

From the Chairman

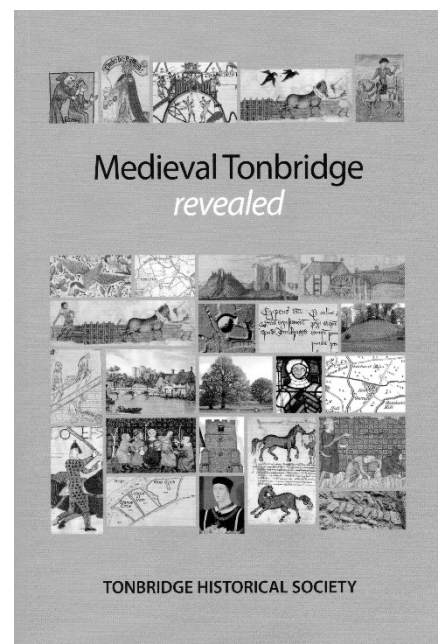
Now that we as a Country and a Society are beginning to return to some form of normality – as we knew it – we can start to move forward. We have what promises to be an interesting programme of talks, at our normal venue, for the coming year; full details below.

In July we finally were able to host the launch of our latest publication 'Medieval Tonbridge Revealed'* along with the combined 2019/20 & 2020/21 AGMs at Tonbridge Castle. The night was well attended by members as well as some new ones, and everyone seemed to enjoy the occasion.

I would like to thank everyone who attended or helped organise the night, especially Deborah Cole for her insightful talk on Medieval Tonbridge. Personally, it was great to meet up with both old and new friends. I am sure that sentiment was shared by many.

I therefore look forward to meeting up at our first meeting, on 16th September 2021. *David Phillips*

**The book is now available from the Tourist Office in Tonbridge Castle, from Mr Books bookshop at 124 High Street, and at THS meetings, £8.*



Lecture Programme 2021-22

All meetings are held in the Riverside Room at the Angel Centre

*Thursday 16th September 2021, 7.45 pm: **The Boleyns of Hever Castle** – Dr Owen Emmerson*

Nearby Hever Castle was the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. The talk will be based on the speaker's new book 'The Boleyns of Hever Castle', co-authored by historian Claire Ridgway, in which he recreates what Hever would have looked like during the Boleyns' tenure, and charts the 77 dramatic years in which the family rose from a life of petty crime to owning a castle – from Hever to the throne of England. Dr Emmerson is a social and cultural historian, working as the Castle Historian and Assistant Curator of Hever Castle. He gained his doctorate from University of Sussex with his thesis on the abolition of corporal punishment.

*Thursday 14th October 2021, 7.45 pm: **Hitler's Secret Weapons** – Eddie Prescott*

The talk covers the discovery that Germany was developing secret weapons in WW2, development work at Peenemunde, photo reconnaissance leading to bombing raids on the site, the arrival of the V-1 and V-2 in England, and the countermeasures that were taken, with descriptions of the worst impacts on British soil. Finally the talk will cover the little known V-3. Eddie Prescott has lived in Tonbridge all his life and has given many talks on WW2 Military and Aviation History to local clubs and societies. His most recent publication is 'Tonbridge at War – 1939-1945'. He is also engaged in active aviation exploits which include a Skydive, Wingwalk, Spitfire flight and aerobatics.

Saturday 13th November 2021, 2.30 pm: two session meeting with Tea – Steve Hookins.

Booking is required for this meeting. A form with details of charges is enclosed with this Newsletter.

1 'Doing our bit' A presentation delivered in the character of 'Mr Foreman' of the Emergency Road Repair Service who talks about the roles carried out by some of the Home Front's unsung heroes, from the Upper Thames Patrol to the workers of the MG Works in Abingdon, via the Emergency Hospital Service. He also looks at some of the civilians who were awarded the George Cross and George Medal. 'For your delight and delectation, he also performs an array of impersonations of notable men of the period!'

2 'Bits that don't fit' Steve will talk about some of the weird and wonderful historical square pegs that don't fit into any of his other presentations. Who invented gunpowder and why? What exactly did the Romans leave behind? Plus a wry look at our cousins across the pond. From Newcastle Brown to Bollinger Champagne via Salvador Dali and Hugo Boss, this is 'Stand-Up History!'

Steve Hookins worked for the Ministry of Defence for 27 years, the last 7 as part of the Curatorial Team at the Royal Artillery Museum (Firepower) in Woolwich. His presentations are based on tours and lectures he developed at Firepower. His style is a mixture of historical facts, anecdotes and humour.

*Thursday 9th December 2021, 7.45 pm: **Ten Brave Men and True** – Richard Snow*

The talk centres on the 10 Victoria Cross Holders of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, including Eric Dougall, an alumnus of Tonbridge School, based on the speaker's 2012 book of the same title. We will hear about The Victoria Cross, including the Victoria Cross Grove in Tunbridge Wells, how the project started and some of the local heroes. The book will be available to purchase at a discounted price, with all profits going to 'Help for Heroes'. Richard Snow is retired and lives in Pembury, having dedicated 30 years to working as a Fundraiser for Barnardo's and then Hospice in the Weald. He started researching after noticing the 'John Brunt VC' pub in Paddock Wood, and was then asked to write about all 10 VCs of Tunbridge Wells Borough.

*Thursday 10th February 2022, 7.45 pm: **Jane Austen and The Regency** – Dr Geoff Doel*

This illustrated talk will deal with Jane Austen's inter-reaction with the Regency, both in her life and letters, and particularly in her later novels. A well-known local speaker, Geoff Doel is a retired university lecturer in Literature and in Traditional Culture. His PhD is in 19th Century literature and he has published 20 books (some jointly with his wife Fran). He is an Honorary Fellow at the University of Kent, and is still lecturing for WEA at Tunbridge Wells and for U3A & WI (Denman at Home)

*Thursday 10th March 2022, 7.45 pm: **Smuggling in Kent** – Mark Lewis*

In the 18th and 19th century, an increase in taxes led to an explosion of illegally imported contraband, characterised by opportunism, violence and deception. The speaker is a freelance artist, designer, silversmith and retired university lecturer with a passion for lighthouses. He is a keen folklorist with an interest in unusual local customs and rituals. He regularly gives talks to local societies and groups covering a myriad of topics, including silver and jewellery, art and design history, folklore and lighthouses.

*Thursday 7th April 2022, 7.30 pm: **AGM**, followed by **Cobham Landscape Detectives; a community archaeology odyssey!** – Andrew Mayfield*

The Cobham Landscape Detectives project was a 3 year lottery funded archaeology project working across the parish of Cobham. The work involved everything from LiDAR surveys to test pits, geophysics, tree studies and fieldwalking. By the end of the project participants had gained a much wider understanding of the rich history and archaeology of the Cobham area. The speaker is an archaeologist who lives and works in Kent. He grew up in Tonbridge and attended Judd School. He studied archaeology at UCL, and after a Masters, started an archaeology career working on construction sites across the UK. In 2004, he joined the heritage team at KCC and became their Community Archaeologist in 2009, with a series of lottery funded community archaeology and research. In 2021 he has also taken on the role of community archaeologist for the Greenwich Park Revealed project for Royal Parks.

New members We welcome Martin Baker, Victoria Corcoran, Helen Ramsden, and Catherine and Geoffrey Rishman who have recently joined the Society.

From the Archives

'My Dear Lizzie' – part of a letter sent by a scullery maid at Fairlawn, the Cazalet establishment near Shipbourne, probably around 1900:

'My Dear Lizzie Just a few lines hoping they will find you quite well ... I like it very much hear and the servants are so nice and so is the kitchenmaid I get on very well with them all there are 3 [other] maids ... and we have many a bit of fun it was my birthday last Tuesday and we had them and three of the footmen in to tea we did enjoy ourselves it is very hard hear I don't get my time to myself only after nine o'clock when the dinner is over it is a lovely part of the country ... Dear Lizzie you did ought to go to service it is the best place after all you soon get used to the servants I had twenty four to get used to ... I think we come to London next month and I have got to be vaccinated [for smallpox] before we come up ... all the servants in these gentleman's houses are being vaccinated ...'

