

Thank you for the memories!

Ilsington Local History Group would like to thank everyone who joined us for the 80th anniversary celebration of the endeavours of Captain Charles Quelch in restoring the old cottages of Ilsington and Trumpeter. The presence of so many former residents of the village was particularly special as we reflected on the changes over the years.

We were fortunate to have two excellent speakers. Paul Brassley gave a lucid and detailed overview of the trends in the inter-war economy and their impact on the local Devon scene. Literary and thespian influences permeated the rural scene and Ilsington boasted above average levels of boarding houses and hotels. Rural crafts and trades were another useful indicator of the vibrant rural life.

The stage was set for our second speaker, Tony Seed, to expand on the crisis in rural housing and the fortuitous intervention by a local retired architect and builder, Capt. Quelch. With illustrations of the various cottages both before and after restoration we were able to appreciate the significance of events in 1938-9 when condemned cottages were rescued and rebuilt to national standards. A key priority was sanitation. For years the village had been served by an open pot-water leat; wastewater and night soil were disposed of locally in the orchards and allotments.



Locals enjoying the exhibition at Ilsington's local history day.

In the afternoon we were joined by Derek Honeywell and June Weeks (née Free) for a shared conversation. Derek's parents lived at No. 4 Simms Hill before the restoration. His father moved his boot repair business to

Shamrock Cottages in 1939 and June's parents moved into No. 4 Simms Hill shortly after it was rebuilt. Years later June found two old cobbler's lasts left behind by Arthur Honeywell and now 80 years later they were on show in the exhibition that accompanied the day's event. In a delightful hour of reminiscing and reflection we learnt about some alarming ironing, Methodist church outings and unforgettable Saturday night bathtub rituals. The tale of Derek and friends setting off for a wrestling match in Plymouth surrounded by straw bales in the back of a horse trailer was priceless.

The children from Ilsington Primary School had viewed the exhibit the day before and they enthusiastically inserted illustrations of rats, mice, spiders and bats in our interactive display of habitats in old cottages. They greatly enjoyed the chance to 'dial' their numbers on old phones, and discovering unusual but practical home utensils.

The event was accompanied by an illustrated booklet 'Ilsington: a place in history' and copies are available, price £5 from Ilsington Village Shop. We are grateful to the DNPA and the Heritage Lottery Fund for financial support through the Parishscapes project (moorthanmeetstheeye.org/parishscapes), which has enabled us to establish our local history group. For further information about the group and our activities please see ilsingtonhistory.co.uk

Anne & Rob Parkinson