

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**2nd April 2024**

I'd like to start by welcoming you all to the AGM; it's good to see so many of you. I'm pleased to report again that our membership has held up well, and remains at around 100. I express again my thanks to Simon Edkins for his excellent work as membership secretary.

Equally important has been David Bett's work in arranging the programme of talks, which we intend to maintain as 12 per year, giving you as members excellent value for your subscriptions. You will each have favourite examples from the past year; but I especially enjoyed Nicola Turner-Inman on the Royal Collection, and David Heath on The Time They Cancelled Christmas. David has to cope also with unexpected hitches due to illness, etc., and he always rises splendidly to the occasion: as he has today, owing to Julia Mottershaw's ill health preventing her from giving her talk on the Gardener of Stourhead. We hope very much to reinstate this talk as soon as Julia's health allows.

I should like to add a word on the future programme. To a large extent this depends on who happens to be available and willing to come to Mere. Only to a limited extent is it possible, therefore, to apply any policy to the selection of talks. Committee members do their best to look for speakers; and some occasionally approach us. If we have a policy, it is to maintain a balance between subjects that are, on the one hand, local, i.e. specific to Mere and its area, or regional – affecting the 3 Counties of the Eponymous Corner; and more general aspects of history, on the other. In

## MERE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

both cases, we will always welcome suggestions from Members, should they have a special interest; and we will always try to make room for talks by Members themselves. Since the programme is managed 6 months in advance, Members will always have a good long period of time to brush up their research or prepare slides, once they are in the schedule. If you have a suggestion, please approach David Bett, or any Committee member, at any time.

Like myself, the Committee is ageing rather. The Society does need – it depends on – people who are willing to spend a small share of their time on its management. I'd like to take the opportunity to urge any of you who feel able to do so to come forward to join the Committee. You need not even take on any specific role – at first, at least – until you feel comfortable in doing so. It need only take some 8 or 10 hours per year. If you can spare the time, and share the interest, do please contact myself or any other Committee member.

Finally, I should like to thank you, the members, once again for your support in keeping our Society in good health and vigorous activity.

**Peter Landymore**