

Clavering Local History Recorder Report 2015

Another busy year in 2014, unfortunately dominated by the demands of preparing for a planning appeal over refusal of permission for a large housing estate outside the village. As the site was next to Clavering Castle, a scheduled monument, the heritage case against it was very strong and entailed the Recorder in many hours of research and preparing proofs of evidence for the enquiry in November, in addition to raising large sums of money for professional advice. It was all worthwhile, as the plan was dismissed by the inspector, with the heritage reasons being a very strong factor in his decision. One benefit to the village was a realization of the importance of this wonderful moated site. The community also enjoyed the fund-raising events organized to raise money – including an **Open Gardens Day** (raised £3000), a **History exhibition** (raised £1000 - SEE PHOTO) and a **history tour** of the village centre ending with a strawberry tea. The history exhibition was put together within just a few weeks, and all the events were held in aid of Hands off Clavering, the residents' group fighting the appeal.



This left little time to run other events, but we did have a red-letter day of a concert by **Ancestral Voices** in the church, sponsored by the Clavering History Group – this was much enjoyed and raised £700 for the church fabric fund. The concert was on a **Magna Carta** theme, since the lord of Clavering had been one of the barons who forced King John to sign the great charter in 1215. This also prompted one of our themed **coffee mornings**, in May, where I discussed the various lords of the manor of

Clavering, and attempted to show the line of succession to the lordship by constructing the links on a long piece of wallpaper!

These **coffee mornings**, at which I display a small selection of items from the Clavering History Collection and talk informally about them, have now become a feature of our programme and are enjoyable social occasions too. Another coffee morning in March, looked at timber-framed houses locally, and we also had a fascinating lecture about dendrochronology, all this to chime with the History Group taking part in an Essex survey of **listed buildings**. About a dozen members took part in this survey, concluding that the listed buildings of Clavering are on the whole well cared for. The results are being used by Historic England to formulate similar surveys in other parts of the country. The final coffee morning of the year was also our Christmas social, at which I displayed and talked about Clavering stories to be found in 19th and early 20th century local **newspapers**.

In November came the annual Study Day, proceeds going towards the maintenance of the local history collection and to purchase additions to our archives. This year's theme, church history, was not as popular as usual, but proved a most enjoyable day with Tony Kirby and John Vigar as excellent speakers on various topics.

Meanwhile, the work of local history recording continues – photographing events and changing scenes, collecting newscuttings and ephemera, scanning, cataloguing, answering emails, writing articles etc.

The publishing front was busy too. Two more editions of the *Saffron Walden Historical Journal* were published, and I also edited a book by Liz Allan, *Chepyng Walden*, about the medieval town. There was a reprint of *Clavering at War* with new additions and am currently working on a new edition of *History Walks in Clavering*, another volume in the Clavering Remembered series and, of course, more issues of the Journal.

History events planned for 2016 include more themed coffee mornings with displays and talks, an archaeology lecture, a memories tea party, a concert of music from Elizabeth I's reign (to celebrate the 90th^h birthday of our Queen), and a test-pit dig in July under the Cambridge Field Academy scheme, similar to those held previously in Manuden and Little Hallingbury.

The History Group's eight-year **Oral History Project** is now winding down, with over 40 recordings by its organizers, Joy Barrow and Jane Laing, and 11 volumes published, with a 12th in the pipeline. The tea party in May will be a special event to hand the CDs over to the ERO Sound Archive and thank all those who contributed to the project. We are also looking into the possibility of having one of the Listening Benches installed in the village as a permanent reminder of this excellent project.

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