

Newnham History Society

Was created in 2022:

- to promote, develop and foster an interest in and an appreciation of the history of Newnham and the surrounding area for the benefit of all who have lived or worked in Newnham, or will do so, or who otherwise have a general interest in Newnham and its history
- and
- to promote the preservation, security and accessibility of archival material

Events

The Society seeks to hold at least 4 events each year.

The intention is:

- to arrange for speakers to provide interesting and entertaining talks on local history;
- to organise outings to local historical sites; and
- to hold our own fun events with a historical theme.

In the last 2 years or so we have:

- Had a talk on Spies & Secrets in Bedfordshire & the Chilterns during World War II by Jean Yates;
- Had a talk on The Fawsley One Hundred & growing up in Newnham in the 1960's by Paul Stuchbury;
- Had a talk about Blair Swannell, a Northampton Saint, British Lion and all round swashbuckler, including his World War I service by Graham McKechnie, Northants BBC and Saints Historian;
- Had a "behind the scenes" visit to the gardens at Canons Ashby, its history and the National Trust;
- Jointly with the WI, had a talk by Rebeccas Shawcross from Northampton Museum on "Shoe Superstitions";
- A further talk from Jean Yates on the Gun Powder Plot & the Treshams, with all its local connections;

- A talk and pictorial view by Doreen Addicott on Weedon Bec Royal Ordnance Depot – an inland port;
- A talk entitled “Lost & Found” by Dr Jenny Dyer, Historian, about the extraordinary, sometimes sad or funny and often uplifting stories of Foundlings, the young children abandoned in the 18th century and taken into big houses where some suffered but others blossomed

Other Activities

The Society is currently engaged in producing a History Trail for & around the village.

This has begun with:

- The refurbishment of the Telephone Box by members of the Society (& later this year the inside panel will be completed depicting “Work & Leisure in Newnham – then & now”);
- The refurbishment of the Bus Shelter by Alf Reynolds assisted by 3 volunteer members of the Society, with the Parish Council funding the material costs;
- The production of a “Royal celebrations” Board;
- The production of a “Newnham at War” Board, both of which are now displayed in the refurbished Bus Shelter

During the course of the next 12 to 18 months, History Trail Boards will also begin to appear around the village, celebrating such things as the Newnham Hill Climb, the Church, the Green, Church Street, Poets Way etc

A website is in the throes of construction which will enable documents and other historical information, including photographs to be available for all to access & see

The Society publishes approx 4 newsletters each year with articles and stories about the history of Newnham – the latest, the 17th, had as its feature article, the cottage called “Trebor” in Manor Lane. The information was derived from title deeds of the property, census records, original documents and recollections from Society members. Manor Lane was previously called Post Office Lane, and before that, Dyers Lane.

The feedback from this article has generated further information about those who used to live and work in Post Office Lane whereby a follow up article can now be written.

The Society is collecting originals or copies of photographs, documents, title deeds etc relating to the history of Newnham (& what happened yesterday is now history!). The object is to create an archive accessible to everyone.

If you have photos or documents you think should be preserved for future generations then please contact the Society.

The Society would also like to see title deeds that anyone has – we can get copies taken so that you can retain the original documents (and the same goes for any photographs or other documents relating to life in and around the village)

Membership

We are currently approaching 50 members.

The Society is run by a small executive committee elected each year at the AGM in December by its members.

Membership is currently £6 per person for the year (1 Jan to 31 Dec). Membership entitles you to reduced admission for speaker events, attendance at membership events such as the Canons Ashby “Behind the Scenes” visit, plus a Xmas Social after the AGM.

Our funding is limited, relying mainly on donations, although grants are sought where possible.

The History Society has been heavily involved in the organisation and running of various Royal Celebration & VE day events in the Village, including the Beacon Bonfires, whereby we have the benefit of the legacy funding from those events, currently held by the PC, which will go towards the costs of the History Trail and the Phone Box.

The Society is also able to accept legacy donations and all donations (including membership fees) are capable of being “Gift Aided”.

We are a social group and welcome new members, whether from Newnham or beyond, who have an interest in local history.

Please contact us by email to Newnhamhistorysociety@btinternet.com or the current Chair, Jim Simpson (Jim.a.simpson@btinternet.com), the Secretary, Jackie Minor (Jacq0108@gmail.com) or the Treasurer, Judith Dorkins (Judithdorkins@btinternet.com)

for any further information or details, including a membership form.

We look forward to meeting you.