

# Desford and District Local History Society

## Newsletter

Spring 2019



### Report Back from a very enjoyable AGM on January 15<sup>th</sup>

A lot of AGMs cannot always be said to bring laughter and stimulating thought. This year our Desford and District History AGM was one that certainly did.



We began with brief reports from Caroline Wessel (President), Bernard Grimshaw (Chair) and Dennis Casson (Treasurer). After a look back at all the various activities and talks we had over the last year by both Caroline and Bernard; it was obvious that it had been a very successful year indeed. They passed on their grateful thanks to all those members who had contributed towards this

outcome.

Dennis reported back that the Society has over £1000 to carry forward and the subscription would remain at £12 with the complimentary tea/coffee at meetings. On the night over 44 members re-enrolled and this has risen to 50 members. Dennis estimates there could be about another 10 to be added to the total.

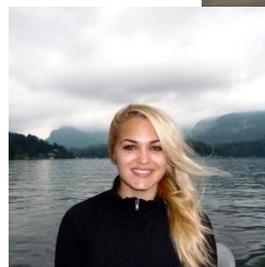


Angela Thomas (Secretary), after commenting about talks and visits in 2018 gave a resume of activities booked for the next year beginning with a talk by Dr Iain Hambling about T.G.Green



Co Ltd on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2019.

This will be followed on May 21st by about the De Montfort University



Elizabeth Wheelband telling us Heritage Project

The first visit (Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019) will be a local visit to Market Harborough with a heritage trail guided walk as well as a chance to visit the small, but very interesting Museum opened in 1983 in the former R & WH Symington Corset Factory.





After the appointment of the next year's committee; all offering to stand for another year plus the addition of Linda Grimshaw as a new committee member; members enjoyed a small buffet and drinks provided by various members.

There then followed about an hour of 'entertainment'.

Dennis Casson started the second part of the agenda with three very entertaining renditions of well-known monologues by Edgar Marriott. These monologues became well known after being performed by Stanley Holloway.

Firstly, Dennis read 'Canute the Great'; then 'The Fair Rosamund' and finally 'The Lion and Albert'



Images taken from illustrations of Marriott Edgar's monologues (Born 1880, died 1951).

We then enjoyed vintage material from our archives, a CD about The Desford Industrial School which harked back to our talk the previous September by Sally Prytherch called 'Elsie May Dearest', followed by a CD lent by John Richards showing images of 'Desford Past.'



The third and final contribution was from John Russell, who had us trying to make up our minds about the case for or against the telling and teaching of nursery rhymes to young children. Should we continue or discontinue this practice.

Both serious and funny it really did make you think.

The meanings behind the rhymes are often chilling and macabre. John certainly had me trying to discover more and search the internet.

We definitely had a most memorable AGM this year.

## More contributions from Betty Dickson's alphabetical card index sent in by Caroline Wessel

### ARTISTS-

Just a little more information about Frederick Rust from our last newsletter. There is an actual plaque commemorating his memory on the Free Church Wall. See if you can find it next time you walk down the path from Pickards Play Area. Though extremely faint you can see his first name is without the k.



**BULLOCK HALL BARN** - a sumptuous brick-built parlour (built 1791 - 1857) to accommodate Desford cattle-breeder Henry Chamberlain's prize cattle; it was situated in a field by the stream at the bottom of the hill in Leicester Lane. There were cellars underneath for the storing of root crops and a yard with stalls around it. By 1982 it had all but disappeared and the bricks and tiles were stolen.

The **CALVINIST CHAPEL** (or Strict Baptist Chapel) on High Street was built and opened about 1800, fell into disuse about 1900 and was demolished possibly in 1937. Members of its Mother Chapel in Leicester would come to the Desford chapel on outings during the summer months. William Gadsby, the Apostle of the North, was minister at this Desford Chapel for a while. He had a thriving congregation in the heart of Manchester's poverty and squalor; was a vigorous voice against injustice and founder of the Gospel Standard magazine.

**William Gregory**, the Desford shoemaker, was the last person to be buried there. Although the chapel building is now demolished, its well-maintained graveyard site, still with some gravestones, is a peaceful area open to the public. *Currently being 'revamped' by DCAG- Open Gardens, with seats and planting.*



*William Gadsby was born at Attleborough in Warwickshire on 3rd January 1773. When about twenty years of age he was baptised and joined a Baptist Church at Coventry that was pastored by Mr John Butterworth.*

*In 1796 after marriage to Elizabeth Marvin he moved to Hinckley and joined a few people there who met in a barn. His first sermon was preached on Whit-Sunday 1798 at Bedworth and soon after a chapel was erected for him at Desford in Leicestershire. In the year 1805, he moved to Manchester where he remained until his death*

Does anyone know anything more about these or have any photographs? If so, please contact: Molly Marcus Telephone 01455 823004 or e-mail [mollymarcus@aol.com](mailto:mollymarcus@aol.com)

More Card indexes compiled by Betty Dickson in the 1950s appear in our next newsletter. I hope you find them as interesting as I do.

## Who was Betty Dickson?

Caroline is working on a collection of Desford Personalities of the Past. Here is her account of Mrs Elisabeth Dickson (1906 - 1998)

Betty Dickson's name was synonymous in Leicestershire with local history. For almost five decades she researched, published and promoted it through her work in Desford and on various history committees countywide.

Betty's interest in local history was sparked off when she came to live in Desford in 1945 and joined some W.I. ladies to record the village's history. In St Martin's Church Parish Chest, she discovered registers and other documents dating back to 1559, which she worked on with boundless energy and then arranged for their safe storage with the County Archivist. She was instrumental in the founding of Desford & District Local History Society and worked tirelessly, helping to organise its exhibitions and activities.

Mrs Dickson was also a member of the Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society, Leicestershire Local History Council, Society of Genealogists, Leicestershire Family History Society, East Midlands Heraldry Society, British Association of Local History, Leicester Museums and Friends of Leicestershire Record Office, serving on the committees of several of these organisations. She loved the history of her home county, not just as a meticulous researcher and writer herself, but to engender pride in it amongst others. Her *History in Desford* (1974, out of print) and *Recollection of Desford* (1986) still inform and delight the people of Desford

Thanks for all the information Caroline - Molly Marcus for our History Newsletter



### Changes:     Do you remember these in 1997?



Extending the Post Office



Closing down of Stich in Time

and earlier - total transformation of the old Off-Licence, previously owned by Chawners; later Wilsons.

