

MINUTES OF THE 56th MEETING OF AYNHO HISTORY SOCIETY HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL, AYNHO ON WEDNESDAY 27th MARCH 2013

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

1. Chairman and Treasurer's Report Rupert Clark

The two photographs of trains at Aynho station added to our archive were "football specials" probably taking Portsmouth supporters to matches in the Midlands during the post WW2 period. A further picture has been added of a Manning Wardle engine named "Aynho". It was built at Hunslet, and scrapped in 1957 having worked in Midland collieries.

2. Secretary's Report Peter Cole

Peter said that Grafton Regis are holding historical walks and talks through their village on Saturdays, April 27th, June 22nd, July 13th and September 21st. These all start at 2.30 pm from their Village Hall. You will visit the Norman Church and other points, and you will meet monarchs and other people from medieval times up to the recent past. Then you can go back to the Village Hall for tea and cakes. The cost will be £7.50 for adults, £1 for children under 15, under 5s free.

3. "Archives Matter - a National and Local perspective" Lord Boswell of Aynho

Parliamentary records and particularly, the Acts of Parliament are the history of England. The durability of these documents is vital hence vellum was the material of choice. As part of a cost cutting motion, it was proposed that paper be used instead. Tradition has been maintained in the Upper House and vellum will continue to be used by 84 votes to 60.

Lord Boswell has also taken a lead role in ensuring that the Post Office Museum in Mount Pleasant is not "lost" as part of the privatisation of the Post Office. Copies of all our postage stamp and their drafts are now expected to remain safe.

His involvement in codifying the legal status of "missing persons" and their legal and financial affairs i.e. mortgages and insurances has highlighted the need for safe keeping of records. All the European states are being approached so that there is consistency of understanding across the continent.

It should be remembered that when the Cartwright Archive was put up for sale in 2006 an American University immediately bid the asking price of £300,000. Without the intervention and cooperation of a number of local interested parties, sufficient funds would not have been raised to save this unusual and voluminous collection of papers for the nation. With the help of funding from the Lottery Heritage Fund, the Appeal resulted in sufficient funds being raised, not only to purchase the Archive for the County Records Office, but also to pay for an archivist to spend two years examining and fully cataloguing all 317 boxes of documents, some 87 of which had never been properly looked at. It is noted that these efforts have provided a template for other organisations seeking to save a similar archive.

The importance of protecting significant archives for future researchers has led to the establishment of the All Party Archives Parliamentary Group on Archives.

On the international front, the Red Cross in Geneva hold the prisoner of war records, with hundreds of thousands of entries. Ditto the International Tracing Service has many records of Nazi concentration camps internees, forced labour workers and displaced persons. Eastern European archives are now being opened to the public as a consequence of the ending of the Cold War.

The Bank of England archive holds records of how previous financial crises were handled, these are referred to today. For example, our banks were closed at the start of WW1 to avoid a “run” for gold and hard currency.

For the historian, Local Government, university and local judicial records hold many treasures. Many are being digitised. With changes in technology, it is vital to ensure that the storage media is current and retrievable. Not everything can be saved so thought is required as to identifying what is relevant. “Weeders” play a vital role in ensuring what should be kept, and what it is safe to throw away. Without them bias could creep into a collection.

4. Forthcoming meetings

April 24th	"Humphrey Repton - understand his impact on the Ashridge and Aynho estates landscapes"	Mick Thompson, Ashridge Gardens Manager
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