



CODSALL & BILBROOK HISTORY SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER NO 81

July/August 2023

## **The Railway to Wombourne**

An illustrated talk by Ned Williams

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September

Codsall Village Hall 7.45pm

Dear Members,

Here is my Chairman's Report – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year.

It came as a bit of a shock to realise that it is 25 years since the History Society took off as an independent society rather than a part of the Civic Society. Its roots go back even further to 1986 when John Blamire-Brown called for anyone interested in local history to attend a meeting in the High School staffroom. Little did I know when I went along of the changes that evening was going to bring to my life. John, being the person he was, inspired everyone to volunteer to do something for a new History group. So began my recording of Codsall residents and the involvement with future publications. This little offshoot of the Civic Society stayed small, with just a couple of meetings a year about items of local interest, until the demise of the Civic Society in 1998. When this happened the History group refused to finish and with David Whitehead and myself at the helm, ably backed up with Margaret Dean, Clifford Bennett, Janet Adams and Bill Stone as Treasurer, it became the History Society.

As founder members, Margaret and I still carry on with a loyal committee that, except for members leaving through ill health, has remained unchanged to the present day. However, if it is to continue into the future we need new blood and fresh enthusiasm. Another weekend exhibition would be of great interest to the residents of our expanding village, but would require a separate Working Party.

That's for the future. As Chairman I look back over the events of the past year:

The new Programme began on a high note with Andrew Lound once again keeping us enthralled as he took us through Shackleton's heroic 800-mile voyage in a lifeboat to take his men to safety. Andrew returns next May for another epic event. This time he will be following the career of Scott of the Antarctic. An evening not to be missed. In October we revisited our history as we were taken, by Phil Clayton along ancient trackways, Roman roads and buildings,

packhorse routes and later on turnpike roads, all there in our landscape. We have all heard of Jack the Ripper, but Lynda Sharpe in November concentrated on the stories of the women who became his victims. She brought them to life as well as putting forward some of the suggestions as to who the Ripper might have been.

Then came a very different pre-Christmas meeting. The audience were taken back in time to the customs and activities of a Tudor court. We learnt about the importance of the moves in Tudor dancing. We watched demonstrations before being encouraged to take to the floor ourselves. We were becoming quite accomplished when the evening came to an end. The Tudor theme continued into January when Pamela Manning raised a few eyebrows with her evening dealing with sexual problems in Tudor times.

February's talk took us into the Black Country as the area recovered from wartime austerity and into the boom years of the 1960s. Simon Briercliffe was a competent guide through these changes and we could recognise many local landmarks, sadly some of them have since disappeared, although a few have found a new home at the Black Country Museum. In March, Mary Bodfish shone a light onto the way the working-class people amused themselves, with the emphasis on the Black Country. Heavy drinking and betting were well known to us, but we may not have been so knowledgeable about the prevalence of bull baiting and cock fighting. The names of local landmarks give clues to these past activities: The Bull Inn in Codsall; The Bull Ring in Birmingham, to name just two.

The irrepressible Max Keen, as always, built up the few facts known about Hereward the Wake, posing the question as to whether he was the inspiration behind the story of Robin Hood, living as almost as a guerilla fighter later on. We also had the opportunity to feel the weight of the 11<sup>th</sup> century fighting armour. To finish our indoor talks we went back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Julie Ann Cooper as she became Florence Nightingale. With her we were able to look back over Florence's remarkable life, to share her achievements and disappointments. A truly remarkable presentation to complete our year of talks.

The coach trip went extremely well. Once again the rain stayed away and the temperature was ideal for getting around. There was plenty to interest everyone at Calke Abbey, with the house, the Church, the wonderful walled gardens and woodland walks for the more adventurous.

Our theme for the Christmas Tree at St Nicholas Church on this occasion was the life of our late Queen Elizabeth. We had a very enjoyable afternoon picking out photographs to illustrate her long life and service to her country.

**Website** – Hopefully some of you have accessed our newly revamped website at [codsallhistory.org](http://codsallhistory.org). The Newsletter and the Joining Form will be available on the website. Our Publications may be ordered through the website or purchased from Codsall Library if they are not available at our meetings.

**Bakers Nursery – Boningale.** I have been given a collection of photographs of groups of people who worked at Boningale, but no names. If anyone is able to help please get in touch with her.

**Beating the Bounds walk** was successfully completed once again this year.

Judy Davies  
Chairman

**RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION 2023-2024 (ONLINE FORM)**

Please make your cheque for **£10 per person** payable to **Codsall & Bilbrook History Society** or cash and return it to the Membership Secretary:

**Mrs Margaret Dean, 162 Wood Road, Codsall, WV8 1DW**

**I/we enclose a subscription of £.....**

**Name /s.....**

**Address .....**

**.....**

**Postcode ..... Telephone number .....**

**Email: .....**

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**NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE for the Autumn AGM**

I wish to nominate:

Chairman: ..... Membership Secretary .....

Treasurer: .....

Committee (1) ..... (2) .....

(3) ..... (4) .....

(5) ..... (6) .....

Name of Proposer ..... Seconder .....

***If you wish to nominate a person please send this form to Margaret Dean with your subscription.***

*Present Committee – Judy Davies (Chairman), Peter Birkert (Treasurer), Margaret Dean (Membership Secretary), Stephen Skinner (Programme Secretary), Alfred Turley, Val Holland, Janet Evans, Gill Gogle.*

**New nominations / people willing to help with sound/ publicity/ exhibitions are more than welcome. Please include a note if you would be interested.**