

Chiseldon Local History Group Report for Parish Council 2017/18

Last year ended on a sad note for us with the passing of Marjorie Toomer, at the grand old age of 97½. Marjorie, and her husband Bert, were instrumental in setting up the group in the 1980s when it evolved from a WEA course on Landscape History.

Membership of CLHG stays healthy at around 50. We also welcome many visitors to our meetings, which are always well attended and which brings a useful contribution to our finances. This has to be down to a varied and interesting programme of talks.

We enjoyed our study trip to Wantage last summer and the guided tour of the site of Chiseldon Camp we ran attracted more participants than we could accommodate, so it will be repeated this June. We have also given talks to local groups on Chiseldon Camp and the History of Chiseldon.

A new venture was a Talk and Tour of "The People in the Church", looking at stories behind the many beautiful monuments in Holy Cross and based on research done by Sheila Passmore, another founder member. This is to be repeated during the Church Fete, (for details see our website chiseldonlhg.org.uk)

The museum attracted 250 plus visitors during the 2017 season (up from 226 the previous year) but there were some weeks when very few or sometimes no people came. The committee therefore reviewed the opening dates and decided to open slightly later in April and close in September rather than October. We will monitor the effect this has on overall visitor numbers.

The museum had group visits from the cubs and class 6 from Chiseldon School which were great fun. First question from class 6 – "What were the causes of the First World War?" David Bailey rose gallantly to the occasion.

Two big projects we embarked on last year have been to install an interpretation board at Strouds Hill and to renew the permanent timeline display in the museum. Both will further our aim of informing villagers about their local history. The interpretation board will illustrate the history of the old centre of the village. We obtained all the necessary permissions and raised the money – our grateful thanks go to the Parish Council and the Memorial Hall Fund, - as well as having our own fundraising events. A local graphic designer, Sam Smith, volunteered to work on the layout and I am pleased to report the completed board has just been delivered and is ready to be installed.

The text and pictures for the new timeline, - which is an overview of 5,000 years of the history of the Parish, - are with the print company at present and it should be ready to go up in the museum within a few weeks.

There will be a grand unveiling by a local celebrity, hopefully of both projects- as soon as we can organise it. - Everyone will of course be invited.

Elaine Jones, Chair CLHG, May 2018