

Rossett Lectures Autumn 2017

Monday 18th September

Harrogate's Russian Connection

This lecture focuses on Harrogate's Russian connection including the involvement of the last Russian Empress Alexandra Feodorovna and the Czar's Cousin HH Marie Georgievna Romanova, Grand Duchess George of Russia.

Malcolm Neesam

Malcolm has published several books, including "*Exclusively Harrogate*", and for many years wrote a popular column in the local newspaper. The historical plaques throughout the town have mostly been written by him and in 1996 he was awarded the title, Freeman of the Borough of Harrogate, for his work as the town's historian. In 2014, his stage presentation about the Grand Duchess George of Russia and her humanitarian work for wounded soldiers during the Great War, was performed by Edward Fox and Joanna David, followed by a TV documentary. Malcolm also appeared in several TV documentaries including appearances with Michael Portillo, Emilia Fox and "Restoration man" George Clarke.

Monday 25th September

Fountains Abbey - 'Reformation & Dissolution'.

This lecture is the story of Fountains Abbey; highlighting the effects of the 16th Century English Reformation which ultimately led to its surrender and dissolution. Reference is made to the causes of Reformation and the events which led to the: resignation of its penultimate Abbot, William Thirsk; and his eventual execution at Tyburn

John Colston

John is a retired Anglican priest, living in Ripon. with a keen interest in English History. He is very interested in Shakespeare and is passionately involved in the local amateur theatre scene. He has performed in many Gilbert & Sullivan Comic Operas and he recently directed Othello for the Harrogate Dramatic Society. He is also the organist at his local church.

Monday 2nd October

A Palaeontologist's perspective on the History of Bees.

Much information on the Internet is misleading and as far as Geological History is concerned, problems exist at all levels; from definitions of basic terms, to hysterical predictions concerning our own species. This lecture returns to basics; exposing flotsam and conjecture, whilst establishing a clear bee evolutionary timeline covering the last 140 million years

Dr. W. John Varker

University of Leeds palaeontologist. Researched microfossils for the dating of rocks. Member of a geological Sub-Commission checking rock exposures in Mongolia/China, Ukraine, Nevada and Utah, plus European locations. Honorary member of the Yorks. Geol. Soc. and the Leeds Geological Association. Novice Beekeeper

Monday 9th October

Golden Acre Park - From Theme Park to Botanical Garden

This lecture focuses on one man's passion to create a major visitor attraction only to be met with unforeseen challenges leading ultimately to its demise. However, a forward thinking Local Authority rescued the site and developed it as a botanical treasure for the people of Leeds and beyond.

Martin Walker

Martin has worked in Horticulture for over 40 years, from apprentice Gardener at Golden Acre to lead designer of Leeds's Chelsea Show Gardens, achieving three Gold Medals at the Show along the way. He has given television presentations and appeared on 'Glorious Gardens from Above' with Christine Walkden. He presents the Kitchen Garden Theatre at the Harrogate Flower Shows.

Monday 16th October

Animals Behaving Badly.

It's not only humans that develop bad habits. Animals, particularly the brighter ones, often reveal some unlikely behaviour - sometimes learned from their human counterparts! Meet the drunken monkeys, phobic ostriches, psychotic magpies, hallucinating lemur

Dr Michael Leach

Dr Michael Leach is a full-time wildlife author and photographer. He has travelled to all 7 continents and worked with many of the world's most charismatic animals - polar bears in the Arctic, gorillas in central Africa, lemurs in Madagascar, sperm whales in the mid-Atlantic, monkeys in the Amazon, penguins in the Antarctic and elephants in Kenya.

Monday 30th October

George Bernard Shaw at the Opera

In his lecture Anthony Ogus discusses George Bernard Shaw's role as a knowledgeable and perceptive critic of music and of the late Victorian operatic scene, including extracts from his sometimes devastating, but invariably witty, opera reviews.

Professor Anthony Ogus

Anthony Ogus is a retired academic lawyer and an Emeritus Professor at the University of Manchester. He was awarded the CBE in 2002 and is an elected Fellow of the British Academy. In 2013, he published a book on opera-going and he now writes a monthly article in the Opera Now magazine."

Monday 6th November

Blind Jack and Eighteenth Century Knaresborough

Blind Jack of Knaresborough was an amazing character who lived and worked at the time of the early industrial revolution, the introduction of road building, the development of Harrogate as a Spa town and the Jacobite rebellion. For a blind person to achieve what he did, would be as outstanding today, as it was in the 18th century.

Brian Forshaw

Brian has been presenting talks and guided tours on the History of Knaresborough, its people and places, since 1994. His background is in education having worked in primary, secondary and special education. He has written two books: 'From Castle Yard to Stockwell Road - 200 years of the history of Knaresborough's St. John's School' and 'A History of Harrogate Rugby Club.'

Monday 13th November

Recent Developments in Astronomy and Cosmology

Astronomy is the study of objects within the universe and cosmology the study of the large-scale structure of the universe. The lecture discusses recent space missions exploring the planets Venus, Mars and Jupiter, as well as the Dawn mission to asteroids Vesta and Ceres, Cassini mission to Saturn, New Horizons to Pluto and the extraordinary Rosetta mission. Their importance in understanding the origin and history of our solar system and indeed our own planet, the Earth, will be stressed. Recently a whole new branch of astrophysics has begun with the discovery of 'gravitational waves' (Einstein's theory of general relativity has been confirmed after 100 years of searching) and the second part of the lecture will discuss the importance of how the waves can be used to 'observe' black holes colliding billions of light years away. Lastly a consideration of the most distant galaxies will perhaps tell us about the history of the entire universe.

No previous knowledge of astronomy or science is required

Fred Stevenson

Fred obtained a first-class degree in Physics with Astrophysics from the University of Leicester in 1980 followed by a PhD in Cosmology in 1986. For the past twenty years he has taught adult education classes in astronomy, physics and mathematics at a variety of venues throughout Yorkshire. He now works part time at the Kielder Observatory and as an A-level Maths and Physics tutor.

Monday 20th November

Artists' in their Habitats

A study of the studio as a place of work and inspiration from past to present. The lecture provides an insight into the artist's studio observing a range of practitioners, personalities, working methods and client relationships. The lecture discusses the impact of social and political developments, changes in fashion, critics, demands on portrait painters and much more and is delivered with a combination of facts, anecdotes and humour. The cast of artists will include: Rembrandt; Hogarth; Turner; Whistler; Degas; Sickert; Stanley Spencer; Bratby; Lowry; Bacon; Ken Howard.

Alec Purves

Alex Purves was born in Berwick Upon Tweed and studied Fine Art at King Edward VII School of Fine Art at Newcastle Upon Tyne (University of Durham). He then lectured in PGCE Art Education at Leeds College of Art and finally as Senior Lecturer in Art Education at Leeds Metropolitan University. He is a practising painter and has exhibited at a range of venues including: The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle; The University of Bradford; Leeds City Art Gallery etc. Alex tutors several local art groups and delivers a growing number of illustrated talks on a range of art related topics.

Monday 27th November

Life in the Palace Kitchens

The talk discusses the Colin's initial trial as a chef to ending up as The Royal Pastry Chef travelling from Buckingham Palace to Windsor Castle, Sandringham House, and Holyrood House in Edinburgh and, whilst on board the Royal Yacht Britannia, sailing from Cowes Week, Western Isles Cruise to Scotland, and onto Mexico and The Bahamas.

The talk covers the preparations for State visits, setting the banquet tables, and staff fancy dress parties, The Ghillies Ball at Balmoral Castle and receiving Christmas presents from Her Majesty The Queen

Christmas With The Royal Household

This is a glimpse into HM The Queen's Christmas: from the food the Royals love, to going to the chapel with The Queen, the gifts and, not forgetting the food the staff prepared for themselves!

Colin Alderson

Colin Alderson, Head Pastry Chef to the Royal Household, was working not only in the palaces but also on the Royal Yacht Britannia. After leaving Scarborough Technical College having qualified as a Chef, Colin obtained work locally in the Yorkshire Dales where his parents had a farm. After a short time in the Army Catering at Catterick, he worked at Bolton Castle in Wensleydale and then as Chef to the Royal Household.