**Report to the 2020 Annual Meeting from North Marston History Club**

This is a milestone year for the club as October 25th marks our 10th anniversary, and we will be planning a celebratory event nearer the time, subject to Covid-19 restrictions. We could not have imagined, ten years ago how successful the club was to become. Our sights in those early meetings were very much set on producing a village history book, which we achieved in the summer of 2014.

2019 was a busy year for us with a diverse range of speakers and topics that ranged from the Ice Age to the events of the 1970s when this village came under real threat from a proposed international airport at Cubblington. Along the way we were treated to a demonstration of Tudor cod-pieces by Martin Sirot-Smith and a surprise strip-tease by Queen Victoria. The whole year was rounded off by The Marston Mummers.

Initially, 2020 promised another interesting mixture; we planned to journey from the Silk Road to the Great Train Robbery, and hoped to manage a local day trip or two during the summer, as well as possibly co-producing an exhibition about a key aspect of the history of the village. But clearly, events have overtaken us and regrettably all our speakers have been placed “on hold” until further notice.

That’s not to say we haven’t done other things. We have been heavily engaged with and committed to the preparation of the North Marston Neighbourhood Plan which we see as an exciting opportunity to further protect and explore this village’s unique history.

We are also spearheading a project to create a stand-alone war memorial in the village; good progress was being made until the March lockdown.

Our website is an important asset for us and enables the world to access information about the village, including a growing number of Marston-related films that can be downloaded from the website. These have proved to be very popular and more are planned.

We are grateful to have been awarded a grant from the parish council enabling us to expand the village’s Heritage Trail.

Despite these challenging times, the club’s Executive Committee continues to hold virtual meetings using Zoom and we continue to publish a quarterly Newsletter and to provide “History Snippets” for the monthly parish magazine. It is to be hoped that the initiatives we have put on hold can be resumed this year, including the VE Day exhibition we had prepared.

John Spargo

Chairman NMHC