

Mere Historical Society



UNLOCKING HISTORY

Autumn Newsletter

September 2015

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www.merehistoricalsociety.org.uk

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EDITORIAL

My apologies for late delivery of this Newsletter due to circumstances out of my control and failure of my desk top computer. My new laptop with Windows 10 is working well, but taking time to get used to. Enough said.

I trust the format of the Newsletters and Notices continues to meet with your approval, so far there have only been encouraging comments, so I will continue to strive to improve until you let me know to the contrary.

I would like to bring to your attention in particular the Talk by Jenny Wilding on the 17th November on the 'Archives'. This has brought to fruition many years of dedicated and hard work by her and her helpers.

Also we have introduced a mild festive feeling to the December Evening Lecture by offering 'mulled wine and mince pies' for you all to enjoy. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

The updated Programme of Activities takes us up to 3rd May 2016, which is in line with our new policy of avoiding Evening Talks in the dark winter evenings in January and February. This was universally agreed, but do let us know if you still think this is a good idea at the AGM in April.

Sue Birch, our new Lecture programme organiser, has produced what I think will be an excellent series for 2016-17, so please do let us know what you think when you've had a chance to digest it, also at the AGM in April.

By the way, we still need someone to take on the Morning Talks, volunteers please!

Tony Grinyer
awyethg@me.com

Mere Historical Society

Chairman's Remarks Autumn 2015

It seems a long time since the Society met for a meeting, whether an informal Morning Talk or a formal Evening Lecture, so I am very glad to welcome you 'back' for our Autumn programme. I hope it will prove to be a stimulating and exciting programme with something of interest to everyone.

I know that members of the Committee work hard to keep up the high standards of the Society and I am grateful for all that they do on your behalf. If you have any ideas for subjects for our Evening Lectures or indeed know of any individual you have heard give a Lecture, do let us know so that we may consider incorporating it in our future programme. On the other hand, if you feel able to give an informal talk on a subject that you have an interest in or knowledge of, then do let us know and we can discuss using it as a Morning Talk. The success of these Talks is entirely a result of members' own interests and experiences which they are willing to share with other members. It is quite a revelation how wide ranging our members' interests are and how knowledgeable many of you are!!

As always Caroline has organised a stimulating and varied programme of Summer outings which have been enjoyed by all who have taken part in them. Reports of the outings appear in this Newsletter. Congratulations and thanks to Caroline and Gerry, who has given her so much help in the demanding task of organising the Outing Programme.

Please do your best to encourage friends and neighbours to come and take part in our programme. We do try to advertise our activities as widely as possible, but experience shows that the best publicity is by personal recommendation and encouragement.

Peter Lewis, September 2015

Mere Historical Society

Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 3rd March 2015 in the Grove Building

Present: Committee Members: Christine Allberry, Caroline Cook, Gerald Cook, Diane Ellis, Tony Grinyer, Peter Lewis (PL) (Chairman), Jenny Wilding; plus approximately 45 members

1 Apologies: Peter Platt-Higgins; Sue Birch;

2 Minutes of the AGM of 4th March 2014 had been circulated in the AGM NewsReview 2015 booklet. These were approved by those present and signed by the Chairman. Proposer June Jury; Seconder David Longbourne;

3 Matters Arising: It was pointed out for future reference that the spelling of Peter Knapp's name was incorrect in the 2014 Minutes with the omission of the letter 'K'.

4 Reports to the AGM:

4.1 Chairman's Report:

- The Chairman, Peter Lewis, referred the meeting to the Chairman's Report circulated in the AGM NewsReview 2015 booklet. He publicly acknowledged the hard work of all members of the Committee and thanked them.
- He expressed the view that the speakers this year have been excellent and said that he was disappointed by the low attendances at some of the talks.
- He congratulated the organisers of the Morning Talks, Evening Lectures and Visits. He particularly thanked Chris Allberry and Tony Grinyer who are both stepping down from their respective roles organising the programme of Evening Lectures and Morning Talks.

4.2 Financial Report:

The Treasurer's Report had been circulated in the AGM NewsReview 2015 booklet. Acceptance of the Report was proposed by Madeleine Morris, seconded by Ros Castro and approved by the meeting.

4.3 Archivist's Report: The Chairman referred to the Report which had been circulated in the AGM NewsReview 2015 booklet. He thanked Jenny Wilding for her hard work on the Archive on behalf of Mere Historical Society and the Museum. He appealed for help needed with the ongoing work on the Archive.

5 Constitution and Rules: The Chairman stated that the Constitution and Rules had been unchanged for some time and that these had been amended to reflect the practical realities of the functioning of the Society. He asked the meeting to consider the proposed amended version printed and circulated in the AGM NewsReview 2015 booklet for formal ratification at the 2016 AGM. In the meantime, comments and suggestions may be made to any member of the Committee.

6 Election of Committee: No new nominations had been received. The Chairman introduced the current Committee Members to the meeting as listed in the AGM NewsReview 2015 booklet and asked for them to be re-elected. This was agreed. Proposer Steve Hoffman; Seconder Rose Cox.

7 Open Forum:

The Vice-Chairman, Tony Grinyer, explained that this part of the meeting was for members to raise any points for discussion.

7.1 Appeal for Committee Members: Tony appealed for volunteers to contact the Committee Members if they would like to help and said that the Committee was looking for new members to co-opt. He re-stated that the Society needed someone to organise the Morning Talks as he is giving up this role with effect from 2016.

7.2 Notice of Increased Subscription: On behalf of the Committee Tony gave notice of the proposal to increase the subscription from £7.50 to £10.00 with effect in 2016. He said that the subscription had not increased for some years and that the Society would like to be able to pay more for speakers to help raise its profile, as well as support the funding of the Archive work.

7.3 Publicity: Suggestions from the floor were offered to help publicise the Society's activities. These included promoting the events in local villages; using the free events listing in publications such as the Blackmore Vale Magazine and Valley News; using local radio including Radio Wiltshire and The Breeze in Shaftesbury; appointing a Publicity Officer to manage this.

7.4 Archive Working Party: Jenny Wilding explained that the aim was for the Archive and Catalogue to be accessible online. She is keen to use it to create new areas of knowledge, perhaps producing papers and talks on local history. To this end she proposes to establish a small working party for the Archive and requested volunteers to join her.

7.5 Talks and Visits: These are organised for 2015 and 2016. Booking forms for visits are in the AGM NewsReview 2015 booklet. A proposal for a visit to Bletchley Park in 2016 was met with interest with the possibility of a new member, Peter Landymore, helping to arrange a tour.

7.6 Next Morning Talk: reminder for 17 March 2015

7.7 New Society Leaflet: A leaflet promoting the Society and listing the activities has been placed in the Library in Mere and is available for display elsewhere.

7.8 Suggestions Book: A book for members to write comments and suggestions will now be available to use at meetings.

8 AOB: None

Signed: Peter Lewis, Chairman

Mere Historical Society Morning Talk

Tuesday 17th March 2015

"Fossils Rocks and Dinosaurs"

by Gerry Cook

Fossils are common, particularly shells, and until the end of the 18th Century were considered simply a part of God's Creation. In 1769 the invention of the steam engine led to coal becoming increasingly important. When William Smith, a young surveyor, began work in the Somerset coalfield, he noticed consistent patterns in the layers of rock and in the position of fossils. Subsequently in 1815, Smith produced his famous geological map of England, the first ever of an entire country.

At the same time, the Napoleonic Wars prevented European travel and fossil collecting became popular as an alternative. For a few, such as Etheldred Benett (born in the Pyt House near Tisbury and later from Heytesbury), this became a serious study. The science of geology had begun.



Lyme Regis was already known as a source of marine fossils, especially large ammonites. A carpenter, Richard Anning, helped by his children Joseph and Mary, supplemented his income by collecting and selling his finds. Mary became a celebrity, discovering several specimens, including 'Ichthyosaurs' (Dolphin

like reptiles) and the remarkable shaped Plesiosaurs.

A photograph taken by William Fox Talbot, the pioneer photographer from Lacock Abbey, is thought to show Mary Anning, shortly before her death in 1847, with Wm Buckland.



William Buckland, a young student from Axminster, befriended Mary Anning and also became interested. After studying at Oxford, he became the first professor of Geology at Oxford in 1814. He examined a collection of ancient bones exhibited at the Ashmolean Museum and reconstructed them as the giant reptile *Megalosaurus*, mentioned in Dickens' *Bleak House*. A GP from Lewes in Sussex, Gideon Mantel, discovered fossilised bones at a quarry in the Sussex weald. A single tooth, apparently from a large herbivor, reminded him of an iguana. The remains became known as 'Iguanodon', another ancient reptile.

From the 1930's a new generation of fossil scientists emerged, led by Richard Owen, a controversially ambitious figure. From a poor background he came to completely dominate the field. It was Owen who realised that most of the large land animal fossils discovered until then had certain anatomical similarities and coined the term „Dinosaurs“ for this subclass of reptiles. He also helped to organise the Great Exhibition of 1851 and to construct the life-size model dinosaurs which still stand at Sydenham in London. He was also responsible for the building of the Natural History Museum in London.

Charles Darwin had returned from his pioneering voyage on the 'Beagle' in 1836, unsure of his idea on why species gradually changed and its social consequences. He worked at home for over

20 years, refining his ideas and confiding only to close friends, until forced to publish by the emergence of similar conclusions by Alfred Russel Wallace. His theory of natural selection is fundamental to our current understanding of fossil history.

Fossils are often millions of years old, typically buried in silt under extreme pressure and eventually turning to rock. Animal life was originally confined to the sea, awaiting plants to develop on land as a food source. With the resulting increase in oxygen, some animal species became large, particularly reptiles, but the periodic occurrence of huge natural disasters resulted in mass whole-species extinction. The largest was 250 million years ago, killing off most life.

Life did eventually re-emerge, with the dinosaurs dominating. They formed three main groups; the giant herbivorous sauropods (like Apatosaurus), the smaller but still large armoured ornithomimids (Triceratops) again herbivorous, and the carnivorous theropods, which varied greatly in size from the giant Tyrannosaurus to the 8 ft tall ornithomimids.



Another extinction, 65 million years ago, destroyed many species, including almost all of these 'dinosaurs'. Only one survived, probably similar to 'ornithomimids', to become the ancestors of the birds. New fossil finds are still being made around the world, filling in gaps in the record, but it is record-breaking dinosaurs that form the headlines. A sauropod dinosaur found in Argentina in 2014 was calculated to be 130 ft long and to weigh as much as 14 elephants.

Finally a quote from Darwin's autobiography, in which he claims his work to have been greatly overpraised and states his desire to avoid controversy, reveals much about his character!

Mere Historical Society
Joint visit with the Mere Theatre Club

**The Theatre Royal, Bath and the American Museum
at Claverton Down. May 14th 2015**

It was a wet day, but with her usual foresight and efficiency, Caroline had organised an outing that was almost entirely indoors with only a few yards dash from the coach to the front door of the places we were visiting!

The Theatre Royal is one the oldest theatres in Britain and we began in the best seats in the house with a masterful lecture from Jane Tapley who gave a concise history of Bath which set the theatre in its historical context. There was a Roman theatre that could seat 2-3000 people, but the Romans abandoned the city, and, because it became buried under river silt, the Roman buildings were preserved.



Bath was a small market town selling wool, until the 17th Century when it exploded in size and importance because of the new fashion of “taking the waters”. Queen Anne set the fashion and in a very short time the population grew from 2,000 in 1700 to 35,000 by the 18th Century.

Bath became very fashionable, its social life was highly organised and it became a sort of marriage market! During the day people took the waters, strolled, gossiped, but in the evenings they went to the theatre,

to be seen as much as to see the theatricals! The first theatre was opened in 1715 but proved too small – it is now the Masonic Hall. When the present Theatre Royal was opened in October 1805, it was the largest theatre in England.

By the mid 19th century Bath was in decline, the seaside became the fashion, and inland spars lost their appeal and by the middle of the 20th century the Theatre Royal was in a sorry state, kept going by pantomime. No money was put into the theatre until a Mr Fry bought it, and anxious to save it set, up a charitable trust. As a result of much effort the whole theatre was restored in the 1970's. Currently the Theatre is open all year and is usually 75% full: with tourists only making up about 10% of the audience.

A high proportion of new plays have a short run before going to the West End. The Ustinov Theatre seats 160 and stages less well known or more experimental plays. This theatre is too small to be self funding and is subsidised by the main theatre. After the lecture we were conducted in a tour of the backstage area of the main Theatre and the Ustinov, but did not have time to view the Egg Theatre.

After a break for lunch we departed for the American Museum at on Claverton Down. The main collection is housed in the beautiful Claverton Manor and is divided into areas displaying aspects of American history. The first gave an outline of significant dates with an illustrated narrative their importance:

1492 Columbus discovered America

1776 Independence was ceded by Britain

1803 The land area was virtually doubled by the Louisiana
Purchase from France.

1819 Florida and the southern states were bought from Spain

1845 Texas became the 48th state

1890 marked the end of the push west and the “frontier”.

In 1492 it was estimated that there were 7 million Native Americans; a century later this had been dramatically reduced due to the ruthlessness

of European fortune seekers and the diseases that they introduced. The American Civil War began as a conflict of economic principles. It was the fear of the US breaking up as an economic unit, rather than the issue of slavery, that initially pushed the Union into war against the Confederate States. The nature of the war, however, changed with Lincoln's publication of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 that confirmed his determination to abolish slavery.

Several areas displayed home interiors of varying wealth and date, starting from 1690. Whilst wealthier persons imported furniture from



Europe, many used native woods to make copies of furniture produced in Europe. It really was done well and I found it quite fascinating.

The pride and joy of the Museum was the fine display of quilts, usually made to mark life changing events such as marriage or death.

The folk art museum had a fascinating display of primitive portraits and landscapes, large carvings and weather vanes.

The shop was a typical New England store from Main Street, with wooden floor boards, a wood burner and wooden shelves to display items for sale which been shipped to Claverton from the US.

Claverton Manor was completed in 1820, built by Jeffrey Wyatt (1766-1840). It is set in fine grounds covering 130 acres with superb views and magnificent trees. The formal garden included a copy of Mount Vernon Garden in Virginia US.

"Come on a journey through the history of America" proclaimed a leaflet. We certainly did that!

Peter Lewis

VISIT TO BEAULIEU PALACE HOUSE, ABBEY AND NATIONAL MOTOR MUSEUM

16th JUNE 2015

We were met outside **The Palace House** by Sara, 'a Victorian parlour maid' and our guide.

This charming house was formerly the 13th century Great Gatehouse of Beaulieu Abbey. It has been in Lord Montagu's family since 1538, when Sir Thomas Wriothesley, later the 1st Earl of Southampton, bought the seven and half thousand acre estate from Henry VIII for £1340.6s.8d following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The current Lord Montagu inherited the title on his father's death in 1929. He was two and a half years old. The Estate was managed by a board of trustees until his 25th birthday in 1951.

Our tour began in **The Entrance Hall**. This was used as a billiard room during the 19th century but now contains pictures and



objects relating to the four generations of the owners of Beaulieu. When The House was first opened to the public in 1952 Lord Montagu had 5 vintage cars

placed in The Hall (they knocked down part of a wall to get them in) as a tribute to his father, John, a motoring pioneer, and from these simple beginnings, the **National Motor Museum** has grown.

The Lower Drawing Room was the Entrance Hall of The Palace House until the alterations in 1870. It has also been used as a dining room and gentleman's smoking room where topics deemed unsuitable for feminine ears could be discussed in private!

The Dining Hall was formerly the Inner Hall of the monastic gatehouse. It went through to a courtyard now seen behind glass doors. When The House was converted into a dwelling this became the family dining room. The huge table in the centre of the room is made of a single elm tree and is 16ft long and 3" thick. The Dining Hall is still used by the Montagu family on special occasions.

The Portrait Room was once the library. It now shows portraits of the Montagu family, including Thomas Wriothesley, Henry 3rd Earl of Southampton (Shakespeare's patron) and John, 2nd Duke of Montague who tried to build a free port (now called Buckler's Hard) for the import and export of sugar from The West Indies.

The Upper Drawing Room and adjoining **Ante Room** are 'withdrawing rooms' for the ladies of The House. In recent years they have been used for musical performances and other special gatherings. The Ante Room was where the entire household gathered for morning prayers. The walls are now adorned with portraits of the current Montagu family.

A quick look at **The Kitchen** which has been reduced in size to accommodate The Gift Shop; worth noting was the portrait of Charles II in the corridor to the kitchen. The rest of the day was our own so after a quick lunch we had a chance to explore some of the other attractions on The Estate.

The National Motor Museum was opened in 1972. It is a charitable trust. It tells the story of motoring in Britain from the 1890s to the present day. Many of the exhibits are in working order and are driven in rallies such as The London to Brighton Car Run. John, Lord Montagu's father, is generally acknowledged to have introduced



The Royal Family to motoring when he took The Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) for a drive in his Daimler. In 1903, as MP for The New Forest, he promoted a Bill which made car number plates compulsory and raised the speed limit from 12 to 20mph! It is believed that John's secretary, Eleanor Thornton, was the model for the mascot – the famous Spirit of Ecstasy figure – that has been fitted to Rolls Royce cars ever since. I was particularly keen to see the On Screen Cars – Mr Bean's Mini, Del Boys' Reliant Van, Harry Potter's Flying Car and Wallace and Gromit's Van !

The Palace House was built on the site of **Beaulieu Abbey**. The Abbey was founded in 1204 on land gifted by King John to a group of Cistercian monks. It took over 100 years to complete. **The Abbey Church** was once the largest Cistercian building in England with an overall length of 336 feet and a width of 186 feet. Little remains now apart from one wall and the pillar bases. The proportions can only be appreciated by the outlines in rubble on the grass covered space where the church once stood.



The Gardens of Palace House (particularly in the glorious sunshine) are a joy. The Victorian Garden with its Purple Beech, Tulip Tree and fragrant Rose Garden is a delight. The Kitchen Garden with its recently restored Vine House produces fruit and vegetables for the family. The reed beds in The Mill Pond are once again being used to repair the thatch on local cottages. There is so much more to see at Beaulieu – The Secret Army and Beaulieu Abbey exhibitions, a ride on the Monorail and a walk to Buckler’s Hard where Lord Nelson’s favourite warship HMS Agamemnon was built and maybe a peaceful river cruise – but we ran out of time. Certainly enough for a return visit.

Our thanks to Caroline for arranging such a fascinating day out.

Chris Hughes

Visit to Breamore House & Country Museum

16th July 2015

Once the coach had dropped us off in the courtyard of the Country Museum most of our party headed towards the old Saxon Church of St Mary, pending the opening of the Tea Room at Mid-day.

The original church was built by Ethelred the Unready in about 980 and is considered to be the most important complete Anglo Saxon building in the South of England.

There was much of interest to admire in the Church, from the medieval font, to the wall paintings, to the various Hatchments depicting the Coats-of-Arms of the Hulse family, to the Saxon arch and the stained glass windows.

Outside is an ancient yew tree thought to be much older than the Church itself. However it was little disappointing to see how overgrown and untidy the Hulse Family vault had become.

Breamore House is a fine elegant Elizabethan building, completed in 1583 for the Dodington family. It is built in the shape of the letter 'E' for symmetry, which was an important



consideration at the time. In 1748 the House and Estate was sold to Sir Edward Hulse and his descendents still own the property today.

For the guided tour of the house, our party was split into 2 groups, one of which had the privilege of being shown around by Michael Hulse, the present owner of the House.

As one might expect all the rooms contain a large variety of paintings, many of them portraits of family and friends. The painting of 'The Coming of the Storm' hanging in the Great Hall being particularly interesting.

There were magnificent stone fireplaces – 2 in the Great Hall alone - and tapestries dating from around 1630. On the wall of the main landing is a very rare and intricate carpet from the time of James 1st. This carpet was much too valuable to have been walked upon, but may at some time been used as a table covering.

All the rooms are light and airy, although some of the walls in the bedrooms had been adapted to preserve the symmetrical appearance from the outside.

The Country Museum has much of interest for everyone. The full size replicas of local village shops gave a fascinating insight to life in a self-contained village in the early 20th century. I feel sure a lot of people will have recognised and used many of the articles displayed in the Grocers shop. The displays also include a Blacksmith, Wheelwright, Schoolroom, Garage, Dairy, Saddlers shop and a cobbler's workshop.

Other buildings exhibiting agricultural machinery displayed a wide variety of tractors, threshing machines, steam engines, farm wagons and all their associated tools. As someone who had an urban upbringing, I could only guess at the purpose of some of the more obscure exhibits.

I thought the outing to the Breamore Estate was extremely interesting and in keeping with the aims of a Historical Society. By the time we returned to Mere it had been a long and tiring day, but one full of interest and fascination.

Peter Dethick

Visit to Waddesdon Manor House

9th September 2015

The final visit of the summer of '15 departed early from Mere at 0845, with some 20 members and friends, for the long trip north via the A34 for a pit stop on the Oxford by-pass. Onto the A41 between Bicester and Aylesbury, to arrive at the most splendid Victorian Manor House of Waddesdon in beautiful parkland at 11.15 am in time for a quick coffee before our timed entry to house at 12.30 pm.

Bequeathed to the National Trust by Baron de Rothschild in 1957, to display the extraordinary art collection and to preserve it for the nation, today can be discovered the finest 18th century French decorative arts alongside magnificent English portraits and Dutch Old Masters.



We started in the Red Drawing room, most impressive with four large portraits by Gainsborough; onto the Grey Room with larger than life paintings by Reynolds; the West Wing gallery with the most superb writing desks for guests of the Rothschild family to read newspapers and write letters; then the Baron's room with many paintings of Society Hostesses, plus an enormous roll-top desk by Lenoire.

Through to the West Hall and several large paintings by Francesco Guardi, including his magnificent 'Rialto Bridge from the North' circa 1768, on loan from a private collection. Into the Morning Room with the 'Pink Boy' by Gainsborough amongst

others and a Reynolds over the marble fireplace, as well as an enormous black lacquered desk with two clocks by Rene Dubois and Jean Goyer circa 1770.

Up the very grand circular west staircase to the West Wing and an enormous painting of the lawn at Goodwood circa 1886, with Edward Prince of Wales in evidence plus his host the 6th Duke of Richmond & Gordon in the company of many members of the extended Rothschild family.

Through to the various Sevres rooms with amazing displays of porcelain and china in floor to ceiling glass cabinets. Finally to the tower Bakst Room with fairy tale paintings by Bakst with all the figures modelled by the members of the Rothschild family.



Back down to the 1st floor and the White Drawing Room and the quite magnificent 'King's Silver' services ordered by George 111 for his Hanover Palace.

On again to the Bachelors' Wing,, originally built before the main house, which houses the fantastic collection of weaponry and artefacts. The ablutions in the bathrooms are particularly noteworthy.

Special Exhibitions in the House were Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild's 'Renaissance Museum' of treasures from the Smoking Room at Waddesdon, exploring it's original furnishings; the installation by contemporary artist Jane Wildgoose inspired by his writings

about collecting, his grief for the loss of his wife Evelina and the wider cult of mourning in the 19th century; Waddesdon at War from the archives tracing the stories from 1915 and 1916 of members of the Rothschild family and staff who fought; Waterloo 200 Anniversary, exploring the role of the family in the campaign and some of the myths that grew up around their involvement.

And so to lunch in the very fine Manor Restaurant and then joined by others in a visit to the Wine Cellars. These were built of vaulted brickwork with amazing wine racks in the French mode full of musty old bottles of wine from the Rothschild vineyards all over the world. These atmospheric rooms store a historical collection of more than 15,000 bottles of the finest wine from the last 150 years and are used for wine tastings.

In 1853 Nathaniel de Rothschild, third son of the founder of the English branch of the family, purchased Chateau Brane-Mouton in the Haut-Medoc and renamed it Chateau Mouton Rothschild. In 1973 it was promoted as a 'premier cru'.



Baron James of Paris succeeded in purchasing the adjoining Chateau Laffite in 1868; at the Court of Louis XV, Laffite was known as 'The King's Wine' and one of the 'big four' Bordeaux wines. More recently the

Rothschilds have acquired other vineyards such as Chateau Clarke and expanded to the Americas, South Africa and other European locations.



A walk round the grounds followed, to view the Parterre with its fine sculpture and fountains, the Aviary and the North Avenue with modern 'red' sculpture depicting a six-in-hand stagecoach and the pair of giant candlesticks by Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos. Each candlestick is 7 metres tall and made of over a 1000 glass wine magnums supplied by Chateau Laffite Rothschild.

Finally, a visit to the NT Shop and purchase of Rothschild wines, a cup of coffee and the long walk back up the North Avenue to join Andrews coach for the return to Mere; departing at 4.30 pm and arriving back on time at 7 pm, after a very comfortable and smooth and fascinating day out.

Once again well done Caroline.

Tony Grinyer

Mere Historical Society
Programme of Activities 2015-16
Evening Lectures & Morning Talks
In the Grove Building (Main Hall) on Tuesdays
2015

1. 6th October : Evening Lecture at 7.30 pm
“HISTORY OF THEME AND VARIATIONS IN MUSIC”
By JILL JENKINS
 2. 13th October : *Morning Talk* at 10.15 am for coffee
“SHEEP TO SHIP TO NORTH SEA OIL RIGS”
By ROSE COX
 3. 3rd November : Evening Lecture at 7.30 pm
“THE LAST COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE”
By ROS LIDDINGTON
 4. 17th November : *Morning Talk* at 10.15 for coffee
“THE SOCIETY’S ARCHIVE ; OPEN FOR BUSINESS”
By JENNY WILDING
 5. 1st December : Evening Lecture at 7.0 pm for
Mulled Wine and Mince Pies followed by
“THE BRIGADE OF GURKHAS 1815 – 1015”
By JOHNNY FENN
- 2016**

6. 12th January : *Morning Talk* at 10.15 am for coffee
“ANCIENT JORDAN AND PETRA ; A PERSONAL
VIEW” by TONY GRINYER
7. 2nd February : *Morning Talk* at 10.15 am for coffee
“A FRESH LOOK AT THE SILK INDUSTRY IN
MERE” by JULIA MOTTERSHAW
8. 16th February : *Morning Talk* at 10.15 am for
coffee “MEMIOR OF AN ESCAPE FROM BRUSSELS
IN 1914” by Rev MARGARET
LAURIE
9. 1st March : Evening Lecture at 7.30 pm
“SS GREAT BRITAIN – FROM LAUNCH TO RE-
LAUNCH” by IAN CASKIE
10. 15th March : *Morning Talk* at 10.15 am for coffee
“CONSERVATION – THE AGENTS OF DECAY”
by HANNAH SEVERN
11. 5th April : Evening Lecture at 7.30 pm
“CONSTABLE – HIS VISITS TO GILLINGHAM”
By SAM WOODCOCK
12. 3rd May : Evening Lecture at 7.30 pm
“MATA HARI – EYE OF THE DAY ; THE STORY
OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND CLEVER DOUBLE
AGENT”
By KATHY McNALLY

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2015-16

| | | |
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Nominations or AOB for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) must be submitted in writing to the Secretary or Chairman at least two weeks before the date of the next AGM.