



## **Report for Parish Meeting April 2023.**

It has been a big relief to settle back into holding regular face-to-face meetings after the restrictions imposed on public gatherings due to Covid-19.

We have been able to deliver a full programme of meetings on a wide variety of topics. We had talks ranging from the medieval era through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We had a fascinating insight into medieval construction methods and the record keeping involved in rebuilding Thorney Hall by the Amondeville family and reflections on other historically significant buildings that Suffolk has lost. We had contrasting stories from WWII, with on the one hand a talk on the Women's Land army girls and finishing the year on a lighter note with a talk about the Dad's Army actors. We were given an insight into the ongoing developments at the Stowmarket Museum as they refocus onto the agricultural end-product of food rather than their East Anglian heritage. We heard snippets from newspaper reports on past happenings in Suffolk, speculations on experiences that can trigger reports of hauntings and explored how works of art reflect aspects of our local history.

We are still awaiting our talk from the Cotswold Archology about the dig they undertook before the Linden development was built on the corner of Thorney Green Road and the B1115. Although the archaeological survey was completed pre-Covid, the lockdown delayed the company's ability to process the data and to complete the publishing of their findings. This talk is due to take place soon.

As well as monthly talks a group of members were finally able to visit Stowupland Hall. Although this is now office space for 'Plain English' (a carpentry factory) because it is a Grade 2 listed it was fascinating to still be able to see some of the Hall's original nineteenth architecture.

We continue to share our research with the wider community, especially keeping alive the memory of Ena Carter who did so much for local history in the last century. Neil Langridge combines research with helping to ensure past records are resurrected and made accessible for the future. And thanks to our members our village archives continue to grow with, amongst other items, the addition of farming diaries from 1940 to 70, newspaper clippings and a pre-1910 postcard showing Holy Trinity as it might have looked at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Material from our archives has been invaluable for allowing us to put together displays in the village. Whilst Queen Elizabeth II never visited Stowupland, we celebrated her Platinum Jubilee with a display reflecting events in Stowupland during the "70 Glorious Years" of her reign. In December for the Stowmarket Christmas Tree Festival we decorated a tree at the Food Museum in honour of those people we knew from our archives who had celebrated Christmas away from home in foreign parts.

'Like Topsy' our website continues to grow. It has prompted queries from the wider community as requesting information that we hold on either their family members or the history of their home and provided the answers for a fund-raising Christmas quiz that we set our members over the Christmas period. We have benefited from the support of the parish council in arranging funding for the purchase of a lap top computer which will be invaluable for displaying our speakers' power point presentations and make it easier for us to share our archives with the community.

We are extremely grateful to our members and our committee of volunteers without whom there would be no Local History Group

Sandra Walker (SLHG Chair)