

THE 109th MEETING OF AYNHO HISTORY SOCIETY HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, AYNHO
ON WEDNESDAY 31st OCTOBER 2018

Present:- Keith McClellan – Chairman
Peter Cole – Secretary

1) Business

Keith said that in advance of Armistice Day Andrew Bellamy had prepared details of each of the soldiers from Aynho who had given their lives in World War One, and are remembered on our Church War Memorial. As announced in the November Newsletter on each day up until Armistice Sunday there will be a short service at 5 pm to remember each soldier. This will only last about a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes.

He said that at the AGM next month Andrew would be giving us details of this. In addition it was planned to issue a survey to each member to find out how the past year had gone down, and to ask if anyone had ideas for how the Society should proceed.

Peter said that he had brought the Society's Accounts up to date and would be giving details at the AGM next meeting.

2) Hitler's Retirement plans in England after he had occupied Britain by Douglas Ward.

Doug opened by saying "Have you noticed that your silver spoons go black if you do not clean them regularly." This is because silver and its compounds are light sensitive. It all began in 1827 with the Frenchman Nicephore Niepce who was the first person to produce a photographic image. It took an exposure of eight hours but in 1838 he joined up with Louis Daguerre using a silver compound to produce the Daguerreotype. Both these results only produced a single image and it was William Henry Fox Talbot of Lacock Abbey in 1845 who produced a negative from which copies could be made.

It was soon realized that, with our two eyes, we see things in three dimensions and by 1850 stereoscopic photographs were being made. Each eye sees a slightly different view and our eyes have to converge to focus. The brain is able to measure the convergent angles and enable us to understand distance. There are special cameras that take two photos 2.5 inches apart simultaneously to make stereo pairs for viewing. A single lens camera can also be used by sliding the camera through this distance using a small platform on a tripod.

This kind of photography has been a hobby of Doug's for many years and in the Photographic Museum in Vevey, Switzerland, he saw a machine called a Taxiphote which enables 25 stereo slides to be viewed in sequence. After some years of searching a Taxiphote turned up in 1987 in an antique shop in Deddington. Doug bought this machine and found about three hundred slides in the cupboard at the base of it. This Taxiphote was found to have belonged to Major Foster of Apley Hall near Bridgnorth in Shropshire and the photos were from the Fosters holiday trips throughout Europe taken in the 1920's and 1930's. Much interest has been enjoyed taking photos from similar positions to the originals in more recent times.

There was a television programme earlier this year in which Hitler's plans for the occupation of England were revealed. Oxford was to be the administrative centre but Hitler was to reside in, of all places, Apley Hall. How did he know of the existence of Apley Hall and why choose it in preference to somewhere like Blenheim Palace? Doug suggested that he might have been a P. G. Wodehouse fan! There has been much speculation about the building upon which

Blandings Castle was modelled and Sudeley Castle has been the favourite among fans for many years.

However, in 2003 all the geographical information from the seven novels which described Blandings Castle were fed into a special computer programme at London University and that came up with the position of Apley Hall. Now, in 1940 the only person who knew the correct answer was already in German custody and had been taken to Berlin to record five amusing talks for German radio. Dr. Goebbels, minister of propaganda, was besotted with Hitler and, if Hitler read Wodehouse Goebbels would have known. He used the broadcasts to persuade the world what nice people the Germans were to allow a member of the enemy to use their radio. Wodehouse's 90 plus books were translated into many languages and in 1923 Hitler spent a year in prison so he might have done some reading there. It was pointed out that although he was a criminal monster he may have had a private life, as shown by his affection for children.

Having taken up residence in Apley Hall he would have possession of the Foster's Taxiphote so what would he have made of the slides? There were some of pre-war Nuremburg and that town was the centre for the Nazi Party and where many of the large parades of goose stepping German troops were photographed. From a large podium in the Zeppelinfeld there, built by Albert Speer, Hitler made many of his rabble raising speeches.

The programme also mentioned the list of several thousand people who had offended the Reich and were to be sent to concentration camps or otherwise dealt with and suggestions were made about those, including the Home Guard.

The beautiful old walled town of Rothenburg, not far from Nuremburg, was shown in many of the slides and Hitler must have visited that town. Another place of interest for him would have been the pictures of Chantemarle in Dorset. This was the home of Sir John Hornby who was a trustee of the British Museum and numbered Thomas Hardy and William Morris among his friends. He was also a close friend of Sir Sidney Cockerell who was the curator of the Fitzwilliam museum in Cambridge. It was the German custom to take the best pieces of artwork from occupied countries back to Germany and Hitler might have needed the specialised knowledge of Sir John Hornby and his friends. He might not have got it of course!

Finally, as the icing on the cake so to speak, he would have found that the Foster's had a holiday home on the Worthesee in Southern Austria. Hitler was actually Austrian having been born in Braunau near the border with Germany in 1889.

3) Forthcoming Meetings:-

Wednesday 28th November – A G M followed by Andrew Bellamy's known facts about the Aynho soldiers who gave their lives in World War One, followed by more not previously seen photos of Iford Manor.

Programme for 2019

Wednesday 30th January - New excavations at Farnborough Hall by Steven Wass.

Wednesday 27th February - The History of Privys by Chris Bazeley

Wednesday 27th March - Romantic Decline - Preserving Chastleton House by Ruth Peters

Wednesday 24th April - The Sheep That Eat Men by Martin Sirot- Smith (in costume).

Wednesday 29th May - Northamptonshire inventions and Inventors, by Jon-Paul Carr.

Wednesday 26th June - The Culworth Gang by David Hewitt

Wednesday 25th September – The history of Rainsborough Camp by Andrea Gladden

Wednesday 30th October – Oxford Castle and Prison from Oxanfora to Malmaison by Alistair Duncan

Wednesday 27th November – AGM