

KINGSTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS FOR MAY 2017

On Thursday, March 23rd we were thoroughly entertained in the Reading Room by Jeanne Curtis who gave a lively talk on the history of "Lace making" There was an amazing array of beautiful lace articles lovingly and painstakingly made by Jeanne. We were transported back to a time when lacemaking was first discovered in the tombs of Ancient Egypt in the form of Coptic netting, used by the nobility to decorate their clothes, now on display in the New York museum. Tracing further down the historical timeline Jeanne talked about Venice plaiting when bobbins made of bone or ivory have been discovered, she explained that this kind of lace is made by braiding and twisting lengths of thread wound around bobbins to manage them then held in place with pins set in a pillow. Fashions through the ages often dictated changes in types of lace made to decorate costumes for both men and women; the heyday for traditional types of lace was in the 16th/17th centuries throughout the continent and the British Isles. Jeanne showed us a delightful little bob-cap made in the style of those worn in the days of Jane Austin as well as more colourful lace from Russia. We were also told that lace making in England developed as "piece work" for ladies of the time to earn extra money to provide food for their families; many women lost their sight as a result of such close work in dim light. Different areas produced their own variety of lace making and Jeanne mentioned Honiton, Sidmouth and Bedford as examples of this phenomena some using wool and others silk thread. Jeanne told us that her Honiton lace pillow needs to be baked from time to time and also the old saying of "picking up a pin was regarded as good luck." Eventually machine lace, first developed in Nottingham, brought about the demise of this cottage industry, but it continues to flourish as a pastime for lots of enthusiastic lace makers like Jeanne!

Our next event will be in Kingston Reading Room on Thursday, May 25th 7.30 for 8pm when South Western Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust will be giving an interesting and informative presentation on the evolution of the ambulance service in Devon from its early days, when officers wore white shirts; the 'crew' wore blue; and the ambulances themselves were white. The service has evolved to today's highly sophisticated modern provision, including the introduction of the Paramedic role and the use of state of the art medical equipment carried by the emergency ambulances we see today. Staff now wear dark green and the distinctive yellow of today's ambulances is unmissable, with or without blue lights flashing. Then on Thursday June 22nd Graham Phillips, Chairman of The Hope Cove Lifeboat, will be talking about the history of the Lifeboat as well as its present day activities in Bigbury Bay. Finally, please contact Jennie Stanley, "Brae Cottage" stanz@stanz.plus.com if you want any information about the Society. There is list of our Publications on the website kingstonlocalhistory.co.uk alternatively they may be obtained from Viv Freeman, our President. (01548 810255). To help the Committee plan future events we would be grateful if you could find time to respond to the following:-

I would be interested in talks on:

I would be interested in visits to:

I would be willing to give talks on the following subjects:-

Please contact *Viv Freeman, Jennie Stanley, Alan Coleman-Smith, Carol Beard, Rae Musk or Margaret Kelly* with your suggestions.