

MALDENS AND COOMBE HERITAGE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 25th FEBRUARY 2015

AT NEW MALDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Mary, greeted all members (35)

There were apologies for absence from Anthony Evans, John Durkin, Liz and Don Bavington, and Beryl Bizodis

There was one new member. Marjorie Barnard

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed.

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

The Working Group reported that it had not met, but they were keeping an eye on the two developments which had most effect on the local heritage, namely the planned houses/flats on the Coombe Road and the Cocks Crescent construction. Anthony was intending to speak to the leader of the council on 7th March as part of his question and answer session at the Malden Centre. Also at the Malden Centre and the library there is to be an exhibition on these developments. Two points to be born in mind is that there is at present no dedicated conservation officer on Kingston Council, and also that the War Memorial is not listed.

The Society had enjoyed their visit to Warren House where they were greeted by Vicky Good the daughter of the owner. She took everyone on a tour of the property, and afterwards we enjoyed tea and scones. Twenty three members and their guests took part viewing the house which was first built in 1860 for Hugh Hammersley a partner in the banking firm of Cox and Co. After Hammersley's death in 1884, the house was purchased by Baron Wolverton who added to both the property and the gardens. The Wolvertons continued to occupy the property until 1894 when it passed into the hands of George Cawston a stockbroker who because of financial pressure sold the property in 1907 to Lady Padget a good friend of Edward VII who visited the property. The Padgets lived at Warren House until 1954, when it passed to ICI who used it as a conference and training centre until the 2000s when it owned by a private family but still used for events and conferences.

The Society then enjoyed a short film about Cyril Barton VC and the action that earned his award. Both Joyce and Cynthia (Cyril's sisters) were featured in the film which was produced by Forces TV. This was followed by an update on the pavilion at Barton Green by Mary where we were informed that the building was to be demolished in April but the site retained for potential community use. It is hoped that the Heritage Society is involved in any wording used in a suitable plaque to be placed on the site. The Society have agreed to publish a booklet about the three Victoria Cross recipients (Barton, Bazalgette, and Firman) and hope to have it ready later this year.

We were then given a talk on New Malden's Navy by our member Nick Howgill. Nick proceeded to relate some details of naval recruits from World War One who appear on our War Memorial. He also told us why some men/boys would have chosen the Navy in preference to the army and what their initial training would have involved. He also related the different types of ships they would have served on. It was a very informative talk well illustrated and it was obvious that Nick was very knowledgeable about his subject. He answered questions afterwards.

In AOB Julian reminded members that he was still looking for recollections for the Society's second booklet, and related that the bridge connecting Alric and Dukes Avenues had been built upon making it practically impossible to view any of the trains passing underneath. He said that he would investigate further and try to get the authorities to remedy the situation to some degree. He was also on the lookout for the source of an unpleasant smell! Not an odour from today of course, but something that was emitting from a factory in the Malden area during the Second World War. This factory was involved in important war work and this attracted crickets and rats as well as giving off a pungent odour. Julian speculated what work may have been involved but was anxious to locate the whereabouts of the offensive building.

The meeting closed with the next planned for Wednesday 1st April 2015