

MALDENS AND COOMBE HERITAGE SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 26th APRIL 2017

AT NEW MALDEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Mary, greeted all members (29) for the meeting.

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

Our main speaker was Fiona Fisher the curator supported by David Falkner the director who gave a very interesting insight into Dorich House. The house was designed in 1935 and built as a studio house by a builder from Kent. It houses as its main collection the work of Dora Gordine from 1920-1960. Also, items from Russian Art and Design from Dora's husband Richard Hare. The house was built in 1936 the area chosen with Richmond Park next door together with nice views. Richard died in 1966 and failing eyesight of Dora meant that she was restricted to living on the top floors where she died in 1991.

The Russian Collection was on display, but this type of art was falling out of favour and so Kingston University took on the building with the sale of part of the Russian Collection covering the renovation costs, which took place in the 1990s.

The house was opened on a regular basis to the public in 2015 on Thursdays Fridays, and Saturdays at 11.30am. The house is located over three floors. Its principal ground and first floor spaces- a plaster studio, a modelling studio, and a gallery, were originally devoted to the display and production of Gordine's work. Above them a more modest top floor apartment served the couple's domestic needs.

Dora had been born in Latvia in 1895 and had met Richard first when he acted as one of her sponsors. She had lived in Paris during the 1920s so the house was furnished partly with French furniture and Russian furniture. Shoes were taken off on arrival and there was a mixture of decorative arts both European and Russian.

The judging of the Junior School Art competition then took place with the nine entries divided into two age groups 5-7 and 8-11. The standard of work was good, and the children had drawn and painted with enthusiasm.

Mary gave an update on the Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the Plough Pond and asked for volunteers to become part of the steering group for work which could start in September.

A very enjoyable quiz then took place called "Lucky Sevens" organised by Robin and run between 4 teams of seven based on questions from 1957/67/77/87.

This was followed by Julian's Pot Luck in which he read an extract from The Battle Of Dorking by George Tomkyns Chesney written in 1871 it related an invasion of Britain by a German speaking country not identified. Britain is conquered, and its empire broken up.

In AOB Robin advised members that Amy Graham who worked in the Kingston archives and had given a number of talks to the Society was leaving her position as Local History Officer and he would be sad to see her go and had sent her best wishes. He also drew members' attention to three upcoming talks at Kingston Museum which might be of interest. Namely Michael Davison 8th June "Royal Kingston and The Dukes Of Cambridge", Shaan Butters 28th September "Kingston At Leisure" and Julian McCarthy 23rd November "More Hidden Kingston".

The meeting closed with the next one planned for Wednesday 31st May 2017.