

Meeting reviews 2010/11

Census Returns - Winchester and the Worthys

Parish	Area	Population	Area	Population	Area	Population
St. Andrew	St. Andrew	100	St. Andrew	100	St. Andrew	100
St. John	St. John	100	St. John	100	St. John	100
St. Peter	St. Peter	100	St. Peter	100	St. Peter	100
St. Paul	St. Paul	100	St. Paul	100	St. Paul	100
St. James	St. James	100	St. James	100	St. James	100
St. Mary	St. Mary	100	St. Mary	100	St. Mary	100
St. Nicholas	St. Nicholas	100	St. Nicholas	100	St. Nicholas	100
St. Thomas	St. Thomas	100	St. Thomas	100	St. Thomas	100
St. George	St. George	100	St. George	100	St. George	100
St. Michael	St. Michael	100	St. Michael	100	St. Michael	100
St. Martin	St. Martin	100	St. Martin	100	St. Martin	100
St. Andrew	St. Andrew	100	St. Andrew	100	St. Andrew	100

In October 2010 Dr Mark Allen, a lecturer in History at the University of Winchester, spoke to the group about census returns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To begin with Mark gave us an insight into how census returns developed from a basic survey undertaken by Church Wardens in 1801 to the detailed surveys which were completed by individual households which were collected in 1911. He showed the group what information can be gleaned from census returns but also outlined their limitations and common discrepancies. Next Mark demonstrated how Winchester developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with a special focus on the main parishes in the city centre and examples from the Worthys. Mark's talk was interesting and informative to those interested in using census returns in their own research and also more generally in the social and commercial history of Winchester and the Worthys.

Motoring in the Worthys



Showing where the car struck the path.

In our November meeting we were entertained by group member and local motoring enthusiast Chris Cunington to an illustrated talk on "Motoring in the Worthies". Chris took us on a journey through a series of stories showing how motoring developed locally from the early 1900's through to today. This began with a report from the Hampshire Chronicle of 15th November 1904, of a motoring incident, close by on Barton Hill. The picture shows the overturned car of Lord Baring and reveals scenery that can be recognised even today. The chauffeur driven car was carrying a doctor and nurse to attend the Earl of Northbrook G.C.S.I. in his final hours. It was reported that the car overturned in a manoeuvre to avoid the Alresford Mail Cart in the early hours of the morning. The history of how motoring developed and how it was reflected in the growth of cycle and motor cycle businesses was fundamental to the increase of motor car ownership in the early days. Giving examples of this and how the needs of the local motorist were being served was illustrated. For example the all important supply of petrol and servicing of vehicles, enabled small motor businesses like TE Blake & Co Ltd of Kings Worthy to begin. Pictures of the locality and drawings of the original site were shown. The site today is where the Kings Worthy Volvo Garage stands.

In addition, pictures showing the Cart and Horses public house revealed the less well known fact that at one time the pub used to sell petrol from a small forecourt where customers today have their summertime drinks This caused some amusement and pictures showing charabancs and cars parked on the pub forecourt where both vehicles and their occupants were being "refuelled" reveals how little some things have changed since motoring began. The development of the Winchester By-Pass was covered and how that influenced motoring in Kings Worthy and surrounding areas. Reference was made to the owner of the Gordon Keeble car company who lived at Hinton House, Kings Worthy and pictures of examples and details of these cars were shown. Bringing the story up to date, the pictures and some brief details of local enthusiast David Spurling's epic journey from Peking to Paris in his Morgan sports car was told. A wide variety of motoring items were covered to an appreciative and participating audience.

The Springvale Estate - its origin and development



A large audience gathered to hear Peter Finn's talk on the origins and early development of the Springvale estate. The name was first used when James John Axe and others created what is now known as Springvale Avenue in the early 1900s. Initially it was called "The Avenue" and Springvale Road was called "Water Lane" amongst other things. The area was known as Spring Vale. In the 1930s the Rural District Council decided that the road names needed to be formalised and they were confirmed to be Springvale Avenue and Springvale Road. After the Second World War an urgent need for housing became apparent. During the war Flowerdown had been used by the Royal Navy as a wireless station and staff had been housed in barracks. Once the war ended civilians were employed and they brought families with them. The Rural District Council earmarked a large plot of large above Springvale Road as a suitable area to develop housing for the Royal Navy staff and their families. Compulsory purchase orders were issued 18 days later and a building schedule of 6 weeks was decided upon! Initially the development was going to be called the Hookpit estate but by the time of the inauguration it was renamed Springvale.

The final design had two central reservations of grassy areas and 115 prefab bungalows. By the time construction began ten local families also needed accommodation so they were housed in more prefabs bungalows in Tovey Place. In 1948 the first houses on the estate were built, in Vian Place, for local agricultural workers. The houses opposite St Mary's Hall were four shops, the shop part being in what are now the adjoining garages. There was a Grocer's, Hardware, Post Office and Greengrocer's. In 1969 these closed and the Delamonts and Rackhams opened the separate shop and Post Office in their current location. In the mid-1940s St Mary's Church Hall was constructed, this was later rebuilt. In the 1950s the Scouts obtained a Nissan hut and in 1959 built an extra structure around it to provide more space. Further housing was built in the 1950s in what was designated as recreation land but became Churchill Close, Edinburgh Road and North Road. All the roads on the estate were named after outstanding Naval commanders. (See Peter's article The Road Names of the Springvale Estate in Worthy History No. 13.) Major changes occurred after the Navy relocated to Cheltenham in 1960. Permanent buildings replaced the prefabs and the density of the housing increased. The roads went through the central reservations rather than around them. Peter once again researched and delivered a fascinating talk. He is likely to repeat it during Worthys Festival in September 2011. Please check back for more information nearer the time.

Gudies and Brownies in the Winchester and Worthys District

This was the title of the splendid talk given by Linda Banks at the February meeting of the Worthys Local History Group. Looking back from last year's centenary, and using a remarkable variety of material, she presented her talk against the backdrop of an exhibition which brought the subject into chronological focus. This was the first time Linda had researched a topic systematically, and she brought off a real coup. She began by sketching in the start of the Scout movement, closely followed by 'something for the girls' in 1910. A few years the Brownies were formed for younger girls, though initially they were called Rosebuds. Early uniforms from the inter-war period were shown, and accounts of early camping, hikes and expeditions were recorded in a series of scrapbooks and diaries showing photographs, sketches and paintings of real quality and originality. The Guides of our area have created an archive to be proud of, and our speaker used it to great effect. The detailed story of Guide and Brownie groups in the Worthys was traced from the sixties to the present. Linda herself had been a Brown Owl for many years in the 80s, and into the 90s she was also a Division Commissioner. Several women in the audience had either been Brownies with Linda or actively involved in the guiding movement. Today there are half a million members in the UK Girl Guiding Association. This was local history at its best - the past moving into the present, making our meeting a happy reunion of many who remembered the events and changes that figured in the talk. The Winchester Division President, Linda Scorey, rounded off by describing some of the celebrations of the centenary last year, and as a delightful tailpiece, a short film of a recent entertainment showed the Kings Worthy Girl Guides had mastered the techniques of making a movie. The Guides are looking to the future, yet keeping the best of the past love of the outdoor life and group activities, finding ways to help others.

Littleton in the twentieth century

On 10th March three members of the Littleton History Group gave us a talk, based on their book about Littleton, 1900-1000. Denis Holman, Chairman, took us back to much earlier times, mentioning that Littleton still had Disc barrows from the stone age, also the 13th century church and several late medieval hall houses. Mr Lupton took us into the 20th Century, tracing the development of several large houses and various housing estates. The first village hall came into use in 1923 and was used more as a community spirit and various organisations were started. The handsome new village hall was completed before 2000 and has proved a great success. The Recreation ground was the largest in Hampshire and a focus of cricket as the main village sport. There was, rather surprisingly, a polo ground. Our third speaker, Mr Austin Hooker, who has lived in Littleton all his life, regaled us with tales of his youth and his participation in the cricket team. His family built up and ran Hookers Nursery for three generations before the site was replaced by the new hall and a housing development. Austin remembers playing cricket with the Worthys team. Certain families stood out in their purchase of land and their contribution to village life. Mr Arthur Deane owned a bank in Winchester and was master of the Hursley Hunt. His son was much involved in the equestrian business. One of his horses won the Derby which enabled him to set up a stud. This was inherited by his son and it remained in the Deane family until 1984, providing much employment. Everyone agreed it was a great idea to find out more about our neighbouring villages and to look at the research they have done. The Littleton book contains about 100 pages of detailed narrative and photographs, which enlarges on the themes mentioned above. Many of their pictures were shown during the talk. We all learned a lot, during this detailed and enjoyable talk.

Headbourne Worthy in the 1940s & 1950s



On 14th April John Pitman gave a talk on Headbourne Worthy in the 1940s/50s. John was born in the village in 1942 and lived in 5 Vokes Cottages with his parents and two older brothers. He gave the audience an insight into home life, farming, schooling, the church and the village's experience of the Second World War. Then John was growing up his cottage had electricity in three rooms but only a light dangling from the ceiling. There was no mains water or drainage so water came from the well and there was a toilet at the back of the garden. The roof was made of slate tiles so lacked insulation and one year the water on John's bedside table froze during a particularly cold winter. John's father was a gamekeeper on the farm and John remembers him having to deal with pests such as rats, rabbits, pigeons and poachers. One day his father shot 200 pigeons in one day! John helped on during the annual shooting season by working as a beater for 16 shillings a day. Professional people such as Harley Street doctors would pay to shoot on the farm. At the Manor House there were stables which housed race horses including Lovely Cottage, the winner of the 1946 grand

national. The day after the race Lovely Cottage was paraded around the village and young John was lifted onto its back. During the Second World War John's family squeezed a woman and her two children into their 3 bedroomed cottage. The woman's husband was a fireman in Portsmouth and they could see the city lit up with flames at night. Headbourne Worthy mostly escaped damage but one doodlebug fell and killed an RAF pilot who was on leave. In John's cottage the bedroom ceiling came down on top of him in his cot and the windows broke. When D-Day was imminent tanks, lorries and troops were in the area and John was wheeled down to watch Eisenhower and Churchill go past. John's account of his early life in Headbourne Worthy was incredibly interesting and gave a detailed insight into village life in the 1940s/50s.

A Walk Around Kings Worthy Farmland



The tour started at the site of the original Hookpit Farm House, just off Hookpit Farm Lane. It is likely that the house was built in the eighteenth century. The date 1770 was written on roof's lead work however it could have been built earlier with a thatched roof. The house lost a lot of tiles when the V1 landed during the Second World War and the roofs of the buildings were costing £1000 per year to keep the slates on. It was decided that the buildings were not suitable for modern farming and the house and farm buildings were sold in 1966 and demolished in 1973. The tour continued on to the field off Hookpit Farm Lane, at the rear of Tudor Lane. This is currently voluntary set aside providing cover for birds and pollen/nectar for bees. The next location was the old railway line and the site of the railway cottages. (See photo above.) The only sign of them which remains is the cast iron stack pipe which stood at the end of the row. Members of the group remembered how cramped the cottages were and how the train lights would shine in the windows as they were so close to the line. The next field we saw looks over Springvale Road and the entrance to Legion Lane. This is currently planted with poppies and is the site of the old roman villa and what is likely to have been an Iron Age cattle

enclosure. Nigel reported that archaeologists would love to dig the field! The tour continued to Woodhams Farm and the old Didcot railway line. Along the line the group saw a ganger's hut base and pillbox. Michael Edwards described how the pillboxes were designed to stop attack. There are 23 in the area and they were built after the evacuation of Dunkirk. The tour finished by examining Nigel's fields and he gave the group an insight into the workings of modern farming. Satellites enable very accurate crop spraying and harvesting. They also enable analysis of the nitrogen level in each part of the field to allow more responsible use of fertilizer.