

MORLEY

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY Newsletter

November 2017

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www.morleylhs.btck.co.uk



Tonight

Ken Cothliff is our speaker and he will be giving an illustrated talk about Yeadon Airport. Mr Cothliff has been described as a life long aviation enthusiast and he has written a book about the airport. From what I've read about his background and views I think we can expect an authoritative and stimulating evening.

The Last meeting

We had a lovely meeting with John Wallis who entertained us with stories and songs about Wartime periods which have been used by Variety artists. He took us from the time of the Boer War and the Great War up to that of 1939-45, choosing songs by popular artists from each period which had a cheerful and humorous element. He added jokes and used various musical instruments throughout. It was a joyous time even with such a sombre subject.

Local History Society Yearbooks and Booklets

Our new member, Jeff Chambers, is continuing to transform the old yearbooks into a new A5 format. The latest one is Volume 1 from 1965-68, giving details of how our society was shaped, with ideas and activities. He has added some lovely new graphics including the Gildersome Manor House and the Crank Mill well. It costs £4.

Remembrance Day 2017

Last Sunday, an enormous number of folk attended the ceremony at the War Memorial for those service personnel who have died in the service of our country. It is also just over 100 years ago that the Battle of Passchendaele (3rd Battle of Ypres) ended. Julie Heeley and I were privileged to lay a special wreath on the Memorial for all the local men who are commemorated at the Tyne Cot Memorial for victims of this conflict.

36 Morley men are remembered here and Morley Community Archives has produced a booklet which gives details of them.



Herbert Hardy

It's a tricky problem mentioning just one of these men but I think the story of Pte Herbert Hardy of the Yorkshire Regiment highlights the awfulness of this time in full detail. He is thought to have been killed on 16-November-1917 but his body was never found. Even in February 1919, two months after the end of the war his mother could not accept this and was still asking if anyone had details of her son. I have to say that we have heard of numerous similar incidents in this terrible time for the soldiers and their families.



Morley's Passchendaele Wreath
with 36 named Poppies

Christopher Saxton

Many of you will know that the New White Bear pub at Tingley Cross-roads has been demolished. Some time ago the Yorkshire Society erected a memorial plaque there to commemorate the locally born map-maker Christopher Saxton.

It was felt quite rightly that this tribute should be preserved and so a new plaque has been made and placed on the nearby New Scarborough Public House. It was formally dedicated on 12-October in the presence of the Mayor of Morley, Cllr Robert Finnigan and I gave an account of Saxton's life and work.

Nowadays folks take maps for granted but few realise the great debt that we all owe to this man who rose from relatively obscure beginnings to become the Father of English Map making.

Christopher Saxton was born in the age of Queen Elizabeth I. Extensive work on the sparse, available records by Evans and Laurence indicates that, contrary to previous ideas, he was born in Sowood, a district which has now been taken into Ossett, somewhere between 1542 and 1544.

His parents, Thomas and Margaret moved to Dunningley in his childhood. This part of West Ardsley still exists as a separate entity and remains relatively isolated, just off Thorpe Lane. His family had the means to educate him, probably in Wakefield and also, it's thought, at Cambridge. In 1570 he came under the influence of John Rudd, Vicar of Dewsbury and passionate map-maker. The evidence is strong that he learned his skills here and that they were such that he became known to Thomas Seckford who had direct links to the Royal Court and, in particular, the chief minister William Cecil. A recent TV series has shown how the Cecils guided English policy and William, aware of a threat from Spain, felt that the layout and resources of the country must be fully known. The result was that in the early 1570s, Cecil instituted a grand project to map the whole country with Saxton leading the team of surveyors organised by Seckford. A beacon signalling system had already been set up on high points around the country and Cecil instructed locals to give Saxton all the help he needed in locating and using these points.

Even so, in an astonishingly short period of three years, Saxton had completed the whole survey in 1577 and that of Wales by 1578. In 1579, his work was published in one volume with beautiful art work decorations - the first British Atlas. It remained the standard for accuracy until the advent of the Ordnance Survey. In 1579, he was granted a Coat of Arms but he returned to Yorkshire and Dunningley in 1588 when his patron Seckford died.

Thereafter he worked on local surveying projects including maps of Dewsbury and Manchester, often with his son Robert. He died around 1610 and was likely buried at Woodkirk Church. The inclusion of Dunningley in his map of Yorkshire must, surely, indicate that he felt this was his home and he was proud of it.

Leeds Libraries have one of the 47 existing copies of the original atlas, now valued at around £150,000.



*The Slate Plaque at
The New Scarborough*

An original exists in Leeds Central Library



Part of the Saxton map of Yorkshire, Dunningley shown.

The principal waterways around Morley clearly changed later.