St Dunstan’s Church Feltham was one of many churches London wide that participated in a sponsored event organised by Diocese of London and Heritage of London Trust (HOLT).

Its aim was to raise funds through encouraging people to visit local churches either by walking, cycling and running or by Public Transport.

The event was a day long affair which witnessed a steady stream of visitors from far and wide who were treated to wonderful hospitality from the parishioners. The feature of the day, it has to be said, was a 30 minute organ recital by David Gamble.

Additionally St Dunstan’s invited the history group to provide a day long display of local historical items, interspersed by talks and a conducted tour of the grave yard.

The two talks were given by Eddie Menday the first of which being a history of Feltham from its earliest mention in the Saxon Chronicles and its account in the Domensday assessment and featured a history of the church concluding with the transition from village to town status. The second of Eddie’s talks was on the Church memorials and wall plaques of past Felthamites some of which held some cautionary advice!

There was also a conducted walk around the memorials of the church yard by the Secretary of the group who provided history and background of some of the past parishioners.

It was explained that although there was some 3000 burials in the ‘yard’ fewer than 200 of them were marked, amongst the earthen graves there were brick graves and vaults, the latter, almost always being under the body of the church.

The church yard holds the bodies of many ‘past notables’ from the Lodge Brothers graves to Joseph Toussaint ‘wax chandler’, the Burgoyne’s London Solicitors, one of whom, a military man, it is said ‘wandered’ (1770) across Hounslow Heath to Feltham and on crossing the old Feltham Bridge over the Crane River, was so taken by the place that he had a house built (The Grange)

The Secretary told of a number individuals whose reason for being buried here [Feltham] was uncertain, as by example John Evans ‘Admiral of the Blue’ (second image) he of Feltham Hill who died 8/7/1794, a long way inland one might think! There are no fewer than twelve of the Blake/LaCoste family (fourth image) Bankers of Chertsey, William Babb, died 25/2/1875, he and his father were Church Wardens - his father ‘Billy’ (Babb) ‘that is how he was always referred to’ has a mystery surrounding him, in as much he disappeared from the village following the death of his wife?

The image on the left (Vault C) is the only visual indication that Vaults exist in open ground.
There is William Wynne Ryland ‘the below image is of the grave of his parents Edward & Mary Ryland’

Ryland was an exceptional engraver pioneering ‘stipple engraving’. He was executed at Tyburn after being found guilty of forgery 1783.

Here is the table top tomb of Robert Swinfen Peel born/baptised 8/10/1812 at St Editha Church Tamworth Staffs. He died 1st December 1851 aged 39. He for a while lived at Feltham House (Place) he also, a mystery provides, being that he appears and disappears from records and is not noted in his father’s Will, but is still buried here.

As noted 3000 burials in the ‘yard’ but only 200 or so have memorials erected; a reflection, it could be deduced, of the standing of many of the poor villagers of what was a small and obscure Middlesex village.

It is understood that the event is to be held annually; opportunity therefore, should be taken next year to become involved.

Feltham History Group hereby acknowledges Andi Barnes for use of some of the images used and it is requested that any reproduction of the images should first be sought.

Hon Sec.