

Syresham History Society Report – 2021-2

The main issue that has taken our time has been how to manage to keep the Society afloat and working with few face-to-face meetings, and no income. We had planned a full programme from 2020 and into 2021, but it became very obvious that things were not going to be normal, and we could not physically meet for some time. Whilst the near future is looking more positive, for much of 2020-21 we were unable to meet, but were able to use online presentations using Zoom. Although we were conscious that not every member has access to online facilities, we managed meetings in March, April and May with some 13 or so members tuning in, including some guest members from Buckinghamshire. There has been no charge for these meetings although we have met speaker costs from reserves.

We had excellent online presentations on The Banbury Munitions Factory, women in Astronomy, The Queen Eleanor Way, Bees and Honey. Regrettably we cancelled the Carry on Films talk as it clashed with the Euro Football final and it was felt that our funds would not stand the further losses incurred. August saw Roy Smart bring us up to date on Amy Johnson the famous flyer, and in September a fascinating account of the horrendous travels of Ernest Shackleton in the Antarctic. For October, we enjoyed a talk about WW2 Bailey Bridges.

We are planning for a Treasure Hunt and a Quiz evening later this month, and then a talk in November about the Watling Street and finally our Wassail Evening in early December with a short talk about metal toys by Roger Brown.

We face a very challenging time ahead with the continued impact of the Pandemic, and the on-going reductions in members and visitors to our meetings. We really do need some extra support on Committee. It is unfortunate that we have had to operate with only 5 of us in all, and we need support from within membership to keep us going. We do meet in the day time, but can change that and we have a monthly diary of meetings. We have obviously not been spending greatly, but at the same time income has of course dropped, and we have largely been running at a loss. If we cannot restore activities by getting in more members and committee activists to keep afloat, the Society will almost certainly fold.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for its very generous financial support to keep us on track with increased costs of speakers, travel costs and are doing what we can to support ourselves and our regular activities.

As always, my thanks go to all members for continuing to support our programme, and especially my thanks to the Committee for their regular help.

Ian Draper, Chairman, May 2022