

MALDENS AND COOMBE HERITAGE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 28th OCTOBER 2015

AT NEW MALDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Mary, greeted all members (43)

There were apologies for absence from Dick and Anita Riches, Peter Goodchild, Julian McCarthy, Frank Dobson, Marion Moats, Geoff Hunt, Lynne Finnerty, and Pat Farr

There were no potential new members

The minutes of the last meeting was taken as read and signed. It will appear on the Society website at a later date.

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

Members of the committee (Maureen, Robin, and Joan) had attended both schools Richard Challoner and Coombe Boys to present the Lloyd Award and runner up prizes to the boys. The presentation at Challoners took place at the morning assembly for the year on 16th October and Maureen announced the winner (Alistair Stockley) and presented the award together with a book token for £20. The following Monday (19th October) Maureen and Joan attended at Coombe Boys to present the runners up with their book tokens. Fittingly, this took place in Barton Hall which enabled the school to be told about the Society's forthcoming publication concerning the three Victoria Cross recipients.

Julian reported back on the Heritage Walk which took place on 10th October. In which 12 members took part. The walk which, as before, covered the Groves and Kingston Road, before finishing at the Fountain roundabout was much enjoyed by all that took part. Expertly led by Julian, many commented that they thought they knew the Groves but had learnt a lot, just in a couple of hours. Thanks were given to Julian for all his work both before and on the day.

We had also enjoyed our visit to Coombe Conduit on 24th October. About six members took advantage of the kind offer from Dr David Kennedy to show us around. Although the weather was not kind we found that the conduit building offered ample protection from the elements. David was very knowledgeable concerning the building, history, and use of the conduits which used to supply fresh water to the apartments at Hampton Court. The building is believed to date from about 1540. The two buildings are connected by a passageway 81 foot long. The chamber nearest to the entrance is about 10 sq ft containing a lead lined cistern which is 6 ft deep. The water is so clear, it is only discernible when disturbed. The other chamber has three separate rooms and is about 10 sq ft with another lead lined tank fed by spring water. Pipes lead from here to the other cistern and eventually to the palace.

David Rymill (assisted by his parents) then gave us a very interesting talk on Old Malden and Worcester Park. He stated that people had lived in the district for over 2000 years, but it is only when we reach the Middle Ages that we know more about them as individuals. The area known as Cuddington was involved in dramatic changes in the 16th century when Henry VIII built Nonsuch Palace and a large part of the area became both Nonsuch and later Worcester Park.

After the demolition of the palace the area was devoted mainly to farmland and the pursuit of agriculture. The arrival of the railway in 1859 late saw Worcester Park become a suburb with various estate companies building villas for professional commuters. This in turn brought about the provision of schools and churches for the community.

The First World War brought about sadness and losses for most of the community and their names were recorded on local memorials in an act of remembrance. The railways were electrified in the 1920's and a branch line connecting Malden to Chessington was constructed in the 30s. New shops were built at Plough Green and Malden Manor, and many parts of the area were used as sports grounds.

The area suffered extensively from bombing during the 2nd World War both from conventional bombs in 1940/1 and flying bombs in 1944.

David was thanked by the members and sold a number of his books that he had written on the area.

In AOB members were reminded about the Christmas Party on Saturday 12th December, tickets were still available at £7. Members were also told that the Society would be operating a stall at the Farmers Market on 7th November when the new book "We knew you were coming" would be launched and signed copies would be available, together with Christmas cards and copies of MWAWD. Members were also advised that the Society would be laying a wreath at the Remembrance Day service on November 8th.

The meeting closed with the next planned for Wednesday 2nd December.