

Stonehouse History Group

Annual Report 2015 - 16

In May 2016 we celebrate the eighth anniversary of the formation of our group. Our membership is now 64 (up from 51) with 113 names on our contacts list. This year we have had 11 events, with an average attendance of 45, plus a visit to Purton Hulks and the Summer Afternoon in Lechlade.

A highlight of the year has been the completion of four local history Information Boards around the town and at the entrance to Doverow Wood. We are grateful for the support of the Co-Op, the Town Council and the Doverow Hill Trust in funding these. We are intending to create more boards over the next few years with leaflets to enable people to follow a heritage trail.

The Stonehouse History Group website, www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk, continues to be maintained and developed by Darrell Webb. This year he has also created a Facebook page for the Group, featuring historic photos, which has proved very popular. It reaches a wide range of people including former residents keen to revisit their past. Thanks to those people who have contributed photographs and memories of the town.

We have continued to interview local residents about their memories of Stonehouse. Shirley Dicker, Jim Dickson, and Vicki Walker have interviewed Tom Shiers, Audrey Broomhall, Tommy Smith, Diana Humphreys, David Smith, Maxine Winstone, Diana Bilton, Audrey Ricks, Eric Lewis and Tom Round-Smith on different aspects of life in Stonehouse. We also talked to Stanley Paskey (Ryeford Sawmills), Philip and Alex Walmsley (the Anderson family) and Nick Parkin (the Parkin family). Bob Lusty has talked to a number of people about working on local railways. We have still to write articles on many of these memories but we have used some of the information and photos in our displays and on our website.

We have continued with local walks and talks. We have taken two groups of Wycliffe College students on the Canal and Church walk. Talks to five different groups included "Stonehouse Then and Now", "Pubs of Stonehouse", "Some History of the Canal at Stonehouse", and "Stonehouse in the Second World War". We have made more use of our members at our monthly meetings at "Show and Tell" evenings and talks about our latest research. In April we welcomed 40 members of the McLannahan family from around the World for a visit to The Mount in Regent Street, the home of their ancestor Dr McLannahan. Eight of them attended our meeting to talk about their family.

We have increased our range of displays including a Timeline of the History of St Cyr's Church which was displayed during our visit there in June. We created a display on Immigration and Emigration for the GLHA Local History Day in October.

Our journals and calendars continue to sell well. We still have copies of all Journal issues available, including Issue 1 which we have had reprinted. Journal Issue 6 will be out soon.

Our bank balance has been reduced this year due to a substantial contribution towards the Information Boards. We are hoping that future boards will be sponsored either by local organisations or possibly by a grant from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Committee, May 2015 - April 2016

Chair - Jim Dickson

Vice-Chair - Shirley Dicker

Secretary - Vicki Walker

Treasurer - Andrew Walker

Committee - Valerie Blick, David Bowker-Praed, John Peters, Darrell Webb, Colin Wood.