

★ **Tuesday 4th April 2017** "The Toll Houses of Devon" by Tim Jenkinson

Toll houses were mostly built in the 19th century turnpike era of road management and are found throughout Devon. Tim has co-written three books on tollhouses, two of which cover Devon. His talk will take us on a tour of toll houses and milestones, with plenty of local examples of each.

★ **Tuesday 2nd May 2017.** A visit to the Devon Rural Archive and Shilstone House and grounds, Modbury, 12 noon

The Devon Rural Archive was launched in 2006 and is situated in the grounds of the Shilstone estate. The archive is dedicated to promoting a greater understanding of Devon's domestic rural architecture and associated landscapes. The focus is on the building and landscape of the county but the historian, genealogist and archeologist can all further their research there. It is hoped the work of the DRA will encourage the preservation of sites which are lost either to age or development without true recognition.

We will start with a 30 minute introduction to the Archive. We can then browse the display gallery and library collection to discover what the Archive has on Dawlish and district, followed by a light lunch.

After lunch we will have a guided tour of the restored Georgian country house, and a guided walk around the historic gardens, exploring the development of the site from prehistory to the present day through the surviving archaeology.

This will be a full day's outing to a unique local resource. The cost of £20 per person includes a light lunch and a cream tea. Car sharing will be arranged.

★ **Tuesday 6th June 2017** "Bringing 1939 to life" by David Gearing.

This will be a free-wheeling historical exploration of the subjects of articles and advertisements found in a copy of the Exeter Express and Echo from May 1939, just before WW2. The talk is fully illustrated with images of the newspaper items and the people, events and products linked to them, including some films and movie stars of the time. There will be plenty of opportunities to prompt memories of the 1930s, '40s and '50s.

David was a self-employed management consultant until retiring 10 years ago, since when he has worked harder than ever. He completed a Masters in Film Studies at Exeter University in 2009. He is currently Chair of the DLHG committee.

★ **Tuesday 4th July 2017** A visit to Newton Abbot Museum (2.00pm), and a Guided Town History Walk.

The museum is divided into small rooms that cover different aspects of the town's history, including 18th century inventor and diver John Lethbridge, and Sandford Orleigh, built in the 1830s by George Templer, grandson of James Templer. The GWR room is dedicated to the railway history of the town, with a working signal box, an original section of Brunel's atmospheric railway, and a model of the atmospheric system.

The Museum is situated in St Pauls Road, a short walk from Newton Abbot station and the large Osborne Street car park.

After visiting the Museum we will have a guided historical walk in the town, ensuring that we fit in some tea time refreshment somewhere en route.

★ **Tuesday 1st August 2017** "An Exeter Man in Algiers and Mecca : The Amazing Adventures and Achievements of Joseph Pitts, (1662-1739)" by Paul Auchterlonie

Joseph Pitts was born in Exeter. When only 15 he was captured by Barbary pirates. He was sold as a slave, forced to convert to Islam, and became the first Englishman to visit Mecca. He saw active service with the Algerian army and navy and was only able to escape via a walk across the Alps back to England at age 30. In 1704 Pitts published an account of his adventures, a unique story of an Englishman's experience of life within an Islamic society.

Paul Auchterlonie worked as an academic librarian specialising in Middle Eastern and Islamic studies for 40 years, and is currently an Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter.

★ **Tuesday 5th September 2017** A visit to the Devon And Exeter Institution 2.00pm

Situated in historic premises in the Cathedral Close, Exeter, the Library dates from 1813 and is a subscription library of 30,000 volumes, together with thousands of maps, pictures and other ephemera which has been collected over the years.

We will start with a historical talk touching on the early collecting policies, taking us through some troubled times, to the current more rosy picture. There will then be an opportunity to browse through the collections, with a cream tea to conclude the afternoon.

★ **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 Additional event:** Visit to Dawlish Museum, meet at 2-30 pm at the Museum. Tea and Biscuits.

★ **Tuesday 3rd October 2017** "The Three Hares: A Curiosity Worth Regarding" By Dr Sue Andrew.

In sixteen churches in Devon can be found a striking medieval carving of three hares running in a circle sharing three ears between them, which form the sides of a triangle at the centre of the design. Intriguingly this same motif is also found in sixth-century Buddhist cave temples on the edge of the Gobi desert in China. Sue's talk will explore the origins, transmission, and survival of this enigmatic motif, as it crossed cultures and was adopted and adapted in the worlds of Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

Dr Andrew has studied anthropology, art history, and architectural conservation. Her doctoral thesis focused on the medieval oak carvings of men and beasts, including the Green Man and the Three Hares. She is co-author of a 2016 book with the same title as this talk.

★ **Tuesday 7th November 2017** "The Country Houses Of Devon" by Hugh Meller.

Traditionally a country house might be defined as an impressive building supported by its own estate and owned by one family for several generations. Those that qualify, now or in the past, in Devon number in their hundreds, a subject too vast to cover in an hour, but it is possible to consider how they fare in the 21st century. Among approximately 400 survivors half remain in private hands, a few still owned by the families who built them although with reduced estates. The rest have been converted to other uses, some more successfully than others. However, with only a handful of exceptions and despite ominous predictions, the future for country houses appears far from bleak.

Hugh Meller began as a solicitor specialising in criminal law before retraining as an art historian. He worked for the Victorian Society as architectural advisor, and then for 26 years as the National Trust's curator in Devon responsible for the "presentation" of the houses open to visitors. He is the author of 'The Country Houses Of Devon' (2015).

★ **5th December 2017** A Quiz At Christmas by David Strawbridge.

A fun historical, slightly mysterious, quiz, even with a touch of Christmas. There will also be the traditional offerings of wine, juice and nibbles.

David is a member of DLHG and worked in the University of London before recently retiring to Dawlish.

★ **Tuesday 6th February 2018**"A Taster of Devonshire Customs, Festivals and Traditions" by Angie Weatherhead.

Angie has worked in Swindon, Devon and Torbay Libraries before going freelance in 2013. Whilst working in local libraries she became fascinated by many of the old Devonshire customs she came across, as well as the questions people asked on local history. As a result she developed this talk on an annual calendar of customs, festivals and traditions.

★ **Tuesday 6th March 2018**"Aspects of Dawlish Warren History" by David Gearing.

In 2015 David produced a DLHG booklet 'Dawlish Warren: Contrasts and Changes', that was well received. Talks on topics relating specifically to the Dawlish area have been very popular, so he has been persuaded to select some of the best bits and turn it into a presentation. It will also be an opportunity to bring up to date information on efforts to protect the Warren from storm damage and erosion, and to look at some other historic pictures not included in the book.