

STOW and DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

AUTUMN 2014 NEWSLETTER NO 186

Forthcoming Events: -

Next Meeting – Friday, 3rd October at 7.30 pm

Our speaker on Friday, 3rd October is Andrew Hamilton. His talk is entitled “*Meet at Dawn, Unarmed*” – an account of his grandfather Captain Robert Hamilton’s experiences on the Front Line in the First World War and the famous Christmas Truce of 1914 in which he played a prominent part.

Annual Event

We’re having a bit of a change this year and have decided to make this year’s event a relaxing Lunch - to be held at the Mill House Hotel in Kingham on **Friday, 24th October, 2014**. For those that have not visited the hotel before it is an old converted flour mill nestling in 10 acres of lawned riverside gardens with a history dating back to the 11th C. A booking form with menu is enclosed; replies by Saturday, 18th October, please. We do hope you can come and join us!

December meeting – Friday, 5th December at 7.30 pm

Robert Harris will tell the story of “*Lord Nuffield and the birth of the Motor Industry*” – from bicycle repairer to creator of Morris Motors Ltd. and ultimately to one of this country’s greatest philanthropists.

Help for Open Meetings

A big ‘Thank You’ to all those who have already offered to help serve refreshments and set up the Hall for our open meetings. However, we really would appreciate a little more help so if you could possibly offer just one evening only during our season this would be very helpful and would enable us to share the tasks around. If you would like to help but have not put your name forward yet then please contact Rachel on 01451 833783 or email on rachelsurman@btopenworld.com

How Old is Your House?

We can still offer the chance for a few more owners of pre-1900 houses in Stow and the surrounding villages to be part of our talk in February. Our speaker from the Oxfordshire Buildings Record would like to use local examples for his talk entitled “*How old is your house?*” and this really is a wonderful opportunity to have a local expert do some research on your own individual house! He will be coming to Stow one day in the early autumn to do his research and visit in person anyone who wants to take part so if you would like any further information, then please contact Rachel on 01451 833783 or email her at rachelsurman@btopenworld.com

Stow Cotswold Festival – Saturday, 4th July 2015

As previously mentioned, next year's Festival will have an American theme and we'd be grateful for any ideas for displays and activities which the Civic Society could showcase on the day in St. Edward's Hall. Just contact any committee member with your thoughts.

My Home History Project

We would like to receive more submissions for this project please and Trish Ashley is very happy to help anyone who is finding difficulty in preparing or researching their home history.

The Archives

If you haven't already had the chance to do so then please take a look at the newly organised, catalogued and labelled Archives – which are located in the Local Studies area of the Library. You might find something you didn't know about Stow! Once again many thanks are due to Trish and her team for all their hard work.

Members' Questionnaire

Nigel has asked me to thank all members who have already returned the Members' Questionnaire; every response is extremely helpful to your Committee so it is still not too late to let us have your thoughts, opinions and ideas on our Society.

Bovis Homes Planning Application

A further enquiry is proposed into this proposal following the announcement in the press that CDC have sufficient land available to meet the future housing requirements of the Strategic plan (SHLAA).

This enquiry is due to take place on **Tuesday 4th November** at the CDC Council Offices, commencing at 10.00 am and is scheduled to last for 2 days. Members are encouraged to attend.

Visit to Frampton on Severn



The village is a real gem; not only boasting the longest village green in the country, it has not one but two historic houses and is situated close to the River Severn and the Sharpness canal. Thus it has a high water table and its low lying position provides an excellent environment for plants, which were far more lush and advanced than those in Stow.

Our tour started with coffee in the Wool Barn and a talk by the current owner's wife Janie giving the inside story of the history of the family and the houses. Both the Manor and the Court remain the property of the

Clifford Family who have past connections with Stow. The Cliffords were a Norman family who were granted possession of Clifford Castle, now ruined, in Herefordshire, on a cliff beside a ford on the River Wye – hence the name - as well as the estate at Frampton. Walter Clifford and his wife Isobel gave birth to a daughter, who became known as Fair Rosamund because of her beauty. She

was introduced to King Henry II and they became lovers, her influence securing the Clifford's tenure of the castle for many years.

The family were established in Frampton in the 11th C and the Manor house was built in stages between the 13th and 17th centuries. The Wool Barn has been dated to around 1550. A conducted tour around the house revealed many interesting features of this home – for the house is a family home and not a museum. The gardens were in full summer growth and a walk around gave an opportunity to see the exterior of the house and its development over the centuries.



Following lunch in the various eateries around the village we assembled at the entrance to Frampton Court for a contrasting view of an 18thC Palladian style house built in the 1730's by Richard Clutterbuck, John Clifford's great grandson. He passed it to his sister's grandson Nathaniel who took the name of Clifford by Royal consent. The family flourished throughout the 19thC but later Major Henry Clifford was killed in WWI leaving a baby daughter to inherit. She and her husband made their home in the Manor and later moved to Frampton Court. Their son Rollo inherited the Estate and he and his wife Janie continue to run it from the Manor.



Nowadays the Court is on view to the public and several rooms, including the Orangery, are available for guests who wish to spend a few nights in the beautiful surroundings of the Estate. We were shown some of the guest rooms which were beautifully presented and very enticing, despite sparing guests from some of the accoutrements of modern hotels!

We left feeling very privileged to have received such a warm welcome from the family who had held one of their family reunions in Stow a few years ago. The family have many connections with our town and the Civic Society was pleased to act as hosts on that occasion. A return visit in future would be very welcome as we now feel much closer to this family with its long history.

**Note: - there is an interview with Janie Clifford in the Sept 2014 issue of "Cotswold Life" together with a piece on the legend of Fair Rosamund Clifford".*



(Members at Frampton Court)

The QEII Field (aka the Cricket Field)

A recent application from a resident to have the QEII field, as it is now officially known, re-designated as a village green revealed an interesting history of this open space. It was originally owned by Evesham Abbey as part of the Manor of Mangersbury, but was acquired in 1250 by the Earl of Cornwall and then granted to Hailes Abbey. The people of Stow have had access to use it for leisure purposes for hundreds of years and sheep were once grazed there. It is known that Gloucestershire Cricket Club played a match there in 1870 and it is said that Jack Hobbs was part of the team! The original cricket pavilion was burnt down in the 1960's. During WWII the US Army used it for training tank drivers, which can't have done much for the surface of the pitch!

It was by then part of the Abbotswood Estate, but due to the cost of maintenance the owner of Abbotswood, Mr. Harry Ferguson, sold it to Stow for £1,000. There is a Public Right of Way across the field from the little iron gate at the end of Talbot Square to the far SW corner and it is thought that at one time this was the route of the road down to Lower Swell, now the B4068.

Despite this extensive research of the history of this open space and its lovely distant views, the Chairman of the Enquiry said his brief was to consider the application solely in the light of the use of the land in the previous 25 years! A decision is awaited.

Battlefield Survey

The good news is that the Battlefields Trust has obtained some funding which is enough to carry out a "low budget" limited survey of the battlefield area. But by the time it can be organised it is likely to be too late to get on some of the land this year before it is put under the plough, though this will leave a substantial area of possible locations, including the plateau near Donnington known as the "traditional" location where the monument has been placed. In addition there are complications due to the potential sale of the Abbotswood Estate, which owns much of the land, and the agents are understandably wary of allowing metal detectorists to roam across the fields when prospective purchasers are around. Also when a new owner or owners are in possession we will need to approach them to obtain permission to survey the land in the future.

Robert Hardy has followed up his May visit to Stow to view the battlefield monument near Donnington village and walk the "traditional" battlefield area to see whether his claimed ability to "see" the ghosts of those who died during the battle can provide any clue to the location. He was also able to view the area of the alternative site from a gateway on the road to Donnington off the Evesham Road. As we were unable to walk the landscape it seemed that no ghosts appeared, but he had some interesting observations, based on his experience, of the relative merits of the two sites.

We also took him to the field near Upper Swell known as "Bloody Jim" which local folklore suggests played some part in the battle, either at the time or afterwards. He felt nothing at this site and we were left still wondering how the field acquired its name. ***Who was Jim? Can anyone shed any more light on this particular mystery?***

Members may also be interested in an article written by Tony Spicer, a long time proponent of the “traditional” site, in the Campden Historical Society Journal, setting out his theory on the location of the original Saltway through Longborough which he considers was the route followed by Sir Jacob Astley on his way to Stow on the Wold and Chipping Norton. He also suggests that it was intended, once he met with the King’s men at Chipping Norton, that Sir Jacob and his forces would accompany them to Banbury to try and regain possession of the Town from the Parliamentarians. After many days, and nights, of marching this would have been a tall order indeed!

For those with access to the internet the link is www.chippingcampdenhistory.org.uk/, then *Publications*, then *Notes and Queries Vol VII then VII, 6, Spring 2014*.

WWI Concert

To commemorate the beginning of WWI St Edward’s Church held a concert consisting of recitals, songs and readings from Gloucestershire composers and poets. The theme of many of the readings echoed the longings of the young soldiers for their homes and the local Cotswold countryside so far away. The following poem was recited which, though not from that particular conflict, really embodied the heartache so many of them must have felt for this particular area of their homeland.

**“When I come home from the East”
Said the soldier,
“They say I’ll feel the cold.
But I shan’t care
If Stow’s still there –
If Stow’s still there on the Wold.”**

**“When I come home from the East”
Said the soldier,
“The North wind may be harsh.
But I shan’t mind
If I can find
Moreton still in the Marsh.”**

**“When I come home from the East”
Said the soldier,
“It’ll like as not be snowing.
But that’s naught to me
If I can see
The River Windrush flowing”**

A. W. B.

Published in Punch 29th November 1944