

THE WYCHWOODS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The new season of monthly meetings began with a short AGM. Both Chairman and Treasurer presented favourable reports. The retiring treasurer, Frank Ware was presented with a small token in recognition of his many years in office. Then followed a talk by Paul Booth on the work of the Oxford Archaeological Unit at the Roman site in Asthall.

Here an emergency dig preceded the laying of Thames Water pipes. The speaker explained some of the results of the dig – the old Roman road, the houses alongside it and the work and burial areas. Due to funding problems work has only just begun on a detailed analysis of artifacts uncovered – swords, coins, pottery etc.

“Oxfordshire’s Woollen Industry” was the subject of the next talk given by Philip Best who began with the introduction of longwool sheep by the Romans. He explained the importance of the woollen industry to the area from the raising of the sheep to the production of the finished goods. With the growth of a strong international trade, taxes were levied, fortunes were made and churches built.

Water mills had been used from the earliest times but increased mechanisation meant the building of factories, especially in the Witney area. But, from wool being the only textile fibre, other fibres like cotton and later man-made fibres were introduced which led to a decline in Oxfordshire’s woollen industry.

In her talk “Ramblin Rose, my search for the boatwoman”, Sheila Stewart gave a fascinating account of her efforts to collect material for a book on the women who lived and worked on the canal boats. Five years of research gave her an insight into a life-style now gone. It also gave Mrs Stewart an opportunity to make a record of the boatwomen before they passed into history unrecorded. Sheila Stewart’s talk was a perfect complement to her book recently published.

Our next meeting:-

Jan 10 Milton Eynsham Abbey Brian Atkins
Details for February 14 and March 14 in the next issue.

Grateful Commuter

I am extremely grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Naish for extending the opening hours of the Post Office. How useful it is to be able to pick up a newspaper at 7.10 en route to catch the 7.27 London train. The benefits are psychological as well as practical. The bright lights in the winter gloom of each end of the day cheer up the High Street. So thank you.

Maggie Pettifer