

*Mere Historical Society*



**UNLOCKING HISTORY**

**AGM Notice & Newsletter  
February 2017**

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**[www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk)**

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## Chairman's Remarks January 2017

Members of the Committee have been working to produce the Society's programme for the next twelve months, and beyond.

Caroline has organised what promises to be an interesting and varied series of visits for the summer months, whilst Julia and myself have been organising a programme of evening lectures through to mid 2018; some speakers have even been pencilled in for the autumn of 2018!

We are, however, concerned about the morning talks. Originally these were informal talks given by a member on a subject which interested them and about which they had some knowledge. These talks were given in members' homes so restricting the numbers who could attend. We changed to meetings held in the Grove Buildings and gradually the attendance grew, until there were the odd occasions when more were attending than the evening Lectures. The informal talks are still given by members which says a great deal for the knowledge and experience of our members! It is, however, becoming more difficult to find speakers. An alternative would be to have the occasional "outside" speaker to supplement the "home team". Your views would be appreciated.

In the meanwhile, if anyone would like to offer to give a morning talk, please let Julia or myself know.

Do you read our web site? Someone in Australia does, because she sent an email congratulating us on a really good web site.

Peter Lewis.

# **Notice of Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**The next Annual General Meeting of the Mere Historical Society will be held in the Grove Building at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017.**

Members are invited to partake of a glass of wine from 7pm and subscriptions will be collected before the AGM.

Notices or Nominations for the AGM must be submitted to the Secretary at least 2 weeks before the above date.

## **AGENDA FOR THE AGM**

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes of the AGM on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 Reports to the AGM
- 5 Election of Committee
- 6 AOB

Diane Ellis, Minute Secretary, MHS

## **Mere Historical Society**

### **Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in the Grove Building**

**Present:** Chairman (Peter Lewis), Committee Members: Caroline Cook, Gerry Cook, Tony Grinyer (Vice Chairman), Julia Mottershaw, Peter Platt-Higgins (Treasurer), Jenny Wilding; plus approximately 70 members

**1 Apologies:** Diane Ellis, Sue Birch who has had to resign from the committee for reasons of health.

**2 Minutes of the AGM of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015** had been circulated in the Autumn Newsletter, September 2015. Approval of these was proposed by Rachel Welch and seconded by Charles Allberry. They were unanimously approved.

**3 Matters Arising:** Amendments to the Constitution and Rules as proposed in item 5, AGM 2015 Minutes.

Approval of the amended Constitution and Rules was proposed by Peter Platt Higgins and seconded by Stella Sivyour. The amendments were unanimously approved.

#### **4 Reports to the AGM:**

##### **4.1 Chairman's Report:**

The Chairman, Peter Lewis, said he felt it had been a good year and thanked all who had contributed.

He expressed the view that the speakers this year have been excellent and thanked Chris Allberry for arranging the evening lectures for the past 3 years.

He thanked Steve Hoffman for his work developing and maintaining the website.

He congratulated Tony Grinyer who organised the Morning Talks, and invited members to consider putting themselves forward as speakers.

#### **4.2 Financial Report:**

The Treasurer's Report and Final Accounts for 2015 had been circulated in the AGM Notice and Newsletter dated January 2016. Acceptance of the Report was proposed by Daphne Tighe, seconded by Jan Van Sloten and approved by the meeting. The Treasurer thanked Peter Dethick for checking the accounts

**4.3 Archivist's Report:** The Archivist has nothing further to report to the meeting and was thanked by the Chairman for the work she had put in to get the Archive catalogued and on line.

**5 Election of Committee:** Julia Mottershaw had recently joined the Committee. No further nominations had been received. The Chairman introduced the current Committee Members to the meeting as listed in the AGM Notice and Newsletter January 2016. He reported that they had all agreed to stand for re-election. The re-election of the current Committee Members was proposed by Peter Ralph, seconded by Sally Brett and carried unanimously.

#### **6 AOB:**

**6.1** The Vice Chairman, Tony Grinyer, asked which publicity sources members found useful; newsletters, posters and emails were all used but the majority used Mere Matters notices.

**6.2** Tony asked for responses to innovations.

Members were happy with the change of dropping evening lectures in January and February, with morning talks in those months.

The move of the AGM to April was questioned. Tony explained that this put the AGM at the end of the membership year, and with the Treasurer's report and visits being published in January,

members would have more time to consider both. Members were happy with the newsletters.

Tony asked if members were happy with the wine and mince pies offered at the December evening meeting. It was reported that they were favourably received and will therefore be repeated.

Members were reminded that there is a suggestions book for comments etc.

**6.3** Caroline Cook, who organises summer visits, suggested members should book the Bletchley Park outing as soon as they were able as it was likely to be popular with non-members.

There was no further business.

Signed as a true record:

# MERE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## *Treasurer's Report on the Accounts for January to December 2016, presented at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017.*

Mister Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. I have pleasure in presenting the accounts for the year January to December 2016, and hope that you all have a copy to which you can refer.

Overall the accounts show an increase in our bank balance for the year of some £70. This compares with a decrease in our bank balance of some £1872 in 2015. The decrease in our assets in 2015 was predominantly due to the costs of completing of the computerisation of the current content of the Society archive. This is now complete. Although the Society do not have a specific allowance for this work, over the years we have received grants and donations towards this work and the balance has, with the Committee's approval, been funded from our reserves. As a society your committee believe that the establishment and maintenance of the archive to be a key piece of work that the Society should support.

We remain solvent with in excess of £2700 in uncommitted funds.

Membership income, as a consequence of the agreed increase in subscriptions, increased to £1225. It is the membership fees which cover the Society's basic overhead costs represented by hall rental, the costs of talks, the production and distribution of the newsletters, donations and administration.. Currently these costs are some £59 less than our membership income. If our membership could be increased this would improve the Society's financial situation so please consider persuading your friends to join.

Interest on our deposit account was £7.48.

The Summer Visits achieved a surplus of £49 on a turnover of some £5008 (1% which again is a VERY neat balancing act by the organisers).

We made donations in the year to support Mere Matters.

Should you wish to pay membership fees or any other sums to the Society using internet banking or by standing order the details of our account are:

Account name: Mere Historical Society

Sort Code: 30-93-45

Account Number: 01735722

I would like to thank Peter Dethick for certifying these accounts and keeping me honest!

P.M Platt-Higgins

Hon. Treasurer.

# MERE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## FINAL ACCOUNTS 2016

ACTIVITY	CREDIT	DEBIT	GAIN	LOSS
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	1225.00	328.20	896.80	
<i>2015 Figures</i>	<i>(945.00)</i>	<i>(188.76)</i>	<i>(756.24)</i>	
<b>TALKS</b>	23.90	307.50		283.60
<i>2015 Figures</i>	<i>(55.18)</i>	<i>(270.00)</i>		<i>(214.20)</i>
<b>NEWSLETTER</b>		426.20		426.20
<i>2015 Figures</i>		<i>(434.00)</i>		<i>(434.00)</i>
<b>DONATIONS</b>	16.50	30.00		13.50
<i>2015 Figures</i>	<i>(2.50)</i>	<i>75.00)</i>		<i>(72.50)</i>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		114.96		114.96
<i>2015 Figures</i>		<i>(68.59)</i>		<i>(68.59)</i>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1265.40</b>	<b>1206.86</b>	<b>58.54</b>	
<i>2015 Figures</i>	<i>(1002.68)</i>	<i>(1036.35)</i>		<i>(33.67)</i>
<b>VISITS</b>	2528.60	2479.60	49.00	
<i>2015 Figures</i>	<i>(2678.00)</i>	<i>(2399.00)</i>	<i>(279.00)</i>	
<b>ARCHIVE</b>		45.00		45.00
<i>2015 Figures</i>		<i>(2125.28)</i>		
<b>INTEREST</b>	7.48		7.48	
<i>2015 Figures</i>	<i>(7.67)</i>		<i>(7.67)</i>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3801.48</b>	<b>3731.46</b>	<b>70.02</b>	

<b>2015 Figures</b>	<b>(3688.35)</b>	<b>(5560.63)</b>		<b>(1872.28)</b>
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<b>BALANCES</b>	<b>AT 31.12.15</b>	<b>AT 31.12.16</b>
<b>PETTY CASH</b>	16.20	<b>21.20</b>
<b>CURRENT A/C</b>	257.65	<b>815.19</b>
<b>DEPOSIT A/C</b>	2403.67	<b>1911.15</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	2677.52	<b>2747.54</b>

Increase in Society assets **£ 70**  
(See Treasurer's report)

Signed:

P M Platt-Higgins

Hon. Treasurer

P Dethick

Checker

## **Verwood, Industry and Life Mrs Pam Reeks**

4<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Pam moved to Verwood with her parents in 1948 and married into a local family. Over the years she has seen many changes, not least the change of Verwood from a village to a small town, its population growing from 2,000 to more than 15,000 during the time she has lived there.

A geological map showed that Verwood has been built on a variety of sands and clays – notably Bagshott sand and London clay. These were important in providing the raw materials for both the pottery and brick industries of the town.

### **The Pottery.**

The clay for the pots was trodden with bare feet to ensure that all stones were extracted before work could commence. Children frequently were responsible for keeping the portable potter's wheel turning whilst the potter "threw" the pot. In fine weather this would be done outside. Pots were dried outside before being loaded in the kiln for firing, a process that took two days and nights; they were allowed to cool completely before being carefully unloaded and taken to the shop to be sold.

The pottery closed in 1952.

### **The manufacture of Bricks.**

Pam had brought samples of Verwood bricks made from different local clays. The main types were Somerley, Ebblake, and Manor. Somerley made a white brick, whilst Ebblake made chimney pots as well as bricks. When the Brick works was closed, the paint manufactures Farrow and Ball bought the site, and paint is still made on the site of the former brick works.

Verwood produced a very fine "sharp sand" which was much in demand in the making of castings. It was taken by train from

Verwood station to various destinations, including South Wales from where the trains returned loaded with much needed coal,

The manufacture of Besoms and Hay Rakes was another local industry using materials to hand in the New Forest. Birch was used for the besoms in summer and heather in winter. Hazel strands were used for both sorts of besom to secure the handles. As well as being used in the local Oakwood bacon factory to brush the pigs' skins, besoms were sold in many surrounding areas, including Warminster, Gillingham, and Portland.

As well as being delivered locally milk, there was a daily milk train which left Verwood station at precisely 6 am for London.

Pam's lively lecture gave us an insight into a community in the New Forest where a variety of skills using locally resourced materials were put to good use in creating a flourishing community that continues to thrive although many of the industrial activities have disappeared.

Our speaker concluded by drawing our attention to the Verwood Heritage Centre which is housed in the old Crossroads Pottery and is open to visitors.

## Mere Historical Society; Joint Meeting with the Mere Literary Festival

### “Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Charity Organisations in Mere” by Dr Michael Plaxton

Attended by some 35 members and guests, Dr Plaxton commenced by giving the background to the growth of Societies in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries as the very low wages of only around a shilling a day paid to Agricultural workers throughout the period. He also invited the audience to view the collection of relics from local Societies displayed on a table at the front of the room.



Commencing around 1775, Societies such as found in Bruton and Frome were endowed by the relatively well-off Woollen Industry to provide for the sick and disabled workers. By the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the number of Friendly Societies in England and Wales had grown to some 25,000 due to the lack of sick pay and low wages. People felt the need for the protection the Societies gave them. Society Rules dated 1896 exist for a society still in existence today.

The competition for members of the 3 or 4 societies in Mere was fierce.

Weekly meetings with refreshment were held and a feast on Maundy Sunday at the 'Angel' to encourage members to join. Societies were made up groups of people who contributed money to a fund for members in hard times.

The minimum number of members to be viable was around 100 and no one over the age of 40 was allowed to join, with retirement at 63. When ill, members were paid 5 shillings a week for the first 3 months and 3 shillings thereafter.

The 'Mere Friendly Society' rules also gave £3 towards funeral expenses and widows and orphans received 6p from each member. Ill members were examined by the Societies Doctor or the local pharmacist, who also examined them prior to membership and no one with VD or a disablement was allowed to join. Rules for weekly meetings also imposed 6p fines for non-attendance at Church on Sunday and drinking or betting or fighting at meetings. A curfew of 8pm was also imposed during the week with similar fines.

On feast days, members dressed in their 'Sunday best' and paraded around the town or village with 5ft staves with brass nobs; 'stove pipe' hats were worn with decorated ribbons for each society. Members were allowed 2p each for drinks at the feast and brass bands featured; cock & hen' dancing and wrestling waere also popular. Stewards controlled the events and

imposed fines for unruly behaviour to be put in the 'box', to be added to Society funds.

The 'Angel Club' with 200 members closed in 1864 due mainly to Victorian principles, while in 1874 the 'Mere Temperance Society' was formed under the auspices of Mr Rutter of Dewes House, who was also responsible for the present day 'Lecture Hall' in Mere. Other societies still exist such as the 'Order of Buffalows'.



In the 1850's the Mere Society joined in with the 'Wiltshire County Club', which was an large society formed out of all the local societies with a large membership essential for its success. Working men's clubs also featured at this time. Due to the reduction of agricultural workers from around 10 for a typical 300 acre farm in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was down to nearly 2 in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the mechanisation of farm machinery. Charitable societies thus ceased by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

What has survived are the 'collectables' on show in the various County Museums around the west country. Each local society had its own rules and emblems, such as the staff points and other items on show. The 'Bell and Crown' in Zeals for instance had a society well into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, which issued embossed tokens to be exchanged for beer.

The Chairman invited questions which resulted in several local anecdotes and then gave a vote of thanks for a very informative and interesting talk.

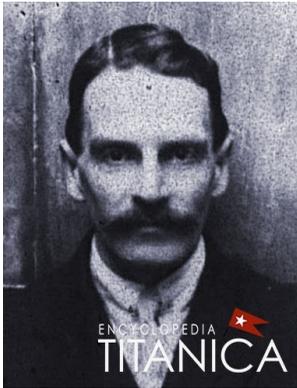
Tony Grinyer

## Mere Historical Society Evening Lecture

Tuesday 1 November 2016

### 'The Mysterious Life of Walter Henry Nichols'

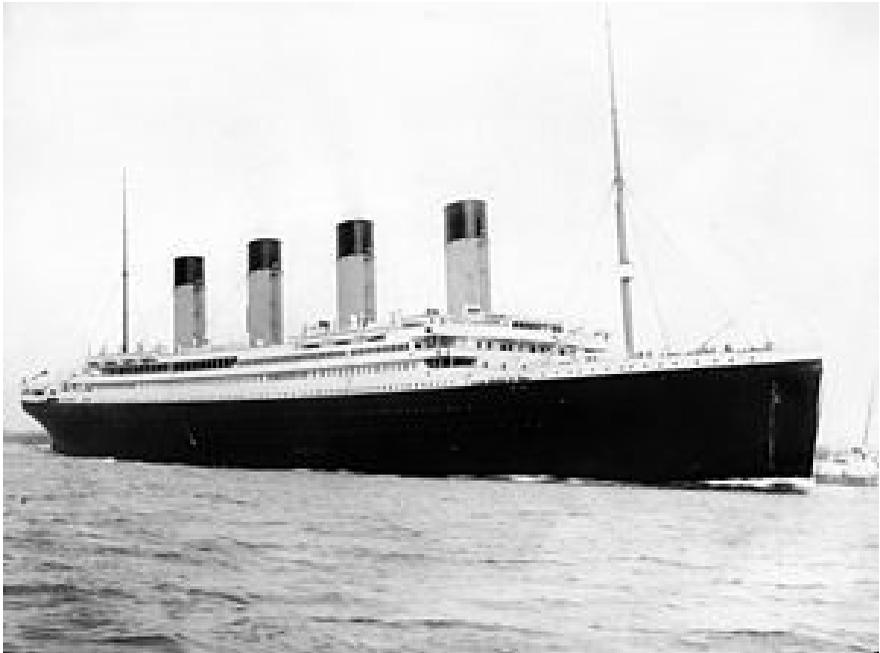
By Howard Nichols



In his talk, Howard Nichols took us on a fascinating account of the life of one Walter Henry Nichols, who we were eventually to discover was the speaker's own grandfather. Walter seems to have had an eventful but charmed existence, surviving amongst other things a collision with an armour-plated Royal Navy vessel (HMS Gladiator), the infamous sinking of the Titanic and torpedo attacks on two Canadian ships (SS Royal Edward and SS Principello). Despite Howard's diligent research, parts of Walter's life are still shrouded in mystery with the suggestion that he may even have worked for the government as a spy.

Walter's working life began at the age of just 7 when, living in a London workhouse, he was employed as a warehouse boy. Eager to leave the workhouse, Walter followed his brother to sea as cabin boy. He fell in love with life at sea and in 1894 began work as a steward for P & O, qualifying as a lifeboatman on the way.

In 1912, Walter was offered the chance to sail on RMS Titanic as second class steward. This was perhaps the most significant and emotive episode of his life as evidenced by his eye-witness account of the moment the Titanic struck the iceberg and went down. Walter was responsible for lifeboat 15 and the lives of 80 ladies who were placed in it. Tragically he had to force himself to ignore the plight of others around him who were desperately trying to survive in the freezing sea.



In 1961 this dramatic experience was to be sought after by the Rank Organisation for their film of the disaster, *A Night to Remember*, starring Kenneth More. For Walter this culminated in a moving reunion with other survivors.

By a cruel twist of fate, following the Titanic disaster, Walter found himself stranded in New York without papers and without his vital Conduct Book. Unable to get work on a British ship, he was taken on in 1914 by the Canadian troop carrier, SS *Royal Edward* and then the SS *Principello*. Mystery surrounds what exactly Walter did between 1915 and 1918 but he survived the First World War and attacks by torpedo at sea. Records show that he sailed to Australia on SS *Panama*, a hospital ship, and on SS *Czar*, a Russian troop-carrying ship, apparently involved in helping the Russian Czar's family to escape to the UK. Never officially a serviceman, he was, however, awarded 2 service medals. Why was this? As steward serving senior officers on board various ships, was he involved in relaying information to which he was privy to the government? Was he a government spy? Our speaker is still hoping to learn more about this.

What is known from the records is that in the 1920s-30s Walter went to work on government-run mail ships, including SS *Llanstephan Castle*, RMSP *Avon*, SS *Orbita*, SS *Orduna* and SS *Alcantara* which sailed to South America. In 1933 Walter retired to become the postmaster of West Moors, near Wimborne. But then in 1939, intriguingly, the government asked him to serve at the torpedo works at Holton Heath, Poole and then the Red Barracks in Weymouth before he finally retired to Swanage in 1944.

Walter died suddenly in 1961 at the age of 86, leaving a legacy of his love of the sea to his grandson, our speaker, who despite

his father's disapproval, eventually went to sea himself, becoming a training officer for the RNLI. Even now he is still 'bobbing about on the ocean' working on cruise ships.

THE BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE. NEW YORK.

# GRAPHIC STORIES OF TITANIC'S SINKING

STEWARD WALTER H. NICHOLS.

Steward Walter H. Nichols of the Titanic Details for The Eagle the Scenes Following the Collision and the Launching of the Lifeboats.

By WALTER H. NICHOLS, Steward on the Titanic.

"I've been a sailor for twenty years and I've crossed about 300 times, but this April 14, with fine weather, something slipped was ship shape. We got to Chertsey at about six that night and took a lot of people there, though not quite so many as we took on at Southampton, besides stowage and all. We only stopped for a little at Queenstown, leaving there between 2 and 2:30 on Thursday forenoon. Our first day's run was 480 miles. This was coming from the time I left Queenstown until 12 o'clock on Friday. From Friday noon to Saturday we also ran 541 miles, and the next day 480, she wasn't trying for a record because she was a new ship, and this was my first trip.

**Extreme Cold Told of Icebergs.**  
"All day Monday it was very cold, although the weather was fine. There was all around us. There were serious loads that day, in the first and second decks. I was busy until six o'clock and then I went to bed at about 10 o'clock on my 3rd bed. I looked around for a pile of boxes before I turned in. I let go on deck. On a big boat like a man working inside. Don't get on at the water for days at a time, like the working in a big hotel. But now that it was slightly cold outside I know what the reason was, good enough to know that when she sailed she was at the water's edge.

First Officer Mardock was in charge. He saw to the guidance of the vessel in the night that handled the boat. The order was to take women only, and the officers kept saying, 'We can only take women. No men allowed to get in.'

**Saw Colonel Aker's Wife Goodby.**  
"But as she seemed particularly anxious to get in. The officer kept on talking to the women, sort of urging them. 'Come, now,' he'd say. 'Get in or you'll have to leave you behind. The boat's going to leave and we can't wait for you.' Several women stopped back as they saw the boat and refused to leave their men folk, while they saw that they would have to go alone. The women stopped us to the rail against which we were holding the boat, looked into it and then stepped back as though she didn't like it. I saw Colonel Aker's wife with her baby. I know him because he had been a pilot but to me in the water. I don't know any of the crew.

**Women Had to Be Coaxed into the Lifeboats.**  
"All the time we were there the officers kept talking just like, urging women to get in. He didn't say anything about danger. I guess he didn't want to have any talk, and so he just talked, quiet like, and kept on of looking them about, looking them to hurry or they'd be left, and things like that. But they all seemed to think that the ship was a lifeboat, so to be in that a lifeboat. Many of the



Survivor of Titanic's Crew Who Told His Story to The Eagle.

It

was a fascinating tale evidenced with documents and photographs. But perhaps the most interesting aspect was the first-hand account of Walter's survival of the sinking of the Titanic. For those wishing to know more, exhibits from Walter's life experience can be seen at SeaCity Museum in Southampton.

Diane Ellis

## **Mere Historical Society Morning Talk**

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

### **FRANCIS FAUGOIN – STEWARD TO HENRY HOARE II AT STOURHEAD: WHO WAS HE?**

**By Julia Mottershaw**

Julia became interested in Francis Faugoin when she noticed the inscription on his large and imposing tomb in the churchyard at Stourton. It said "In memory of Francis Faugoin, Steward to the late Henry Hoare Esq . . . with whom he lived for forty eight years". She wondered who he was and what a French name was doing on a grave in a little Wiltshire churchyard in 1788? She decided to find out and, with others, embarked on a voyage of discovery which has so far taken more than three years with still more to be discovered.

Julia's intriguing talk led us along the path of meticulous research that revealed the personal story of a man who was intimately involved with the development of the estate at Stourhead in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Francis Faugoin was from a family of Huguenot refugees. His father, John Faugoin, worked as a gardener for the second Duke of Montagu at Ditton Park from 1718 to 1742. Julia found many references to John Faugoin in the Montagu archives at the Northamptonshire Record Office. Ditton Park was important as it had ready access across the Thames to the Court at Windsor and the Duke embarked on a wholesale re-design of the garden where he planted thousands of trees. Like his father, Duke John patronised many fine Huguenot craftsmen. Thus Francis grew up on the Ditton estate, helping his father, meeting French

craftsmen and seeing the garden take shape. He was, therefore, well qualified eventually to work for Henry Hoare II at Stourhead. The question was how did he get from Ditton to Stourhead?

On his certificate of marriage to Mary Swetman, Francis is described as 'Batchelor of Grateley'. Grateley is the village next to Quarley in Hampshire where the Hoare family had a house. It seems that Francis was employed as a gardener at Grateley, which was owned by William Benson, uncle of Henry Hoare II, as well as at Quarley, where the Hoare family lived from time to time whilst the house at Stourhead was being built. Francis's wife, Mary, was also employed by the Hoare family as a housekeeper in London. Possibly Francis and Mary met each other at Quarley when the family came to stay. They married in London at the church of St. Mary Magdalene on Old Fish Street on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1739.

There are many references to Francis and Mary in the Hoare ledgers, but after their marriage their names simply disappear. Where did they go? Julia's co-researcher, Jean Nimmo, realised that two of their children were baptised at West Coulston, Wiltshire, whereas their third, and last child, was baptised at Stourton. This meant that Francis and Mary must have lived at West Coulston.

After further investigation, they concluded that Francis and Mary went to work for the Godolphins who lived in Coulston House, now known as Baynton House, while Henry Hoare II and his wife were abroad on their Grand Tour. It has yet to be established why they went to work there or what Francis did. Francis' name does not re-appear in the ledgers at Stourhead until 1747, almost eight years after their marriage.

After following a complicated and, at times, frustrating trail, Julia and Jean finally established Francis at Stourhead in 1747 when there is the first recorded payment to him for £20. From this date on there are many references to Francis in the ledgers. Henry Hoare II paid him an enormous amount of money to oversee the work carried out to create Henry's vision – the Pleasure Grounds at Stourhead.

Francis organised the labourers, paid their wages and kept meticulous accounts. He oversaw all the temples and the dam being built before the valley bottom was flooded to create the lake. Between 1747 and 1755 Francis received a total of £5,714 and between 1755 and 1763 a total of £4,562 – just under £1million in today's money.

He was hard-working, trustworthy and educated, not to mention fluent in French. He may even have taught Henry French as it is known that Henry spoke good French. Francis and Mary knew the Hoare family well and even briefly looked after their youngest child, Ann, after her mother died.

Julia and Jean's research has continued to Francis and Mary's three children. The eldest, Henry, worked for the Honourable East India Company, but sadly died in passage to Calcutta. Felix married a local girl, Alicia Ford, in Mere church and stayed in the area his whole life, becoming a churchwarden at Stourton. John became a lawyer. There is a plaque to the whole family in the church at Stourton.

The hitherto untold story of Francis Faugoin is a fascinating account of just one of the people who worked on the creation of what is now a world-famous garden. We know much about the

famous figures in history, but less about ordinary people, people like us. Julia raises the question of which of us will be remembered in three hundred years' time? As a result of her research, at least Francis Faucoin and his contribution to Stourhead will be remembered. Julia's talk was inspiring testimony to her curiosity and desire to make sense of a historical jigsaw puzzle.

*Julia Mottershaw and Diane Ellis*

# Programme of 2017 Summer Visits

VISIT ONE: Monday 15 May 2017

## ss Great Britain

Brunel's ss Great Britain is one of the most important historic ships in the world. When she was launched in 1843 she was called 'the greatest experiment since the Creation'. By combining size, power and innovative technology, Brunel created a ship that changed history. His vision for the ss Great Britain made her the great-great-grandmother for all modern ships.

Following last year's talk on ss Great Britain, this is a good time for the Society to revisit such an important piece of history. Our visit will include a guided tour of the ship, where the sights, sounds and even smells, recreate life aboard. You will also be able to head beneath the glass sea to view the hull, and walk the ss Great Britain's history in the Dockyard Museum. There is a café bar next to the site, other food outlets and picnic tables close by.

**We will leave Salisbury Street Car Park at 9.15am and return by around 6pm.**

Cost: MHS Members £23, non-members £26 per person.

*Includes coach and tip, entrance and guided tour.*

***For more details please ring Caroline Cook 01747 861797***

**Please use the booking form provided (or print from**

**<http://www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk>)**

**DEADLINE 6 MAY**

***No receipts will be given but you will be contacted should any problems arise.***

**Refunds given only if visit does not run.**

**VISIT TWO: Wednesday 14 June 2017**

## **Tyntesfield**

This will be the Society's third visit to Tyntesfield, one of the most important Victorian houses in the National Trust's collection. The house was not built as a bold and extravagant statement of wealth, power or politics, but to serve as a family home. Once hidden and inaccessible, the ordinary and extraordinary lives and possessions of four generations of the Gibbs family are ready for discovery, many more of which have been sorted since our last visit. The 'Passions and Possessions' exhibition reveals the life and times of Antony Gibbs, Tyntesfield's Victorian owner, through over 100 fascinating objects.

The garden and estate balance faded beauty and function with an abundance of nature. Flower filled terraces, an empty lake, woodland, champion trees and productive kitchen garden give further opportunities for exploration.

**We will leave Salisbury Street Car Park at 9.30am and return by around 6.30pm**

Cost: MHS Members £12, non-members £15 per person.  
*Includes coach and tip.*

***Entry to Tyntesfield for non-National Trust members is £12.60 (group rate). Please add this to your payment if applicable.***

***For more details please ring Caroline Cook 01747 861797***

**Please use the booking form provided (or print from <http://www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk>).**

***DEADLINE 31 MAY***

***No receipts will be given but you will be contacted should any problems arise.***

**Refunds given only if visit does not run**

## VISIT THREE: Thursday 13 July 2017

### **Swindon: Museum of the Great Western Railway**

The museum is situated in the heart of what was once one of the largest railway engineering complexes in the world. Swindon Railway Works opened in January 1843 as a repair and maintenance facility for the new Great Western Railway. By 1900 the works had expanded dramatically and employed over 12,000 people. At its peak in the 1930s, the works covered over 300 acres and was capable of producing three locomotives a week

The works finally closed in 1986 and the site was bought by Tarmac Properties offering the opportunity to redevelop a large part of Swindon that was largely unknown to its population, having been surrounded by high walls for most of its history. The area now is home to the museum and provides an unusual historic setting for a large designer outlet with plenty of places to eat.

**We will leave Salisbury Street Car Park at 9.30am and return by 6.30pm.**

Cost: MHS Members £22, non-members £25 per person.

*Includes coach and tip, museum entry and highlights tour*

***For more details please ring Caroline Cook 01747 861797***

**Please use the booking form provided (or print from**

**<http://www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk>)**

**DEADLINE 27 JUNE**

***No receipts will be given but you will be contacted should any problems arise.***

**Refunds given only if visit does not run**

## VISIT FOUR: Tuesday 5 September 2017

### Devizes: Wadworth Brewery and Wiltshire Museum

After climbing several short staircases, we will be guided through the traditional Victorian Tower Brewery, following the gravitational process down through each of the four floors. The next stop will be the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Copper House to see how technology has developed over time. We will also visit the on-site Sign Studio to see Wadworth's unique hand-painted pub signs; this is where they still paint all of their 250 signs in the traditional way. Afterwards we will visit the stables, home to the working Shire Horses, then end with a sampling session.

After time for lunch in Devizes, we will visit the Wiltshire Museum which houses 500,000 years of Wiltshire's story through award-winning displays. These include spectacular treasures dating to the time of Stonehenge and worn by people who worshipped inside the stone circle. After the highlights tour there will be free time.

***NB*** *The stairs at Wadworth should be manageable for most members, but if you would prefer to cut out most of the stairs, contact Caroline.*

**We will leave Salisbury Street Car Park at 9.30 am and return around 6.30pm.**

Cost: MHS Members £26 Non-members £29

*Includes coach and tip, tour of Wadworth, entrance to museum with highlights tour*

***For more details please ring Caroline Cook 01747 861797***

***Please use the booking form provided (or print from***

***<http://www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk>***)

**DEADLINE 25 AUGUST**

***No receipts will be given but you will be contacted should any problems arise.***

**Refunds given only if visit does not run.**

*Booking form (Refunds given only if visit does not run)*

**VISIT ONE: Monday 15 May 2017 ss Great Britain**

Name(s).....

Address.....

...

.....Telephone Number.....

Sum enclosed £..... **(Check: have you paid your MHS membership fee of £10 for 2017/18?)** Please send your cheque (payable to Mere Historical Society) with the booking form to:

**Caroline Cook, 20 Lovage Way, Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6RU**

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*Booking form (Refunds given only if visit does not run)*

**VISIT TWO: Wednesday 14 June 2017 Tyntesfield**

Name(s)

.....

Address.....

...

.....Telephone Number.....

Sum enclosed £..... **Non-NT members add £12.60. (Check: have you paid your MHS membership fee of £10 for 2017/18?)**

Please send your cheque (payable to Mere Historical Society) with the booking form to:

**Caroline Cook, 20 Lovage Way, Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6RU**

*Booking form (Refunds given only if visit does not run)*

**VISIT THREE: Thursday 13 July 2017 Swindon**

Name(s)

.....

Address.....

...

.....Telephone Number.....

Sum enclosed £..... **(Check: have you paid your MHS membership fee of £10 for 2017/18?)** Please send your cheque (payable to Mere Historical Society) with the booking form to:

**Caroline Cook, 20 Lovage Way, Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6RU**

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*Booking form (Refunds given only if visit does not run)*

**VISIT FOUR: Tuesday 5 September 2017 Devizes**

Name(s)

.....

Address.....

...

.....Telephone Number.....

Sum enclosed £..... **Check: have you paid your MHS membership fee of £10 for 2017/18?)** Please send your cheque (payable to Mere Historical Society) with the booking form to:

**Caroline Cook, 20 Lovage Way, Mere, Wiltshire BA12 6RU**

## Committee Members 2017

Chairman	Peter Lewis	840116	<a href="mailto:pexhill@btinternet.com">pexhill@btinternet.com</a>
Treasurer	Peter Platt-Higgins	860809	<a href="mailto:p.platthiggins@btinternet.co.uk">p.platthiggins@btinternet.co.uk</a>
Secretary	Diane Ellis	861541	<a href="mailto:dianesellis@yahoo.co.uk">dianesellis@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Membership	Gerry Cook	861797	<a href="mailto:sixpenny1946@gmail.com">sixpenny1946@gmail.com</a>
Visits	Caroline Cook	861797	<a href="mailto:sixpenny1946@gmail.com">sixpenny1946@gmail.com</a>
Archivist	Jenny Wilding	860908	<a href="mailto:jenny@flaxmill.org.uk">jenny@flaxmill.org.uk</a>
Member	Julia Mottershaw	861912	<a href="mailto:juliamottershaw@hotmail.co.uk">juliamottershaw@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Co-opted	Peter Landymore	228819	<a href="mailto:plandymore@outlook.com">plandymore@outlook.com</a>

Nominations for committee etc and notices for AOB for the AGM must be submitted to a member of committee by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017.