

MALDENS AND COOMBE HERITAGE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13th JANUARY 2016

AT NEW MALDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Mary, greeted all members (32)

There were apologies for absence from Alan Oakley, Anthony Evans, Chris Coke, Alison Rawlings, Glyn Alpe, Graeme Hodge, Marjorie Barnard, Jean Lyons

There was one potential new member Audrey Paine

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.

Amy Graham told us about the new premises for what we knew as the Local History Room. This was now called the Kingston History Centre and based at the Guildhall in what used to be Court No 1. Most of the resources available were similar such as street directories from 1890-1970 and electoral registers from 1920 onwards. There were also other resources for family history, house history, and school history etc. Unfortunately, there would be no access to original copies of the Surrey Comet, but microfilm copies were available and help would be given as to how to use the readers. You could also view the original cells.

Opening hours were Wed-Sat 10-5pm with late night opening on Thursday until 7pm. No parking was available but Mary mentioned there were 3 disabled bays. Amy reminded us that the staff were putting on a panto on 28th January at 5.30pm. The performance had originally taken place at the Royal County Theatre about 100 years earlier.

Robin and Mary related their understanding of the proposed Fountain Roundabout scheme as officers of the Council were unable to attend to give us an update. It was felt that a more detailed explanation was in order and Robin would try to get some representative from the council to attend.

There then followed a lively discussion about the shops which stood between the railway station and Dukes Avenue and the railway to Grafton Road together with memories of Beverley Park and Brook. (Details to follow).

Robin reminded members that at the March (30th) meeting, we would be voting for the Town Pride Award for the retail outlet that had given the best service to the members over the years.

Our speaker Frank Dobson then related the second chapter in the history of his family. They were involved in the wire trade up to the First World War where they diversified into mills bomb holders

and made millions of splints.. The family was wealthy by this time, but the money was lost when the partner in the business absconded.

The family set up a stall at Hampton Court Station selling flowers in the summer and gramophone records in the winter. They passed up the opportunity to buy shares in Decca, and moved into 3 London Road Kingston where they went into photography and developing blueprints.

During the 2nd World War they worked exclusively for the Admiralty, and afterwards went into dyline printing moving to 30 London Road (now oxfam), which had been an old inn. This was in the time of flash powder, where you had only one chance to take a picture indoors. At weddings the last photograph normally taken was the cutting of the cake, and film was taken to the chemist for developing.

The company became the leading sewer photographers and undertook the photography for the Victoria Line on the underground where every crack had to be photographed for insurance purposes. Photographic work at Kingston Power Station also took including taking the lift to the top of the chimney. Photography of the Royal Family soon followed, and pictures for Country Life and the company moved to the old Palmer and Harvey building in Fairfield Road. Work started with Gestener printers as the company moved more into the printing business. Worked for the French Government during the Algiers crisis and the company moved to Eden Street, and then to a new factory in Ferry Road Teddington which they found was prone to flooding and burnt down soon after being sold. Finally, moved to Orchard Road in Richmond. The company printed facsimiles of the log of the Beagle and the log of the Bounty, together with I me mine by George Harrison.

Frank was the last president of LPIA and LMPA and trustee of the printers pension fund. (see attached).

In AOB members were told that the letters to schools in connection with the Lloyd Award would be sent out later that month to give them more notice than previous years. Members were also informed that there would be a series of public consultation events for all residents to take place in early spring concerning the Cocks Crescent development.

Robin also asked whether members could remember any locations of Police Call Boxes within the local area. Two were suggested one by the Cambridge Estate and the other by the George and Dragon on Kingston Hill.

The meeting closed with the next planned for Wednesday 24th February 2016.