

LAUNTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Report to the annual parish meeting 25th April 2019

Our 40th year was a very busy one as it saw the culmination of several year's work on tracing the men named on the Roll of Honour for the 1914-18 war. As part of the national events to mark the centenary of the ending of that conflict, it seemed the ideal time to commemorate the men from this village – although a number of them had already moved away – who took part in the war and were to survive: some for only months, the majority for many years.

A lot of hard work was put in by a team of six members of this Society to put on a small exhibition in Bicester Library, then a much larger two-day display in Launton Church on the weekend of 10th and 11th November. We were pleased that the elderly daughter of the last of these soldiers was able to come, as well as many visitors from Launton and elsewhere, including four men from Bristol.

Copies of the information discovered have been widely distributed, and explanatory leaflets have been placed in the church for visitors. (At present we are trying to trace what happened to the men and women named on the Roll of Honour for the 1939-45 war. It is planned to provide a leaflet about those named for visitors to the church to mark the outbreak of WW2 eighty years ago.)

The 1917 diary, photographs and other items belonging to the late Frank Jones, who served with the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars in WW1 were presented to this Society several years ago by Ruth Crawford, his granddaughter who used to live in Launton. With Ruth's agreement, these artefacts have been passed to the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum at Woodstock for safe keeping and to assist in further research.

A gentleman descended from the Cottesford family who lived in Launton in the 14th-17th centuries and held large amounts of farm land, visited a few months ago and he was amazed to discover the information gathered by this Society about the parish in 1607. He is employing a researcher to look into other documents about his Launton ancestors which are held in the archives at Westminster Abbey. A document dated 1755 looked very exciting, but on closer inspection it seems to be a draft for the 1607 survey, or another document from that earlier period, rather than 150 years later, as claimed. Hopefully this mystery will soon be sorted out. It would be exciting to have details of a mid-18th century survey of the parish: this would bridge the period between the 1607 documents and the enclosure Award of 1814.

As ever, our monthly meetings were addressed by speakers on a wide variety of talks on historical matters; these were well attended and much enjoyed. In August, our social evening took the form of a bring-and-share supper, which was held in Jane and Paul Ebberson's garden. Recently a team of members of the Society took part in the fund-raising quiz held at the Tythe Barn; playing under the name 'The Blast from the Past' we managed to come 6th out of the 21 teams that took part.

Pat Tucker,
Hon Sec LHS.