

# MALDENS AND COOMBE HERITAGE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2013

AT NEW MALDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Mary greeted all members (50)

There was an apology for absence from: John Durkin.

There were 5 new members Christine Widdows, Rochelle Lisbon, Dick Riches, Roy Hicks, Nicholas Howgill,

The minutes of the previous meeting were signed.

Mary thanked the church for the use of their meeting place, and for their catering facilities.

We had produced 500 Christmas Cards (125 x 4 Designs) at a cost of £240 plus bags. These had been produced by a printer called Fresh Printing and represented a saving of £120 on the price originally quoted from another source. We were selling them at £4 for each pack of 4, meaning we had to sell 60 packs to break even. We had already sold 34 packs at the farmers market, and any which remained unsold could be held until next Christmas.

We had manned, and womanned, a table at the Coombe Vale Community Day held at Coombe Girls. We were grateful to Joan Beer and Maureen Wilkins for helping with the distribution of leaflets etc. Considerable interest had been shown in the society by the public, and we had also encouraged the children to get involved in their local history.

As mentioned above the Farmers Market on 5<sup>th</sup> October had been a great success both in the sale of Christmas cards and in the interest shown by the public in the society. The weather had been kind with only a little rain and the publicity attracted by the town crier and Morris dancers had helped attract the crowds. Thanks again to Joan and Maureen and Julian for their help.

A successful Heritage Walk had taken place for members on 6<sup>th</sup> October, and another one was planned for the 20<sup>th</sup>. These would be along the Coombe Road as far as the Royal Oak, and back down again led by Julian.

Trevor Williams our speaker gave a very interesting talk on the history of Tudor Williams department store. He said that the store had opened on St David's Day 1<sup>st</sup> March 1913. The opening hours were 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 9pm on Saturdays. Soon the First World War started and Tudor joined the navy leaving Norah to run the store. On his return expansion took place with the shop being extended down the back further into Cambridge Road. Ransoms next door was bought, and this enabled the shop to start its large window displays along the Malden Road and also to develop the arcade within the store. These same windows were blown out in the bombing in August 1940.

Trevor started his career in retail at Harrods where he was referred to as “laddie”. The deterioration in his father’s health brought him back to Malden where he gradually took over authority for the business. He found it vastly different to Harrods and was told to save all string and fold any brown paper to be used again as most goods were parcelled up with brown paper and string.

The business continued to acquire other shops like Salters and Perkins, and about 32 years ago an escalator and lift were installed to reach the extra floor which had been built on top, with the sculpture on the front of the building representing “the family” erected at the same time. His son in law John Morris took over as company secretary and the business is now part of AIS (Associated Independent Stores) with other stores that have been acquired such as Elphicks (Farnham) and Knights (Reigate). They have also bought shops in Cobham, Dorking, and Farnham (Millets).

Trevor spent 45 years buying in linen and was on the floor of the shop for the whole day other than meeting reps. Trevor is not worried about the so called demise of the High Street and still enjoys shopping which he says is unusual for a man.

In AOB Mary reminded members about the Christmas Party with 20 tickets sold at £5.75 each. Chris also told members that Ann Packer would be coming to New Malden on 20th November and addressing an assembly at Coombe Girls School. Robin reminded members that Colindale Newspaper Library would be closing in November and a reading room would reopen at the British Library for microfilm only in February next year.

The meeting closed with the next planned for Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November.