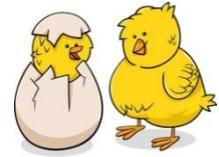




Alresford Historical & Literary Society



NEWSLETTER 1st April 2021

Dear Fellow Member of Alresford Historical and Literary Society - future news - read all about it!

OUR NEXT MEETING: THE AGM PLUS!

Our next Zoom meeting is on Wednesday 21st April, 7:30pm. This AGM will be the first since 2019 (2020 was cancelled by Covid). Please join us. The AGM is an important opportunity for you to steer the Society in a positive way. It should not take long. Here is the link which will open at 7:15

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85412060689?pwd=TXZuV2Rib2hhRFZTRFBPYkZ4clYzdz09>

You will be aware that the constitution provides for the AGM to be chaired by our society's President – a position vacant since the death of Colin Metcalfe. The committee unanimously voted to ask Peter Pooley to step up from Vice-President to President, and we are delighted that he has accepted the post. We hope that he will have many years as guardian of our constitution.

AND THEN FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT- ART ATTACK!

**“James Gillray’s Most famous Victims - 18th Century Satirical Cartoons”
a talk presented by our own Hist & Lit member, Graham Lumb**



The Cow Pock or the Wonderful Effects of the New Inoculation
(AstraZeneca beware!)



The Voluptuary
(remind you of anyone?)

A REVIEW OF OUR LAST MEETING

At our March Zoom meeting we had 52 computers interconnected. Many of our members are couples so this represented another fine turnout of about 70 members! Brian Tippet reports:

'WILLIAM RUFUS - I'VE GOT SOMETHING IN MY EYE' (a Zoom presentation) 17th March 2021 by Andy Skinner of Southampton City Council Cultural Services

In August 1100 William II, the son of William the Conqueror, was killed with an arrow while hunting in the New Forest. Was this a tragic accident? Or was the king murdered as part of his brother's plot to seize the throne? Hunting accidents were not unusual but circumstantial evidence aroused suspicions and these have lingered ever since, making the event one of the great English historical mysteries. In the background was simmering hostility between William, his brothers and the Church. And what happened immediately after William's death looked odd. William Tirel, an eye witness, immediately fled the country, never to return, while with unseemly haste the king's brother Henry rushed to Westminster to be crowned king. It was left to a charcoal burner to cart the king's corpse to Winchester. Meanwhile the other obvious contender for the throne, brother Robert, was far away on Crusade, and when he did return the new king imprisoned him for 28 years. Lucidly and with an engaging touch of humour Andy Skinner described the events, explained the historical background and set out the theories that still persist, the most far-fetched of which is that William died in a pagan ritual, a notion that may be fed by the fact that a forest pond still occasionally turns blood-red. [BT]



FUTURE TALKS

19th May 2021, 7.30: A ZOOM TALK

“The Green Men of Winchester”, presented by **Roy Weller**

Mysteries hiding above you
in the Cathedral!



16th June 2021, 7.30: A ZOOM TALK

Well known Russian expert, author and broadcaster

Stephen Dalziel presents “The Portland Spy Ring”. *This was broken 60 years ago this year, was the most damaging case of espionage for British naval interests. It involved two clerks at the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment at Portland; an undercover KGB agent; and two fanatical American communists. And unwittingly Lawrence Oxley’s antiquarian bookshop and the public toilets near Alresford Station played an important part!*



A CONTRIBUTION TO THIS NEWSLETTER FROM BRIAN TIPPETT

A GLIMPSE OF ALRESFORD'S PAST

During the second World War units of the American army were billeted in Hampshire towns and villages to prepare for D-Day. Sixty years later Thomas L Cobb recalled arriving in Alresford on 23rd November 1943.

"The 1st Battalion headquarters Co. of about 175 officers and enlisted men arrived in the village of Alresford by train shortly after dark. It was a short walk to our living quarters in several buildings along West Street and Broad street. The office quarters was on Broad Street. The Ammo and Pioneer platoon of about 25 enlisted men, of which I was a member, had comfortable quarters in rooms over the Pharmacy corner of West and Broad Street. We became acquainted with the village folk when we met on the street, going and coming from the Co[mpany] Mess Hall [in the Dean] or talking with them at night in the Pubs. We left Alresford in early June 1944 by truck convoy."

A new, full-length history of Alresford describes wartime life in the town including the American presence and a visit by Churchill and Eisenhower. *Alresford through Time: A New History* edited by Brian Tippett will go on sale later this year.

WEB CONTENT WORTH EXPLORING

The following link allows you to download a formidable mine of local information. [The Land of the English Kin: Studies in Wessex and Anglo-Saxon England in Honour of Professor Barbara Yorke](#)

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS (keep them brief!)

- Barbara Fitzgerald recommends Peter Finn's "Headbourne Worthy - A History" from the Worthys Local History Group for £10. <https://www.worthyhistory.org/publications>. Beautifully produced it superbly chronicles the importance of Headbourne Worthy to both Church and State.
- John Miller recommends Barack Obama's "A Promised Land" as well-written and full of sharp insights into US politics and fellow-politicians. Equally sharp is self-analysis, "I've never been a big believer in destiny..... accidents and happenstance determine more than we care to admit."
- Me? I recommend a 1909 free e-book "Rivers and Streams of England". See Chapter III about local chalk streams: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46742/46742-h/46742-h.htm> - plus ça change!

Happy Easter. See all you Zoomers at 7.30 pm Weds 21st April.

Best wishes
Mike (Michael H Dickens)

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