History before History: Jon Tacey, February 2015

Jon, a well known local resident, archaeologist and member of the Historical Society, took his audience (a full house) back to the beginning of time - the Big Bang 13.6 billion years ago. Eschewing the usual slides or PowerPoint, he demonstrated the length of time most effectively using an eight foot measuring stick. This represented a span from 13.6 billion years ago at one end to today at the other -through the formation of galaxies; the solar system; arrival of bacteria; water; oxygen; respiration and the first ice age. The arrival of *homo erectus* 10 millon years ago was represented by the final inch on the 8ft measuring stick.

A different measuring stick was then used to represent progress through the last 10 million years, with “man" learning to manipulate things, tire, tools and evidence of ability to communicate. The last Ice Age ended 12,000 years ago, followed by the Bronze Age.

The building and alignment of stone circles was described. They were made possible by the arrival of a large workforce, who probably returned year after year following the end of harvest. This was likened to the tradition of hop-pickers in Kent.

At Durrington Walls, the Neolithic settlement (circa 2,500BC) near Stonehenge, evidence of feasting has been found. Remarkably, at Stonehenge itself the remains of a cow from Orkney has been found (identified by DNA). As long ago as the Middle Bronze Age (2000 - 1500BC) people travelled remarkable distances overseas using skin-covered boats built like coracles. Heavy loads were best moved by boat. The Romans built canals, and boats were pulled by three men while a fourth steered.

The last 2000 years represented the final inch of the measuring stick. As Jon commented, “we are awfully new here”!.

To compliment Jon’s talk Margaret Jensen spoke about social history of the times and in particular food. Evidence of diet has been found by analysis of the stomach contents of human remains. She described the range of foodstuffs that would have been available and had that day experimented with baking a recipe containing dried fruit, millet, wheat, poppy seeds and sunflower seeds. Members of the audience were invited to sample this historic culinary experience.

The Work of Dr Stevens: St Mary Bourne's Doctor 1845 – 1879: John Isherwood, March 2015

A journey three miles down the Bourne valley and 150 years back in time - the March meeting of the Historical Society heard about the life and times of Dr Joseph Stevens, the village doctor in St Mary Bourne from 1845 to 1879. The speaker, John lsherwood, was an Andover solicitor who after retirement went back to university to learn how to study local history. His talk focussed on Dr Stevens, set against the more general background of public and private health in the late 18th to late 19th centuries.

Dr Stevens (1818-1899), son of a yeoman farmer, was originally apprenticed to a chemist in Newbury. A small legacy from an uncle enabled him to train as a doctor at The Middlesex Hospital in London. He was appointed "surgeon & apothecary" for the St Mary Bourne area in 1845 at the age of 26.

At the time the area was almost entirely agricultural; the villagers of St Mary Bourne were very poor, some close to starving. Only a few years earlier during the 1830 Swing Riots, five local men who could not find sufficient food for their families, described as "misguided and desperate", were sentenced to transportation. Over the previous 50 years the agricultural workforce had been progressively impoverished and dispossessed of land following the Enclosure Acts of rural England. During the Napoleonic Wars farming had prospered but after 1815 there was a depression and added to this, during the 19"' century the population nearly trebled. ln 1874 heavy taxation led to more agricultural unrest and a labourers' strike.

Records from 1867 reveal that labourers in Hampshire were the most poorly fed. St Mary Bourne had the highest need for poor relief in the Whitchurch area. Dr Stevens recorded a typical diet, describing it as "nutrition adequate but monotonous".

ln contrast to the near starvation of the poor, the better off suffered from excess - indigestion and digestive disorders, frequently exacerbated by poor sanitation. The sale of patent medicines boomed with extravagant claims. Dr Collis Brown's Chlorodyne was widely advertised as a treatment for cholera, diarrhoea, insomnia, neuralgia and migraines (it contained laudanum, cannabis and chloroform). Professor Holloway was an advertising genius whose Holloway's Pills claimed to cure everything (and made him a fortune). However price put these patent medicines out of reach for most people.

Dr Stevens lived in a "comfortable house" (now demolished) with stables for his greyhounds, and the surgery over the coach house. He could be described as a "character", and numerous stories about him survive. lt is related that he would visit a patient in a stuffy room and remarking "That's what you need", would put his stick through the window then put down a shilling to have it repaired.

Another tale is that when he was anxious to go coursing with his dogs he was very impatient with anyone who came to his morning surgery. In such a crisis, he would tell his groom to mix a bucket full of Epsom salts in water and fill all bottles with that in rapid succession.

In Dr Stevens time healthcare was dramatically different. He still accepted the "miasma" theory of disease transmission, which held that diseases such as cholera or the Black Death were caused by a miasma - a noxious form of "bad air" emanating from rotting organic matter (such as frequently blocked the Bourne Rivulet). But at this time Lister's work on sepsis had not yet been published and the germ theory of disease remained to be developed during the 1870's. Dr Stevens was an advocate of "simples", single ingredient herbal medicines. The local "dentist" was the village blacksmith.

Smallpox was a still major killer of children in the 19"' century; the last smallpox epidemic in St Mary Bourne had been recorded in 1823, when there were thirteen burials on the same night. In 1865 a cottage in a remote spot near the village was used as an isolation unit where children were sent after vaccination.

Dr Stevens earned £25 a year, the same as a labourer, but this was supplemented by income from vaccinations (five shillings) and “difficult confinements". He also received a steady income from Friendly Society members. A third source of income (estimated as £250pa) was providing medical care to employees of the Earl of Portsmouth. Dr Stevens shared political views with the Earl and in 1899 died at Hurstbourne Park.

During his time in St Mary Bourne the doctor wrote “St Mary Bourne, Past & Present” (1863). He was warm hearted and much beloved for his genuine interest in the place and people of the village. After retirement Dr Stevens lived in Reading and was a frequent contributor to the Reading Observer. He was a keen geologist and archaeologist, and in 1877 was instrumental in creating the Reading Museum, of which he became curator.

Brewing in Hurstbourne Tarrant – Betteridge's Brewery
Mark Betteridge, May 2015

The May meeting of the Historical Society was held at Coopers Bam which, since April 2014, has been home to Betteridge's Brewery. Welcoming members, Mark Betteridge began by explaining the modern equipment used to produce his range of beers. The batch capacity of the micro-brewery is described as "two and a half barrels", contrasted with a commercial brewery of 250 barrel capacity.

Mark described brewing as "in principle a very simple process requiring just four ingredients - water, grain, hops and yeast". Malted barley is soaked in hot water to release the malt sugars; the malt sugar solution is boiled with hops for seasoning; the solution is cooled and yeast is added to begin fermentation; finally the yeast ferments the sugars, releasing CO2 and ethyl alcohol. Temperature control during the process is critical; ambient temperature in Spring and Autumn being the most suitable. Additions to "individualise" the product, the exact quantities and moment they are added are also absolutely critical to the consistency, bitterness and taste of the beer.

After a demonstration of the various stages by transfer of the solution between different pieces of equipment and a description of the cleaning procedure, Mark talked about the history of brewing, produced some historical pictures and information about Hurstbourne Tarrant and entertained the assembled company with numerous brewing-related anecdotes.

Coopers Barn is on part of the site once occupied by the Cooper's Arms, which was one of ive pubs in Hurstbourne Tarrant in the 19th century. The Cooper's Arms was burnt down on 2nd March 1904 despite the best efforts of firemen using a horse-drawn steam pump, which took 40 minutes to come from Andover. The bam in which the micro-brewery now operates survived and is the very same building once used to produce beer for the Cooper's Arms.

Mark is a great supporter of village life and uses locally sourced ingredients wherever possible. His aim is to provide real ale to local pubs and organisations – the rediscovery of ale that tastes like ale and the huge number of variations on this. Bitterness, maltiness, hopiness and mouth-feel together with a pleasing look and aroma make the perfect combination. The aim of Betteridge's Brewery is to provide a variety to please all tastes - currently offering a good best bitter, a cream stout and a "delicious golden ale with some fantastic hops in it" and a session bitter.

Private Sector Best Bitter – *a full flavoured amber coloured ale. Brewed with the finest malts from Wanninster Maltings this bitter uses traditional Eng/ish hops to provide a fully satisfying English best bitter.*

Serious Black Cream Stout – *a complex and enriching ale using dark malts and roasted barley to give coffee and chocolate notes alongside burnt, toast. Lactose is added to mellow these burnt flavours giving it a sweeter edge. Low on hops, high on malt and complex flavours.*

Jenny Wren Golden Ale – *a golden, single hop pale ale. Using Nelson Sauvin, a hop from New Zealand, this beer is light in colour, has a distinctive hoppy flavour and deceptive body for its appearance. It is refreshing and ideal for warmer days - a great substitute for lager.*

Old Chap – *An easy drinking malty session bitter.*

Following the talk members were invited to sample these beers.

Before the evening ended Mark was presented with a picture frame containing two historic photographs, one of the pre-1904 Cooper's Arms and the other showing members of the (unsuccessful) Andover Fire Brigade in March of that year.

Shepherding - A Personal History: David Sullivan, June 2015

Needing no introduction to his audience, David Sullivan the Chairman of the Parish Council described how his early experience of caring for livestock was at the age of eleven or twelve, when he reared some chicks in the top drawer of his dressing table - only later realising that he should have used the bottom drawer!

While still at school he decided he wanted to be a farmer, although his father tried to discourage him, having seen at first hand the poverty suffered by farmers in the 1930s. Answering an advertisement in Farmers Weekly, David travelled to Exmoor for an interview, got the job and at the age of sixteen started work. Farming then was very different and life on the farm was described as basic; running water to the house was a direct feed diverted from the stream and his bedroom was over the shippon -the cows providing central heating.

David spent eighteen months with sheep, became fascinated by shearing and was taught the art by his boss. His father, by this time resigned to his son's choice of career, then sent him to Sparsholt College for a year. The next job was in Kent looking after 500 ewes; a farm cottage was available and David asked Eileen to marry him. Soon after they arrived there a knock on the front door revealed someone who simply handed over a kitten and, when asked, said "the shepherd always does the village cats". A neighbour was able to explain the required procedure!

Four years later, shepherding on 150 acres in West Sussex became available. This enabled David to attend a day-release course at Sparsholt. Next he spent a year carrying out contract sheep shearing.

Fifty years ago the Sullivans moved to Hurstbourne Tarrant to run a mixed farm for Mr & Mrs Murdoch, with potatoes, grass, cereals and 300 sheep. Although sheep were the least profitable they could make use of the steep hillsides and water meadows. Later, moving to the Trewby's farm David came to an arrangement under which he cared for the flock of 300, of which he owned 30. It was a simple arrangement ("no paperwork") and when sheep were sold he received 5% of the proceeds. The next move was to Mr Boord, who had unused land suitable for grazing at Ham Hill. Mr Board was unwilling to let sole grazing rights as this would have established a tenancy for three generations. However David persuaded him to invest in a flock of 300 sheep, owned 50:50. The land was occupied as tenants in common and this new concept - a joint venture in farming – became widely known. As a result David was granted a scholarship to go to New Zealand. Not only could young people now have a share in a flock, but a return of 20% was possible. The City became interested, but in 1991 the Government completely changed farming subsidies and the concept was no longer as attractive.

The traditional lambing season of March/April was questioned when a ewe was marked late and produced lambs in May. David realised that this timing had advantages - the better weather was not only easier for young lambs but also for the shepherd!

David's enthusiasm and love of shepherding were unmistakable - few people can be as utterly content throughout their chosen career.

35 Years in the Hampshire Police: Jack Taylor, September 2015

Our police force is based on the premise that every citizen is responsible for law & order, and a police officer is only a citizen who is paid to do the job. The principle was expressed by Sir Robert Peel in 1829; “the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence”.

This was the starting point of the September talk given by Jack Taylor, a resident of Andover who spent 35 years as a police officer in Hampshire. Since retiring as a Chief Inspector he has served as a member of Test Valley Borough Council and as Mayor in 2001-02. His talk began with the origins of law enforcement in Saxon times, when the country was split into tithings (a group of ten families) and King Alfred commanded that every Tithingman (Head of the Tithing) was responsible for “raising hue & cry” whenever a crime was committed. If they failed to catch the culprit then every man in the Tithing was fined.

The Normans kept some of the Saxon ways but required Earls to take responsibility for Counties; the Earls then appointed a Reeve for each Shire. Reeves had been law officers since Saxon times but now became tax collectors. It is from “Shire Reeve” that the present office of Sheriff, is named.

In the reign of Edward I the 1285 Statute of Winchester defined the King’s Peace, with much of the old system retained and Town Watchmen appointed. In later times there were Parish Con-stables, usually well off men who employed others to do the job. In the 18th century the Bow Street Foot & Horse Patrol (the Bow Street Runners) were formed.

Law and Order was often the job of the militia or regular army. In 1800 militia were called out to suppress a “violent, unlawful and tumultuous assembly” in Alresford. However, use of militia was not always a satisfactory way to maintain law and order. In the 1819 Peterloo Massacre, cavalry charged a crowd in St Peter’s Field, Manchester, leaving eleven people killed and over 400 wounded. After the Napoleonic Wars returning unemployed soldiers were not looked after and there was fear and disorder among the population. This was enough to overcome the fear of a permanent paid police force (it had been feared such a force would take over the country) and in 1829 Sir Robert Peel’s Metropolitan Police Bill received Parliamentary approval.

In 1839 an Act was passed allowing Counties to form police forces, Hampshire and Es-sex being the first, with Hampshire recruiting officers in January 1840.

Following this history of the origins of policing, Jack Taylor regaled his audience with a most entertaining description of the many and varied experiences during his long service in the Hampshire Constabulary. Among the numerous amusing anecdotes were a selection of hilarious answers given by candidates in promotion examination papers.

Magna Carta: Dr Alex Armstrong, October 2015

Dr Alex Armstrong is, a retired GP who developed an interest in Magna Carta when he became a guide at Salisbury Cathedral.

Before Magna Carta England had endured sixteen years of John's kingship - a rule based largely on extortion, legal chicanery, blackmail and violence. During the tirst decade of his reign he lost most of his empire in France and funding war with France to reclaim these lands created the need to impose taxes. In defence of King John, Dr Armstrong described him as a superb administrator, who set up a civil service. In some ways this was his downfall – "he would have done better to be more affable and less efficient".

The relationship between the king and his barons deteriorated when John refused to meet the baron's demands "to abolish all the evil customs by which the kingdom of England has been unjustly oppressed". The king was forced to negotiate when the rebel barons captured the city of London. A charter was drafted by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in an attempt to create peace between the unpopular king and the rebel barons. Originally granted as a Charter of Liberties in June 1215, it promised protection of church rights; protection for the barons from illegal imprisonment; access to swift justice; limitation on feudal payments to the crown; as well as matters such as standardisation of weights and measures. The king agreed the terms of the charter and the barons renewed their oaths of allegiance.

Neither side stood by their commitments; within months the charter was annulled by the Pope, leading to the First Barons War. After John's death in 1216 the regency government of his young son, Henry III, reissued the document stripped of some of its most radical content. In 1217, it formed part of the peace treaty agreed at Lambeth, when the document acquired the name Magna Carta to distinguish it from the smaller Charter of the Forest which was issued at the same time. Short of funds, Henry reissued the charter again on 1225 in exchange for a grant of new taxes. His son, Edward I, repeated the exercise in 1297, this time confirming it as part of England's statute law.

The original charters were handwritten with quill pens on parchment sheets, in heavily abbreviated Mediaeval Latin. Copies were distributed to ecclesiastical establishments throughout the country (it is believed thirty three). Only four copies of the original 1215 document survive; two in the British Library, one at Lincoln cathedral, but the copy at Salisbury Cathedral is generally acknowledged to be the best preserved and most beautifully written of the four (probably written by a monk). The original charters formed a single, long unbroken text.

Magna Carta established the principle that everyone, even the king, was subject to the law. Many of the 63 clauses granted by the king dealt with specific grievances relating to his rule. However within them were a number of fundamental values that both challenged the autocracy of the king and proved highly adaptable in future centuries. Most famously clause 39 gave all "free men" the right to justice and a fair trial.

Some of Magna Carta's core principles are as pertinent today as they were in 1215. ls has influenced the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United States Declaration of independence and the constitutions of many other democracies.

The Great Anarchy: The Stephen and Matilda Wars
Erica Tinsley, November 2015

Erica Tinsley - a well-known local historian and Chairman of the Andover History & Archaeology Society gave a graphic description of this troubled period.

During the reign of King Stephen (1135-1154) the struggle for the throne of England was hotly contested; it was described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as an era “when Christ and His saints were asleep”, while the Victorians labelled this 19-year period as “The Great Anarchy” – although modern historians prefer to describe it as a civil war or a war of succession.

King Stephen was the grandson of William the Conqueror and nephew of Henry I (1100-1135). Stephen's father, Stephen of Blois, was killed while on a Crusade and the young Stephen had been sent over to England by his mother; being only her third son, it was hoped he would make his fortune at his Uncle Henry's court.

An affable, mild-mannered and handsome young man he found favour with Henry, who knighted him. Contemporary chroniclers described him as an attractive, good natured and courteous, but also lacking in resolution, weak willed and unable to enforce law and order. The barons recognised these weaknesses and exploited them to their own advantage; some became a law unto themselves and built unlicensed castles from which they terrorised the populace.

Empress Matilda (also known as Maud, the Saxon version) was the only surviving legitimate child of Henry I and had been named as his heir; prior to his death the barons had sworn an oath of fealty to her. Stephen was among those who had sworn fealty to his cousin, but at the time of her father's death she was in France and in her absence Stephen seized the throne for himself. The barons, disliking the idea of a woman ruling over them, accepted this and Stephen was duly crowned king of England on 22 December 1135.

Stephen had a strong supporter in his loyal wife Matilda of Boulogne (“Queen Matilda”), the daughter of the Count of Boulogne and his wife Mary of Scotland, daughter of King Malcolm lll of Scotland. Queen Matilda was the maternal cousin of Empress Matilda.

King David of Scotland supported the claims of his niece the Empress Matilda, daughter of his sister who had married Henry l, against those of his other niece Matilda of Boulogne, wife of King Stephen. He invaded England on three occasions in support of Empress Matilda's cause but with only temporary success.

Empress Matilda was incensed at what she saw as Stephen's betrayal, but was pregnant at the time of her father's death and her reaction was delayed. In 1139 she invaded England ably supported by her illegitimate half-brother Robert, Earl of Gloucester. There followed a long period of civil war. Normandy was eventually taken by Empress Matilda's husband, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, but the conflict in England became a long drawn out and bitter struggle.

King Stephen was taken prisoner by Robert of Gloucester at the Battle of Lincoln in 1141, and Empress Matilda was recognised as Queen. However, when she arrived in London her arrogance and pride resulted in her being expelled by an angry mob. Shortly after, at the Rout of Winchester Robert of Gloucester was captured by Stephen's wife Queen Matilda. An exchange of prisoners was agreed, with neither side gaining an advantage. Empress Matilda herself was nearly captured while being besieged in Oxford but managed a daring escape across the frozen river camouflaged in a white cloak.

Empress Matilda’s young son Henry was summoned to England in the hope his presence would help his mother's cause and Matilda finally returned to Normandy in 1148. The struggle with Stephen for the crown was taken up by the Empress Matilda’s son Henry Plantagenet but both sides had become weary of the struggle and had little enthusiasm to continue the war. On a second expedition to England in 1153 a compromise was reached with the Treaty of Wallingford. By its terms Stephen was to retain the crown for the remainder of his lifetime, whereupon it would revert to Henry and his heirs. Stephen's son Eustace was disinherited and died shortly after.

King Stephen died in 1154, aged 51, and was succeeded by Henry II, the first of the great Plantagenet dynasty. So Empress Matilda lived to see her son become king as had been the wish of his grandfather; ultimately the long civil war had made no difference to the succession planned by Henry I.

Local Maps: Dr Andy Watson, December 2015

Illustrated with images on the screen, Chairman Andy Watson's talk was entitled Local Maps. A diagrammatic representation of the whole globe 450 million years ago suddenly became animated, showing how continents changed as tectonic plates shifted until the continents became recognisable just one million years ago. Other images included a 1256 map drawn by a monk in Colmar; a 1575 Saxton map of Hampshire; a 1759 map by Taylor showing how the area was dominated by the pattern of Roman roads; an 1838 tithe map of Hurstbourne Tarrant; and finally the 2010 Hurstbourne Tarrant Conservation Area map by TVBC – which in future will be studied as evidence of the village in the early 21st century.

Murrle Cottage: Mike Nash, December 2015

Mike Nash described the history of Murrle Cottage in Church Street – probably not very old but built in a traditional style. The cottage is of particular historic interest because it has remained little changed over the years. Murrle Cottage is named after Miss Lilian Murrle (1899-1974), who left the cottage in trust for the use of retired clergy, missionaries or nurses.

Miss Murrell's father, Ernst, was born in Germany in 1862; he came to England in 1880 and ran a wholesale jewellery business called Murrle, Bennett & Co. During WWI Ernst was interned and, inevitably, the business suffered; however the success of his firm during earlier years provided sufficient funds to enable Ernst's spinster daughter to live in Murrle Cottage until the end of her life.

Object 101: Margaret Jensen, December 2015

The final speaker was Margaret Jensen, whose title "Object 101" remained a mystery until halfway through the talk. Inspired by the Programme "History of the World in 100 Objects", object 101 was argued to be an overlooked but important piece of social history – an example of "Utility" furniture, a cupboard in the Royal British Legion.

Margaret outlined the gradual introduction of rationing during WW2 – starting with food rationing in January 1940, followed by issue of clothing coupons. There was a shortage of timber and the "Utility Furniture Scheme" was introduced in 1942; the furniture industry had to conform to specific statutory designs, an element of complete design control that made the scheme unique.