**North Marston History Club, Village Annual Meeting Report 2019**

The History Club is now in its ninth year, and is as buoyant as ever. Membership currently stands at about 140, the bulk of members being local but a few are from much further afield.

We continue to maintain a busy schedule of talks and visits, and this summer we are holding an exhibition to mark the 50th anniversary of the campaigns to fight the development of a major airport at Cubblington and subsequently at Hoggeston.

Our website is an invaluable portal to the wider world, and a frequent source of enquiries for heritage information, family history information or for copies of our publications. This past year has seen a rise in the number of “hits” we have received, confirming yet again the worth and usefulness of a regularly maintained internet site. Our quarterly Newsletter, delivered to every household in North Marston, also ensures that those without access to the internet are kept in the loop.

We use a professional graphic artist to design our publicity posters and web-based promotions, and we shall continue to do so. Through Facebook, we promote our activities widely, and we have visitors from other villages to our talks and events. The last few evening talks have seen attendances of over 40 people.

Highlights from the 2018 calendar must include The Village Wartime Experience in October and the exhibition commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War, in November

The Heritage Centre at the Wesley Centre is due for a refresh of the story-boards, which will begin this summer. We are also about to launch a new series of North Marston history videos to supplement those already on YouTube, and accessible through our website. One of the most popular in the past year is “How the Village got its Name”.

The History Club is very keen to involve youngsters in an understanding of their heritage, and in the past year, we have engaged with the school, the cubs and the Brownies. This is an area we wish to develop further.

The Heritage Trail remains a popular feature, especially during the summer months. This is something we intend to promote more widely and, possibly, increase in scope.

All in all, the last year saw us consolidating a number of important changes that we intend to build on in 2019 and beyond. We need constantly to keep our approach to local history fresh and innovative if we are to attract new interest, especially from younger generations, who we want to appreciate the rich heritage of this village.

**John Spargo**