

Wychwoods Local History Society

At the first meeting of the season in September we all enjoyed a very knowledgeable description of the journeys which could be undertaken from Chipping Norton to the Wychwoods in the 1930s with popular speaker John Rawlins. One bus ran directly along the A361 whilst another wended its way around Churchill and Sarsden taking in the other villages on its route. Or then again there was the train which ran from Chipping Norton to Kingham for connection with the line along the Evenlode. It seems the villages were very well served in those days.

The October meeting started with the Annual General Meeting when another successful year was reported by the Chairman, Sue Jourdan, and the Treasurer, David Perceval. This was followed by a fascinating talk by Tim Copeland about the North Oxfordshire Grimsditch, known by his archaeology colleagues as Tim's Ditch. This enormous, oval earthwork has a bank about a metre high and a metre deep and runs intermittently for 20 kilometres around Ditchley near Charlbury. The talk was illustrated with many aerial photographs taken early in the twentieth century when much more of the ditch survived. At places where development has taken place over the ditch, it has been possible to show that it was built in the late Iron Age and in the first years after the Roman conquest. An important factor is that Akeman Street, the Roman road from Cirencester to St Albans, runs beside it. After the Roman conquest, Akeman Street was a boundary between the British tribes that had made peace with the Romans and the wilder north.

The precise use of such a monument will probably never be known and all that can be achieved is a satisfactory explanation. Its size would have made it indefensible and there has been no evidence of it being a boundary. Dr Copeland's theory which is generally accepted, is that it was a large enclosure with a gate on the early conquest boundary where trading of many commodities, including cattle took place.

Future meetings, to which all are welcome.

17 January 2002	Milton	Riding the Tiger – Twentieth century agriculture	by David Wilson
21 February	Shipton	Places and Events	by Packer and Simms by Alan Watkins

Sue Jourdan

The Lady Reade Educational Foundation

A meeting of the Trustees of the above Foundation will be held on January 9th 2002, when applications will be considered from young people resident in the Wychwood parishes of Shipton, Milton, Leafield and Ramsden, who are undergoing further education, for assistance to buy books or other educational aids.

Applications should be made, in writing please, before January 9th 2002 to the Secretary :-

Mike Brooks, 18 Jubilee Lane, Milton under Wychwood, Oxford. OX7 6EW