

Local History Group 2

May 2013 – April 2014



Review of our First Year!

After our initial Get to Know You meeting in May 2013 we were encouraged by the enthusiasm of the new group members to plan a summer programme of local trips. As a result we have all enjoyed some delightful visits and talks and felt this review will remind us of our first years' events.

Who can forget our first trip out to the D Day map at **Southwick House** and learning about the sequence of events leading up to the invasion decision which was taken there?



In June the Navy obliged us with an impressive display whilst on our visit to **Gunwharf** where we had a grandstand view accompanied by figureheads looking remarkably like Elvis Presley and Brian May from Queen!

We were impressed by the arduous work involved in brick making at **Bursledon** where a good attempt to copy the skills was tried by one member of the group. She has the brick to prove it!



In August, attired appropriately, we revelled in the grandeur of **Goodwood House** and consumed those enormous scones in the ballroom.

September found us on our tour of **Chichester** learning much of its building history enlivened by anecdotes of a pub called The Slurping Toad and the local rivalry to kidnap a parrot! Despite being in pouring rain the walk was much fun with our very witty, knowledgeable guide Margaret.



Gilbert White's House at Selborne gave us an insight into the man's remarkable work in observing and recording his local wildlife. The Oates exhibition was a poignant reminder of the two explorers, particularly Lawrence Oates' supreme sacrifice in that howling Polar wind.

The gratitude of all those taking part has been much appreciated and (has) spurred us on to plan our winter programme of talks and events to which we have been pleased that members from Local History groups 1 and 3 joined us.

We began in November with **Geoff Hallett on Palmerston's Forts** where his overview of the fortifications and explanation of munitions of the time enabled us to understand fully the constructions surrounding Portsmouth in the 1860s.

The year ended with our **Festive Tea and a Mummers Play given by The Madding Crowd**. Everyone joined in with the singing and dancing before enjoying a wonderful spread and applying memories to the challenging quiz.

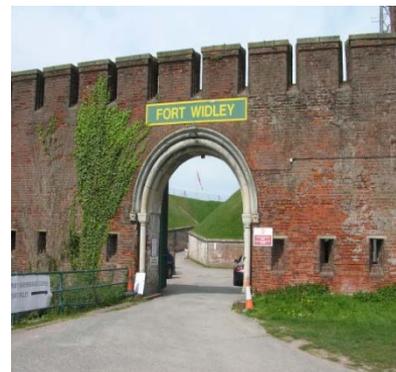


January 2014 began with a talk by **Anne Wellstead – A Social History of Portsdown Hill**. This was well attended and proved an informative account of fairs, race courses, chalk pits, post war housing and even a tea shop! (Digital projectors will not be discussed....)

February gave us a poignant session with Bob Askew and Anne Edwards performing songs collected from the poor in **Workhouses at Portsmouth and Catherington** during the 1800s and telling stories of the people who lived there at the time.

In March Linda Newell took the intriguing title of **Smuggling in Chichester and Langstone Harbours** and gave us an interesting account of dark misdeeds in the muddy creeks of Emsworth and around Hayling Island pursued by unlucky customs men.

Hopefully better weather and the start of our trips, we began in April with a visit to the **WW1 Remembrance Centre at Fort Widley**. This proved to be fascinating as we were guided through the trench system and exhibits, and we then listened to a detailed account by Charles Haskell on the Battle of the Somme. As one member put it “a bombardment of passion”. Refreshments were very welcome after that.



Tea, as you know, has been a vital part of all that we do. Here's to many more cups!

Mary Reed, Grace Willcox, Jane Hussey, Sue Newham and Libby Midgley

