



Alresford Historical & Literary Society

Newsletter 1st April 2025

Next meeting Wed 16th April 7.30pm Methodist Church Hall, a brief AGM followed by: *The Gift of a Paranoid Queen* a talk by Richard V Frankland

In England the history of the Royal Mail goes back as far as the sixteenth century; from there it evolved and grew almost in direct correlation with education and cost of service. The development of distribution and identification of recipient changed dramatically from the person's name and vague location descriptions to the modern exactitude of the person's name, house number and postcode.



During the nineteenth century the service dramatically changed leading to the introduction of Sub-Post Offices and eventually the post box. When in the early twentieth century the Post Office took on the customer contact point for many government departments from pensions and allowances to vehicle licensing it reached the zenith of its service to the nation. Its subsequent decline, hastened by technology and politics, compared to its ponderous rise has been dramatic.

Though on the surface the history of Royal Mail and the Post Office appear to many to be dull there was throughout intrigue and scandal. [RVF]

Comments on March 19th talk *The Battle of Cheriton* by Neil McLocklin

The English Civil Wars (1642–1652) were a series of armed conflicts between Parliamentarians ("Roundheads") and Royalists ("Cavaliers") who had opposite views on how England should be governed. Neil's talk gave us a whirlwind overview of all the wars. He explained how The Battle of Cheriton (1644), decisively won by the Roundheads, was an important step towards the formation of "The Commonwealth", a republic, with Oliver Cromwell appointed as Lord Protector in 1653.

Neil's knowledge and enthusiasm for the period led to his writing a series of books (two published and a third partially written) in which he attempts to bring history to life by telling stories about the actions of some key players. Some examples were Lady Mary Bankes' fortitude during the siege of her Corfe Castle, the death of Colonel Henry Sandys of Mottisfont at the Battle of Cheriton, and the imprisonment of King Charles on the Isle of Wight.



Our audience of around 100, which nearly exceeded the maximum capacity of the hall were treated to an absorbing fact-filled talk. [MD]

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