

## NEWTON ST CYRES HISTORY GROUP

After an introductory session in November last year, the inaugural meeting of the new History Society was held in the Clubroom on Thursday 14th January.

We had a most interesting evening based around the showing of a video of the church made by Chris Southcott in 2002, which was followed by an informal and enjoyable discussion amongst the group, when all kinds of questions and ideas were raised and information exchanged.

Chris had made the video in the form of a tour, led by John Durrant, and it showed many items of interest in the building. I had never properly noticed the carvings in the porch, and the large gateposts at the entrance had always mystified me. We saw the outside sundial, and the clock face made by villagers in 1985 and this time placed on the East rather than the North face of the tower. We also saw the mechanism of the clock restored by John Durrant in 1971.

The imposing Northcote Memorial, the unusual survival of the Quicke lozenges (or hatchments) and the C20th embroideries were all discussed, and then the James II coat of arms next to the door. Who knew that there is an old, probably medieval mural, surviving in a fragmentary form on the wall behind this? I didn't! Jean Wilkins has been researching the coat of arms, and has reconstructed the outline of the possible story behind it.

We then had the rare opportunity of following the camera up the tower stairs, past the bells, and on to the roof, where the views on all sides were clearly shown. Chris Southcott remembered the fetes that were held annually in the garden at Newton House, and also that the scouts used to meet in the old vicarage buildings, removed when the new vicarage was built c1980.

The History Group would welcome any information on the church, the features mentioned and any memories of events connected with it (*contacts in Newton Wonder*)

Fuller information on the James II coat of arms will be available from the History Group to anyone who is interested.

*Isobel Hepworth*