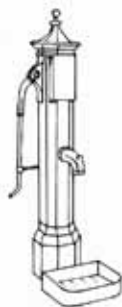


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Sherington Historical Society

Newsletter



March 2012

www.mkheritage.co.uk/shhs

Special dates for your diary

Tuesday 13th March

Annual General Meeting.

Tuesday 10th April

‘Smothered in the Bog House’. An illustrated talk from Brian Giggins, who previously was the Milton Keynes Council’s Archaeologist.

In 1721 an unnamed person in Southwick is recorded as losing his life by being smothered in the bog house. Find out why such a disaster happened, and many other details about biffies, chuggies, larties, skunkies, longdrops, tandems, and whatsumacallits, that you might or might not want to discover. Brian adds that personal or family encounters with any of the above will greatly add to the evening’s entertainment, so if you have any stories, please bring them along.

Tuesday 8th May

Members Meeting. Please come for a low key evening archiving and chat.

Tuesday 12th June

****Members only**** Picnic. Diana, Richard and Phyllis are inviting us back to Yew Tree Farm for the annual picnic. Bring a nibble for an informal get together. Please note that it will be a 7.00 pm start.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday 22nd, 23rd and 24th June

Scarecrow and Flower Festival. Get your scarecrows ready for show this weekend which is also Open Gardens in the Village.

Tuesday 10th July

‘The History and Mystery of Women’s Underwear’. Carol Tames is likely to be hosting a very popular evening event.

Tuesday 14th August

No meeting.

Tuesday 11th September

Members Meeting. Please come for a low key evening archiving and chat, where we will be trying to prepare for the Open Day.

Saturday 6th October

Open Day, Sherington Village Hall 12 noon-4.30 pm (Set up from 9 am).

Tuesday, 9th October

'The Hanslope Murder'. Roger Drage is coming to talk to us about the Hanslope Murder. Find out if it really was the Butler what done it!

Tuesday, 13th November

Members Can Talk. It will have been a busy year with the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee. This is a potpourri of an evening with members own talks.

Tuesday, 11th December

Christmas Party. Games, wine and nibbles.

Tuesday, 8th January 2013

Members Meeting. Please come for a low key evening archiving and chat.

Mid-January 2013

January Jolly. More details nearer the time.

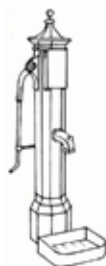
Tuesday 12th February 2013

'Lacemaking'. A talk by Julian Hunt about the history of making lace.

Tuesday 12th March 2013

Annual General Meeting.

Our Tuesday monthly meetings start at 8.00 pm unless otherwise stated.



**Sherington
Historical
Society**

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 13th March 2012

7.45 pm for 8.00 pm

Sherington Village Hall

Refreshments available

Entry: £1.00/£2.50 for members/non-members

Web: www.mkheritage.co.uk/shhs

Email: SheringtonHS@yahoo.co.uk

News Snippets

Our January Jolly this year was at the Chester Arms. There was a good turnout from members, and a very good evening was had by all. Everyone I talked to was impressed with the food.

The January meeting was a Members' meeting where much archiving, general chatter and tea drinking was carried out. The February meeting was a film show presented to us by Oliver Powell. It was very enjoyable to see Sherington from a few years ago with the Son et Lumiere event in the Church, and also a recent event - Philip Smith's final Thumbsticks walk as leader. Thanks to Ollie for all his hard work in putting the film show together.

The March meeting on 13th will be our AGM. Please come along and give your support, and also to say goodbye to Pearl and Sheila who are both standing down from the Committee. Thanks to both of them for all their hard work for the Society over the last few years. Don't forget to renew your membership at the AGM. The cost this year is £6.50 for single membership and £12 for a couple.

We'd like to welcome two new members to the Society - Liz and Nigel Blight, who live in Carters Close. Also, to give a warm welcome to Udi and Dina who are now running the Village Shop.

The book by A. C. Chibnall, 'Fiefs and Fields' has finally been re-published, and we are selling them through the Society for £10.00 a copy. Thanks to Gilly Ranson who works for Cambridge University Press and lives in Sherington. She was able to get us a good discount. Copies will be on sale at the AGM and at future meetings.

The book 'War Horse' by Michael Morpurgo about a horse in the First World War has become a very successful West End stage play and is now also a film. In this newsletter Caroline Leslie has written about Sherington's very own War Horse, based on the memories of Philip Smith. See page 8.

An interesting article was sent to us from June Corfield in Ontario, Canada about her ancestors, the Griggs Family, and this is reproduced on page 6.

Lionel Horsnell, the artist who painted various scenes in Sherington died recently. See Sheila Quinn's memory of him and some of his paintings on pages 10 and 11, also the front cover.

Searching for Thomas Smith, born 1813 in Sherington, Buckinghamshire

In 1842 Thomas Smith, of Prescott County, Ontario, Canada married Nancy Klock of Aylmer, Quebec, Canada in Hull, Quebec, Canada. In conducting Smith research I found that Thomas Smith had a brother Stephen who also lived in Prescott County, Ontario in 1842 and a brother, George B Smith, who lived in Troy, New York. There was also a Dryden Smith, butcher, whom was living in Aylmer, Quebec, that I thought was connected to the family because one of Thomas Smith's grandsons was named Dryden Smith and Dryden was a very unusual name at the time. But I had no substantiating evidence

After some further research I found Thomas Smith's mother, Elizabeth Smith, living with his brother George B Smith in the 1850 Troy, New York, US Census. The census indicated that she was born in 1790 and arrived in the US in 1850. George B Smith had arrived in the United States in 1844. Elizabeth Smith's 1866 Troy burial record listed her parents as Browns and her place of birth as Buckinghamshire.

I had made the Sherington, Buckinghamshire connection because one of Thomas Smith's sons had made a trip to Sherington in 1903 and recorded a diary during his trip. He went to see his father's baptism and his grandparents' marriage records at the Sherington parish church but he was not able to find any record of them.

After doing some Sherington research, I found the marriage of Elizabeth Brown to Thomas Griggs and the baptism of four sons, all the right ages – the brothers Thomas, Stephen, Dryden and George. It was the Dryden name that really sealed the deal for me. As you know, there was a Dryden Smith family who were well-to-do manor owners in Sherington, and their son Dryden Smith Junior died in 1821. Benjamin Griggs was a witness to Dryden Smith Senior's marriage and I think that Dryden Griggs was named after that family.

My ggg-grandfather Thomas Griggs was baptized in Sherington on 22 Mar 1778, son of Benjamin and Ann Griggs. He was a butcher in Sherington and married Elizabeth Brown on 13 Sep 1808. They went on to have 12 children, 11 of whom survived until 1840. At that time the family was caught up in a scandal that had international impacts. Two of the sons, Thomas Griggs Junior, a book-binder and printer in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, who was my gg-grandfather, and his brother Stephen Griggs, a butcher in Bedfordshire, as well as their father Thomas Griggs Senior from Sherington were charged with conspiracy to defraud creditors of their goods and tried in the assize sessions in Bedfordshire County in March 1840.

From those records I found out that Thomas Griggs Junior and his brother Stephen Griggs had bought goods (clothes, food etc) from shops and promised to pay for them at a later date. They both had indicated at various times that they would be getting married soon and coming into money so would be able to pay then. In addition, Stephen Griggs' partner in a butcher shop in Bedford wanted payment on a loan he had made to Stephen. Thomas Griggs Senior was implicated because it was thought that he protected his sons by forewarning them that shopkeepers were looking for them.

Various shopkeepers testified that Thomas Junior and Stephen had tricked them into providing goods without payment. Thomas and Stephen had also forged their Aunt Jane Brown's signature on some orders and defrauded a distant Rogers relative, George Rogers of Woburn, who testified against him.

When Thomas Griggs Junior and Stephen Griggs were arrested, the police found that Thomas Junior had three tickets to South Australia in the name of Brown. So it appears that they intended to not pay their debts but to leave the country under assumed names.

They had no evidence against Thomas Griggs Senior, who had a number of prominent Sherington residents attest to his good character, including The Rev Pretymen, rector of Sherington; Mr Johnston, malster of the same place; Mr Wm Dymok (Dimmock), farmer of Sherington; Mr Richard Meadows, of the same place; Mr Job Sweet of the same place; and Mr Thomas Goodman, also of Sherington. In the end they were all acquitted. I have no idea why since the police did have a lot of evidence against Thomas Junior and Stephen Griggs.

Although Thomas Griggs Junior was acquitted of conspiracy and defraud, he was locked up in Debtors Gaol in April 1840. This may have been related to his failed business or an action by his creditors. But he escaped! I have detailed information that someone threw a rope over the Bedford Gaol wall on 22 April 1840 just before 9:00pm, and Thomas Griggs Junior was gone!

It appears that Thomas, Stephen and Dryden Griggs came to Canada between 1840 and 1842 and lived as Smiths after the escape in order to not be caught. I have not found the passenger record yet, but I'm still hopeful. When George B Griggs went to Troy, New York a few years later he also changed his name to Smith and likewise for his mother, Elizabeth Griggs (nee Brown).

George B Griggs is listed in the 1841 census for Sherington with his parents Thomas and Elizabeth Griggs and siblings. It was shortly after the death of four of their

children between 1840 and 1844 (and likely dealing with the shame and village gossip) that they left Sherington because Thomas Griggs Senior is no longer listed as living in Sherington in the 1847 Sherington directory.

For additional interest, one of Thomas Smith's sisters, Jane Griggs, married Joseph Bradley in 1840 in Sherington and went on to have three children before her death in 1845. Joseph Bradley remarried but died before 1856, and the three Bradley children, Sarah, Elizabeth and Arthur W, suddenly arrived in Troy, New York, probably as a result of their stepmother remarrying and not wanting them there. I think grandmother Elizabeth Griggs (alias Smith) brought them over. The three Bradley children lived and worked in Troy, New York until their deaths.

I believe that the reason that my relative was not able to find the parish records showing Thomas Smith's baptism or Thomas Smith's parents' marriage in Sherington during his trip in 1903 was because he was looking for Smith records and not Griggs.

I have not yet been able to find out what happened to Thomas Griggs Senior or where he died. There is also a younger sister, Ellen Eliza Griggs, who is unaccounted for. Dryden and Stephen Smith both died in Canada in the 1850s.

Thomas Griggs Junior (alias Smith) led an exemplary life here in Huntley Township, Carleton County, Ontario, Canada, first as a butcher then as a farmer, innkeeper and tavern owner. He was involved in the local Anglican Church and died in 1873. I have found no evidence to indicate that his brothers Dryden, Stephen and George B (all butchers) were not law-abiding citizens in Canada and the United States.

If anyone would like additional information about the Griggs family of Sherington please contact june.corfield@gmail.com.

June Corfield

War Horse

Having seen the new film about the WW1 War Horse, I remembered being told about an old war horse that had lived in Water Lane. His field was behind Virginia House Stores, where there are now houses built. He was named Deppa, and this seems to have come from the word depot, where he may have worked. It is not known whether he took part in front-line duties.



The village children would visit the large grey horse and knew of the military number tattooed on the inside of his mouth.

It occurred to me what a very lucky horse he was to have survived the war, since the odds of ever returning were stacked against him. We could not have won the war without the effort of these animals, who kept the supply lines constant in all conditions and pulled the heavy guns and wagons. There was one horse for every four men taking part in the war. The Army paid good prices for horses over 15 hands that were purchased from farms, factories and mines all over Britain. The best horses were kept for the cavalry.

Battle Charges were the main cause of horse deaths, it took years of this hideous slaughter of both men and horses before the folly of using cavalry against machine guns was realised. Starvation, disease, infection and exhaustion were also the cause of many horse deaths. At the end of the war, the horses suffered the ultimate betrayal, and were sold to French and Belgian butchers for slaughter, or were left in fields to die, since it was thought to be too expensive to ship them home.

Some owners travelled to France to claim their horses, if they could prove ownership, but how Deppa found his way home we do not know, but we hope that he had a peaceful and happy time in Sherington after his military service.

Caroline Leslie

MK Exhibitions

There are a couple of free exhibitions running in Milton Keynes at the moment which might be of interest.

The 'Our Sporting Life' exhibition runs until 30th April 2012, and is in the Pitchside Bar, the Doubletree Hotel, Stadium:mk. It is inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and is a celebration of the passion, performances and achievements that make up our local sporting history, from school sports days to world-beating players and teams.

'Artefacts - Exploring museum collections through art' is on until 5th April 2012 and is in the Discover MK Showcase, upstairs in Milton Keynes Central Library.

Lionel Horsnell

The artist Lionel Horsnell, who lived in Hertfordshire, died of heart failure in Welwyn Garden City in December 2011, aged 79. Sheila Quinn tells of his connection to Sherington below.



“Lionel was a bohemian who frequented Soho and drank in my aunt and uncle’s public house, The Coach and Horses, Old Compton Street, Soho in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Pat and I knew him, but not very well. He arrived at our Pub, The Foresters Arms, New Bradwell, having travelled on the train to Wolverton and then cycled the rest of the journey. His ramshackle bike took him around MK and to Sherington. In exchange for ‘bed and board’ Lionel painted a picture of 2 School Lane. While painting no. 2 he received requests for paintings of village houses. Pat and Nigel, Griggs Orchard had one done of the rear of their property and there was one in the Swan.

Lionel visited us for a second time and then painted a second picture of No. 2 and one of the Foresters. He then seemed to vanish but left some easels and painting equipment in Pat and Nigel Banham’s outbuilding.”

Sheila Quinn





Sherington Historical Society

presents

An illustrated talk by Brian Giggins

Smothered in the bog house



Tuesday
10th April 2012
7.45 pm for 8.00 pm

Sherington
Village Hall

Refreshments available
Raffle
Entry: £1.00/£2.50
for members/
non-members

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