

CLEVELAND and TEESIDE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 2017

Cleveland and Teesside Local History continues to thrive.

Membership has remained steady, at about 250 Members, over the past few years.

We continue to deliver a full and varied programme of talks and other activities. Our biannual bulletin 'Cleveland History' and our triannual Newsletter continue to be well received. In the past year, as well as exploring the past, we have looked to the future with developments that embrace the digital age.

This is no mean achievement as we regularly hear of other local history societies that are having problems with declining membership numbers and curtailing or even cancelling their activities.

The Committee are grateful for the support shown by Society members and you can be assured that we will continue to strive to deliver services that meet your needs.

For many the heart of the Society is our annual programme of talks and other activities.

In the past year, our indefatigable Programme Secretary Allan Wilby produced, yet again, a varied selection of speakers and topics for our four Saturday morning twin-talk meetings.

Topics and speakers included:

- My Favourite Durham Churches: Martin Roberts
- The Re-Use of 'Antiques' in High-Status Anglo-Saxon Graves: Stephen Sherlock
- My Grandad was a 'Felon': Appleton
- Gustavas Martens – Architect: Ian Stubbs
- The Eight Streets of Grangetown: Peter McCarthy and Catherine Ford
- Theosophilus Phillips and the Phillippsville Estate: Linda Polley
- From Roman Nails to Cleveland Victorian Ironmasters: GD Spenceley and R Widdowson
- In Search of Cook's Cottage: John Rowlands and Kev Cale

Delivering such a varied and interesting programme is no mean feat and the attendances at events show that the efforts of Allan Wilby, ably assisted by his wife Margaret, are very much appreciated by members.

Allan also helped organise our 19th Day School at Teesside University. The annual Day School reflects a partnership with the Teesside University Centre for Regional and Local Historical Research, a partnership that we greatly value and which recognises the esteem in which our activities are held by the university. We are grateful to the support provided by the university, and in particular to Diana Newton.

This year's Day School took place in March and had as a theme 'Sporting Cleleveland' and included the following presentations:

- Women's football during the Great War: Paul Menzies
- 200 years of Stockton Cricket Club: Gary Daly
- Rugger in Teesside 1870 to 2016: Martin Peagam
- Cycling on Greater Teesside 1869-1914: Bob Goodall

- The Social, Cultural and Economic context of sport and leisure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Ben Roberts

We know that day-schools, in which a number of speakers explore a theme, are popular with Society members.

Two Committee members, Linda Polley and Val Harrison, secured funding to deliver another day school, in September, at the Dorman Museum. Called 'A River Runs Through Us' the event explored aspects of the River Tees, through words, music and film.

As well as contributions exploring the history of the river, there were also contributions that considered the natural history of the river.

Speakers included Alan Bettaney, John Little, Tony Nicholson, Martin Allen, Jeremy Garside and Martin Peagam.

The evening saw various musical performances celebrating the work of the late Graeme Miles, with songs celebrating the growth and demise of industrial Teesside.

We are very grateful to the support provided by the Dorman Museum, by River Tees Rediscovered, the North East Film Archive, and by Teesside Philanthropic Foundation, all of whom helped make this event a success.

Whilst we have had a web site for a number of years, the growing importance of digital media as a means of communication has been recognised – with the Society developing a new and improved web site, a strong Facebook presence and most recently the delivery of regular electronic bulletins to members with internet access.

Not only do these facilities allow more timely notifications of events to Society members, and potentially reduced costs, but they also allow us to extend a welcoming hand to overseas members and to raise our profile with individuals and groups with similar interests, including potential members.

These developments have been coordinated by Martin Peagam, with considerable assistance from another Society Member, Matt Falcus.

Some of our members have been busy in other local history events, for example the Discover Middlesbrough Festival and Local History Month.

The Society depends heavily on the time, expertise and enthusiasm of a small band of people, primarily but not exclusively Committee members, to deliver everything that we do:

- Margaret Wilby continues to keep our finances in order;
- Lee Firth is the first point of contact for all membership enquiries;
- Val Harrison edits 'Cleveland History', producing a bulletin which is highly respected and much appreciated by Members;
- Jenny Braddy produces our regular Newsletter, always welcomed by Society Members;
- Ian Stubbs has developed our publication sales;
- Linda Polley, our Vice Chairman, has found time to organise a day school as well as stepping into the breach to support the Chairman and Secretary when needed;
- Alison Brown, Paul Stephenson, Stewart Ramsdale, Peter Davison and Francine Marshall have all helped out throughout the year;
- Dorothy Thomson, our Distribution Officer, has kept our members supplied with all the Society's regular communications for many years.

We are grateful to each and every one of them.

And, although he would be the last to mention it, we are particularly grateful to our Chairman, Geoff Braddy, for keeping everyone in check and ensuring that we never forget our purpose.

Above all we are grateful to our Members for continuing to appreciate and support the Society.

The deadline for submissions for the Packett Prize, which is awarded every two years to encourage research into local history, is the end of March 2017. We are looking forward to reading some interesting essays.

We are also looking forward to what will be a major milestone for the Society: it was 50 years ago that the Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society was formed.

As we reach our Golden Jubilee, the Society now has a history of its own, and that is surely something to celebrate.