



President	Elizabeth, Lady Hamilton	Vice-President	Mr Peter Gregory-Hood
Chairman	Dr N.W. Alcock & Mrs C. Woodland	Vice-Chair	Dr J. Wilmot
Hon. Secretary	Dr R. Barbour	Hon. Editor	Dr A.W. Watkins
Hon. Treasurer	Miss A. Rajagopal	Programme Secretary (Outings)	Mrs R. Fisher
Membership Secretary	Mrs L. Caine	Programme Secretary (Lectures)	Dr R. Barbour

SIXTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Tuesday 21st April 2026, 7.15 pm at Aylesford School, Warwick.

AGENDA

- 1) Apologies for absence.
- 2) Minutes of AGM held on 15th April 2025 and SGM held on 18th November 2025. (Appendix 1)
- 3) Matters Arising.
- 4) To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for 2025. (Appendix 2)
- 5) To elect officers for the forthcoming year.

The President, Elizabeth, Lady Hamilton and Vice-President, Mr Peter Gregory-Hood are proposed for re-election (elected annually).

Chairman: Dr Nat Alcock and Mrs Christine Woodland are happy to continue in post and have been nominated.

Vice-Chairman: Dr John Wilmot is happy to continue in post and has been nominated.

Hon. Treasurer: Ms Aarthi Rajagopal is happy to continue in post and has been nominated.

Hon. Secretary: Dr Barbour has resigned as Secretary and as Programme Secretary (lectures). *Nominations are sought.*

The following are happy to continue in post and have been nominated:

Hon. Editor: Dr Andrew Watkins

Membership Secretary: Mrs Lesley Caine

Programme Secretary (Outings): Mrs Rowan Fisher

Programme Secretary (Lectures): *Nominations are sought.*

- 6) To elect an Executive Committee for the forthcoming year: Miss Macdonald has retired; the following are happy to continue as members:

Dr R. Bearman

Mr Mark Booth

Mrs Rita Poulson

Mrs R. Richardson

Mrs Stella Thebridge

There are three committee vacancies.

The following have been nominated: Mrs Jackie Bland and Dr Colin Hayfield.

- 7) Any Other Business

Appreciation of the work of Dr Barbour and Miss Macdonald for the society.

Nominations for officers and members of the Executive Committee, with the agreement of the person being nominated, should be sent to the Secretary at info@warwickshirehistory.org.uk by **Tuesday 7th April 2026**.

After the AGM Rita Poulson will speak to us on ‘Charles Jennens and his family of Nether Whitacre’.

Appendix 1

Warwickshire Local History Society Minutes of the Fifty Ninth Annual General Meeting held on 15th April 2025 at The Primary Hall, Aylesford School, Warwick commencing at 7.15pm

In the Chair: Dr John Wilmot.

Twenty-six members attended.

Apologies: Lesley Caine, Rowan Fisher, Rita Jackson, Marion Keeley, Peter Lane, Stella Thebridge, Andrew Watkins, Christine Woodland.

Chairman's Introductory Remarks: Dr Wilmot welcomed members. He noted that Aarthi Rajagopal, who had been co-opted as treasurer in November 2024, was present. Also in attendance was Emily Clark who is helping us address problems with our website.

Minutes of the 2024 AGM were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed Dr Alcock; Seconded Mr Lethbridge. (For 26, against 0, abstentions 0)

Annual Report 2024: The Chairman noted the positive publicity recently received in the *BALH News* that the society had received more awards for articles in its journal (12) in the past than any other society.

Annual Accounts: The outturn was summarised:

	2024	2023
Total Members	213	219
Income (£)	7120	8370
Expenditure (£)	8020	9987
Surplus (deficit) (£)	(900)	(1616)
Cash in Hand (£)	7575.00	8681.17

The accounts were approved Proposed: Mr Lethbridge, seconded Professor Kümin. For 26. Against 0, abstentions 0.

Election of officers and Executive Committee Members for 2025/2026.

Our President Lady Hamilton and Vice President Mr Gregory-Hood remain in office.

Chairman: Dr Wilmot noted that this was the last year he could serve as chairman: our constitution requires him to stand down in 2025 when he will have completed the two consecutive three-year terms allowed under our constitution for holders of that office. Dr Wilmot proposed, and Dr Barbour seconded that Dr Alcock and Mrs Woodland be appointed jointed chairmen. For 26: Against 0 Abs 0.

Vice-Chairman: Dr Bearman had indicated that he wished to stand down from this position but was willing to continue as a member of the committee. His long period of service to the society was noted, in particular 42 years as editor. Dr Wilmot was elected (Proposed Mrs Woodland, Seconded Dr Alcock) For 26; Against 0.

Mrs Poulson proposed and Mr Lethbridge seconded that all other current officers should be re-elected en-bloc. For 26, Against 0 Abst 0.

Secretary, Dr Barbour

Treasurer, Miss Rajagopal

Editor, Dr Watkins

Membership Secretary, Mrs Caine

Events Organiser (Lectures) Dr Barbour

Events Organiser (Outings) Mrs Fisher

Executive Committee

Mrs Rita Richardson was proposed as a new member. Proposed Mrs Caine, Seconded Dr Barbour. For 26, Against 0, Abst 0.

The re-election of current members Dr Bearman, Mr Booth, Miss Macdonald, Mrs Poulson, Mrs Thebridge was proposed by Professor Kümin, seconded by Mr Lethbridge. For 26, against 0, abst 0.

Review of the Constitution:

The following revised clauses were proposed by Dr Bearman and seconded by Dr Alcock and accepted. For 26, Against 0, abst 0.

Meetings

5.(d) *The Secretary shall convene a Special General meeting upon receipt of a written request from the Chairman or from any six individual members or from any three member institutions. Fourteen clear days' notice shall be given in writing to each member of the Society of such a meeting.*

Finance

7.(c) *No member of the Executive Committee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Society (otherwise than as a trustee for the society) or receive remuneration other than in accordance with section 185 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) or be interested (otherwise than as a member of the Committee) in any contract entered into by the Committee.*

Any Other Business

Professor Kümin thanked Dr Wilmot for his chairmanship.

Dr Alcock presented Dr Wilmot with a token of our appreciation.

The desirability of increasing the society's social media capabilities was noted.

The meeting closed at 19.35.

The meeting was followed by a lecture by Sheila Woolf on Care in the Community – the Leighs in Stoneleigh.

**Warwickshire Local History Society
Minutes of the Special General Meeting
held on 18th November 2025 at The Primary Hall, Aylesford School, Warwick
Commencing at 7.30pm**

In the Chair: Dr Nat Alcock.

Fifteen members attended.

Apologies: Elizabeth Ballantine, Jackie Bland, Lesley Caine, Andrew Watkins

Dr Alcock informed the members that the meeting was being held to confirm the revised constitution, as approved at the AGM in April 2025, following notification from the Charity Commission that this had been approved by them.

Motion. To re-approve the revised constitution. Passed, for 15; Against 0.

The meeting closed at 19.35pm

Appendix 2

Warwickshire Local History Society Annual Report and Accounts for 2025

2025 was the society's 60th anniversary year. Andrew Watkins compiled a short history of the society which was published in *Warwickshire History* (see below). And our 60th has been a good year for the society. Outings were very successful, attracting so many that limits have had to be imposed on numbers. Attendance at in-person lectures has generally been around thirty, but perhaps significantly, over sixty attended our Zoom-only lecture in January this year.

Constitution

The revised Constitution was finally agreed at a Special General Meeting (SGM) held on 18th November 2025, before the regular lecture meeting. Members had given their unanimous approval at the April 2025 AGM, but the Charity Commissioners' rules required that the Commission approve the changes *before* they were put to the membership. The SGM fulfilled this requirement.

Committee

Rita Richardson was welcomed onto the committee. She has volunteered to deal with the refreshments available before lecture meetings, and she has since stepped in when help was needed at the visit to the Lady Katherine Leveson Foundation.

Long-standing members will remember when Jackie Bland was our Secretary and in charge of IT. She has volunteered to return to help us update our website. Our email addresses are now working again, so the future looks very positive.

The end of 2025 saw the retirement of two long-serving Committee members. Ruth Barbour and Mairi Macdonald are stepping down from the roles of Secretary and Programme Secretary (Lectures) and as editor of the *Bulletin* respectively. Ruth has been our Secretary since 2015, running the work of the Executive Committee and dealing with correspondence and emails, as well as being Programme Secretary for our lecture meetings. Mairi has edited the *Bulletin* even longer, since 1993, from no.1 to the latest, no. 65. She has kept us informed not only of the Society's activities, but also those of our local society associates, as well as new publications and local projects. We offer them both our very grateful thanks for all their work.

The Committee considers that the membership will now be best served by maintaining the register of future meetings of local societies and of other matters of interest on our website under 'WLHS Events' and 'Other Events' <https://www.warwickshirehistory.org.uk/events.php>, and circulating this at intervals to members by e-mail, rather than in a printed bulletin; the latter will therefore be discontinued.

Membership

The membership numbers have remained remarkably resilient over recent years. Most members have been with us for many years and are both loyal and committed to the Society. We have members living in all parts of our historic county, as well as those from elsewhere with a keen interest in Warwickshire's history. We have a high number of retired people, with a low rate of attrition. But it is becoming more difficult to recruit members; this seems to be typical of most organisations such as ours across the country. We have a healthy number of local history groups in our membership, and their members are well represented at our evening talks and daytime outings. Funding is becoming increasingly difficult for some of our organisational members, and we endeavour to keep the subscriptions as low as possible in all our membership categories to support everyone wishing to be part of Warwickshire Local History Society.

For membership details, see the Annual Accounts (below)

Warwickshire History

Two issues of our journal have been published in 2025. Their contents are:

XIX, Number 4, Winter 2024/25

- S. Ferguson, *And the Walls came tumbling down: the earl of Northampton and the humbling of Coventry 1660-62*
- Rosemary Hall, *Rough music in Warwickshire from 1757 to the early-twentieth century*
- Margaret Henley, *To what extent was the New Poor Law of 1834 a radical departure from past welfare practices?*

- *Accessions to Local Record Offices*

XIX, Number 5, Summer 2025

- *Sixty Glorious Years: the Diamond Jubilee of Warwickshire Local History Society*
- John Wilmot, *Dr John William Bland, 1935 – 2024: an Appreciation*
- Andrew Watkins, *The Guild of St Mary in Mancetter church and the small town of Atherstone in the later middle ages*
- Robert Howe, *The Collections Associated with James Harvey Bloom, M.A.*
- *A list of publications on the history of Warwickshire published 2024-2025*

Lectures and outings

11 January 2025 (online meeting). Dr John Hunt spoke on ‘Three Warwickshire Parish Churches’. ‘Are cemeteries everywhere enclosed, churches properly built and furnished and sacred vessels properly guarded?’ Researching parish churches in the western midlands.

Over 60 of us enjoyed Dr Hunt’s talk, as he looked at the history of Berkswell, Ansley and Tysoe. He explored themes from the article he recently wrote for *Warwickshire History*, which investigated the origins, settlements, structural history and patrons of these three churches. Dr Hunt also highlighted work he has undertaken elsewhere in the West Midlands.

18 February 2025. Alan Godfrey, Chair of Alcester and District Local History Society, spoke on ‘Life in Roman Alcester’.

Alcester became a small Roman town, dating from the Roman invasion of AD 46, when a fort was built on a hilltop to the south of the town, to defend the river crossing. Two Roman roads crossed in Alcester: Icknield Street running north to south, connecting Lichfield with Cirencester, and the Salt Way, linking Droitwich with the Fosse Way. The town was later protected by walls and gates, and the earlier fort was abandoned.

18 March 2025. Members’ Evening: Bill Timson, Chair of Harbury Heritage Centre, spoke on ‘Discovering Harbury’s Heritage’.

Bill Timson shared the challenges and triumphs of establishing the Harbury Heritage Centre, a hub dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich history of Harbury village. We heard about the fascinating stories and events that shaped Harbury, and the recently published book, *Life in Victorian Harbury*. We also learnt how the Heritage Centre aims to connect with all ages through events, fundraising, and outreach.

15 April 2025 - AGM. Sheila Woolf, Chair of the Stoneleigh History Society, spoke on ‘Caring for the Community: The Leigh Family’s Legacy’.

Sheila Woolf delved into the Leigh family’s enduring commitment to Stoneleigh’s welfare. From Sir Thomas Leigh’s 16th-century arrival to the Second World War, the Leighs significantly influenced village life, helping to shape institutions such as the church, alms houses, school, club, inn, and even a workhouse. Drawing from the Leighs’ detailed notebooks, this talk offered unique insights into the villagers’ lives and their connection to the ‘big house.’

19 May 2025. Excursion: Winterbourne House

30 of us enjoyed a guided tour of Winterbourne’s seven acres of beautiful botanical gardens followed by the opportunity to explore this Edwardian Arts and Crafts house at our own pace. We explored the woodland walk, strolled through the hazelnut tunnel and crossed the 1930s Japanese Bridge in this hidden gem of a garden. The house was built for John Nettlefold, a pioneer of early housing reform in Birmingham at a time when the city had a serious lack of decent homes for working people. The house contains interesting exhibitions about this, as well as being a light and airy example of an Arts and Crafts house.

25 June 2025. Excursion: Arbury Hall, Nuneaton

Nearly 50 of us enjoyed a guided tour of Arbury Hall. This beautiful Elizabethan mansion house was transformed into the Gothic style by Sir Roger Newdigate during the second half of the 18th century. It featured in George Eliot’s novels as ‘Cheverel Manor’. The three tour guides were excellent and we were fortunate to have Sheila Woolf, WLHS member, as one of them. After the tour we had a delicious cream team in the onsite tea rooms and were then free to explore the 18th century landscaped gardens at our own pace. A lovely afternoon.

12 July 2025. Excursion: Shipston-on-Stour guided history walk and visit to Shipston Museum

Nearly 30 of us braved the heat to join historian and Shipston Museum trustee Martin Russell on a history walk around Shipston. Some of you may remember Martin as he was our guide on the Edgehill Battlefield visit a couple of years ago. We learnt about Shipston-on-Stour's history, which began in prehistoric times. Following light refreshments at the Black Horse, we finished the afternoon by visiting Shipston Museum, which showcases artefacts from Shipston and surrounding villages from prehistory to post medieval times.

16 September 2025. Jim Ranahan, Cataloguing Archivist at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, spoke on 'A Passion for Stratford and Warwickshire Life - Enid and Neville Usher'.

Jim Ranahan gave us a fascinating exploration of the Usher siblings, Enid and Neville. They were long-time residents of Stratford-upon-Avon, until Enid's untimely death in 1998 and Neville's in 2021. They immersed themselves in Stratford and Warwickshire life, not least through their business, the Stratford Bookshop. Both were strong supporters of local heritage, working with the Stratford Society and for Neville, harnessing his accounting and organisational skills over many years for Warwickshire Local History Society. In their different ways and through their varied interests, Enid and Neville Usher demonstrated a passion for life across the County. This passion is reflected in their papers which, along with records relating to the Stratford Bookshop, are now held by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

4 October 2025. Excursion: Tour of The Lady Katherine Leveson Foundation, Temple Balsall.

Nearly 30 of us enjoyed a guided tour with WLHS member Marion Keeley of the twelfth-century Old Hall at Temple Balsall, once the Commandery of the Knights Templar in Warwickshire, the adjacent church of St Mary's and the almshouses. We learnt about the legacy of Lady Katherine Leveson (d. 1674), daughter of Sir Robert Dudley, who founded two lasting charitable institutions: the almshouses, now the Lady Katherine Housing & Care Home, and the Lady Katherine Leveson Primary School. We also enjoyed refreshments in the hall, which was welcomingly warm on a cold day.

21 October 2025. Susan Hopcraft, author of *Leamington's Game: A History of Leamington Tennis & Squash Club*, spoke on 'A History of Lawn Tennis in Leamington Spa'.

Susan Hopcraft shared insights into the town's role in the origins of lawn tennis. Her book marks the club's possible 150th anniversary and revisits key questions — was the game first played in Leamington or Edgbaston, and in 1872 or 1874? Susan believes Leamington's club was the first founded solely for lawn tennis. The sport quickly took off, with the club hosting major tournaments for decades before interest waned. Today, the club is thriving again, with new squash and padel courts, all-weather floodlit surfaces, and relaxed dress rules — no more compulsory whites or long dresses. Junior coaching is growing, and the evening's discussion included current players and a Real Tennis enthusiast, noting that two nearby courts still keep that traditional game alive.

18 November 2025. Peter Mason, author of *The Two Manors of Frankton*, spoke on 'The Village of Frankton c. 1660-1680'.

Peter Mason gave us a fascinating insight into the people of the village of Frankton, as revealed through documentary sources. We discovered the lives not only of the gentry, but also of the ordinary residents of this quiet Warwickshire village. Peter explored records from 1660 to 1680, including: taxes, wills and inventories, the church register, legal actions concerning land usage and ownership and other court reports.

Award to Our Warwickshire

At the Community Archive and Heritage Group (CAHG)'s conference in Huddersfield on 19th June, Our Warwickshire was announced as the winner of the Group of the Year award. The Our Warwickshire Community History website is run by Heritage & Culture Warwickshire (HCW), but at arm's length – its focus is community involvement and engagement. The website is an online archive, hosting images from the County Record Office and the County Museum, along with images submitted by the Warwickshire community. The site now has over 1,500 articles, over 10,000 photos, and more besides. The project page area has recently been improved to make it more usable, and the coming Warwick Castle exhibition at the Museum will see a marked increase in articles on the site, as HCW strive to integrate digital and physical exhibitions. It also provides an online portal to connect people with similar interests and has worked in the community to improve peoples' digital skills and sense of wellbeing. WLHS has always supported it, and if you don't already know and use it, do go online and explore the wide range of resources. <https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/>

Outreach

We have attended two events reaching out to non-members of the Society. On 17 January an Evening Meeting was held at Warwick University chaired by Prof B Kumin and Dr Naomi Pullin. Ruth Barbour spoke on 'Putting the local into Warwickshire History'. We had our usual stall at the Leamington History Day on 18 September, when several of us enjoyed meeting people from varied local organisations inside the large and impressive Leamington Parish Church.

The Future

Our most urgent challenge is to work on our presently rather tired website, to make it more attractive and user-friendly and to rescue our email communications. Many members will remember Jackie Bland, who was our IT expert and Secretary for many years. She has nobly volunteered to work on the website and our IT problems.

Our sincerest thanks are due to Ruth Barbour for her indefatigable efficiency and organisation both as Secretary and as organiser of our lectures; to John Wilmot as Vice-Chairman; to our Treasurer Aarthi Rajagopal who keeps us on the straight and narrow; to Lesley Caine, who deals patiently with membership issues, and to Rowan Fisher who organises excellent visits, as well as making our presence available on social media. All the officers and committee do a splendid job, well worthy of appreciation.

Christine Woodland; Nat Alcock (Joint Chairmen)

Annual Accounts: 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2025. For 2026 AGM

	2025	Notes	2024
Opening funds:			
Barclays current account	0.00		7.51
CAF cash account	1526.81		1870.14
CAF gold account	6740.44		6576.84
Cash (Float)	16.00		21.00
Total funds at year start	8283.25		8475.49
Income			
Subscriptions (Net)	3034.01	Note 1	3402.00
Postage on Publications/Subscriptions	91.69		78.04
Tax repayment Gift Aid	408.22	Note 2	422.39
Interest on CAF Gold account	130.38		163.60
Bank Interest received	5.82		7.37
Lecture refreshments (donations)	52.70		57.25
Outings/Meetings, receipts	2827.10	Note 3	2566.00
Sale of Publications	212.35		283.49
Donations	323.20		140.00
2026 Meeting receipts, received in 2025	787.00	Note 4	
Total Income	7872.47		7120.14
Expenditure			
Speakers	320.00		406.05
Room Hire	351.50		353.38
Outings Expenses	2306.15	Note 3	2119.70
Member refunds	15.00	Note 5	
Deposits for future meetings	672.00	Note 4	
Insurance (BALH)			75.00
Printing	2235.00		2249.16
Packing & distribution			
Bank charges	60.00		60.00
Postage & secretarial	796.46		860.68
Sundries	40.50		37.80
Accounting and Bookkeeping	742.90		1702.98
Subscriptions			155.88
Website costs incl. security certificate	388.36		0.00
Total Expenditure	7927.87		8020.63
Net surplus/deficit	-55.40		-900.49
Total funds at year end	8227.85		7575.00
Represented by:			
CAF Cash Account	1336.03		1526.81
CAF Gold Account	6870.82		6740.44
Cash (Float)	21.00		16.00
Total funds at year end	8227.85		8283.25

Adjustments to surplus/deficit to reflect true financial position

Subs/publications paid in advance in 2024 for 2025	180.20		
Subs/publications paid in advance in 2025 for 2026	-242.21		
Insurance (BALH, due 2025) paid in 2026	-75.00		
Honorarium (2025), paid in 2026	-250.00		
Prepayment costs of 2025 meetings made in 2024	-60.00		
Prepayment costs of 2026 meetings made in 2025	732.00	Note 4	
2026 meeting receipts received in 2025	-787.00	Note 4	
Total of adjustments	-502.01		
Adjusted deficit, 2025	-557.41		

Examined by:

Date.....

Note 1: Membership

	No 2025	Ann sub	Total Subs	No 2024	Total Subs
Individual	112	15.00	1680.00	122	1830.00
Individual (Old Rate)	1	12.00	12.00	16	192.00
Family	28	20.00	560.00	31	620.00
Junior	0	0.00	0.00	3	0.00
Local History Groups	24	20.00	480.00	26	520.00
Institutions	14	20.00	240.00	12	240.00
Honorary members	4	0.00	0.00	4	0.00
Overseas (+postage)		15.00	0.00	0	0.00
<i>Total</i>			2972.00		3402.00
Subs paid in 2024 for 2025			-180.20		
Subs paid in 2025 for 2026			242.21		
Subscriptions (Net)			3034.01		

Old rate - For one member, payment is being accepted at the old rate.

Honorary Members - Aylesford School; British Association for Local History; Local History Magazine; Coleshill Civic Society.

Institutions - For institutions paying via an agent, we only receive 2/3 of the subscription. One institution pays for individual copies. Total shown is that received, net of expenses.

Overseas - Individuals (1); Institutions (9). Pay the standard subscription, but also for postage.

Note 2. Gift Aid claims are now up to date with £408.22 claimed for 2025.

Note 3. Excursions [Receipts, with costs in brackets]: Birmingham, May 19: £540.00 (£472); Arbury, June 25: £1168 (£960); Shipston, July 12: £566.20 (£450); Temple Balsall, Sep 06: £552.00 (£415.19); Ragley Hall, Nov [moved to January 2026], see Note 4.

Note 4. Payments received in 2025 for Ragley Hall meeting (moved to 2026): £787.00

Prepayments for 2026 excursions: Ragley Hall: £120; Warwick Castle: £162; Packington Hall: £450

Note 5. Refund of payment made twice in error.