



Alresford Historical & Literary Society

NEWSLETTER - 1st May 2024

Next meeting, 7:30pm Wed 15th May in The Methodist Church

The Society's News and Plans

In partnership with New Alresford Town Council, and funded by our Arthur Stowell charitable fund, your society has commissioned a "timeline" for Sun Hill Junior School's playground which was erected in April. This is a 20 metre long display of major world events. It aims to add historical context to topics raised by current history curricula – please see Glenn's report in the following pages.

At last month's AGM, presided over by our President Peter Pooley, the reports previously circulated were all "taken as read" and the current committee members (Glenn Gilbertson, Vic Prior, Charles Ackroyd, Mike Dickens, Nancy Webb, Andrea Sutton and Colin & Fiona Scott-Morton) were reappointed.

Lord Louis Mountbatten, a talk by Adrian Smith, Wed 15th May

Our speaker Adrian Smith is Emeritus Professor of Modern History at the University of Southampton, UK, and renowned author of many books on British History. His particular interest in Mountbatten led most recently to the publication of *Mountbatten Apprentice War Lord and Mountbatten, Cold War and Empire, 1945-79* the cover of which is shown here. Mountbatten was a controversial figure, and a highly influential one, for example on the early years of our current monarch King Charles. Adrian's talk aims to provide us with new insights into this pivotal figure in the history of twentieth-century Britain and her empire.



Some comments on our last talk by Patrick Crowley Rose, Crown & Castle - Hampshire & IoW's Citizen Soldiers.

Patrick's talk explained the crucial importance of part time soldiers: The Militia, Yeomanry and Volunteers. Although their roles have changed over the years they have always been essential to the defence of the country and to pursuing our military goals in troubled times, including two world wars. He highlighted how Hampshire has responded to the call to arms in the past, including the raising of its own Rifle Volunteer Corps in 1859 at the then Swan Inn assembly rooms and the Home Guard in 1940.

Our military has always faced the need to strike a difficult balance of resources, for example: regulars vs part timers, conscription or not, and boots-on-the-ground (always essential) vs expensive technology. This is particularly challenging now that the peace dividend following the fall of the Berlin Wall now seems no longer to be relied on following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A clear conclusion from Patrick's analysis was that the regular army always has, and always will, need the support of Britain's "Citizen Soldiers".

Well-illustrated and delivered, the 72 members present then enjoyed a lively question and answer session. [MD]

New Timeline Display for Sun Hill Junior School as reported by our Chairman, Glenn Gilbertson

Pupils returning to Sun Hill Junior School in Alresford after the Easter break found something new in their playground – a magnificent 20m timeline panel illustrating historical events and people from the stone age to the present day. All aspects of the curriculum are covered, with worldwide and national references plus the addition of local historical events.



The display has been paid for by the Arthur Stowell Fund, which is jointly administered by Alresford Historical & Literary Society and New Alresford Town Trust. Arthur Stowell was a history teacher who settled in Alresford in retirement and became the author of several books, from which he derived no income but used the profits to build his eponymous fund "dedicated to the encouragement of the study of history by local pupils." Since then, the fund has been similarly built up from the profits of AHLS publications and books authored by Brian Rothwell, Brian Tippett and Glenn Gilbertson.

On Friday 19th April teachers, members of the ALHS and NATT committees and a class of pupils with their teacher Marie Woods, who had been actively involved with the design, gathered for an opening ceremony. Arthur Stowell would have been delighted by the lively enthusiasm of the pupils, who were a great credit to themselves and the school.



Glenn Gilbertson, Chairman of AHLS, recalled history being taught in his schooldays as an Anglo-centric series of dates, in contrast to the modern, inclusive, themed approach, though the latter could lose a perspective of time. He then told the story of Arthur Stowell, and expressed the hope that the display would be helpful and a source of inspiration for years to come. Thanks were given by Head Teacher Sue Griffiths, who said:

“I would like to convey a huge thank you from the Staff and Pupils of Sun Hill Junior School for this wonderful timeline which has taken pride of place within our playground for our pupils and their families to enjoy.

We appreciate the support of The Alresford Historical & Literary Society and The Alresford Town Trust more than words can express. Your generous contribution and the foresight of Arthur Stowell to make provision and plan for the future education of the children in our community has left an academic resource which will support our pupils for years to come.

Thank you for believing in our school and helping us to make a difference.”



The above report was prepared by Glenn Gilbertson for publication in the Hampshire Chronicle

Best wishes from
Mike Dickens, Hon Secretary secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk