

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT APRIL 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen

Once again, it is my pleasure to report back to you on the activities of the Marple Local History Society and I am pleased to say that the Society has had a very successful season, which I am sure reflects the quality of the speakers and the variety of their subjects. In particular, the Committee took the decision to include subjects which are not so 'local', hence Donald's very popular talk on 'St Kilda, the islands at the end of the world' and it is our intention to continue to look further afield for talks.

This popularity has come at a cost as, after many years, we have outgrown our current venue. As explained in my letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> March, future meetings will be held at The Methodist Church, which is only a few hundred yards away. The meetings will be held in the church itself, which is on the ground floor and can comfortably seat up to 180 people and refreshments will be provided in the lounge area at the front of the building. There is, however, one change that the Committee has reluctantly decided on - we will no longer have a Christmas Party where members bring food, as this is not practicable. Instead, we will celebrate with a more informal get together with tea and coffee and mince pies and we do hope that these new arrangements will encourage more members to come to the December meeting. At this point, I would mention that the Methodist Church like the Evangelical Church, does not allow alcohol to be served.

Tony Jones and Sheila Thornton are standing down from the Committee tonight and it would be remiss of me if I did not thank them for their valuable contribution. For many years, Tony has operated the audio equipment at meetings and of course, he researched and wrote his book 'From fields to flowerbeds'. Sheila works behind the scenes at the Archives and also helps with refreshments at the meetings.

I am sure you will appreciate that a great deal of hard work goes in to ensuring that we have a vibrant and thriving Society and I would like to thank my fellow Committee Members and other volunteers for all their hard work.

We have a successful Society and I expect next season to be as good as, if not better, than the one that has just passed.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen for your kind attention.

## ARCHIVE REPORT 2014

This last year has been another very busy one for the archive group that meets on a Thursday morning at Mellor Parish Centre. There is the continuous task of indexing and filing new material. Ruth is very good at keeping our computer index up to date.

Sheila has tackled the enormous task of sorting and filing a vast collection of newspaper cuttings and is now starting a project on Market Street. Armed with a large scale map she is plotting the changes over the years. What a task the shops open and close with extreme rapidity.

Brenda has keeping our files of restaurants, cafes and pubs up to date. A never ending task. Bill is our champion sorter, filer and fount of local knowledge. Martin Cruikshank is tackling the sorting out of thirty years of industrial papers. Still being added to as we come across additional material. Louise has now started to sort out our material on census returns, we no longer need the old copies as it is available online.

I still keep everybody busy because I am trying to declutter my house and hand over more material from my collections.

We continue to help people, by email, post or in person, with their enquiries about family or houses.

Please do take photos of changes in the area, eating places in particular come and go with amazing rapidity.

Ann Hearle April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014

**Marple Local History Society**  
**Report on Visits April 2013-March 2014**

There were four visits:

- 12.5.13. Tour of Mellor Mill site. 38 people
- 3.7.13. Marton Church and Congleton. 42 people
- 9&11.11.13. BBC Media City Salford. 43 people
- 5.3.14. Robinsons Brewery, Stockport. 28 people

The year followed the established pattern of a visit for each season.

All visits were booked to capacity, well in advance of the date of the activity, indicating that there is considerable demand from members for this sort of provision by the Society.

In May we toured our very own industrial archaeology site at Mellor Mill. Members were impressed by what had already been revealed in this exciting project, and to learn of plans for the future.

The summer visit, at the beginning of July, took us firstly to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century timber framed Marton Church, one of the locations featured in Donald Reid's little book 'Curious Cheshire'. We then carried on to Congleton, a centre for fustian cutting and leather manufacture, but with connections to John Bradshaw of Marple Hall. We visited the interesting town museum, and then the Curator, Ian Doughty, took us on a town walk.

Autumn provided an opportunity for a bit of history in the making when we toured the BBC's new headquarters at Media City in Salford. Seeing what radio and television studios are really like and trying out news reading and presenting the weather forecast were eye openers. Watching TV is a completely different experience now.

Our final visit was to that important local institution, Robinson's Brewery. They've had a refit in the last two or three years, and replaced their 1923 plant with state of the art equipment, paying attention to energy efficiency and ensuring that the quality of the beer is always up to scratch. Beer aficionados had plenty to say about this. Learning how beer is brewed is fascinating, and we appreciated the improved visitor and refreshment facilities.

Our next outing is to the Wirral and Chester in two days' time on 16<sup>th</sup> April. We will be exploring some of the places featured in Donald Reid's book 'Curious Cheshire'. Currently it is fully booked, but I can put names on a waiting list in case there are any last minute cancellations.

In June we are going to Arley Hall. There will be a tour of the hall in the morning, and the head gardener will take us round the gardens in the afternoon. At the time of writing there are just 4 places left. Hurry, it's first come, first serve!

Judith Wilshaw  
Visits Organiser  
14.4.14.

## Website Report for MLHS AGM 2014

As this is the first occasion on which a report on the Marple Local History Society has been given to the AGM, the Society must offer a gracious thank you to Mark Whittaker for the design of, and his guidance, endless patience and support in the day to day running of the site, from its inception to today.

Why should we have a website? To provide information to members, to provide an insight into the Society, publications, meetings, visits and archive resources and stories. It is our shop window on the world.

The numbers of visitors to the site were consistent throughout the months of 2013. On average, each month, there were 670 unique visitors to the website. And the three countries most visited, in order, GB, USA & China. The site became live in September 2012. The most popular articles are, in descending order, Contacts, Dates for your diaries, Archive Cabinet Index, Marple Bridge Past & Present, Archive book list, these are the top five.

Thank you to Hilary Atkinson, David & Janet Burridge, Ruth Hargreaves, Ann Hearle, Neil Mullineux, and Judith Wilshaw for their input, material for the website. The maintenance of a website is never ending, or it should be! The beast needs forever feeding with its diet of new material. Any offers?

Your history, your society, your website.

*Martin Cruickshank 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014*