

Heritage Centre – Wall painting – Jackie’s researches.

Over the past six months there has been on-going research into the origins of the Wall Painting, which has led us in many directions, and made valuable contacts. The V&A submitted their written opinion, which has been available at the Heritage Centre. Further enquiries were made with Beaulieu Abbey, with the view to exploring the rumoured link with Newenham Abbey, which was founded by the Cistercian order originating from Citeaux Abbey in France. After corresponding with representatives both here and in France, it became clear that the Wall Painting had no apparent connection with the Cistercian order.

I recently visited Brussels and whilst there discovered the Musical Instruments Museum of Brussels. They are world renowned and have over 15,000 instruments in their collections. Within the Wall Painting there are two angels playing musical instruments, which appear to be a hybrid of a cornet and trumpet. I thought that to identify the instruments would be a significant line of enquiry, and duly made contact with one of their researchers. Ms Ceulemans has responded with her report which makes fascinating reading. She believes the musical instruments held by the angels are not realistic, but are in fact imaginary. Such instruments as depicted did not exist in the 14th or 15th centuries (nor ever), and she goes on to give a history of early cornets and trumpets, together with references. Ms Ceulemans is of the opinion that the work is probably 15th Century, and a copy of her report is available at the Heritage Centre. We welcome your comments.

Whilst in Brussels, I also visited Bruges and met the head archivist at the Bruges Cloth Hall Records Office. Upon seeing a photograph of the painting, he remarked that he had seen a similar painting in a house in Bruges, and that in his opinion it was of a secular nature and probably 14th Century. He was very helpful and suggested further reading material - a work entitled Pre-Eyckian Painting.

Over the years there has been much speculation over the origins of the painting, and who lived in the property. The general consensus of opinion from recent enquiries, is that the subject matter is of a secular nature, and that such wall paintings were often to be found in the homes of powerful and successful men, as a visual declaration of the owner’s status in society. The detective work goes on and we may yet discover more about the painting and the original owner.

Planned Activities

Antiques – Call my Bluff We are planning a social evening in the Town Hall, probably on Wednesday, March 4 2015 but the date is to be confirmed, with a local firm of auctioneers providing the expertise – we will provide the wine. This will be an opportunity for you to show your knowledge, or just to make a blind guess, with the chance of winning a prize.

Devon history regional forum Again the date is unconfirmed but we are trying to arrange this for Wednesday, May 13. Just to remind you, the event will probably be from 11- 3 with a series of speakers with a break for lunch, possibly with town walks for visitors and a display in the Heritage Centre. This would be largely organised by Brian Carpenter from the Devon Records Office with invitations sent to other societies in the region, and the event should attract a good number of visitors to the town. The Regional Forums normally have a good selection of local history talks so I expect quite a few of you will be interested.

Monmouth Rebellion Day I expect that most of you know that this will be organised by the Promote Colyton Group and held on June 13 next year. The Taunton Volunteers will be re-enacting episodes in the rebellion while camping in the church yard. There will also be all sorts of activities in the town.

In the meantime, a reminder, Channel 4 at 8pm on November 29 will be showing 'Walking through History' with Tony Robinson walking from Lyme Regis, via Colyton to Sedgemoor, following the steps of the Duke of Monmouth and the Colyton rebels. Colin Haynes has been advising them on the Colyton part of the rebellion and they have used his book 'The most rebellious town in Devon' for reference material.

Other bits

Jackie has put together a Christmas raffle prize which will be in the Heritage Centre. The prize hamper contains many lovely items including a bottle of bubbly. Lucky Squares are available at £1 in the Heritage Centre. We will be open during the Colyton Christmas Fair on December 3 with assorted nibbles available and also we are taking a stall in the Town Hall with our usual set of books and gifts.

Footprints in the Sands of Time – Joan White's History of the Youth Club and its time in George's Meeting House – she has organised a second printing and we now have this in stock again.

NB. Winter Opening times - Tuesdays 10.30am - 3.00pm & Saturdays 10.30am - 1.00pm Admission Free.

Meetings/Events

Next meeting – November – Armageddon 1914 – Robert Hesketh - Wednesday, November 26 in Colyton Town Hall at 7:30

As usual, no meeting in December but **January 2015 – Members Evening including Colcombe Castle by Brian Denham, and Researching House History by Roger Bagg - Wednesday, January 28 in Colyton Town Hall at 7:30**

Future Meetings – we would appreciate hearing about any subjects that members would like to see/hear about – please contact Shirley Campbell-Brown (01297 553557 or s.campbellbrown@btinternet.com) who will be glad to discuss all suggestions.

Website - www.colytonheritagecentre.org