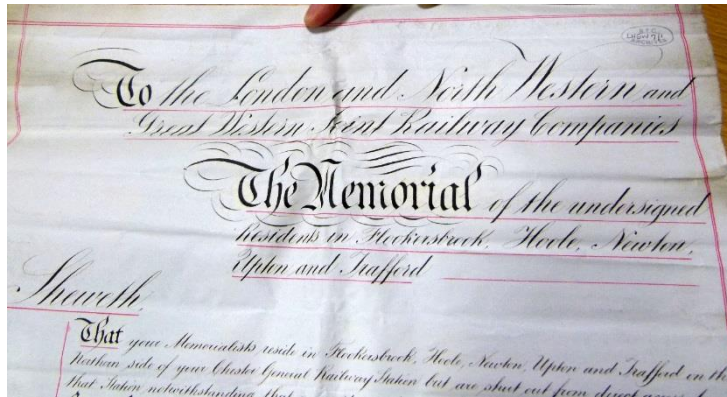


CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018

An excellent start was made to our year when Monty Mercer gave an account of a Memorial (Petition) dated 1889 which he had found in the National Archives at Kew. The Memorial signed by 197 residents sought to improve access from the Hoole side to Chester General Railway Station, which could only be reached by crossing Hoole Bridge, even then a dangerous and congested highway.



Extract from memorial

Important in its own right as a historical document, produced when the Victorian businessmen were seeking to improve their ability to trade, the Memorial provides details of most of the important people involved in the social and economic activity of the area.

From his findings, Monty has been able, through our website, to make the document and his transcription of it, available for further analysis and research. A follow up session in July illustrated how Members have already pursued matters of local interest arising from it. A sequence of photographs of the footbridge which was eventually built in 1893 has been placed on our website.

*Ex LMS Class 5 Loco by Hoole Road Footbridge
1963*



In February, an account of the Neston Female Friendly Society by Stella Young enabled members to understand more about the purpose and activities of the Flookersbrook, Newton & Hoole Female Friendly Society, which held its first meeting in 1817. Apart from newspapers articles about its marches which were reported annually until the 1840's, no other information about our local Society has been found; an appreciation of the work of the Neston Society, and an investigation into the lives of some of our local Society's founding members brought about a clearer understanding of local social and welfare in the early part of the 19th century.

A history of the Chester Leadworks by Geoff Pickard in March provided a well researched, informative and illustrative account of an industry which has dominated the landscape of Chester for over 200 years. Besides providing employment for many local people, a number of connections with Hoole were recorded: Edward Walker, its future manager lived at Brook Lodge; its chief Accountant, Edmund Wimperis, who was originally a clerk and lived in the Leadworks Cottages, eventually resided at Moor House; E.C. Walker, then a J.P. was fined along with the son of the Chief Constable of Cheshire from Hoole Lodge, with attending a cock fight in 1865; Mr. Brown, the first landlord of the Faulkner Arms, also worked there.

Religious worship in Hoole and Newton presented by your Chairman, occupied two sessions during the year. Part 1 told the story of why Plemstall Church was the place of worship for both areas, until the Church of England put Hoole into St. John's Parish and Newton into St.

Oswald's. The growth of Chester in the early 1800's led to Christchurch in Newtown becoming responsible for the area, overseeing the building of a schoolroom and eventually in 1867, All Saints Church. The subsequent battle for the control of Westminster Road Schools which had been run on non-sectarian lines since they opened in 1864 culminated at the end of the 19th Century, All Saints C. of E. Church taking control and the non-sectarian body building the Tin Chapel in Walker Street.

Part 2 dealt with the changes at All Saints Church in the 20th Century, the arrival of non-conformism and the provision for Welsh worshippers. Places of worship built in response to the building of large housing estates in Newton after the Second World War were described, as were the histories of three chapels on Hoole Lane and in Pipers Ash.



Pipers Ash Chapel



St. Paul's Mission Church

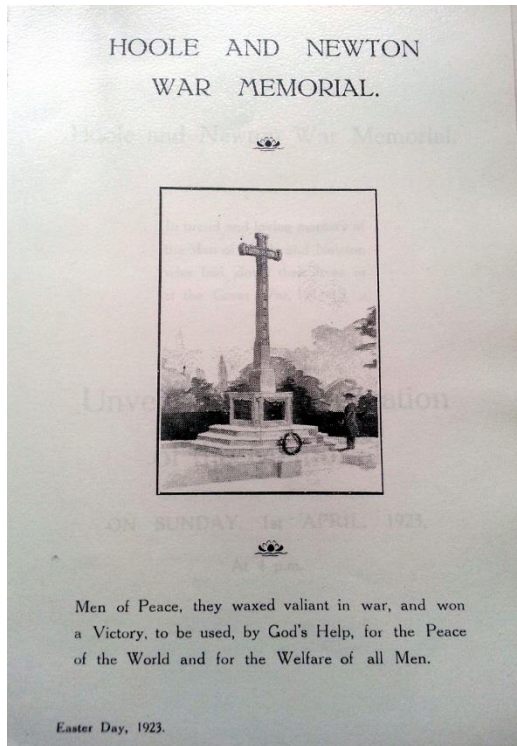
In May, members of the Society took part in a guided walk along Hoole Road, starting at what was The Ermine Hotel, which played a vital role in the life of the area, considering how the road crossed directly into Brook Street prior to the arrival of the railway, and appreciating the history of the houses and their various occupants, and how some are used today – restaurant, hotel, pub, coffee chain. A detour down Westminster Road revealed the headquarters of the former Urban District Council and two mission chapels. The walk continued past All Saints Church and the three houses next door, now an academy, a pub and a hotel. Finally, through Alexandra Park to Hoole Coronation Playing Field.

In June, under the title “Hoole When and Where?”, Linda Webb looked back to when land was owned under feudal rights by the de Hole family in the Manor of Dunham, when the use of their name as a place name may have begun. The feudal rights of the de Hole family over land then came to an end. Hoole, with its various spellings, as a place name on maps from the 17th Century onwards, was identified. The location of the village of Hoole, the settlement which originally bore the name was closely looked at. The emergence of the civil parish of Hoole, becoming a township on the footprint of Hoole as we think of it today, identified the name with a location different from that of Hoole Village.

The political boundary of the township changed significantly from that of the civil parish in 1894, when Hoole Urban District Council was established, followed by further changes to Local Government introduced in 1933 and then 1954, when Hoole Urban District Council ceased and Chester expanded to incorporate most of the area within its boundary. The underlying reasons for, and the human story behind, the later changes were also explored.

The first of August was the 170th anniversary of the opening of Chester General Railway Station in 1848. The Society took up an exhibition space on the platform and was able to illustrate the research that had been done into the coming of the railways and how it had affected the locality. Phil Cook led 3 tours of the station area which were attended by over 75 people.

A very interesting and informative talk was given in October by John Hess about the life of the Cheshire historian, George Ormerod, in whose house he now lives. The circumstances of how the History of Cheshire became to be written, his education and the influences upon him and the process of publishing provided a fascinating story. Ormerod's History was the seminal work on which many of the later histories were based, sometimes reproduced verbatim.



There is no doubt that 2018 saw the Society involved in its biggest project since its formation, which was when it undertook to give particular attention in its activities to the local impact of the First World War. Determined to ensure that the legacy of recently deceased members, Gordon Smith and David Hull, who ensured that Remembrance Sunday was commemorated at the Hoole & Newton War Memorial in recent years, our Vice Chairman, Linda Webb played a prominent role in the way that the centenary of the ending of World War I was commemorated. It was estimated that over 200 people attended the Service at the War Memorial, and that over 400 were in the congregation at All Saints Church when four local Churches came together.

War Memorial leaflet

Much of the information researched and documented, and put together in the past 6 years, was used to enable the 'behind the scenes' input into the organisation of the day – the history of local memorials, the names upon them, the respective responsibility of CWAC and the Flookersbrook Trust, the original dedication and ceremony, the detail of the stained glass windows and the church bells. Practical aspects on times, attendance, dignitaries, wreath laying, possibility of road closure, and the impact on the local area were all considered, to provide one of the biggest gatherings in Hoole & Newton for many years.



Photograph at All Saints Church

At our November meeting, Dave Rees gave a presentation on the way the ending of the War was celebrated both nationally and locally 100 years ago. His research enabled members to see numerous illustrations and newspaper articles which had not been brought together before, to provide a unique picture of what happened in Hoole. Proposals that the War Memorial would be placed in Hoole Alexandra Park along with two German guns was a surprise. Barry Bate gave a very personal and moving account about his father, Basil Dixon-Bate, who became a pilot with the Royal Flying Corps, gaining his Aviators' Certificate on 31st May 1917. He was awarded the Military Cross for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty' on 2nd January 1918 when he was still only 19 years old. The evening was further enhanced when Barbara Nuttall, Jean

Houston and Paul Smethurst showed us photographs and documents and spoke about their relatives who had fallen or who had given service during the War.



War Memorial Ceremony 1st April 1923 unveiled by Gen. Sir H. Beauvoir de Lisle G.O.C. Western Command

Basil Dixon-Bate (back, top right) RFC Training Unit, Hendon



The Society has continued to pursue its aspiration to have a local listing of buildings which would be used not only as a record, but also as a consultation document when planning and conservation matters arise in the district. Changes in the structure and personnel involved in such matters at CWAC, and the lack of clarity and seemingly vision as to how they should be handled has proved to be a frustrating experience. Nevertheless, with the help of Chester Civic Trust, we will endeavour to ensure that the heritage of the neighbourhood is given its due consideration.

Thanks to the skill of Peter Addison, the Society's website has continued to develop and expand, a new feature being a home introductory page that alerts members to new material which has been added. Although it is not possible to quantify use in an exact way, management access distorting figures, it is clearly being well used by members and non-members alike. Regular queries to the website have been received, examples including the Urban District's boundary with Guilden Sutton, the history of Fieldway, Sandleigh and Edge Grove, information about family members, Hoole House and Hoole Hall, Lady Mackinnon, and the locations of Hoole's Fire Stations.

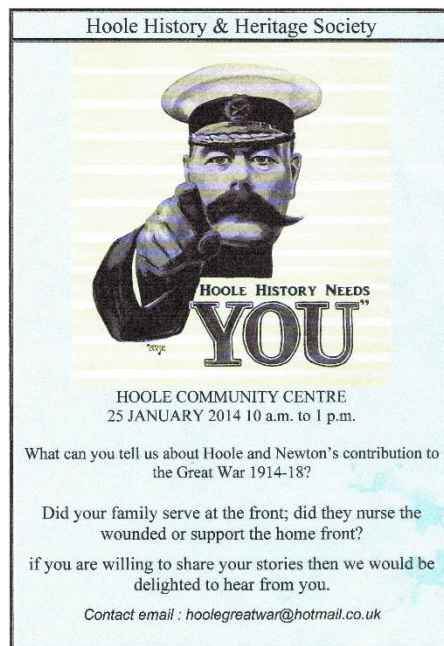
Material has continued to be provided every month for Hoole Roundabout and feedback has shown the interest of residents in our feature in the magazine. Articles are usually based on presentations given to members. This year though there were stand alone items on James Mowle, Hoole's parks and open green spaces, Hoole's coat of arms and a mystery fishing trophy - requests for information about the latter have not produced any results so far.

During the year, Monty Mercer has given talks on Newton Hollows and the Roman route between Deva and Wilderspool to the Local History Societies of Mollington & Backford, Saughall, and Grappenhall. Linda Webb gave a talk to Hamilton Street Methodist Church on its history in the context of Hamilton Street.

Membership of the Society at the beginning of January was 79; by the end of November it was 85. Thank you to Monty in his role as Membership Secretary and also for his research and PowerPoint expertise. The General Data Protection Regulation came into force on 25th May 2018 and thanks also go to our Secretary, Ruth Ludgate, for preparing and implementing the measures that were necessary, in an understandable and simple way.

2018 has been a year of research and discovery. Highlights have included the Memorial (Petition) of 1889, the struggle for the religious control of Westminster Road Schools, and the history of the erection of Hoole and Newton War Memorial, including the photograph of its unveiling in 1923.

However, our involvement in Hoole and Newton's commemoration of the centenary of the ending of the First World War was an outstanding climax to the 6 years of attention that members of the Society have given to the conflict. The illustrations below show the beginnings but definitely not the end, there is much more to come.



2014 poster seeking information on WW1 participants



2018 The Society's Exhibition at the Armistice Centenary Service