



## January 2022 Newsletter

The committee would like to wish all members a very happy 2022. We were hoping to start the year with a party for everyone but in view of the current Covid situation have decided to postpone this and hold it during the summer. Meanwhile, the chairman has drawn up a provisional and flexible programme of events for the year subject to pandemic restrictions. The first three events will be held in St Kenelm's church.

February 8 (see below)

March 9: Virginia Bainbridge; The Nuns of Syon Abbey before and after the Reformation

April date tbc; Carol Hardy, The Impact of World Wars 1 and 2 on Waddesdon Manor

May 11. Jo Willett on her book The Life of Mary Wortley Montagu

June; event tbc

Sunday July 17th, annual St Kenelm's evening picnic in the churchyard

September; local church visit guided by Nicola Coldstream

October; Hannah Bourne-Taylor; date and subject to be confirmed

November; date tbc, Fiona Perigrinor; Troubadours and Courtly Love.

### Subscriptions

Subscriptions were not collected for last year in view of lockdown but they are due again this January and are held at the previous rate of £15 per person. The treasurer would be grateful if members could pay by Bacs or give money or cheque to a member of the committee as soon as possible. For those paying by Bacs, details of our new bank account are: account Enstone History Society, sort code 20-03-84; account number 23443361

Next meeting: 'From Slump to Security' on Tuesday February 8, at St Kenelm's Church at 6.30 for 7.00pm. For her talk, member Dr Elizabeth Birchall (right) will be taking what she calls 'a personal journey through Public Policy' showing the changes in society and social policy from her parents' time through her own life and experiences. Dr Birchall was born during the slump and her family enjoyed a few years of financial stability during the war before her father died. Subsequently the family lived on National Assistance and free school dinners. Aged 18 she joined the WRNS as an aircraft



mechanic. After this, at a time when it was rare for working class girls to go to university (the nineties film *Educating Rita* underlined this), she read Social Sciences at Liverpool University. Here for the first time she encountered slum life during practical placements. Work took her all over Britain but after retirement she turned her attention to a variety of voluntary work and to writing both poetry and prose, including an autobiography copies of which will be available at a discounted rate for members to purchase on the evening. Will members who wish to attend this event please let John Pritchard ( see contact details below) know as soon as possible.

### Women in Medieval London

Our last (and only second) meeting in 2021 was held in St Kenelm's church on November 24. The speaker was Professor Caroline Barron OBE who outlined the economic power and influence of women in medieval London. London seems to have been more progressive in its attitude to women than other English cities; perhaps in its own commercial self interest. The little power allowed to women was more economic than political in nature; women did not become aldermen, mayor or hold public office. Professor Barron pointed out the value to historians of the London Custom books of the hundred parishes. It was the time of the



Black Death and as was the case after the First World War with less man power available, women had 'a window of opportunity' for advancement. Widows for once seem to have had the best deal and could live in their husband's house and receive a third of his estate. Several took over the running of their late husband's business; one became a bell founder and ran a foundry near St Aldgate's church and her bells



were imprinted with her own foundry mark. Others ran breweries, one became a candle maker and one became Bailiff of London Bridge after her husband's death for twenty years and held the most power outside the usual textile trade in which



women worked. Women were allowed to become apprentices on equal terms with boys and to employ apprentices. Professor Barron illustrated her talk with documents including a 1392 female apprentice indenture and the rare 1260 will of Emma, a tallow chandler's wife who obviously had the right to dispose of her property as she wished. Copies of these fascinating documents were given to all members present.

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