fun,

continued...





Frolics and Festivals by Chris Suter. We sold them on a market stall on Saturday Markets, we sold them on Roman Day and we had a successful

book launch too (accompanied by some very tasty cakes). We sold them in Swindon Library when I did a presentation on the history of the Mat Factory and I sold some more when I plucked up courage and meandered round a few pubs in Highworth. They are of course available at the Lighthouse and the Library and at our meetings. When we have sold just a few more we shall publish another tome.

At one of our committee meetings, Jim Mitchell our Treasurer, advised that the War Memorial was looking very shabby and to cut an extremely long story short we obtained permission from the Town Council to refurbish it. This is a very technical job and requires scaffolding and specialist professional to do the work.



Well, I am delighted to say that behind the scene fund raising has gathered together the money and the work authorised. My challenge to you is for every member is to collect £5 - either by enterprise, digging deep in their pockets or asking their neighbours for a small contribution. This way we shall have enough to finish the job and perhaps have a small buffer for ongoing maintenance and most importantly we shall have all contributed. When the work is complete we shall ask the

churches and secular organisations to re-dedicate the memorial. This year we shall try and obtain as many membership fees either by post to Kay Brown at 23 Crane Furlong, Highworth, SN6 7JX or at the annual meeting. We really would appreciate your co-operation in this as it will save our legs and money on postage! I shall not be at the Annual Meeting and Dr. Bryan Lawton has kindly agreed to chair the meeting. We still need new committee members and in the medium term we shall need a Chairman. Please put your names forward if you would be prepared to join us and I will revert to Vice Chairman if a suitable person puts their head above the parapet. The responsibilities are not onerous - just a monthly meeting (in the pub) and if you have a skill we shall of course try to persuade you to put it to good use. Finally, thank you to the members for their participation and questions and for making the meetings lighthearted and fun. I also I thank the committee for all their hard work during the year and not forgetting our Archivist Ann Marie Murphy who is not a committee member - she is very appreciated.

Jacky Clark, Acting Chair

Archivist's Report



Following many years of looking and planning, the history room is finally a reality! Based in the Highworth Community Centre in The Dormers, it has proved to be an invaluable resource providing space to store all our items as well as space to work. We are currently in the process of collating and sorting all the

documents, photographs, maps and documents and I am being assisted in this monumental time consuming task by Diana Sims, whose time and expertise are really appreciated.

During the last year we have been lucky to have received a number of artefacts and documents to add to our ever growing archives. In addition to



these, we have also been loaned items, documents and photographs from various people to be used for our exhibitions and displays for which we are grateful, for without their generosity our shows would be a lot less exciting. The items passed to us include tableware and ceramics depicting Highworth and Hannington which was donated by Maureen Tanner and these were displayed in the library showcases earlier in the year. We were also delighted to receive photographs of various Highworth events through the years given by a member of Highworth Camera Club. Other documents given to us include detailed records showing the works schedule and materials used to construct Southfield School, a real asset to our buildings records.

As archivist I receive a steady stream of requests from people looking for information from our archives. This is a really enjoyable part of what I do and am happy to assist where I can. This will become a lot easier once we have completed cataloguing all the



items that we currently hold.

We are always looking to enhance our collection so if you have any items you think may be of interest to us please let us know. If you have

photographs, items or documents you would like to donate or loan to us so we could copy or scan we would be most grateful. Personally I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the committee members and others who have assisted me as archivist throughout the year while putting together the various exhibitions and displays and to those who toil away in the background collating all our records, they are the unsung heroes of the society.

Ann Marie Murphy, Archivist

Treasurer's Report

The Society's finances remain in good health. We are seeing a good return from our outlay towards the book publications. The raffle continues to generate a welcome source of income and our fundraising events have been a great success and I express my thanks to those involved. We are currently progressing well toward our target for the restoration of the War Memorial and I think you will agree this is an extremely worthwhile cause. Unfortunately our gift aid application has been turned down by HMRC which is a disappointment. I look forward to seeing you all at future meetings.



Jim Mitchell, Treasurer

Website Report



The society website continues to grow and is now well established in cyber space! The site now gets about 1500 hits per month which is a considerable increase over the last year and we continue to attract many visitors from abroad with visits from over 30 countries. The surprising thing is that the visitors are

not only from places like Europe or Australia where you would expect to see people researching family history, but also from far more exotic places such as Vietnam and Romania.

Over the next few months I will be taking a rest from managing the website and am pleased to say that I have had offers of help from various society members who will no doubt keep it all up to date and trouble free.

As ever, we are constantly looking for information and photographs to include on the site so if you have anything suitable please let us know.

In the meantime, happy surfing....

Paul Newton-Smith, Webmaster

Exhibitions and Displays

As you know, a large part of our society's work is planning and putting on various displays and exhibitions throughout the year. Most of these are based in Highworth or the surrounding villages and cover a wide range of subjects. This last year has been particularly busy what with the Highworth Festival, the Roman themed May Day Market, and a particular favourite of mine, the Fashion throughout the Queen's Reign to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. This took place in the council rooms in Highworth and due to the amazing generosity of society members and others included actual clothes from the period which people could pick up and touch as if they were in a clothes shop from the past. The clothes were from the early 1950's to the present day and certainly showed how tastes change through the years. On the same day Coleshill were hosting a weekend event and we were invited to put up a display on Coleshill House. This meant that we had two events on the same day, but as always, our team rose to the challenge and created a comprehensive display of facts and photographs of the house and grounds before and after the fire that destroyed it.



Another display was put together by Jacky Clark for the Made in Swindon exhibition held in Swindon. This was all about the mat factory and was created using various items and information from our archives. The Roman May Day event was a

big day for us. We not only had to create and man our stall on the day but also put on a really professional display in the library.

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DON'T FORGET...

OUR NEXT MEETING

Monday 30th September 7.30pm
United Reformed Church
The Empire Theatre
by Roger Trayhurn



Evening Lectures 2013 / 2014

All meetings to be held in United reformed Church unless otherwise stated.
Meetings start at 7.30 pm.

September 30th 2013	The Empire Theatre
October 28th 2013	Votes for Women
November 25th 2013	Alfred Williams: Our Forgotten Local Hero
December 16th 2013	The Tudor Maydes
January 27th 2014	The Berlin Wall
February 24th 2014	History of the Swindon & District Cycle Club
March 31st 2014	Local Family History of Casualties of WWI
April 28th 2014	Memories of an Evacuee

Roger Trayhurn
Claire Medhurst Williams
Graham Carter
Adrienne Grinyer
Kay Brown & Jim Mitchell
Eric Mulraney
Jacky Clark
Martin Vandervelde

Fortunately we were able to borrow artifacts from both the Corinium Museum in Cirencester and the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in Devizes. Not only did they loan us the replicas used to educate children in schools, but also real genuine roman items which certainly enhanced the show. We also had a Roman centurion on guard duty all day in the library to answer questions and keep the locals in check! A special thank you goes to Mike Stone who kindly lent us a Roman pot which was actually found here in



Highworth. The library displays were certainly different this year! First we had a display of china and tea services showing pictures of Highworth. These were really good

quality and made an interesting display about the various items that have been made to promote our town. This was followed by a show put on by our webmaster, Paul, who created a display on the history of Pinball. He installed two original machines in the library and going by the observations in the library comments book they were thoroughly enjoyed by all who played them. Many people said that it brought back many happy memories of childhood seaside holidays when pinball could be found in amusement arcades



all over the country. This was complimented by an informative cabinet display about how pinball started and its somewhat colourful history. As you can see, we have been really busy promoting the

history of Highworth wherever we can and I'm sure you will all join me in saying a big thank you to all those that work so hard to make it happen. So here's to the next year when I'm sure our exhibitions and displays will be even bigger and better.

Ann Marie Murphy, Archivist

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the members of the Highworth Historical Society will be held at the United Reformed Church, High Street, Highworth on Monday 30th September 2013 at 7.30 pm.

All members of the society are invited to attend.

A Really Busy Year!



This years Roman themed May Day Market was a great success



CONTACT US

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NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS
WANTED! Contact us for details