

MINUTES OF THE 54th MEETING OF AYNHO HISTORY SOCIETY HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, AYNHO ON WEDNESDAY 30th JANUARY 2013

Present: - Rupert Clark – Chairman & Treasurer
Peter Cole - Secretary.

1. Chairman's Report

Rupert Clark

Rupert outlined the programme for the next three months, as detailed at the end of these minutes. A visit to Friars Well is also planned, and a Big Dig, an opportunity for all villagers and children to take part in a mini "Time Team" event in their own gardens. It is hoped that an archaeologist will be able to give advice first, and speak afterwards about any finds discovered.

2. Secretary's Report

Peter Cole

Banbury Historical Society's meeting on Thursday 14th February is "Time out of Mind – Custom and Ritual in the Nineteenth Century."

The Mid-Shires region of the National Milestone Society is meeting in our Village Hall here on Saturday 2nd March from 10am to 3 pm. This region covers the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Wiltshire. It will be an open meeting and anyone can attend for a small charge.

Peter has had an email from Richard Haines of Minneapolis, USA saying that his ancestor had come over from Aynho in the 1600s, and he asked for any information about our village. He replied that Nicholas Cooper's book mentions a Quaker, Richard Haynes, who went to America in 1682, and obtained 100 acres of land in New Jersey. Richard responded that it was indeed his ancestor, but he had actually died on the ship travelling over to America. It was his oldest son who had emigrated a few years earlier who had obtained the land in New Jersey.

3. Healthy, Wealthy and Wise - A history of the local medical services through the ages

Andy Anderson

Early medicine consisted primarily of herbal remedies, taken orally or by enema and bleeding of patients. If an operation was needed, the best you could hope for was a strong drink or a knock on the head as anaesthetic was not readily available until the late C19th.

Pre 1948 and the conception of the NHS the poor often went without medical treatment, relying instead on dubious and sometimes dangerous home remedies, or the charity of some doctors and organisations who might help them.

Most elderly people ended up in workhouses or Public Assistance Institutions. The mentally ill were sent to sanatoriums or large mental health hospitals. In all of these conditions were nothing short of horrific.

Within three years of the start of the NHS, fees were introduced, such as one shilling for prescriptions and £1 for dental treatment. The NHS now employs over a million people, with a budget of around £94 billion.

We know that prehistoric men successfully carried out some operations, and one of these trephining, or cutting a hole in the person's head, is still in use today. Broken bones were cased in a pot/cast made from mud. The Egyptian Imhotep is credited with being the founder of medicine. He was the author of a treatise remarkable for being devoid of magical thinking. In China medicine started in the Zhou dynasty, with new concepts of yin and yang, the five elements and acupuncture. Brian Que, a doctor, was the first man to use the pulse for diagnosis. Around 450 BC Greek philosopher Hippocrates introduced the theory of humour imbalance, which explained the causes of disease. He is regarded as the founder of modern medicine. The Romans developed effective treatments for wounds, hernias, bladder stones and cataracts. Surgical tasks were performed by specialists, using tools similar to those in use only 100 years ago. In Anglo-Saxon times there was a belief that disease particles were shot through the air by arrows. Monastic infirmaries were built in the medieval and Middle Ages, with monks and nuns caring for their own sick and travellers. Hippocrates' theory of humour imbalance was developed by Andreas Vesalius and Leonardo da Vinci, who were pioneers who dissected human bodies to develop a better understanding of human anatomy. Common treatments at that time were camomile for fever or swelling, an arsenic poultice for the plague, bloodletting, emetics, and the use of maggots or leeches to clean wounds.

Major public health problems were bubonic plague in 1347, cholera in the 19th century and Spanish flu in 1918, which killed more people than were lost in World War One.

In Aynho late in the 12th century Roger FitzRichard founded the Hospital of Saints James and John to care for the poor, the sick and the infirm. Their son Robert and subsequent benefactors increased the endowments of the hospital, but in the 15th century it declined. It was under the direction of a master nominated by the lord of the manor, and instituted by the bishop. The earliest name recorded is that of Peter of Maldon, presented in 1232 by Roger de Creissy, farmer of Aynho. In 1319 Sir John Clavering, lord of Aynho, gave to the hospital half a virgate of land (about 15 acres), a messuage (a dwelling house and outbuildings) and a mill called "Goldsbolte milne" with the adjacent meadow and water course.

In 1483 the 16th Earl of Arundel granted the hospital to Bishop Waynflete of Winchester, who had founded Magdalen College, Oxford, and he granted the hospital to the College. At some time thereafter the hospital seems to have become a private house. Monastic infirmaries were designed in a similar layout to an abbey or cloister, with an infirmary to house the sick. Bloodletting was the commonest procedure, involving several litres of blood being withdrawn at a time.

Pest houses were first established in England to house and isolate victims of the plague. Their history goes back to at least the 14th century. They were used for travellers and pilgrims in addition to local people, which suggests that outbreaks of the plague were brought back from Europe. The French word for plague is "la peste". Over time they were used for other highly infectious diseases such as smallpox. If a diseased person refused to go to the pest house, his dwelling would be roped off with a red cross clearly marked on the door, so that no one would approach.

Housewives were expected to know how to diagnose and treat a wide variety of ailments, and were even expected to be able to set broken bones. Household manuals contained lengthy chapters on making medicines. Gervaise Markham's "The English Housewife" of 1617 contains recipes for 250 different home remedies for a wide assortment of complaints.

Some old cures seem incredulous to us today, such as the use of wine and sheep pooh for jaundice, urine for gum disease, whipping with nettles for gout, and fasting and spittle for eye infections and ringworm.

Smallpox, typhus and tuberculosis were endemic, and cholera was alarmingly epidemic. The Public Health Act of 1848, which set up local health boards, investigated sanitary conditions nationwide, and established a General Board of Health. Sanitation was greatly improved following the construction of the Victorian sewerage systems.

During the forty years after 1850 there were many great advances in medical knowledge and procedures by people such as Pasteur and Koch, and the discovery of anaesthetics and X-rays. This was followed by a rise in the number of voluntary and cottage hospitals.

There are some interesting records from the Radcliffe Infirmary indicating the wide variety of causes of deaths. These include erysipelas (an inflammatory disease) after leeches, someone with an injured chest after a steam explosion at a bath and wash house, scalding by falling into an alkali wash, asphyxia from lying near a lime kiln, and shock after a pig bite.

The Horton Hospital in Banbury was founded in 1872. It was built from money donated by the Horton family, who had invented a machine for making elastic stockings. The first house surgeon was appointed in 1926.

Pulmonary tuberculosis was treated by exposure to sunlight and fresh air. In 1916 a small wooden shelter for patients was built in the grounds of Brackley Cottage Hospital. It was on a turntable so that it could be rotated to catch the sun.

In 1900 half of all deaths were due to pneumonia/influenza, tuberculosis or gastro intestinal infections. By the year 2010 death rates had halved and the main killers were heart disease and cancer.

Life expectancy has increased from about 30 years in medieval times to 67 today.

Anaesthesia, anatomy, vaccination and microbiology have been the major advances.

The future lies in genetics.

4. Forthcoming meetings

- Feb 27th "Banbury Past through Artists' eyes - painting, prints and drawings, sources for Banbury's local history" Simon Townsend, Curator, Banbury Museum
- March 27th "Archives Matter – a National and Local perspective" Lord Boswell of Aynho
- April 24th "Humphrey Repton – understand his impact on the Ashridge and Aynho estates landscapes" Mick Thompson, Ashridge Gardens Manager