

## Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf Community Heritage Group – Chairman's Report 2018

Good evening and thank you for coming this evening. I cannot believe that the group has now been in existence for five years, having been officially formed in 2013, initially to undertake a two year project commemorating WW1. Following on from that project, we began holding regular meetings, formed the NIBCHG Friends and started to explore ideas for a permanent home.

So our fifth year has continued as busy as ever. I should like to thank the New Victory Hall (NVH) for continuing to allow us to hold regular displays at the Neatishead Farmers' Market which have been well received by those attending and have added another dimension to the Farmers' Markets. We have had an interesting mix of presentations at our Wednesday meetings from FEPOW, Mills of the River Ant and Women of WW1, and new this year has been the research evenings in the Community Room at the NVH which have increased in popularity during the year.

In our search for a permanent home, Neatishead Baptist Church kindly offered us the use of their Stable Building, for small meetings, storage and research, and we are just finalising an agreement with them.

Our "House History Survey" began this year with a view to forming an archive of information about houses in the three villages. Information sheets are available for people to guide them on what to look for, what to record and how we can help. We would like the survey to cover those houses that are old and not so old, so do take a sheet if you have not already done so – and please remember to return the information to us.

Michael and I have spent some time at the Norfolk Record Office researching more documents relating to our villages and we now have electronic copies of both the Tithe and Enclosure maps for Irstead and the Tithe map for Neatishead, albeit in small sections. This may be helpful if you are wondering how old your house is. Do let us know if you would like to see these, or why not take a trip to the Norfolk Record Office yourself, these documents are available for anyone to look at. We would be happy to accompany you but the staff there are all very helpful.

Copies of "The Last True Countryman" a book written about the life of Sid Pestell was generously given to the group for sale by the family and copies of another book just completed about David Coleman "A Neatishead Man" have also been donated by his family and are for sale. These books both give us a fascinating insight into life in our villages over the past 100 years and I should like to thank both the families who have donated the books and to Ray Gedling for all his work on writing and producing them both.

Returning to World War One, our display "Who do you think you are" at the Barton Church Festival in August was enjoyed by many and I should like to thank Susan and Roger Lamb for sharing details of their family for the display.

Gareth has made a number of visits to the European War Graves and while pursuing his research interests in WW1 has linked this with discovering more about the service of the men from our villages.

Following the WW1 – Norfolk Women on Active Service project I was involved with at The Forum last year and the research undertaken about the work of local VAD nurses at Hoveton and Catton Halls, I organised for touring exhibition of this research to be on display at Neatishead Radar Museum during June and July. We were pleased to be able to see this when we visited the Museum for our July meeting and it also gave us an opportunity to hear about further new projects being undertaken at the Museum.

We were pleased on the success of our application to the Norfolk Community Foundation – WW1 Fund to enable us to organise a number of events for Remembrance Weekend to commemorate the Armistice and I should like to thank Geoff for his help with this. With a little encouragement some members of the community have been researching their own relatives who served their country during the Great War and these will be on display in November. We look forward to seeing you all during that weekend – and if you would like to help please sign your name.

Finally I have two big thank yous, firstly to all members of the committee Barbara, Carol, Gail, Gareth, Geoff, Michael and Susan without whom everything you have seen and heard this year would not have been possible and secondly to all of you here tonight who have supported the group over the past five years. We look forward to your continued support at our forthcoming WW1 event in November and into 2019. Please remember it is not just what happened 10 years or 100 years ago, yesterday's events are today's history.

Thank you, Claire Penstone-Smith, 17.10.18