



## Alresford Historical & Literary Society

### NEWSLETTER - 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024

#### News and Announcements

**Annual Dinner:** we have emailed you details about the Society's Annual Dinner on Fri 25<sup>th</sup> October. To remind you now: please register, pay £35 pp preferably by bank transfer in advance and make your menu choices all by 16<sup>th</sup> October. For more information please contact our Membership Secretary Charles Ackroyd [cackroyd@gmail.com](mailto:cackroyd@gmail.com)

**Professor Adrian Smith** (who gave us an excellent talk in May on Mountbatten) will be giving a lecture on *Wellington and two world wars* at Turner Simms on 29<sup>th</sup> October. *Ctrl-click* [Smith](#)

**Julia McLeod** who manages the team of volunteers at Jane Austen's House in Chawton is looking to recruit House Stewards. If you are interested please contact her at [Julia.McLeod@janeaustens.house](mailto:Julia.McLeod@janeaustens.house)

**Publications Archive:** We want to remind everyone that we have an extraordinarily rich resource of publications accessible via our website. *Ctrl-click* <https://alresfordhistandlit.co.uk/#Publication> and scroll down below our published books. You will find over 100 *Alresford Displayed* contributions from 1976 to 1997 followed by online copies of the printed series *Alresford Articles* including the most recent (no. 7) all now available online. Together this archive makes available to everyone nearly 50 years of Hist & Lit publications. If you love Alresford do dive in and explore! [MD]

#### Next meeting: 7:30pm Wed 16<sup>th</sup> October in the Methodist Hall

a talk by Jude Hayland on: *Writing out of the recent past – how, why and when to set a novel with reference to social, political and cultural contexts.*

Jude Hayland (*Ctrl-click* [Hayland](#)) introduces herself:  
*I began my writing career as a commercial short story writer for women's magazines and wrote for both the UK and international markets for over 25 years before turning to full length fiction. I now write novels and tutor creative writing classes and lead workshops.*

*My first degree was in English Literature, leading to a career alongside writing of teaching English and Drama. My Master's degree in Creative and Critical Writing (Distinction) led me to switch to full length fiction and I have now written four novels and am currently researching for and working on my fifth. I also write some flash fiction.* [Jude Hayland]



## Comments on our 18<sup>th</sup> Sept talk by John Holden: *Ralph Dutton of Hinton Ampner*

Our speaker, John Holden's love for Hinton Ampner led to his wanting to know more about Ralph Dutton, the man and his house. John was aware of many anecdotes but there seemed to be no coherent understanding of the man, so he decided to do some research and write a biography. Digging deeply into archives and inspecting scattered objects left at the house, Dutton's unique character became better understood.

When Dutton inherited a Victorian "pile" near Alresford in 1935 his respect for the Georgian period (1714 -1830) led him to rebuild the house with decoration and contents strictly representative of Jane Austen's period.

But soon war came and, while Dutton served at the Foreign Office, the house was requisitioned for use as a Girls School. Our audience was delighted to hear one of our members reminiscing about her time as a pupil there. In 1960 the house was gutted by fire, but promptly restored by Dutton to its former Georgian splendor. Another delightful contribution from the audience was a first-hand witness of the fire who spoke with a twinkle in his eye about the fire hydrants that had been tastefully hidden in the shrubbery!

Until his death in 1985 Dutton entertained the great and the good luxuriously at the house and was widely noted as a man of impeccable taste. John's talk revealed Dutton as an unusual character. Some adjectives come to mind to characterize this wealthy unmarried man: highly cultured, private and reserved, perhaps a little effete. But to those who knew him approachable, generous and kind.

It was an excellent talk. We know and love Hinton Ampner, but now feel we also know the man! For this talk we had a record attendance of 95 which proved close to exceeding the capacity of the Methodist Hall. [MD]

Best wishes from Mike Dickens, Hon Secretary [secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk](mailto:secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk)

