
Our last Heritage meeting was really interesting and one of our members has very kindly shared a little about it below.

Oh what a night – 1st November 2023!!!

Members of the Escrick Heritage Hub met in St. Helen's Church to share memories relating to various items of interest. The evening commenced with an update relating to some research being undertaken relating to a war memorial within one of the Selby Churches commemorating those who lost their lives as a result of the 1st World War. The research involves a young man, Emmanuel Joseph Foxton, who is known to be buried in an unmarked grave. The burial records for St Helen's confirmed that the young man was indeed buried in the graveyard. Further research has identified the most likely location of his grave, but the location has yet to be fully confirmed. The young man in question was "gassed" whilst fighting in France. He was repatriated, but some months later succumbed to his injuries resulting from the gas attack. We await further developments.

The first item discussed was made of metal, with a handle that turned. This object could be clamped to the top of a work surface, most likely a table top. When the handle was turned the blades within the metal protective case sliced and diced green beans – runner beans. This item had been used by the owner's Grandmother to preserve vegetables in jars and bottles to help feed a family of 10 children in the early part of the 20th Century; long before fridges and freezers became household appliances.

The next two objects were items used in the hairdressing profession – curling/waving tongs and hair clippers. We were able to look at a number of postcards demonstrating ladies' hairstyles from the early 1900s to the mid-20th Century. We were also "treated" to a description as to how permanent waves/curls were carried out. Both clients and stylists seemed to be exposed to several health and safety hazards – clients' hair almost set on fire, stylists' fingers burnt and foul smelling chemicals used to set/neutralise the perm solutions. Such practices today would no doubt, at the very least, breach health and safety regulations, possible even human rights legislation!!

Another member brought in swatches of cloth, patterns and price lists relating to a bespoke shirt maker in York. The swatches of cloth would not have looked out of place for shirts manufactured today. In the 1950s a shirt was priced at 3 shillings (for those who don't know about pre-decimal currency 3 shillings equates to 15 pence); a tie cost 1 shilling – i.e. 5 pence. Sadly the shop closed in the 1970s, but who knew there were styles of shirt collars such as the "Lincoln" and the "Pembroke".

A member brought along a jug with a lever that needed to be cranked backwards and forwards. It was a cream-maker and must have taken hours of cranking to produce even the smallest amount of cream. This member also shared memories of being a school pupil in York during the 2nd World War. The member recalled a Mr Baedeker using some form of dirigible to map out the area. Several guide/travel books were published by Baedeker between 1928 and 1942; and were used by the German military. Maybe Baedeker was a German spy? Baedeker travel guides are still published. Further recollections were shared of the Poppleton Road air raid killing 23 residents, life in the Anderson air raid shelters, and food rationing. York was probably a target because munitions were manufactured in one of the local chocolate factories, and the city's proximity to the Elvington air base. These war time memories linked effectively to a very precious item brought to the meeting by another member.

Unbeknown to this member (until after his death), her father had written up his experiences of being a member of a Halifax bomber crew. The memoir was somewhat ironically titled "My 40 days with Adolf Hitler". Her father had served on the Halifax bomber in various roles including Navigator, Wireless Operator, Flight Engineer, and Bomb Aimer. During a raid the aircraft sustained considerable damage and the crew members had to bail out over enemy territory. Crew members were captured and became prisoners of war - hence the title of the memoir. The author wrote an account of life in the P.O.W. camp; and his experiences of marching across Poland being strafed by R.A.F. aircraft whose crews did not realise the marchers were in fact Allied military personnel. This member recalled that her father rarely, if ever, spoke of his war time experiences. Perhaps the memories were too painful, or as with many veterans he was too modest to talk about his experiences?

Two members who have links to the Midlands shared very different items. A metal sculpture of a Native American tribal chief, with a feathered headdress was passed around. It was an exquisite sculpture – evidencing the great skill of the sculptor. This tribal chief was designed as the mascot/radiator cap for buses that operated in Birmingham/Midlands area. The buses were manufactured by Guys Motors Limited. The sculpture we were able to view was the prototype for the mascot/radiator cap.



Also hailing from the Birmingham area were theatre programmes for the Theatre Royal, The Plaza and The Hippodrome. The programmes dated from the 1950s. The programmes related to various forms of entertainment including variety shows, talent contests, Shakespearean plays and films shows. The talent contests might evidence that modern TV talent shows are nothing new – just able to reach a wider audience. For those who remember TV shows and theatre productions of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s some memorable names were listed in the programmes including Lionel Blair and Frankie Howerd.

Some objects came from further afield. One member handed round an object picked up in the south of France about 60 years ago. We were asked to guess its origins. The object appeared to be "fossilised". Several unsuccessful guesses were made. Then we were given a clue – the object was a root – but of what? We remained stumped. The owner then revealed the object to be a rhizome – the bulb/root of a particular Iris flower.

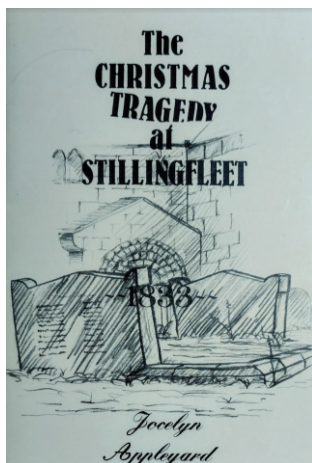
A further item to be discussed came from the Indian sub-continent. It consisted of 3 covered dishes; stacked on top of one another, held together by 2 spoons and at the top, had a handle so the item could be carried. The item is known as a “tiffin dabbas” – lunch box. We went on to discover that in the city of Mumbai around 200,000 such boxes are delivered every day to workers in the city by approximately 5,000 box carriers. The lunch boxes contain home cooked meals which are transported to the workers by pedal cycle, small motor bikes and suburban trains; and distributed to the various shops and offices. Mistakes are rarely made – it is estimated that one mistake is made in about 8 million deliveries!



The final items brought to the meeting we were able to eat. Kit-Kat chocolate bars (other chocolates are available). Before we sampled the Kit-Kats we were given a description of the Japanese Tea Ceremony. A very elaborate affair involving, in this instance, the production of Matcha tea. From the description we learnt that Matcha tea is green in colour, not unlike nettles, and has the consistency of shaving foam/cream. Matcha tea maybe an acquired taste? So why the Kit-Kats? The chocolate bars were also green in colour but nevertheless, very tasty.

The evening drew to a convivial conclusion over homemade cake, tea and coffee. Who knew there would be such an eclectic mix of so many interesting objects in a small North Yorkshire village?

(N.B. the Heritage Group and its members do not accept responsibility for any errors in the content of this article. ☺)



Looking forward to the month ahead

**Escrick Heritage Group - Wednesday 6th December. 7.30pm.
Come along to hear about 'The Christmas Tragedy at Stillingfleet'**

As usual, all very welcome. Members free. Visitors/Guests £4 and refreshments will be served. We will also be sharing our 2024 programme.

There is no Escrick Heritage meeting in January.

Heritage Hub Monday 11th December

Come along between 1pm and 4pm to enjoy a chat over tea and cake.

Hoots Café Tuesday 19th December 9.30am to 12 noon

Absolutely everyone very welcome to come along for tea/coffee and cakes. Adults £3, children 50p. (Free refills). This month all monies taken will be donated to 'The Children Society'.

You may also be interested in:
Thursday 7th December - Weighton Waytes

Christmas concert with wine and festive refreshments . 7.30pm. Free entry, but donations very welcome.

Candlelit Carol Service
Sunday 17th December. 6.30pm

also followed by festive refreshments.

From the community archive



The village Christmas party in the 'Hut' Circa 1930. Lots of very happy faces
(Some of the costumes of course would no longer be considered politically correct,
but they are of the time.)

