

MINUTES OF THE 44th MEETING OF AYNHO HISTORY SOCIETY HELD AT AYNHO VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY 25th JANUARY 2012

Present: – Rupert Clark – Chairman and Treasurer

Peter Cole – Secretary.

There were three apologies.

1. Chairman's Report Rupert Clark

Rupert reported the sad death of John Fulcher, who had been a great friend of the village. Rupert said he hadn't realised just how much correspondence there had been between John and the Society until Peter had shown him the huge file of papers and photos that he had assembled about John's activities in Aynho during the War. This file will now be put in our Archive. The Society will make a donation to his charity: "Help for Heroes".

Rupert said that when googling "Aynho" he had pressed a button which revealed a map of the village in 1945, and it showed the full extent of the Army camp, which is really impressive.

He also mentioned that Syresham History Society is going on a tour of the battlefield area around Ypres in September, and they have invited any of our members to join this.

Brackley is organising a quiz and raffle on 24th February for the Mayor's charity.

Kay is organising a Diamond Jubilee tea party, probably on June 3rd on the Playing Field, and she would like to borrow any photos of Aynho at Coronation time.

2. Finance Report Rupert Clark

Rupert reported that the Society's funds as at the previous day stood at £901 after paying expenses, but this will increase after tonight of course due to annual subscriptions.

3. Secretary's Report Peter Cole

Regarding John Fulcher, Peter said that John had been a great friend of his, not just because of his dealings with him, but because he had lived in West Sussex, only 30 miles or so from John's home in West Wittering, all his life until coming to Aynho in 1997. He and his family had frequently visited parts of Chichester Harbour, only 5 miles away from where John lived. They had both worked in similar Government departments all their working lives.

Peter said that he had managed to help two more people during January. In particular one person's wife was a descendant of Mary Tebby, born here in 1849. The Tebby family appear in six Aynho censuses, and Peter had been able to trace the full history of two branches of them.

He thanked everyone for the presentation made at the AGM, and said he had bought two history books, which should prove very useful, not just for him, but to anyone else in the Society who might wish to check any historical matters.

4. The Grand Tour Tom Duncan

Tom said that The Grand Tour was the most extraordinary experience for the sons of wealthy landowners, which shaped the visual culture of Great Britain. The bible of the Tour is "A Dictionary of British & Irish Travellers in Italy 1701 to 1800". He had searched this huge volume for any local travellers, but alas no record of a Cartwright existed. [The Cartwright Archive confirms this: William Ralph Cartwright made two tours, but only through the Low Countries and Germany, and eventually to the Russian capital, St Petersburg. William Cornwallis Cartwright was half German. He married a German, the Countess Elizabeth von Sandizell, known as Lili, and he lived abroad for many years. Sir Fairfax Cartwright spent years as Ambassador in Vienna, and married Maria Chigi, a beautiful Italian from a noble family.] He would therefore talk only about the 1700s, and would illustrate his talk by means of paintings, which were the photographs of that time. This all started early in the 18th Century, after the Duke of Marlborough had defeated the army of Louis XIV and his allies. The first painting is by Venetian artist Canaletto of the Forum. He was a prolific painter, and many of his were sold to people on the Tour. Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, one of the most important people in England in the 17th Century, is the patron saint of these tours. He was the first man to visit Italy and collect antiquities. Statues he brought back are now in the Ashmolean Museum. The Grand Tour had a particular format. Firstly parents had to agree to it. Secondly a son had to have a tutor to manage the cash flow, and to try to control the person's moral well being. Starting in London they drove down to Dover, went across the channel, and then to Paris to get kitted out. From there they went to Lyon, and then they had to get across the Alps by mid-September, before the snow arrived. For this they were carried over in a sort of mini sedan chair without any covering box. If they were really rich, they might have a carriage, which would be

dismantled, and carried over the Alps bit by bit, and then reassembled. These carriages were often beautifully decorated with the family coat of arms to impress the locals, but of course this also had the effect of raising the local price of food and lodgings! Then they moved on to Turin to learn manners and how to behave in society, as the English were considered to be uncouth. They would also be taught basic Italian, so that they could just about get by. So that they didn't have to carry large amounts of money, bills of exchange, originally introduced by the Medici family, were used. From Turin they had a choice, depending upon their budget, and how long they could travel for. Either they could go straight to Rome, or alternatively they could visit Venice for the Carnival. This was held in the two to three weeks before Lent. After a few weeks there, they continued to Florence and Rome, where most of their time was spent. Few went beyond Rome before the 18th century Tom showed a picture of Canaletto's of the Doges Palace and the original Campanile in Venice (the present one is a 20th Century replacement). Musical concerts were a feature of Venetian life, mainly due to Vivaldi, who held regular concerts there. The musicians were always young ladies from a home for orphans and wayward girls. Another thing you could do in Venice was to have your portrait done by Rosalba Carriera, who specialised in pastel paintings. One whom she painted was Horace Walpole, son of Sir Robert Walpole, the first English Prime Minister. After Venice it's off to Florence, where painters used artistic licence to paint pictures showing a scene that included buildings from three completely different parts of the town, with Vesuvius in the background, which is more than 200 miles away! A painting by Johan Zoffany of the Tribuna Gallery in Florence adorned with over 30 pictures, the prized collection of the Medici family, was shown. This is the one painting, which is a must to be seen of the Grand Tour. One painting among them shows Thomas Patch, an Englishman, who spent many years in Florence, and became the leading Grand Tour guide of his time. There is also an English painting, painted by Holbein.

Lord Arundel had a lot of Holbein portraits and paintings. When he was on his Grand Tour, he was shown round the Medici Collections and was given a painting by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who kept asking for a Holbein from him in exchange. Eventually Arundel sent him a picture of Sir Richard Southall to keep him quiet. Tom mentioned that there had been several television programmes about the Grand Tour. One was by Kevin McCloud, but a far better one was by Brian Sewell. The facts were correct. He found the hotel from hell. Had there been a Faulty Towers in Italy in 1715, this was it. Sewell found it and it is near Rome. You enter Rome through the great Roman Aurelian Walls, to the Piazza del Popolo, painted by Vanvitelli. The Pantheon was the most important building to see in Rome. It is vast, with a circular inside culminating in a huge dome. This was painted by Panini. A local connection was Robert Wood, an Irishman, painted by Alan Ramsay In 1756, who eventually became M.P. for Brackley. He spent some time in Rome, and obtained funding from a group of wealthy people to go on an expedition to the Middle East, where he explored and surveyed what is now Syria and Lebanon. The last time he took people on the Grand Tour, it was the young Francis Egerton, Duke of Bridgewater, whose family owned the house which is now Winchester House School in Brackley. The Duke commissioned this picture of his tutor. If you wanted a memento of Rome, you went to Pannini and bought one of his paintings. He was another prolific artist, specialising in paintings of buildings. He would do a "pick and mix" of whatever was required, completely irrespective of their geographical location.

Another famous Venetian artist was Piranesi, who specialised in engravings.

Tom produced three pictures of the same man, one by an obscure English painter, one by Mengs, and the third by Batoni. The subject was Lord Brudenell, who was created Marquess of Monthermer. He lived at Boughton, Northants.

Another portrait was of William Fermor, who built Tusmore. This is in the Ashmolean.

Some people would go round the Vatican. They all loved the Sculpture Gallery. There is a picture of people looking at the Laocoön sculpture. Obviously the original was not for sale, but copies abounded in any size and made of any material. If you wanted something cheap you went to Cavaceppi. But if you wanted something particular, James Byers was very knowledgeable about what to buy and where and how to get things. For example there was one well-known series of pictures by Poussin of the Seven Sacraments. The Marquess of Granby wanted them, and the owner was prepared to sell, but it was difficult to get them out of the country. It was arranged by Byers that someone would make a very good copies of them, and over a period of time he would

buy the originals and change them over, and later on he would quietly sell them to the Marquess. The Portland Vase is an original made in Rome in the first century AD. It was owned by the Barberini family, and was eventually bought by the Duchess of Portland. It was much admired by Josiah Wedgwood, and he based his Jasper pottery range on it.

The other thing that people on the Tour did was to go out into the countryside. Goethe, the German equivalent of Shakespeare did this, and Tischbein, who accompanied him on his travels painted a picture of him there. Several Englishmen came back from their Tour determined to improve their own landscape. Tom said that Stowe is good, and Rousham is the most perfect replication of Arcadia in this country. George Lambert was the first English artist to take this sort of landscape seriously.

One of Tom's favourite artists is Joseph Wright of Derby, who is very much underestimated. He went on the Grand Tour quite late in his life, and Tom showed several paintings he had made, including the Coliseum, The Vatican, and the fireworks at the Girandola at Castel Sant' Angelo, Rome.

In conclusion Tom said that we don't have a Grand Tour house in this area at all. The nearest is probably Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire. Most of this building is copied from parts of those in ancient Rome. For such people, Rome was the *raison d'être* of their lives. A picture depicted the Triumphal Arch in the Roman Forum.

There are two good books about the Tour. The best is a book of an early T/V series presented by Christopher Hibbert. There is also the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Tate Gallery. Both are called "The Grand Tour".

In response to questions Tom said that most tours took six months to a year to complete. Some people stayed anything from 18 months to 8 years. One arrived at age 19, and remained there until he was 82, apart from occasional visits home.

Unusually the Duke of Bridgewater got fed up after a short time, and returned to England to concentrate on building the first English canal.

Very few women went on the Tour. An exception was Mary Wortley Montagu, who managed to get a divorce from her husband and then set out to travel.

The reason he had drawn a line at 1800 for his talk was that the Napoleonic wars curtailed travel in Europe severely. By the time this had been sorted out, the map of Europe had changed, and the advance of the Industrial Revolution had made travel much easier, so that the middle classes could explore the Continent much more easily.

English people tended to live in English ghettos.

Most Germans who went on the Tour came from Saxony. Very few Frenchmen were interested. The journey took 4 to 6 weeks, although letters home got through in 2 - 3 weeks.

English people didn't like Italian wine, but they loved Parmesan cheese. Most goods were sent home by boat, despite the risk of antiquities being stolen by pirates, while the travellers returned the way they had come.

Forthcoming Meetings

February 29th Family History for Beginners David Hitchcox

March 28th Banbury – Historic Town or Shopper's Paradise? Brian Little

April 25th The Civil War In Oxfordshire Martin Greenwood