

Stonehouse History Group

Annual Report 2009 -2010

Our second year has seen our group membership grow from 38 to 48 with additional visitors to our events making an average attendance of over 40 at group meetings. The group has continued to meet in the Town Hall on the second Wednesday of every month at 7.30 pm. We have acquired a laptop computer with the help of a grant from the Midcounties Co-operative which has enabled us to store scanned images and presentations.

We have a healthy bank balance, benefiting from members' generous contributions to monthly fund raising raffles. This money goes towards paying for the speakers and the hire of the Town Hall.

The committee has remained the same, consisting of:

Committee members

Chair – John Peters

Vice-Chair – Kate Meyer

Secretary – Vicki Walker

Treasurers – Myra Peters and Carole Crisp

Committee – Jim Dickson, Shirley Dicker, Francis Wathan

Committee Meetings

The committee has met approximately once a month to develop the group's activities and organise the events.

- Recording our events. We have used the digital recorder to record each of the speakers. We have written up some of the talks and acquired notes from some. An aim for the future is to produce an annual journal.
- We have continued to collect photographs and artefacts and display them at meetings. A space has been made available at Maidenhill School to store some of these.
- We have continued to interview Stonehouse residents and record their memories of the past.
- We are members of the Local History Committee of the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and representatives have attended its meetings.
- We are liaising with other groups to help produce Stonehouse Town Walks.
- Meetings and events have been organised.

Events of 2009 - 2010

May 13th 2009

At the AGM we had two successful presentations from committee members.

“A History of Standish” about the King family and the hospital by Shirley Dicker and “The Potter family and Beatrice Webb” by Francis Wathan. The notes and slides for these have been recorded to DVD.

June 10th 2009

David Smith, Berkeley Castle Archivist, visited to give a talk on Gloucestershire Victims and Villains. David based his talk on his research of the local court records and newspaper reports from Victorian times. He gave examples of the draconian punishments that criminals could expect to receive for minor misdemeanours which did not seem to deter them from breaking the law on further occasions.

July 5th 2009

A group of members visited the Tewkesbury Battlefield site and were accompanied on a walk by Steve Goodchild who gave a very knowledgeable talk about the battle and pointed out important landmarks around the site.

August 8th 2009

14 people visited Gigg Mill and Dunkirk Mill in Nailsworth for a guided tour.

September 9th 2009

Stonehouse History Group commemorated the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II by holding a special meeting based on wartime memories of local people. Members had collected together a large number of photographs, diaries, letters and artefacts from local people and these were displayed for the audience of 55 members and guests at the Park Junior School.

The evening began with committee member Kate Meyer opening a “Memory Box”, loaned by Cirencester Museum, which contained historic items such as gas masks, bomb shrapnel, a steel helmet and propaganda posters. Members of the audience responded with their memories of such things and also showed their own items which they had brought to the meeting. Stanley Dicker had come complete with his original evacuee label attached to his jumper!

A highlight of the evening was a reading by Les Pugh from his book of wartime memories, about his time in the Home Guard. Members were very interested to hear Mrs Betty Sargeant talk about her time as a morse code interceptor, working closely with the code breakers of Bletchley Park.

During the interval, everyone enjoyed a spread of food prepared by Shirley Dicker from authentic recipes of the time. There was chance to examine the materials on display and talk to many people about their memories of wartime.

To conclude the meeting Tony Burton talked about his life as a small child in Margate, where they were subjected to many bombing raids, and John Peters recalled amusing memories of being a child in wartime.

October 14th 2009

Russell Howes gave a talk with slides on "Gloucestershire in the time of the Tudors".

November 11th 2009

Our research groups reported on the work they had done over the year. Shirley Dicker gave an account of the history of Stonehouse Court. Jim Dickson summarised the work done on Oral History. The Industry and Development Group produced several presentations: Darrell Webb on Stonehouse buildings including the railway stations, Janet Hudson on the development of Stonehouse, Tony Burton on the water supplies and canals around the area and John Peters on the earliest days of Stonehouse.

December 9th 2009

"Hidden Gloucester". We were entertained by Philip Moss's excellent slides showing old buildings in Gloucester which we don't always see unless we look carefully. This was followed by drinks and food.

The **January 2010** meeting had to be cancelled due to the snowy weather making it difficult to get out.

February 10th 2010

"The Mills of Stroud". Steve Mills attracted our largest audience of the year with his talk and slides of local mills. He showed us many photographs he had taken of mill buildings and their equipment. He has created an impressive record of the development of the mills.

March 10th 2010

David Smith visited us again with his talk "William Tyndale and the Bible in English", demonstrating how influential Tyndale was in making the Bible accessible to the ordinary person.

April 14th 2010

"Village life in Mid-Victorian times – a look at Frampton-on-Severn in the 1860s" was an entertaining glimpse into the life of a variety of Frampton characters researched by Rose Hewlett