

East Brent Parish History Group Meeting 9th November 2011

The Parish History Group Meeting began with a brief review of the current position regarding :

- 1 Funding, a Constitution and formal positions (Chair, Secretary etc.)
- 2 Regular dates for the Group's meetings were proposed and agreed to be held on the 1st Wednesday in each month. The next few dates will therefore be :-
7 Dec. 2011
2012 - 4 Jan., 1 Feb., 7 Mar., 4 Apr., 2 May., 6 June and 4 July.
There will probably be a break during August 2012 with meetings recommencing 5 Sept. 2012.
- 3 Original Tithe Map – this will be photographed and made available on the website. A paper copy will be available in the archive.
Somerset Heritage Centre will preserve it for the future.
- 4 Interviewing long-term Parish residents has commenced yielding some fascinating information. The recordings will be edited, transcribed and copies made available in the archive for viewing/listening.
- 5 Queen's Golden Jubilee – the Parish Council is coordinating ideas & suggestions.
Remember - current events also need recording. 'Today is history tomorrow'.
- 6 East Brent Methodist Church – a potted history has been received and will be expanded.
- 7 Field names – several field names have been received. These are :-
 - o HARTLANDS, Just off the old A38 near motorway bridge.
 - o BROWNS GROUND, Close to the Knoll Inn used to hold the Harvest Home years ago.
 - o HANGING GROUND, Lower part of the Knoll going from E.B. school near the church.
 - o ROUND HILL, Just before Battleborough Grange.

Margaret Thompson (née Field)

The Group had the pleasure of a talk by Margaret Thompson recalling particularly her time living in Church Street. Margaret married and left the Parish many years ago but still keeps contact and visits several times a year. She met several friends from the past and was happy for her talk to be recorded on video. An interesting magazine article concerning the War Memorial was provided by Margaret (see below).

The meeting continued with a break for refreshments and several members displayed some of the documents they are investigating/researching for the Group.

East Brent War Memorial

An article in the Winter 2008 edition of 'This England' article concerned the East Brent War Memorial. The magazine has been contacted and details obtained for the person who submitted it. I have written to him and hope he is still at the address given in 2008. The article reads :-

"This unusual First World War memorial is at East Brent and the live figure is Neville Curry who came all the way from New Zealand to see it. Why? Because his father was the model for the Royal Flying Corps airman (face on) and his uncle (his father's brother) was the model for the soldier immediately behind him. Neville admits to crying when he recognised the family likeness in the sculptures."

This has generated a few other lines of interest e.g. why was Neville Curry's father and uncle used as models? Other information indicates an American sculptor was commissioned to do the statues – who was this and who paid for it? Emery, Stonemasons of Burnham-on-Sea did the main work. I am told there may be a smaller, duplicate at Cossington (near Woolavington) and possibly another somewhere

else. This will be investigated further – can anyone throw more light on any of this?

Memories of John Ham

The day after the meeting, I had the pleasure of discussing his recollections with John Ham. John was born in 1928 and has lived ever since in The Laurels, Old Bristol Road.

An extended discussion with John, Jane Watkins and Bob Bees yielded much information about the Parish. John recalled particularly his involvement with the Royal Observers Corp. during WW2. He related many of his memories spotting enemy aircraft (he is still adept at identification) and dealing with bombs. The discussion was recorded and will be edited and transcribed with copies made available. Both John Ham and Jane Watkins referred to the many photos and documents they have.

Please remember that the Group is very keen on obtaining copies of any photographs and documents relating to the Parish. Originals are best and will be copied and returned to the owners. Bring anything along to our next meeting and we can copy them straight away without them leaving your possession.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 7th December 2011, 7:00 pm in the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome.

Colin Loader

3 Johnson Close, East Brent, TA9 4RZ

Tel. 01278 760713, Mob. 07931 429927

e-mail: cloader2@tiscali.co.uk