

The George Fentham Trust

The George Fentham Hampton-In-Arden Charity



Fentham Hall 1914

Several months ago the George Fentham Trust produced a newsletter about the newly created George Fentham Arboretum which was delivered to every household in the village. It proved to be very successful and so the Trust has decided to continue with further publications to give further insight into what the Trust is all about. Each edition will feature one of the roles that it plays within the community.

History

George Fentham was born in Hampton-in-Arden in the year 1630. His father, Henry, was a freeholder of Hampton and a Churchwarden of the Parish Church. At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to a Mercer in Birmingham. In his later years he became very wealthy, and purchased large areas of land in Aston, Handsworth, Erdington and beyond. He died on March 4th 1698 and was buried at St. Martin's church in Birmingham.

In his Will there was an annuity of £30 left to Hampton, £20 of which to be paid for a schoolmaster to teach the children of the village, £5 for the "relief and encouragement" of ten of the poorest families and £5 for the placing of an apprenticeship for the son of a poor inhabitant in "some honest handicraft or trade". After allotting an annuity of £20 to Birmingham, he left the residue of his estate in trust, to be divided equally between Hampton and Birmingham, to be expended yearly for the benefit of such poor, who "honestly labour and maintain themselves" and their families. The selection of these people was the responsibility of the Trustees. And thus The George Fentham Charity was formed.

Grants

One of the main functions of the Trust is the issuing of grants, to help with both the education of young people in the village, and to ensure the wellbeing of elderly residents.

During 2012, grants were given to George Fentham School totalling £58,382. This money was used to refurbish the school ICT room and install new ICT equipment.

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It also funded the Oxford Reading Scheme, sports coaches, swimming, music tuition, the Life Bus and various school visits and trips.

The Department of Education have just published their "School Performance Tables" for this year and it has been confirmed by our Local Authority, that George Fentham has come top of all Primary Schools in Solihull. The George Fentham Trust would like to congratulate Mrs Gaughan and all her staff for this wonderful achievement.

Other youth activities to benefit from grants were Preschool £2000 and the youth bus £5000.

Fifteen years ago, the Trust initiated a scheme to benefit local students during their time at university. It proved a great success and now helps a great number of residents, including those studying for NVQ's, or other specialised courses which help with their employment prospects. In 2012, grants totalling £28,500 were given to 31 students from Hampton.

A quote from one student reads: "The Fentham Trust very kindly sponsored me whilst I was at Solihull College, completing NVQ levels 2 and 3 in Beauty Therapy. The sponsorship funding enabled me to purchase a Beauty Kit, uniform, portfolio, books and equipment, trips and transport costs. The use of the grant really helped me to complete the qualifications."

The older members of our community have also been well supported. For those that need that little bit of extra financial help, the Trust can contribute by means of a monthly grant. In 2012, some £30,304 was given to 46 pensioners. In addition to this, the Trust also paid for Orbit to supply an emergency communication and panic button system to those who could benefit from this way of contacting emergency support. The Trust also sponsors a Community transport scheme which is run by Frances Linn, and cost £664 in 2012. This provides transport by volunteer drivers who take eligible pensioners to hospital and dental appointments. More volunteers are always welcome; if you can help, please contact Frances on 442124, or Judy Fish on 442582.

Then there is, of course, The Wednesday Club – see more below - which the Trust runs and on which £5099 was spent in 2012.

During 2012, other grants have been given to individuals and village organisations; for example, the Trust donated £2000 to support the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations.

The Wednesday Club

The Trustees feel very strongly about the wellbeing of elderly residents in the village, especially those who are on their own. With this in mind, what we now call 'The Wednesday Club' was formed and is funded by the Trust. Previously it was run by Janet Griffiths and the Trust is very grateful for all the hard work that she put into it. It has now expanded to some 35 members and has become a regular social event all year round.

A typical Wednesday Club day would be a cup of coffee and biscuit on arrival, and a good old natter with others for best part of an hour as everyone catches up with local gossip. Before lunch there is a keep fit session for those that want to take part. No, we don't run round the village - it's quite civilised! - we sit on chairs and try to move our

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limbs without creaking. Once we get our breath back, it's time for a hot meal washed down with a glass of wine and followed by an exquisite pudding from the village Pudding Club.

Whilst everything is being cleared away, we have a raffle, and talk about events coming up, in fact anything of interest and entertainment, which sometimes includes our village schoolchildren. During the year, coach trips are arranged to places of interest, to the theatre and at Christmas to the Ballet.

None of this would be possible without the help of the volunteers who give up their time to make sure the Wednesday Club is so successful. A special thank you must go to Janice, who is our head cook and bottle washer, and sets everything up for us. Our thanks also go to Coralie Hammond and Hazel Williams who are regular helpers, and all the volunteers that offer their services.

Last, but not least, the three Trustees in charge of running the Club are Carol Grant, Malcolm James, and Martin Shalley. If you know anyone whom you think would benefit from the club and would like to join, please contact Carol or Malcolm.



The Day We Went On Safari

Picture the scene. 37 pensioners clambering into a charabanc (that's a coach to you younger ones), Zimmer frames strapped on the roof, sandwiches on their laps and setting off down the High Street on the adventure of a lifetime. They were heading into the wilds of Stourbridge, to seek out some of the world's most ferocious animals. Their jungle guides were Malcolm and Carol, suitably dressed in loincloths, and without fear they ventured into the unknown, surrounded by tigers, leopards, elephants, giraffes and of course the king of beasts, lions. With a good old British stiff upper lip, our gallant band bravely survived it through to the end and were rewarded with a well-earned meal of alligator and chips.(actually it was fish). This had of course been a day out to the West Midlands Safari Park for the Wednesday Club.

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The Fentham Hall 100 years ago

In early 1913 the George Fentham Trust purchased a private house named 'The Beeches'. It was surrounded by gardens and they converted it into a club for the men of the village, which became known as 'The Fentham Institute'. At the same time the Trust funded the building of an extension to the property and this became 'The Fentham Hall'. The intention was for it to be used by village residents for a variety of social activities, but unfortunately this was not to happen until 5 years later. The First World War had started and both buildings were taken over by the War Ministry, to be used as a Red Cross Hospital. It was not until 1918, when the war ended, that it was handed back to the Trust for its intended village use. It was during this period as a hospital that the Bowling Green was established on the lawn at the back of the Institute as a form of physiotherapy for the injured soldiers. Next year, villages and towns all over the country will be remembering the First World War and the sacrifices that were made during this period. In our next issue we will explain the important role that the Fentham Hall played as an Auxiliary Hospital.

Trustees

You now know more about the Trust and what it does for the benefit of the village, but who are the Trustees? They are chosen on a selection basis for a term of 4 or 5 years and the current Trustees are as follows:

Martin Cadman	Chairman, (appointed by Co-option)
Carol Grant	Vice Chairman, (appointed by Co-option)
Peter Adams	(appointed by Co-option)
John Pearson	(appointed by Co-option)
Catherine Eley	(appointed by Hampton Parish Council)
Malcolm James	(appointed by Hampton Parish Council)
Martin Shalley	(appointed by Hampton Parish Council)
Alan Martin	(appointed by Solihull Council)
Graham Juniper	(appointed by Solihull Council)
Jenny Phillips	(appointed by Justices of Solihull)

The Trustees could not operate without a very efficient back-up team which is headed by the Clerk to the Trustees, Julie Richardson. Although each Trustee is allocated certain responsibilities, it is Julie that controls the day to day management of all that goes on within the Trust. Also in the team we have our surveyor Nick Russell, Janice Townley, the Fentham Hall Caretaker, Debby Read, Warden of Fentham Green, and Trevor Honeysett, who does our maintenance. You can contact Julie on 01675 443850 most mornings, email clerk@georgefenthamtrust.org.uk or call in to the office at The Meeting Room, Fentham Hall, Marsh Lane, Hampton-in-Arden.

So there we have it. We hope you have enjoyed this edition of our Newsletter and hope it has given you a better insight into what the George Fentham Trust is all about.

www.georgefenthamtrust.org.uk

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