

DEBDEN LOCAL HISTORY RECORDERS GROUP

Report for Village Meeting May 2014

The Group had a very productive year and we were able to undertake a number of projects and activities which are listed below:

History exhibitions:

In December we took part in the Christmas Fair with an Exhibition of documents, photographs and other interesting items recently loaned/donated to the History Group. Henry Blackie's entry in the competition "A Nativity Scene" was awarded joint first prize.

Talks:

We organised two talks in the Autumn which proved very popular and were well attended:

- Jeremy Collingwood in October on "Sir Thomas Smith, Scholar, Statesman and Son of Saffron Walden"
- Dr Martin Bridge in November on "Dendrochronology, An Introduction to Tree-Ring dating"

The Spring talk on the Debden Charities was put on hold, partly because of the unavailability of the Village Hall in the evening during the week. It will be revisited at a later date and perhaps be part of a joint talk on the Debden Fire.

Photographs

A small group of members attended a workshop in August on how to upload photographs on the Debden website. Ben Griffin has been working very hard to revamp the village website and when this is launched we will upload as many as possible of the photographs.

Oral history

Oral history is a very important aspect of history recording as it allows us to keep a record of voices, accents and experiences of Debden people. We are privileged to have a recording made a few years ago by Virginia Chapman with Tom Bland reminiscing about growing up in Debden. Ursula Lyons' recent interview with Colin Luckley is being transcribed by Margaret Andrews from the original audio recording and will be stored as a word document together with Nora Woolner's interview.

It is hoped that more senior Debden residents will agree to have their memories recorded on the Group's recording equipment.

Other

The Group held its annual Social Evening in January when we had a showing of a compilation DVD of the Millennium events held over a weekend in May 2000. The showing was made possible thanks to the efforts of Colin Magness, one of our committee members who undertook to edit the many hours of footage into a very comprehensive and amusing historic document which will provide a snapshot of our village for future generations.

LOANS AND ACQUISITIONS

We are grateful to Virginia Chapman for donating to the History Group a large number of documents and photographs collected over the many years that she and Bobby lived in Debden. We are also very much indebted to Bridget Fry for donating a large number of photographs from Trevor's collection.

Storage for our archives is now a very pressing problem. In many ways, we are victims of our success in that we have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and the generosity with which Debden residents, both long standing and recent, have offered us documents, photograph and other material for recording. We hope that some provisions will be made in the plans for the New Village Hall to provide safe storage for our archives and equipment.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership has steadied around 60 paid up members. However, in the last few months we were saddened by the passing of John Mawer, Bob Taylor, Arthur Prince and Connie Chrystal. We also mourn the loss of valuable supporters like Dennis Camp, Tom Bland and David Bunting who have enriched the archives of our History group with many important documents. And we said goodbye to Virginia and Bobby Chapman and Tom and Sue Duncan who have moved away from Debden

If we are to continue to offer the same level of activities we will need to keep up this level of membership and, even better, increase our numbers, so, do encourage your friends and neighbours to join our Group.

Elisabeth Blackie