

KETTLESTONE HISTORY PROJECT

Over the past two years progress on the history project has been slow because of difficulties created by the pandemic and so not as much has been accomplished as we would have liked.

The project started in 2014 at the centenary of the outbreak of WW1. We investigated the lives of the men who joined up, and also events in the village and the local area at this time. Thanks to notes that were recorded in the church service book by the Rector we were able to build up a detailed picture of Kettlestone in the early 20th century.

As a permanent record of this research, we have constructed a Kettlestone History Project website and we hope to add further information to this, especially details from the 1921 census, which will give us an insight into what happened to the families who had lived here during WW1. This census has now been released but at the moment to access it on the internet is costly and so we will wait until it becomes free to view before we begin our analysis.

A second branch of our project is to research Kettlestone in WW2. This is more problematic as finding source material is proving to be difficult. At the moment we are working on the 1939 list which details most of the residents of the village but those still alive have been redacted so the list is incomplete. Nevertheless it gives some useful information such as details of the address, age and occupation of the villagers living here. To date we have not found anyone who lived in Kettlestone at this time to interview.

We have gathered wartime memories of some of the village residents:-

Pauline Bassingthwaighte
Pat Dickson
Gill Baguley
Marlene Hoad
Roger Townsin

They have very interesting accounts of WW2 and how their lives and that of their parents and relations were affected by bombing raids and rationing. These memories are recorded on the website.

Our original intention was to make voice recordings but because of the pandemic, gathering oral history has been of the question. With the easing of restrictions, we have been able to start this part of our project. Seb White has kindly lent his expertise to us and our first two interviewees, Pauline Bassingthwaighte and Pat Dickson have both given fascinating accounts of living through the second world war. Pauline and her mother lived through the bombing of Norwich and Pat worked in the city of London throughout the blitz. Some extracts of Pauline's spoken memories are already on the website and more will follow. We are hoping to interview more villagers soon.

The third part of the history project is to record what it was like to live here after the war. Both Bernard and Joan Jarvis have given vivid accounts of growing up here in the fifties, and how different it was! Joan recalls riding Harold Williamson's carthorse at the age of 11, bareback to Hempton to the blacksmith's, and Bernard as a teenager, gives a hair-raising account of feeding cattle on the common by jumping off the back of the tractor he was driving, onto the trailer to toss fodder to the cows and then leaping back into the driving seat before the tractor hit the hedge.

Our research is concentrated on the social history of the village in the last 125 years with the aim of preserving it for the future. If anyone has any aspect of life in Kettlestone that they would like researched we will do our best.

Bridget and Judith