

## TAMESIDE LOCAL HISTORY FORUM

### SECRETARY'S REPORT 2014

The year started with our AGM in February, the first of four meetings throughout the year, which as always are very well attended. Norman Redhead The Heritage Management Director(Archaeology) of GM Archaeology Advisory Service based at Salford University was the guest speaker giving an over view of the archaeology projects that Salford University have been involved in. Our links with the Archaeology Unit have been ongoing since 2000. At the November meeting Dr Michael Nevelle from the Unit gave an excellent presentation on some of the Heritage assets we have in Tameside, for instance Newton Hall, Old Hall chapel, Staley Hall and the site of Gorse Hall whose futures must be secured.

The Forum's constitution has been used as a template by the Unit to form a group to bring together history and archaeological Societies within Greater Manchester 'The Federation of GM' of which The Forum are members, Val Bowker and Sue Mitchell attend these meetings.

Stockport and Middleton are two other groups that have an interest in the way we work.

In 2014 the Forum was to lose three much respected members and Local Historians, Janet Patterson, Bill Johnson and Joyce Powell all will be missed by the Forum members for their work in preserving our Local history.

The 'Ashton Infirmary' an iconic building on Darnton Road was demolished this year, an archaeological report was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North. The Forum participated by giving research material done by members. Over a number of years The Forum has been involved in the preservation of artifacts and documents going to Local Studies. A report sent by Ian Miller is available states that.

Joseph Lindley designed the building which was opened in 1861, and represents the country's first small pavilion –style hospital, consisting of a central administrative block flanked by ward wings. Its layout and design was directly inspired by a military hospital at Vincennes Paris, whose plan was published by Florence Nightingale in 1859. The Tameside History Forum was acknowledged for sharing research into the development of the hospital.

The future of Newton Hall and Old Hall Chapel is a priority for the Forum working with the owners and Greater Manchester Building Trust to secure their future's, this is a longstanding project which it is hoped will have a successful outcome in the near future.

Officers and representatives from the Forum attended the Heritage Consultation meetings with Head of Heritage Councillor J. Lane and Officers from TMBC throughout the year. Blue and Brown Plaques, Heritage Open Days Events, Conservation and a Local List are on the agenda.

Member's contribution to the anniversary of WW1 has been put on our website, thanks to Gay Oliver for her help in making the website a very useful tool for members and interested parties.

Heritage Open Days in 2014 was very successful with the old Ashton baths being open for a few hours and seeing crowds queuing to get a glimpse into a past long gone. Several walks around Taunton and St. Anne's were very well attended. The Forum had a stall on Ashton market where the Mayor and Mayoress launched HODs in Tameside. Members also hosted the opening of several local churches, without these volunteers HODs would not be held. Val Bowker one of our members stepped in at the last moment to give an excellent talk on the 'Women in WW1' at the Gallery Ashton Library.

Members visited Dunham Massey 'The Military Hospital', the reopened Manchester Central Library and The Astley Cheetham Gallery.

The cuts in Tameside have made a great deal of difference to Local groups with some of our buildings closing, worries are that individuals have nowhere to meet up and socialise, the Forum was formed to 'have a voice' and will work with other groups and TMBC on this issue.

Our website has information of events and what's going on at [tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk](http://tamesidehistoryforum.org.uk) has an email facility for queries to be sent through, Gay Oliver and myself answer these or pass onto our group members, they come from people worldwide, sometimes arranging to visit the area and to meet with members.

We need volunteers to help put together a 'Local List' which when passed as a document with the Local Council will help protect buildings and features that are of historical or archaeological interest and are not listed or are in a Conservation area. If a planning application is put forward for a building on the list it will have to be looked at as a Heritage asset. Volunteers needed to take photos, put together a brief history of the building, if you can help please contact the website.

Finally I would like to thank all members and Officers in the Tameside Local History Forum for their help and support, staff at Local Studies, Officers and Councillors at TMBC, and other individuals and groups, without whose support we would not survive.

Christine Clough Secretary Tameside Local History Forum 2015