

Chairman's Report to AGM

Forest of Dean Local History Society, Saturday 3rd October 2015

This has been another busy year for the Society, we have enjoyed a full and varied programme of talks, visits and excursions. Following last year's AGM we have pondered over the destructive forces of a Tsunami on the Severn, looked at the fascinating Geology that created the Forest of Dean, we have had an insight into the workhouse system in the Forest, lived on the edge, followed the background and consequences of a map that shows a simple geological section through the Forest, explored popular memories and customs, learnt something of Roman Gloucester, the Greyndour Family of Newland, freemining at Hopewell colliery, explored the business of Burials at the Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol's floating harbour, the delights of Ruardean, the Gloucester to Hereford Canal, Mitcheldean, Huntley and Kempeley Churches, the disgraceful Forest Eyres and finally some recent archaeology by DAG. Thank you to Virginia for putting together another good programme of talks.

And there is yet more to come....after this AGM we have a talk by Avril and Cecile on Ironworks in the Forest of Dean.....all for £10!

Your Committee have also been busy, at the beginning of the year Cecile, Sue and Keith did some work with BBC radio Gloucester recording some soundbites about the Forest and WW1; Cecile and Keith have put together a Lottery Bid to get funding to develop further and publish our research into the way that the Forest was affected by WW1; Mary and I have been involved with the Forester's Forest HLF project, for which we The Local History Society are a key player in the unearthing and recording the story of the forest's heritage. Keith Walker was honoured with an award for the quality of our Newsletter which he so admirably edits. Ron Beard has continued to liaise with the Coal authority over recording the various mine shafts that they open up and made safe; a small group of us are in the process of getting a marker stone erected at New Fancy Colliery, at the site of shaft no.2. In addition to the project work we have committee members who do sterling work in the background. Sue Gordon-Smith continues to ensure that our publications, especially New Regard, are out there and available, and she now has the help of David Harris who supports our website's e-shop - a really useful facility which is well used, I'm sure Cecile will be telling about the additional funds it is generating later. We are now on twitter!

I would like to thank all of the committee and other members who regularly help with the running of and work of the Society. However, I would especially like to thank, on your behalf, a few people especially, firstly Cheryl, with whom most of you will have regular contact, she has been an exceptional Secretary to the Society and has agreed to take over as membership secretary, I would like to welcome David Edwards, and thank him for stepping forward and agreeing to take on the Secretary role....he will receive lots of help from Cheryl and the rest of the committee. I would like to thank Mary as my Vice Chair for her support and council; and I would like to especially Thank Cecile, on your behalf, Cecile is truly the 'go-to' person in this organisation for knowledge, advice and help, always willing to get involved and take on the organisation of an event or display. I know that Cecile was disappointed by the take up of places on this year's Coach Trip to Bristol, but she should not be, as for those of us who went it was well planned, well researched and well organised and a very enjoyable day out. Cecile spends a lot of time planning and organising these events, so I

would firstly like to thank her for the commitment she shows and secondly urge you all to go on them, they are always informative and well planned.

Finally, I am delighted to inform you that this year's edition of the New Regard is available, and hope that you enjoy this year's selection of articles. The cover price has been increased to £8, but the member's price has been held - again - at £6, making this a true benefit of membership. I would like to thank Ian Standing, David Harris and all those involved in this publication; the New Regard continues to be a widely respected publication, so thank you to all those who contribute to it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is your society, over the 67 years since its formation it has grown from strength to strength, so a Thank you to you, for your continuing to support its work; and please consider carefully what you can do to help, we are always looking for members to stand on the committee, carry out research, write articles for the newsletter and New Regard, and help with producing and manning displays and events.

Thank you