

May 2023 - Meeting

Hi All,

We had an encouraging attendance at our May meeting with a total of 47 made up of 34 members and 13 visitors. Our paid up membership now stands at 48, with another 9 yet to pay.

Members have until the June meeting to update their membership without having to complete a new membership form.

We had four apologies from members who were unable to attend.

We are now back in the main hall for our meetings and this proved to be an ideal venue for our May speaker, Henrietta Lockart.

On page two and three is the 'Coming Events' section.

This is an extended 'Coming Events' section.

On Page Two we have details of our next Meeting on Monday 12th June 2023, a presentation 'Exploring the past – the Excavations in Beoley in 2021' by Nina O'Hare, Learning and Outreach Manager, an invite to a Redditch Rotary Club Lunchtime Meeting and a 'SQUEAKY BLUNDERS' MURDER MYSTERY NIGHT' at Forge Mill Needle Museum..

On Page Three there are three items. The first one repeats our important announcement concerning our August meeting, the second concerns the final meeting of Feckenham Forest History Society and the third promotes our first 'book sale'.

Pages four and five have a report on our excellent May presentation 'Winterbourne House and Garden, Edgbaston' by Henrietta Lockhart, Curator (Museum Collections)

Pages six and seven have an article by Derek Coombes on the Moons Moat Nature Trail. This is a ten-post Nature Trail around the moat and the adjacent amenity area.

Page eight has two illustrations produced in the 1980s which show how Moons Most may have looked in it's heyday and how it looked at the time of the New Town Development Corporation.

Next Meeting...

Our next Meeting is on Monday 12th June 2023 and is 'Exploring the past – the Excavations in Beoley in 2021' the presentation is by Nina O'Hare, Learning and Outreach Manager, and there is more on this presentation on Page 2.

The meeting will be, as always at the Oasis Christian Centre starting at 2.00 pm.

Anthony Green, Society Secretary

E-mail: tony.rhs@btinternet.com Tel: 01527 61434

Coming up

Next Meeting Monday 12th June 2023

Exploring the past – the Excavations in Beoley in 2021

Presentation by Nina O'Hare, Learning and Outreach Manager.

Small Pits, Big Ideas is a concept which helps communities reveal the origins of local villages and their story over time.

Relatively little is known about the development of Worcestershire's rural medieval settlements as many are lived in, making large archaeological excavations impossible.

By uncovering the archaeology hidden in back gardens, the project brings people directly in touch with their past and shines new light on the story of rural Worcestershire.

Over the weekend of the 2nd – 3rd October 2021, 13 'test pits' were excavated across Beoley village (also known as Holt End). A total of 56 people took part in digging the test pits and processing the finds. For most, this was their first hands on go at archaeology.



Fieldwork was undertaken by local volunteers with the support of Worcestershire Archaeology, experienced volunteer archaeologists and undergraduate archaeology students from the University of Worcester.

In this presentation Nina gives an overall view of the work carried out and details of the fascinating finds which were found with the support of the local volunteers.

Invite to a Redditch Rotary Club Meeting Wednesday 5th July 2023

History Society members and friends are invited to join Redditch Rotary Club for an afternoon meeting with a special guest speaker and buffet lunch.

Max Keen is an excellent and accomplished historical speaker and will be talking about the life and times of King Richard III.

The venue is the Southcrest Manor Hotel, Redditch, B97 4JS, the date is Wednesday July 5th at 12.00 and tickets are £15 each. The format will include a talk by Mr Keen including costume and visual aids! The talk will be followed by an informal buffet giving an opportunity to talk to Mr Keen.

RSVP to Mike Luck at Mike@classicworldracing.co.uk or feel free to call on 07765 235581

'SQUEAKY BLUNDERS' MURDER MYSTERY NIGHT

Saturday 3rd June 2023: 6.30 to 10.00pm

1919 Birmingham... a cesspit of crime, debauchery, gambling and not very nice folk! Gangs rule the streets, and Thomas Shellfish is the mastermind. A sudden scream, and a dodgy Midlands accent later, and there's a murdered body and a whole room full of despicable and vile suspects (and that's just the accents!)

Dress up is most welcome, by order of the Squeaky Blunders!

Tickets are £38.00 and include a two-course meal served by Gourmet Gorillas. <https://www.forgemill.org.uk/web/events/>



More 'coming up'

Redditch History Society Programme 2023 - REVISED

13 th February	Wayside Wonders and Country Curioities – local items of historic interest which people overlook	Dr Richard Churchley
13 th March	Victorian and Edwardian Buildings of Redditch, Bromsgrove and Birmingham	Tim Bridges, The Victorian Society
17 th April	Annual General Meeting (plus local history film(s))	Society Executive
19 th May	Winterbourne House and Garden, Edgbaston. A general introduction and history	Honnette Lockhart, Curator (Museum Collections)
12 th June	Exploring the past – the Excavations in Beoley in 2021	Nina O'Hare, Learning and Outreach Manager
10 th July	It's Not about Shakespeare: Aspects of ordinary life in Stratford-Upon-Avon, 1770-1915	Will Horton, Author
August	NO MEETINGS IN AUGUST DUE TO MAJOR MODIFICATIONS TO ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AT VENUS	Moved to December
11 th September	'Remembering the Batteries' Nickel-cadmium industrial battery manufacturing in Redditch from 1918 to 1993	Anthony Green
9 th October	A walk round Redditch using old postcards: Looking at the street off the main road	Chris Jackson
13 th November	From Common to Posh: The History of Church Green to 1900.	Graham Smith
11 th December	From Brum to Bringsty Common: Tales of a Wartime Childhood	Bill Meehan

Our meetings take place at the Oasis Christian Centre, 4 Plymouth Road, Redditch, B97 4QB. Meetings begin at 2.00 pm and last for approximately 2 hours. It begins with a presentation, which lasts about one hour, and this is followed by refreshments and society business, event news and project reports. Non-members are welcome for whom there will be a £3 entrance charge. This is refundable against the membership fee if subsequently joining the society the same day. If planning to attend a specific event, please check our web site, our Facebook page, or monthly Newsletter for meeting details and any changes. For further details of the Redditch History Society visit: www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk E-mail: secretary@redditchhistorysociety.org.uk or telephone the secretary at 01527 41404

This year, the Oasis Christian Centre is having a major electrical upgrade. The electrical supplier have notified them that this will take place in August this year, but cannot say exactly when in August it will take place, or how long it will take.

We have therefore decided that we will move our August meeting to December and Oasis have made some changes to allow us to have our second Monday of the month slot in December. Our speaker, Bill Macham, has kindly agreed to move to the December slot and will be giving his talk 'From Brum to Bringsty Common - tales of a Wartime Childhood' on Monday 11th December.

The leaflets have been modified and the website details have been changed to reflect this. <https://www.redditchhistorysociety.org.uk/meetings.htm>



At the A.G.M. of the Feckenham Forest History Society on 11th. April it was found to be impossible to form a new committee.

Following an explanation of the ramifications of this situation and the subsequent discussion a proposal was put to terminate the existence of the Society and this was carried unanimously. This decision was made with sorrow by all the members in the hall.

The Society was formed in 1990 from a group of people who had attended a series of courses run by Elizabeth Atkins on local history and has been a significant contributor to promoting the history of our local area.

It is so sad to see its demise and shows so clearly how a society is reliant on volunteers willing to take on the tasks required for its existence.

Although there is no turning back, there is an opportunity to give support at their final meeting on Tuesday 13th June which is an illustrated talk 'Great Witley Church' given by Howard Robinson. Fittingly, this last meeting will be at Feckenham Village Hall.

More details at <http://feckenham-forest-history-society.org.uk>



We plan to have an occasional book sale to boost our income. This is being organised by Pat Bushaway.

The first will be next month and will take place during the refreshments.

There will be local history books, history books and those of a more general nature. Donations are appreciated, please bring them along.

May Meeting Report.

Winterbourne House and Garden, Edgbaston by Henrietta Lockhart, Curator (Museum Collections)

The May presentation 'Winterbourne House and Gardens' was given by Henrietta Lockhart, who is the Curator of the Museum Collections.

Henrietta has had various other roles, including Fine Art Consultant for the Colley Ison Gallery in Birmingham and she led on the Birmingham History Galleries Project.

Although we tend to think of Birmingham as a 'dirty' industrial centre, but in the 19th/early 20th century it was a melting pot of arts, culture, design, and technical innovation.

Winterbourne is a rare surviving example of an early 20th century suburban villa and garden. Originally designed as a small country estate with rustic outbuildings and large gardens,

Winterbourne followed the style of the Arts and Crafts movement with examples of local craftsmanship throughout the house.

The house was built in 1903 for John and Margaret Nettlefold, of Guest, Keen & Nettlefold. Nettlefold was a pioneer of town planning who carried the ideas seen in his own home to the less wealthy areas of the city.



Above: House from back



Top right: GKN trade stand 1920s



Bottom right: John Macdonald Nicolson by Gunnera 1930s.

Margaret Nettlefold designed the garden, inspired by the books and garden designs of Gertrude Jekyll. After a period of restoration, the garden was Grade II listed by English Heritage in 2008.

John Nettlefold and his wife had already lived in two homes as man and wife before they commissioned J L Ball to design Winterbourne.

It was to be their most beloved family home, but also the final place they would share together. When the family sold up in 1919, it was to move nearer to John's hospital where he spent his final years.

When the Nettlefolds left in 1919, two subsequent families called Winterbourne home.

The latter, John Nicolson, was an avid gardener and built on the existing foundation with further features such as a Japanese bridge and scree garden.

When the University took ownership in 1944 the botanical garden was used for study and relaxation by students, and research by the School of Botany.

May Meeting Report cont....

Initially, when the university took possession, Winterbourne's gardens were used for research by the School of Botany, and as a place for students to relax and study.

The house, meanwhile, provided lodging for female students into the 1960s.

Later the house was used as office space, housing first the Business School, then the Extramural Department which offered courses to members of the local community.

In the late 2000s, the university made the decision to embrace Winterbourne's potential, and to restore the house to its former glory.



Above:
Autumn Japanese Bridge photograph by Susan Georgio

Top right:
Students at hall of residence

Bottom right:
The Pergola, photograph by Alice Whitehouse



Today the botanical garden is Grade II listed and offers colour and interest throughout the year.

The restored walled garden complete with crinkle-crankle wall, is a riot of rainbow shades from May until October.

The lawns are fringed with striking colour themed borders, and beyond lies an original sandstone rock garden and a woodland walk through Gunnera leaves and Rhododendron displays.

The botanical garden contains plants from around the globe with collections of plants from China, North and South America and the Alpine areas of the world.

Winterbourne is home to several 19th century printing presses which are now used for workshops, demonstrations and for making cards and bags sold in Winterbourne's gift shop.

Although it is owned and run by the University, it is open to the public and provides all the facilities expected in a visit to an historic house and gardens.

A plan of the site can be downloaded at https://www.winterbourne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Winterbourne-accessibility-leaflet-2021-map-only_V2.pdf.

Henrietta clearly has a very wide knowledge of her subject and gave a well presented and interesting introduction to the property.

This was very much appreciated by the audience. There is so much more to learn about the property and its related history and, it is clearly well worth a visit.

Moons Moat Nature Trail

By Derek Coombes



Moons Moat is one of the oldest, and most historic sites in Redditch. Originally built in the 14th century – or earlier - it was abandoned in the late 17th century and left to be overtaken by its natural surroundings. With the coming of the New Town, Moons Moat was recognised as a site of significant historic interest and was scheduled as an ancient monument, giving it a level of protection similar to that of Stone Henge.

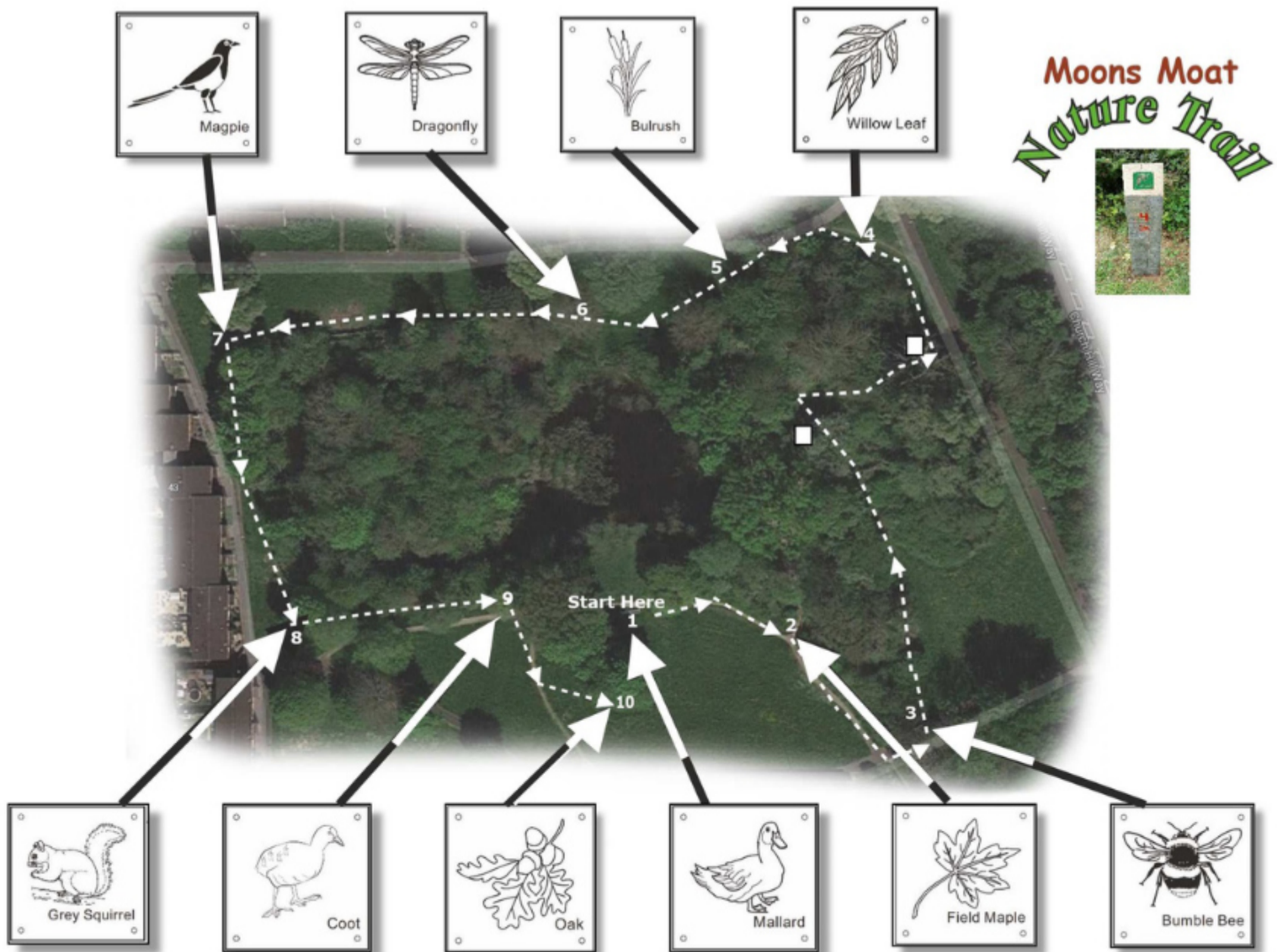
In the 1970s a number of archaeological surveys and digs took place revealing the foundations of both a timber-framed and stone house. Owing to its historic status, as the new town grew, the site survived as an oasis of green in the modern Church Hill residential area.

For over twenty years, volunteers of the Moons Moat Conservation Group, have worked to restore, maintain, develop and promote the site so that today it provides a calm and attractive community asset. The Conservation Group has cleared most of the scrub from the banks of the moat and pond, cut-down unwanted trees, planted spring flowering bulbs and erected new safety fencing around the moat.

They have also adopted overgrown scrub land to the east of the moat, clearing a pathway, installing seating and planting a wild flower meadow in the south-eastern corner of the site.

Now, with support from a VCS grant from Redditch Borough Council, they have installed a ten-post Nature Trail around the moat and this adjacent amenity area.

The ten posts each have a mounted brass plaque featuring a species of wild life sometimes seen around the moat. These plaques are embossed such that with a sheet of paper and a crayon it is possible to “brass Rub” the images - a fun activity for young and old alike.



Moons Moat Nature Trail By Derek Coombes cont....

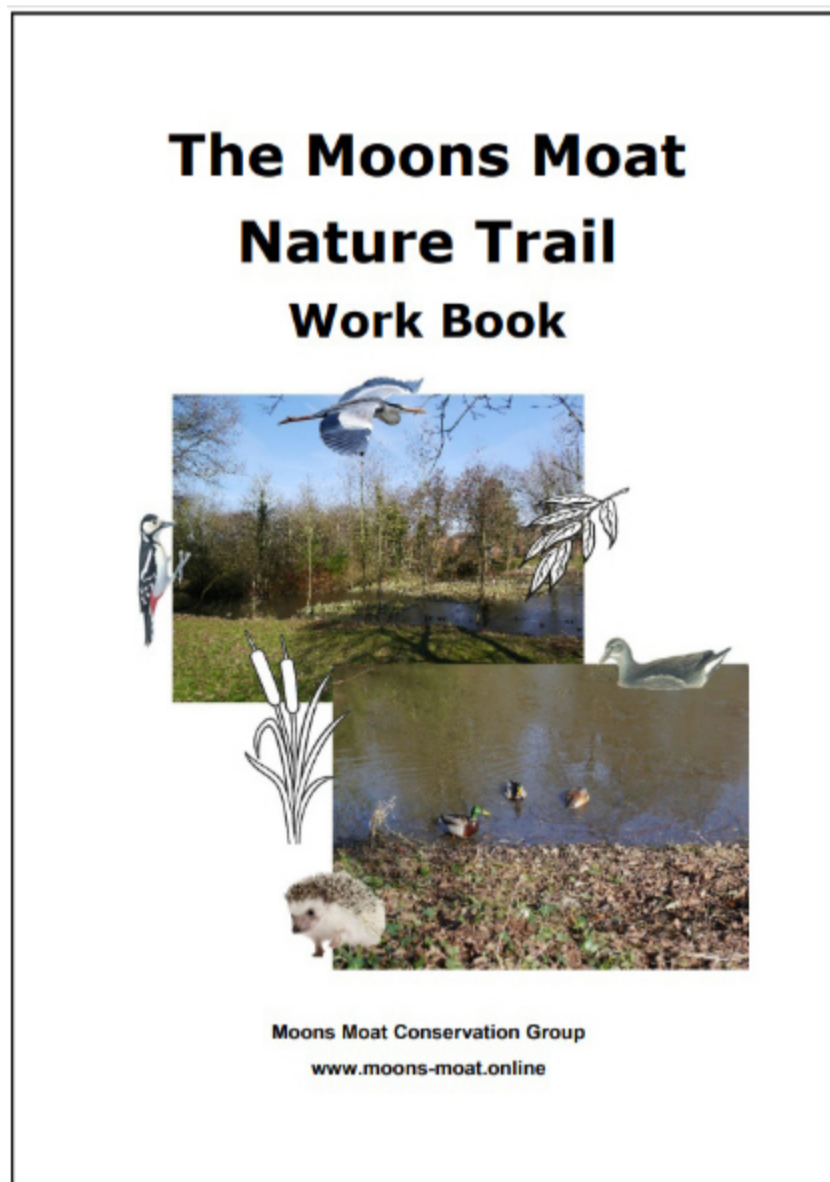


Working with the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the Church Hill Big Local Charity, the Group has produced a workbook to provide the techniques of brass rubbing pages, on which to collect the rubbings, information about the identified wildlife and other interesting facts about wild life more broadly in the area.

The workbook is suitable both for schools and other groups to hold organised walks around the moat and for families to enjoy leisure time together at the moat.

As well as being available on the Moons Moat Conservation Groups web site – mmcg.online - for downloading and printing at home, printed copies are available for organised groups and it is hoped that, for a small contribution to the Groups fund's, copies will be available at other local outlets.

An A4 trifold information leaflet about the Trail is also available from the web site and to pick up at local sources.



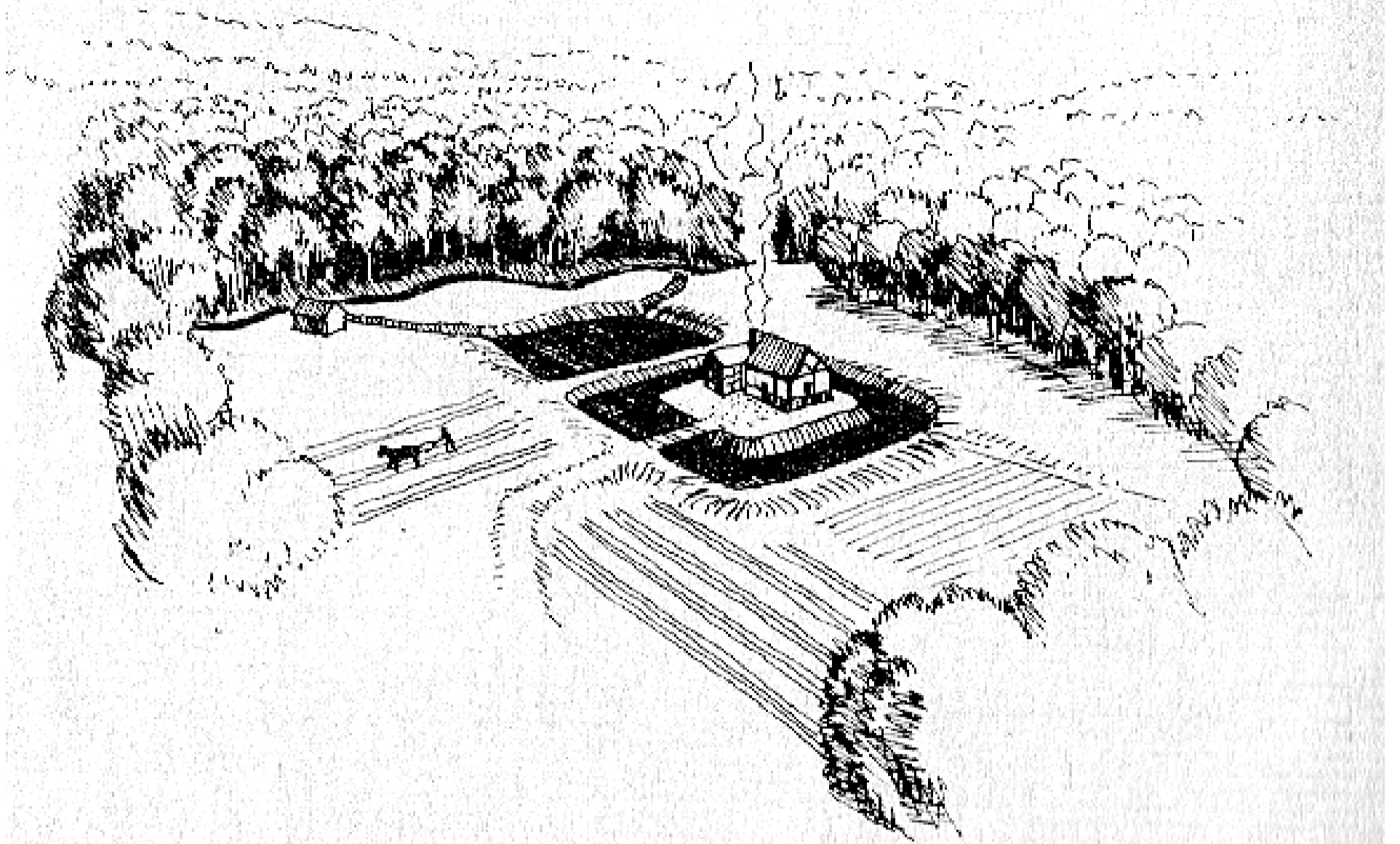
More details can be found at <https://chbl.org.uk/greenspaces/moons-moat/>

Derek Coombes

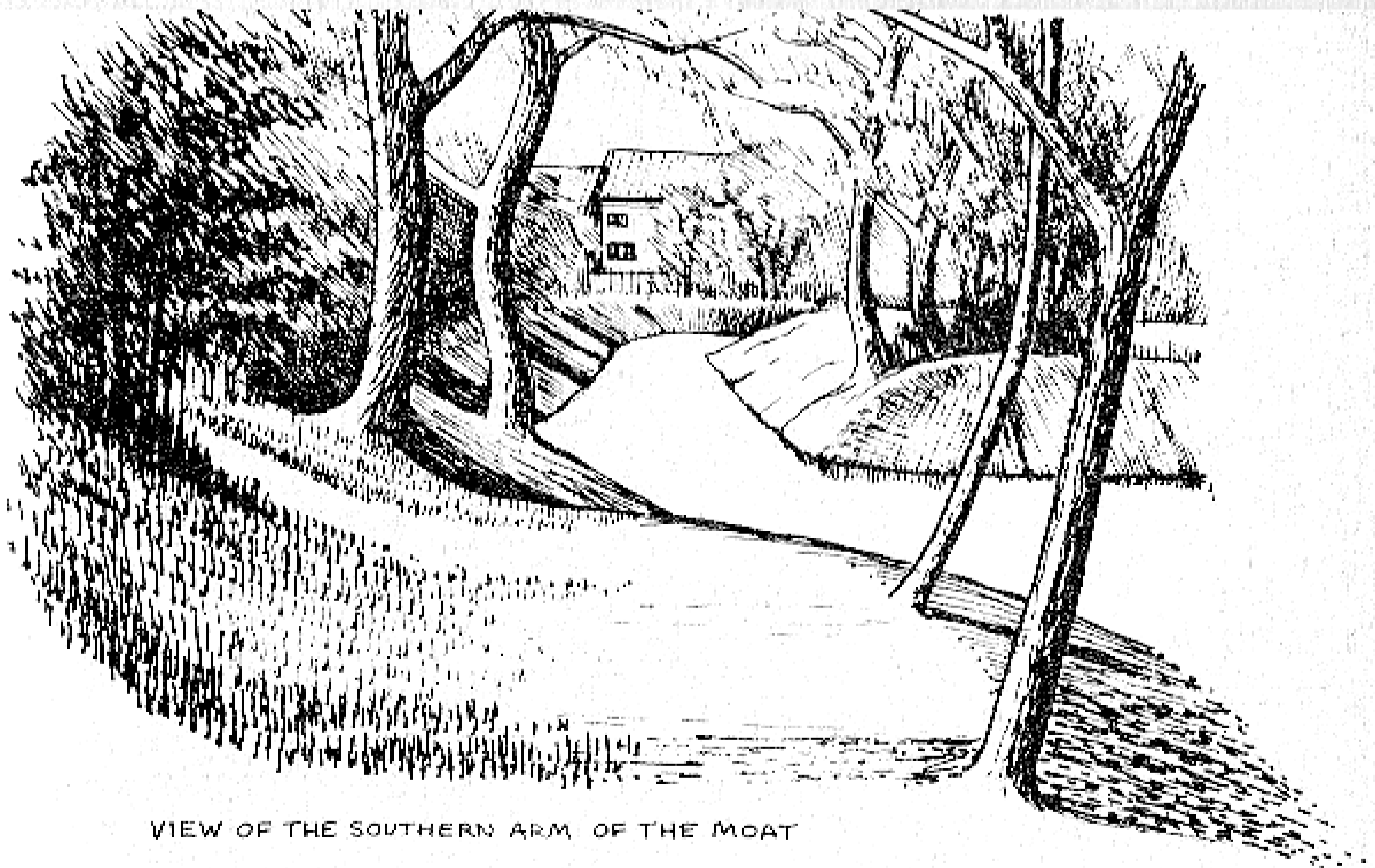
Chairman. MMCG

Next month Derek has an article on how to get involved and volunteer at the site.

Moons Moat - Artists Impressions from 1980's



MOONS MOAT - SURROUNDED BY DENSE OAK FOREST



VIEW OF THE SOUTHERN ARM OF THE MOAT