

MARKET BOSWORTH SOCIETY

April 2016

Dear Member

It hardly seems a month since I last sat down to write a News Letter. How the time does fly? Since my last letter we have helped the HSBC celebrate the 175th Anniversary of banking in Market Bosworth. The banner was put together by our Archivist Glynis Oakley and was helped by both Beth Dawes and Ingrid Davison. Well done! Everyone I have met who has seen the Banner has offered compliments. I must also say at this juncture that Dean and Nicky at The Graphic did a brilliant job of printing it. We have more anniversaries and events coming up, The Co-Operative and the Library Official Opening to name but two. Naturally The Market Bosworth Society will be supporting both events.

We were treated to an illustrated lecture at our April Meeting by Peter Liddle MBE (Honorary Visiting Fellow at The School of Archaeology at Leicester University). Peter's lecture was entitled the '*Rise and Demise of a Medieval Village*' and was enjoyed by over sixty members. We also had four new members and many existing members took the opportunity to renew their subscriptions. Marion was kept busy! Very Busy, thank you Marion. Peter explained how Anglo- Saxon villages were constructed and the role of field walking in identifying the location of these villages. Buildings were of timber and thatch and therefore returned to the soil once the villagers ceased using them. Peter explained how by carefully logging items found, pieces of pottery and coins for example, it was not only possible to locate a village but also to tell how long it was in use. Modern technology also has a role; Ground Reading Radar is used to identify where test pits are most likely to provide positive results. Radio Carbon Dating is also used to give a surprisingly accurate date of the items found by the radar and test pits.

Peter also explained how life changed for the villagers with the introduction of the Enclosure Acts and the effect of the changes from strip farming to field farming. It is thought that villages were originally created as a centre of mutual cooperation. Once the plough was developed it would take a team of 8 oxen to pull it. Very few families could afford more than one oxen but in working together it was possible to cultivate the land and avoid starvation. Peter warned against time travel to the 14th Century! During that time crops failed in 1315, 1316 and 1317 when many of the population starved. The Black Death broke out in around 1348 and resulted in the deaths of between a quarter and a third of the population. Rural villages were never the same again. A truly fascinating lecture. Judging by the lively question and answer session afterwards I was not alone in enjoying it!

Test Pits were discussed in more detail. Our past chairman Peter Loseby is very keen to develop knowledge of our village and is planning to introduce a series of test pits, hopefully engaging with schools to gain the involvement of pupils. More on this later as I have asked Peter Loseby to keep us informed of his plans and progress. Rest assured the Society will be supporting any initiative that will enhance our knowledge and help our children to appreciate our beautiful Market Town.

Our next lecture is a bit special too, "**The Retail History of Market Bosworth**" is being hosted by our own Robert Leake using the research of Glynis, Beth and Ingrid. Robert will be narrating the illustrated lecture but is keen to hear memories from members of the audience. The lecture will be on the **12th May, 2016 at the Free Church, Barton Road and will commence at 7.30pm**. Please make a note of the earlier date. I do hope you will be able to come.

Future events are "**History of Market Bosworth – How it Began**" by Peter Foss. This will be on the 16th June, 2016 and will be held in the Dixie Hall (not the Free Church) and will commence again at 7.30pm. As Peter Foss's (aren't there a lot of Peters?) visit coincides with the Market Bosworth Festival the lecture has been advertised elsewhere and it was decided by our committee that a larger venue is likely to be required, hence the temporary change of location.

July and August are both field trips. July will hopefully be a Visit to Moira on the Ashby canal to see how the renovation work, the subject of a lecture last year is progressing and August sees us travelling to Calke Abbey to view both the house and gardens. But more details of those later trips will follow in subsequent Newsletters.

At the end of our meeting on the 21st April Peter Loseby addressed the audience and gave some very exciting news. **Very exciting indeed!** Peter had proposed **Lady Florence Dixie** to be the recipient of a Green Plaque. It has recently been announced that Lady Florence has been shortlisted. The final recipients of a plaque are down to a public vote. This is where The Society really does need your help. Voting is on-line and we need as many people to vote as possible. You, your friends, family, acquaintances, colleagues every one. Please share the information with your Face Book, Twitter and Instagram friends so that they can vote too. As you will see from the attached, Lady Florence was a woman of great character and intelligence also well ahead of her time. Having Lady Florence awarded a Green Plaque will have numerous benefits for Market Bosworth, not just in Tourism and Commerce but also adding even more importance to an already historically important market town.

Voting opens on Monday 25th April 2016 and the address is:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/vote-for-your-green-plaque-winner

LADY FLORENCE DIXIE



LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S GREEN PLAQUE AWARDS

In January of this year the Market Bosworth Society was invited to nominate someone from the rich history of our Town for recognition by the Green Plaque Award Scheme.

The Society nominated Lady Florence Dixie for her work promoting the emancipation of women and in particular supporting the suffragette movement and equality of women in both marriage and divorce. She was President of the British Ladies Football Club and arranged football tours of Scotland.

At the age of 23 she joined her husband in the exploration of Patagonia and recounted her many adventures in her book 'Across Patagonia'

In another of her books entitled 'Gloriana or the Revolution of 1900' she correctly predicted that our nation would be led by a woman politician before 1999. This was at a time when women did not have a vote and were considered as second class citizens.

She acted as the war correspondent for the Morning Post and sent reports on the 1st Boer War and the aftermath of the Anglo-Zulu war in which she played an important role in the restoration of Cetshwayo as King of the Zulus.

She criticised the Fenians and the Irish Land League for their apparent indifference to the suffering of farmers and farm labourers in South Western Ireland who were in dire need of financial support. In Vanity Fair she wrote an article on Home Rule for Ireland and went so far as to accuse the Irish Land League and the Fenians of misappropriating funds which had been specifically donated to assist the farming community. As a consequence of these criticisms it is believed that an attempt was made on her life when walking her dog in Windsor Park.

The Market Bosworth Society is delighted to inform you that our nomination of Lady Florence has been short listed for an award. From April 25th the final selection of candidates entered its public voting stage.

We would urge everyone to vote for the nomination by completing the voting form on www.leicestershire.gov.uk/vote-for-your-green-plaque-winner or you will find a link to the voting page on www.leicestershire.gov.uk/greenplaques. Winning the nomination will not only recognise the work of Lady Florence, who was surely a lady ahead of her times, but the resultant publicity will raise the profile of Market Bosworth and hopefully attract more visitors to the town.

I know I will be in trouble (sorry Eric) as I have once again exceeded the one-page directive, but I hope you will agree that the cause justifies the end. And that is where we are. **Please remember to vote on Monday next, 25th April 2016.** I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on the 12th May.

Kind regards

Nigel Palmer

Chairman, Market Bosworth Society.