

BELBROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2011



Welcome to our first newsletter: it has only taken us 31 years to produce! The Society was set up in 1980 to encourage an interest in Belbroughton's history, and over the years we have carried out research,

published a number of books, organised talks and outings and developed a well stocked archive.

We welcome new members - no history degree required! It costs just £2 to join for life and to be added to our mailing list. But members and non-members alike are welcome to join in most of our activities – just keep an eye out in the usual places for details of our programme.

30th Anniversary Celebrations

We celebrated our 30th anniversary on 28 March 2010 with:

- A dinner at the Talbot for committee members, past and present
- A well attended exhibition in the Church Hall, with pictures, documents, maps and films from



our archives



- The burying of a time capsule at the school: the children filled it with a selection of artefacts to represent life at the beginning of the C20th. Who will open the box and when?

Talks

Last year's talks ranged from an insight into the people who built our cathedrals to a history of cheese-making, via a tour of the lost mansions of the Black Country. We have two more meetings this spring:

- 30 March: Canal Boat Women: Mike Miles will talk about the lives of the women who lived on the canal boats in the 19th century

- 13 April: we welcome David Simonds from Birmingham Museum who will tell us about the Staffordshire Hoard, the magnificent Anglo-Saxon treasure unearthed in 2009. This meeting is held jointly with Clent History Society

Both meetings are open to everyone: 8.00pm in Belbroughton Church Hall, £2 on the door.

Twelfth Night

We celebrated Twelfth Night with a 1940's party in the Church Hall. Paul Harding of Discover History entertained (and informed) us with tales of war-time Britain - did you know that vegetables planted on Anderson shelters could themselves become missiles if a bomb landed nearby, or that babies were unable to breathe in their gas masks? A bar and delicious pig roast kept austerity suitably at bay.

Next year, we have summoned our (1812) MP for Worcester, a renowned Regency dandy, to quiz him about the (Napoleonic) wars, the economic crisis, and life at Westminster, so make sure you mark Sat 14 Jan in your diaries.

Summer Programme

- Saturday 18 June, the Taming of the Shrew at Hagley Hall
- Thursday 7 July, visit to Bletchley Park: £32 to include coach travel, entrance, lunch and refreshments

All welcome. To book, contact Sarah Snowden on 01562 730772.

2011/12 Programme

All meetings held at 8.00 in the Church Hall, £2 entrance, except for 30 Nov when a light buffet will be available.

21 Sept: AGM (7.45) followed by Richard III, Max Keen

26 Oct: C19th Worcestershire Murders, Vanessa Morgan

30 Nov: Have Bell, Will Travel, Graham Sutherland

22 Feb: Black Country Burials, Ian Bott

21 Mar: Hagley Hall and the Lyttletons, Viscount Cobham

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We Need Your Home Movies

Do you have any cine, video or old reels hidden away? They might be anything from everyday movies of family life to filmed events and news stories. We are working with the Media Archive for Central England (MACE) to save this vital part of the



Midlands' screen heritage for posterity. In return for donating your film, **they will give you a free copy** on DVD! For more information:

- www.macearchive.org and look at their Full Circle project
- Sarah Bradley 731025 or Ruth Perry on 730278

We will be showing a selection of clips from the movies we have collected so far, in the school:

- Friday 6 May at 2.30 - children and their families only
- Saturday 7 May at 10.30 – all welcome

Please do come along: there is some great footage!

Oral History

Five of us were trained in the art of recording oral testimony and are now ready to talk to people who can remember past days in Belbroughton. Please do get in touch with us if you have memories of living here as a child, going to the school and playing with your friends, or perhaps working in the scytheworks, the shops and pubs, or the fields, or indeed any other aspect of village life. We would love to come and talk to you. You may even find you get a call from one of us inviting ourselves to call in for a chat!



Plaques

You have probably noticed that there are a number of plaques around the village, installed by the History Society to mark various interesting buildings and sites. This year we installed two more, one at the end of Dark Lane to mark the site of two mills, and one in the far corner of the Recreation Ground by an oak tree planted to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Do go and have a look at them.

In Memoriam

Sadly, two of our founder members died this year. **Mary Hinton**(89) was a fount of information about the village's history and its inhabitants and continued to answer queries from family historians until very recently; an accomplished artist, her beautiful line drawings illustrate "Buildings of Belbroughton". **Dorothy Cope** also had a huge knowledge of Belbroughton, having lived here most of her life and taught at the school; she wrote "The Scythemen", recording the history of the industry our village's renowned for, and "Shops and Shopping" about the days when you could buy almost anything in Belbroughton.

Committee

Sarah Bradley (Chair) 731025

Sarah Snowden (Secretary and Membership) 730772

John Kitson (Treasurer) 07525 462465

John Penlington (Speakers) 730888

James Bradley

Alan Curtis

Jean Griffiths

Chris Lofthouse

Sue Pawley

Ruth Perry

Paul Shotton

Website

www.belbroughton.com