

# MALDENS AND COOMBE HERITAGE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 26<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2016

AT NEW MALDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Mary, greeted all members (41) for the meeting.

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

Our speaker was Lucy Furlong who chose as her topic her recent poetry map “Over The Fields”.

Lucy Furlong, her Dad and her son have been purposefully exploring and experiencing anew their local strip of greenbelt, which sits on the borders of Surrey and Greater London, and is bisected by the River Hogsmill.

Known by generations of the Furlong family as ‘*Over the Fields*’, it was a recognisably rural reminder of Ireland for Lucy’s paternal grandparents, who arrived in Tolworth from their native Wexford, during the Second World War.

For her dad, Nicholas, it was his and his siblings’ ‘second home’, a place for adventures and escapades, when they were growing up in the 1950s and 1960s; and where Lucy and her sister walked with Gran, and spent time with the rest of their family and friends.

It’s not just a pamphlet, this map invites you to interact. One side shows the map, while the other is full of poems. On a bright day, you can see through the paper, palimpsesting poems unto location. A QR code allows you to view the location of poems on a Google Map, a text bubble invites you to email a photo of yourself rambling with the map in those fields. A map key also provides the reader with more information on points of interest such as St John the Baptist, a Grade II listed Jacobean church.

There are a couple of concrete poems, like ‘Horseradish’, shaped like the vegetable, which feel like a picket of sorts. It becomes the symbol of how Lucy’s grandmother ‘knew the land; / knew / this / land.’ The longest poem, ‘Six Acre Meadow’ contemplates in four parts this place that was ‘just “the field the other side of the second bridge”’, which was always ‘not a destination, a “nothing” place’. It transpires in the denouement that it not only has a name, but was the site of Sir John Everett Millais’ *Ophelia*:

I walked along the bank one day with Gran and my sister  
the dark shaded banks after the second bridge,  
always looking for that unseen space, that  
place out of sight, always near, following her  
as she looked for that unseen space, that  
place out of sight, always near, immortalised.

Lucy read a number of her poems during her talk and one of our members remarked that her voice seemed to suit such a reading. It was a different, and very enjoyable talk.

Ken Cowdery from the Kingston Upon Thames War Memorial Association then talked to us about their scheme to “adopt soldiers” who had fallen the First World War.

He had hoped to be armed with replica dog tags, information sheets and a Book of Remembrance, as the Association and Kingston History Centre were trying to find local ‘adopters’ for every local man who died in the battle of the Somme.

They had already had success from passers-by, scouts, cadets and schools and even the Mayor and local MP James Berry had adopted a man but there was still a long list of those waiting for adoption. There were a number of takers amongst our members after Ken’s talk.

Members then for the first time went into group discussions, which seemed to be a success.

After these discussions members were told about the Christmas Party which will be held at the Baptist Church on 7<sup>th</sup> December. Food and drink would be provided and a quiz with prizes was being organised.

During AOB members were told about the big service at Christchurch on 4<sup>th</sup> December to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its consecration. Also, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St James Players where celebrations were taking place from Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October and Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October at 7.45pm. There was also an exhibition of Surrey in The Great War on 30<sup>th</sup> November at the United Reformed Church in Kingston.

Robin told members about a new road in Malden called Filbert Terrace which contained the houses which had been built on the site of the former vicarage.

Finally, through the representation of the Society at the Farmer’s market we had taken £39.00.

The meeting closed with the next one planned for Tuesday 30th October 2016