

Local History Recorder's Report 2019

As no one has come forward to take on the role of Local History Recorder for Botesdale I shall continue to do it. However, if anyone would like to take this on please do contact me. It is not difficult and can be very interesting and rewarding task.

In March Access Cambridge Archaeology from the University of Cambridge Archaeology faculty returned to do excavations in Botesdale and Rickinghall. They have been excavating in villages throughout East Anglia for over ten years giving students from local schools the opportunity to learn about archaeology. The artefacts and pottery found help the archaeologists discover how the villages developed through the ages. This information goes onto an East Anglia wide data base. The students dig one metre square test trenches in gardens throughout the villages. This year 32 students, aged from 13 to 16, excavated eight test trenches in gardens in both Botesdale and Rickinghall for two days. Unfortunately, no funding has been received to carry on with this project so they will not be returning to our villages next year.

Quatrefoil held their sixth annual history day 'Bringing Local History Alive' on 2nd September in Rickinghall village hall. This year, to commemorate the anniversary of the ending of WWI, the displays were about the two world wars. Gwyn Thomas, a former curator of the Suffolk Regiment Museum, gave a talk entitled 'The Suffolk Regiment in the Great War' and Sarah Doig gave a talk on 'War on the Home Front'. These were given in the morning and repeated in the afternoon. Quatrefoil now has fourteen books in the series 'Recording Local History' and is hoping to publish a book of photographs of the villages this coming year. These books are available from Archers Antique shop situated in the old Newsagents premises or from me. Some are available at the Community shop in Redgrave. Quatrefoil's web site is at www.quatrefoil.org.uk should anyone want to access it.

In October Mary Baxter held an exhibition of her photographs of the villages in Park View Chapel. Mary has a wonderful collection of photographs, many taken by her, which record the villages over the last century. Half the proceeds from the exhibition went to Park View with half to the charity 'Tearfund', to go towards the appeal for the victims of the recent earthquake in Indonesia.

At the recent Quinquennial inspection of St Mary's Church, Rickinghall Inferior it has been found that the roof and much of the stone work is in urgent need of repair. It has been estimated that this will cost £90,000. Our parish churches are usually the oldest buildings in our villages and a very important part of our history. The Chapel of Ease, formerly St. Botolph's Chapel, has been standing on its present site since the late 13th century or early 14th century. The first reference to it so far in the documents is from 1338. It was rebuilt in the late 15th century when it became a chantry chapel and later it became a grammar school. It is the oldest building in Botesdale with an amazing history. It too needs constant expensive maintenance to preserve it.

Diana Maywhort