



Alresford Historical & Literary Society

NEWSLETTER
1st July 2022

THE SOCIETY'S PLANS AND NEWS

20th July, Chawton House. Final numbers for those who have decided to attend the tour have now been fixed. Any questions should be addressed to this event's leader, Fiona Scott-Morton (fcr25@btinternet.com, or 01962 732294), who will be confirming final arrangements in the week before the event. Please share driving to Chawton with other members if you can and make sure you leave room for the cream tea!

17th August, Alresford, a Guided Walk through the Town. As you will have noted from Brian

Tippett's editorial magnum opus, 'Alresford Through Time', our town is steeped in history. Much tangible evidence of this can be seen while walking through the town, from its shape to its architecture and its many curiosities. A guided walk can focus the mind in a lateral way; so that's what we'll do. Small groups will be guided along a loop through the town by our well-prepared volunteers. We are working on details to be divulged before the event.

Then: 21st September - At last! Back in the Methodist Church for a talk entitled 'Thomas Hardy's Novels: Art From Life' by Roger Lowman.



COMMENTS ON LAST MONTH'S TALK

'Remembering the Tolpuddle Martyrs', by Philip Martin

In 1834 a group of agricultural labourers from Tolpuddle, Dorset, banded together to resist cuts to their wages. This aroused a savagely punitive response from their all-powerful employers. Following the practice of friendly societies, the labourers had sworn a membership oath and, in a rigged trial, this allegedly subversive action was used as a pretext to convict six of them to seven years' immediate transportation to

Australia. The verdict was so harsh and disproportionate that it provoked huge demonstrations in London and won the support of leading newspapers and public figures such as William Cobbett, Robert Owen and Thomas Wakley MP. The men were eventually pardoned and after much delay



repatriated. They have ever since been remembered as the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Having told their story Philip Martin went on to describe a restoration project in Tolpuddle which shows that their radicalism had religious roots. In about 1810 members of the Lovelace family (the leaders of the group) with their own hands built a small Methodist chapel in the village, entirely independent of mainstream Wesleyan Methodism and clearly at odds with the established church. As in Alresford the first incursions of the nonconformists were greeted with hostility and the chapel was besieged by rioters and pelted with stones. In 1862 a new Methodist chapel was constructed and the old Lovelace chapel then became a store. Its historical value as an example of simple vernacular architecture has since been recognised and local enthusiasts have raised funds to restore the building. It will soon open to the community and visitors. [BT]

FINDING GOOD SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS

The Society has a fine track record of finding excellent Hist & Lit speakers. Equally important many have also been good presenters, able to capture the audience. But let's not leave it up to Glenn and the committee to find them. Amongst our 164 members there must be some ideas for suitable speakers who are known as successful presenters. Please send me your ideas and contacts if you have them. Glenn and the rest of the committee can follow them up and see where they lead.

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

Please send me, in brief, your book reviews (one paragraph and a link to further information) and, as suggested last month, any ancestral connections with Alresford you are prepared to share with us (one or two paragraphs with a picture).

Best wishes

Mike Dickens, Secretary