

TWYFORD AND RUSCOMBE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
40th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY MARCH 12th 2018

Secretary's Report 2017

The society has enjoyed another busy year, the 40th since its creation, but not without some sadness. The death of Doreen Scott, our trips organiser in November was a great shock. She will be sorely missed and our condolences go to Maurice, her husband. Our thoughts are also with James Fort, our chairman on the death of his wife Marie. A longtime member and supporter of the society, John Whiting also passed away this year. This has been my first year as secretary and it is with regret that I recall these sad events.

However, I must thank Audrey Curtis for the smooth transition in handing over the secretarial duties and for her help particularly when I was in Australia for 1 month.

The 40th anniversary was marked with an exhibition in the library showing some of the changes which had taken place in Twyford and two special editions of the journal were devoted to events during that time and a commemorative pen was given to every member.

Speakers for the year were varied. We heard from Alan Cobham about making Britain air-minded with the possibility of refuelling in the air. Jaye Windmill talked about the emergence of Britain and the complicated pattern of invaders, tribes and kingdoms before William the Conqueror. John Brearley introduced the Siege of Reading by playing music on his keyboard which would have been heard about the time of the Civil War in 1642. Valerie Alasia reminded us of the duties of the Henley Workhouse where Townlands hospital is today and its care of children and vagrants. In June, Judith Halls brought her detailed knowledge of Disraeli and Hughenden Manor to give a very interesting talk which we hoped to follow up with a visit. Malcolm Nelson enlightened us with his stories of smuggling during his time as a customs officer. By complete contrast we were delighted with a pictorial trip along the Thames during Swan Upping time by Sue Milton. The last speaker of the year regaled us with charming photographs of largely unknown little churches in Berkshire and South Oxfordshire.

A successful outing to Charles Darwin's family home in Downe was enjoyed by members in April

The summer social event was again held in the Scott's lovely garden on a very pleasant Saturday in July. We sincerely thank Maurice Scott for the use of his house and garden. Also in summer the Donkey Derby and the summer fete afforded us the opportunity to advertise the society as a village organisation. The progress of the heritage osier beds was pictorially represented and they subsequently contributed to the Twyford in Bloom entry. The erection of new heritage boards at the Almshouses and the shop in station rd. also helped Twyford to gain a silver-gilt award. We have to thank our committee members Graham Starkie and Gerry Wise for their continuing hard work in this connection.

News of our meetings is recorded and sent to Berks Local History association by Denise Wilkin. We thank her for the time taken to keep us publicised in their magazine. Seven members attended an interesting study day in Ewelme which was organised by that association so it is an important link to maintain.

In December the weather was bitterly cold and icy for the evening of the Christmas party, however a goodly number of members turned up for the Bring and Share supper and listened to the MERL players telling stories about local rural people who are depicted in the newly refurbished galleries at the museum.

The society's website is efficiently kept up to date by Gerry Wise and is available for anyone to make enquiries. Just recently an author from New York required information about William Gordon Stables, proof indeed that the website is well used.

Finally my thanks to the chairman and all committee members for seeing me through this my "rookie" year. I look forward with pleasure to our 41st year.

Jean Poulter