



ROYSTON & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY ANNUAL NEWS SHEET

Preserving Royston's Heritage

2010-2011

Message from the Chairman

After sixteen years as Chairman of the Society, Betty Skyrme decided not to seek re-election at the Annual General Meeting in May 2010. On behalf of all the committee and society members I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to her for all she has done as Chairman during this period. However, Betty will continue to serve on the committee in the role of Vice-President.

Although my home is not in Royston, I was born at the hospital and for 35 years employed as the reporter and then photographer of the Royston Crow Newspaper.

I am pleased to report that the Society continues from strength to strength under its conscientious and hardworking committee. Our membership to date is 140, an increase on last year. The management of the Cave and Museum are a great credit to those concerned and attract many visitors, locally and from abroad.

In addition, on behalf of the Society and its members, I would like to express thanks to Cathy Black who after 12 years of faithful service on the committee, with the past eleven as an excellent and hardworking Minutes Secretary, is stepping down.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new members who joined this year and look forward to a continued success of this society in the coming years.

Neville Chuck
Chairman, May 2011

The Royston Museum and Art Gallery was closed from January to mid-February to allow for the storeroom to be emptied, cleaned, artefacts checked for infestation and put back. This was a basic housekeeping commitment expected of all accredited museums. The layout altered to allow for flexible use of the floor space in the main display area. Two wall cases were

removed and reverted to desk cases and previously unseen objects have been added for viewing. It re-opened to the public with the annual display by the Royston Photographic Society on 19th February. With grants from MLA, North Hertfordshire District Council and the Friend of the Museum, old video films of the Coronation Celebrations in Royston in 1937 and 1953 were transferred to DVD and can be viewed on request. Volunteers are always needed and welcomed. For further information you can always pop-in at the museum or ring the Museum Curator on 01763 242587.

Carole Kaszak
Curator

The Society also looks after the Royston Cave on a day to day basis ensuring that the cave remains open to the public and that it is marketed as widely as possible. We contribute financially to its upkeep and recently paid for the refurbishments of the steps and the replacement of the audio system.

The Society also makes up a large part of the Cave Trustees who ensure that the Cave is not only managed and developed appropriately but that the Cave is properly conserved for future generations.

Many of you will have read articles on the current state of the Cave in both the local newspapers and, more recently, in The Observer and on Anglia News, and some of you may be concerned about damage to the carvings.

However, a long term conservation plan is now being put in place with the help of English Heritage and this will hopefully slow down the deterioration in the Cave and help to better inform future conservation decisions.

If you are interested in helping to keep the Cave open and have the odd spare Saturday or Sunday afternoon, why not join our team of guides? You won't need to learn the entire history of the Cave because an explanatory CD is played to visitors during their visit. All you need is a healthy interest. The work is paid and all you need to do is contact the town hall on 01763 245484 or email James Robinson on james@robynson.plus.com for further details.



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The 2010-11 season began on the 7th October with an illustration presentation from Richard Thomas on The Gunpowder Plot, which is celebrated on the 5th November with Fireworks. Known at the time as the "Gunpowder Treasons" it was an insight into the background for the plot and its 13 conspirators, including Guy Fawkes

November 4th. The Prison at Norman Cross: A *Time Team* investigation. Following the Time Team television programme shown on Sunday 3rd October, Paul Chamberlain presented an informative and interesting lecture. Explaining how the programme was prepared and with illustrations and photographs on the Napoleonic first purpose built depot prison situated at Normans Cross on the A1

December 2nd. Maureen Hart, Trustee of Addenbrookes Hospital related its history. Founded by John Addenbrooke in 1766 the presentation showed how the hospital evolved from the beginning to the present day. Our Christmas raffle raised £47.00.

January 6th. Growing up in the 1930's and 1940s – A Village Boy. An illustrated presentation by Kenneth Burton who reminisced about his childhood and personalities who lived in his village of Pirton.

February 3rd The Life and Time of John Calvin. Ian Hamilton, presented a biographical outlook on John Calvin.

March 3rd The Construction and Logistics of the Guides Bus Project. An insight to the development of the bus way from St Ives to Cambridge with Graham Hughes, Cambridgeshire County Council

April 7th. Eels, Punts & Willows – A Life on the Fen gave us an illustrated talk on the Fenlands commercial fisherman making and using traditional willow traps.

This year our Annual General Meeting is on 12th May and will be followed by a talk on the History London with Martin Copping. The evening will be completed with our usual buffet and drinks prepared by the committee members.



Group outing to Warwick 2010

The Society outing this year is on 11th June to the city of Birmingham. There is much to see and the choice will be yours. In addition, a two hour cruise is available departing from ICC Quayside on the Euphrates which will explore Birmingham's Historic Waterways. For further information on cost and availability for this trip contact David Allard, our Treasurer. For those who have already booked, we look forward to seeing you on the coach.

The Royston & District History Society also produce various publications on local history ranging from architecture, folklore, biographies of famous Roystonians and other subjects of local interest. Our forthcoming publication called Royston 1200-1800, A List of Residents is now available on sale at our monthly meetings. This and other publications are available to purchase at the Museum, the Royston Cave Bookshop and at all History Society lectures.

The new season of lecturers start on the 6th October with an illustrated presentation by John Fuller on The Olympics in London 2012.

Useful websites:

Royston and District Museum and Art Gallery

www.roystonmuseum.co.uk

Royston Cave

www.roystoncave.co.uk

Royston & District Local History Society

www.roystonlocalhistorysociety.org.uk

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