

Annual report of Sturmer Local History Group 2014 for RUH and SLHC

I am writing to report on some of the main activities of Sturmer Local History Group in 2014.

We spent the first few months of 2014 completing our All Our Stories – Heritage Lottery Fund project called Sturmer Steps. This was for a heritage trail in the village.

We had spent less than expected on our heritage boards so had applied for an extension until 30 April. This enabled us to use the money for more supporting activities for the trail which had been opened in November 2013.

We ran additional Victorian classroom and handling sessions for school children in the village hall. We were also able to enhance the school packs we gave to all the children who took part in our events with Horrible History books or similar.

Leaflets for the trail are available at each board and we regularly replenish supplies. Local history groups have visited and enjoyed following the trail and we continue to receive complimentary comments on it.

We held an open archive day in March which had been requested when we celebrated the opening of the trail. Visitors had longer to look at the wider range of exhibits on this occasion. It also provided another social event for the village.

The Group's Spring Activity was a talk by Pip Wright on Convicts sent to Australia.

Our new project for this year was researching names on the village war memorial for WW1. We have found details for 10 of the 11 but it seems William Jones may remain a mystery as this is such a common name. Articles on these will continue to be published in the next few editions of the Sturmer Village News. This was a sobering task and made us think of all the current conflicts as well as those who were lost in the First World War.

We attended the Suffolk Local History Council conference on WW1 at Elmswell to increase our background knowledge and heard some interesting and well informed speakers.

During the summer we attended a talk on medieval graffiti with Stour Valley Community Archeology. This was followed up with further training in the autumn and we are planning a survey of St Mary's Church, Sturmer early in 2015. We have had some helpful information from Barry Hooper of RUH who has surveyed the church himself.

In October we were invited to a talk and reception with Carenza Lewis who runs Access Cambridge Archeology. We were fascinated to hear about her work with young people and community groups since 2004. She has kindly agreed to speak at a Womens Institute (WI) centenary event for us on what inspired her as the WI slogan is "Inspiring Women".

Later that month we attended the RUH day school on designed landscape. We heard how gardens developed from medieval deer parks to formal gardens and Arts and Crafts style. Speakers also told us about Wimpole Hall through the ages and

the many influences on gardens from high status food like venison and rabbit to increased foreign travel. It was a very informative and interesting day.

In November I returned to some early oral histories of mine with founding WI members in order to compile a project for the centenary of the WI in 2015. I will be adding to this with comments from members on what they want from the WI in the future.

For our autumn event we took a group of 16 to visit the newly refurbished Colchester Castle Museum.

Over Christmas work so far on the Sturmer Hall house history was reviewed and this is an ongoing project.

In 2015 we hope to run a further Victorian Classroom and handling session and later in the year take a group to Munnings' house and Dedham vale (in addition to our church survey for graffiti).

We are also looking forward to finding out more about the Magna Carta as it is the 800th anniversary this year.

Linda Bevan

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