

NORTH MARSTON HISTORY CLUB

NEWSLETTER November 2011

As 2011 draws to a close the North Marston History Club can look back on its first year (well, eight months actually) with quite a sense of achievement.

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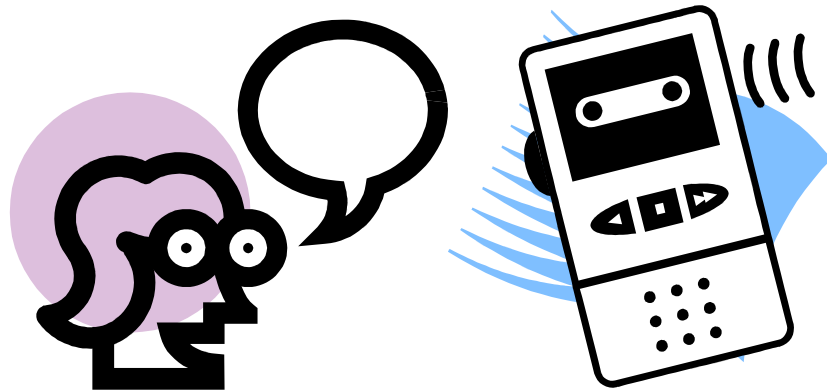
The idea for a history club was partly drawn from my involvement with Quanton Village Society in which I had been Secretary and Publications coordinator. Coming to live in North Marston I was somewhat surprised to find that despite this village's richer history, North Marston had no equivalent of a Village Society or a History Society, and that no-one in recent years had written a history of the village.

When the Parish Council asked people in the village for their views, a high proportion said they'd like to see a book about the history of the village; it was clear there was support within the village and so a group of us got together and the History Club was formed.

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The emphasis has always been on informality, hence it's called a History *Club* as opposed to a *Society*. We started to meet every month and shared thoughts and ideas about the task ahead of us. We soon agreed a structure for a village history and various individuals agreed to take a lead in specific chapters. Meanwhile, we felt we should waste no time in gathering the memories of the residents who remembered life in the village from decades past.

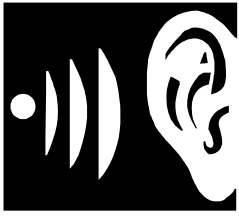
Sue Chaplin took on the mammoth task of recording conversations with these people, which she then transcribed into written memoirs. This was the start of the *Marston Memory Bank* comprising, so far, thirteen individual oral histories: a priceless archive captured in digital format for future generations.



Sue's transcripts, combined with a few villagers' own written accounts and illustrated with pictures from the Club's picture archive (which I've been building up in digital format for the past year), have become the "*Memories Shared*" booklets of which six volumes have now been published.

The twenty-three different memoirs contained within these booklets give a colourful, personal and, often, amusing, insight into the social life, characters, trades-people and events of North Marston throughout the last century.





Meanwhile, the sound files in the *Marston Memory Bank* are being skilfully edited by Diz Minnitt into themes and subjects so that in future we can use extracts to provide a narrative to DVDs about the village.

We realised that publishing a village history wasn't going to be cheap, especially as we want to create something of quality. Income from the sales of the *Memories Shared* booklets have therefore been supplemented with sales of village Christmas Cards and a 2012 village calendar called *Now and Then* that blends old and new pictures of the village.



Looking forward to 2012 we have a clear plan of action.....

For our **first objective**, we need to create a management committee so that we can work towards our **second objective**: to apply for a *Lottery Heritage Grant* to help us achieve our **third objective**: the publication of a *History of North Marston*.



Meanwhile, for our **fourth objective**, we want to see if the Heritage Grant can be applied to creating a *Story Board*: a permanent display of aspects of the village history as well as pictures and artefacts from our archives and what people are willing to give or loan for a permanent display. For our **fifth objective** it would be ideal if we could work with our friends from the church to help renovate the Chapel in Schorne Lane to host this facility (we hold our Club meetings there) and safeguard the future of this important local building.

We always need more help. If you'd like to be part of this adventure you can contact me on 670225 or email history@northmarston.org.uk.

Stepping into 2012 feels like we are moving into a new chapter for the History Club. We need to strengthen and consolidate, catalogue our assets and reach out for financial support; but we must also maintain the enthusiasm that has driven us so far. The history of this village is a constant source of interest and enjoyment and we have an extraordinary resource of historic photographs reaching back into the 19th century.



.....you can buy *Memories Shared*, the *Now and Then* Calendar and sets of village Christmas cards at the shop or on line at northmarston.org/history. We shall also have a stall at the Christmas Fayre at the Village Hall, 2.00 pm on 3rd December.

And finally, a big thank-you to everyone who has given their time and effort to get the History Club “off the ground” or bought our publications. This village has many generous and thoughtful people interested in understanding and preserving North Marston’s history.

John Spargo
History Club Coordinator