

Bidford & District History Society AGM

Friday 19th January 2018

Annual Report: Research Group

The Research Group was so pleased with the positive feedback received following our talk on the High Street, past and present, in December. This encapsulates what the Research Group is mainly about, researching and preserving the history of this area, though we are always keen to recruit new members interested in finding out about the past, whether local or not.

We have continued our link with Bidford School as Roger Leese and Rodney Compton took pupils on history tours of the village. Several of us took groups of visitors round the village in May when Warwickshire History Society made Bidford the venue for their summer visit.

Although there were no publications in 2017, this was not because we were inactive. On the contrary, our members have been working hard on various projects. The next publication will be in the Autumn of this year as Bob Marshall has been working on a sequel to his book 'We Will Remember Them'. This book will cover the lives of those Bidford soldiers who fought in the Great War and survived. He was surprised to discover that there are 265 of them, some of whom returned with terrible injuries, and he feels that their sacrifice should be acknowledged through their poignant stories. It will be another fascinating book and we will be launching it here in the Crawford Hall on Saturday 3rd November with a concert of music and readings to mark the centenary of Armistice Day the following Sunday. It is worth mentioning that during Bob's research he discovered several soldiers from Bidford who had been killed and are not on the War Memorial. We are hoping that their names can be added by November and will be asking for your support as we lobby the Parish Council.

Roger Leese has been working on a publication by Jack Moore, a market gardener in Bidford who wrote an almanack in 1975 on farming through the seasons in this area during the early part of the 20th century. Roger has edited this and put together a glossary of the vocabulary as this valuable book gives us an insight into rural life and farming long gone but now preserved. We intend to publish this in the Spring of 2019.

Roger has also been carrying out research on evacuees to Bidford during World War II and he would be grateful to speak to anyone whose family hosted evacuees during that period or anyone who knows people who were born at Avonside in Grange Road during World War II when it was being used as a maternity hospital for women from the bombed cities of Birmingham and Coventry. After the publication of Bob's book in November, we are hoping that our next big book project will be on Bidford during World War II as we already have a wealth of research material which is worth sharing with the village.

We are trying to keep a record of how the village has changed by building up a bank of photographs of Bidford and Sandra Parker and Bob Marshall would love to hear from you if you have any pictures of Bidford which you would let them copy for our collection.

Finally, if anyone would like to join us, they are very welcome. No experience is necessary, just an interest in finding out about the past. We are grateful for the support of the Bidford & District History Society in whose name we are proud to publish the history of this amazing village.