

March 2017

Dear Members,

Rob Wilson-North of Exmoor National Park came at short notice to give us an excellent talk on John Knight, the wealthy entrepreneur who bought a large piece of Exmoor in 1818 hoping to improve the agriculture and the lives of the residents. He built Simonsbath



House, now an hotel, the church and the inn, together with housing for the agricultural workers. Sadly the Exmoor weather defeated him, and his grand plan collapsed. Rob gave us a brilliant talk about this fascinating man.

The AGM was held in February. David, Alan & Jill presented their reports. Jill said that despite a fall in the membership, our finances were still in a good state. David agreed to remain as Chairman, Alan Secretary and Jill as

Treasurer. David said that Aubrey will be leaving Bridgwater later in the year, and it was proposed that Paul Sterlini and Chris Sidaway would take over his duties as Programme Secretary. After the business meeting we met Charlotte Westwood, who has recently taken over as Sedgemoor Council's Conservation Officer. She has responsibility for over one thousand listed buildings in the District, and she told us about her duties and some of the buildings. Her interest in the buildings and her buoyant spirit helps her to overcome the complexities of the planning regulations and the intransigence of some of the owners of the buildings. Her talk prompted a lot of discussion about the conservation of buildings and the preservation of Conservation Areas.

Charlotte is organising a Conservation Day in July which will bring together the various groups concerned with the local environment.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for the year were due on January 1st. If you have not yet paid, Jill Polak would like to receive your sub. as soon as possible

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

March 16th. 7.30 p.m. at the Blake Museum

'Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group: Three Years in Stogursey'.

Denny Robbins & John Rickard

The Group carried out an extensive survey of the many historic buildings in Stogursey. Their report was published three years ago, and is a tribute to the colossal amount of work they did. Two active members of the Group will tell us about it.

April 21st. 7.30 p.m. at the Blake Museum

'Archaeological Illustration'

Jayne Brayne

You will remember Jayne as the artist who modelled the striking heads for Julian Richards in 'Meet the Ancestors'. She will talk about her varied work.

May 11th. 7.30 p.m. at the Blake Museum (*not the usual third Thursday*)

'The Bridgwater Ceiling in the Burrell Museum, Glasgow'.

Miles Kerr-Peterson

Miles is a Bridgwater man who now works at the University of Glasgow. We have managed to catch him on one of his visits to Bridgwater to talk about this plaster ceiling removed from a house in Bridgwater and now on exhibition in the Burrell Museum.

June 15th. 7.30 p.m. at the Blake Museum

'The Excavation of the Beckery Chapel'.

Richard Brunning

Last summer Richard organised a dig at this site near Meare. He is now able to tell us about it.

July 20th. Annual Dinner at the Bower Inn, Bower Lane 6.30 for 7.30 p.m.

This is an attractive pub based on old farmhouse, and extensively renovated and added to since 2010 by the welcoming owners, Candy & Peter

September 17th. 9.00 a.m. at the Bridgwater Bus Station

Excursion to Wells by mini-bus

Although we visited the Cathedral recently, we felt that there are a lot of other interesting things to see, including the Bishop's Palace, the Vicar's Lodgings, the Museum and the Old Deanery.