

LAUNTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2025-2026

The last twelve months have been mostly good for LHS – a range of speakers, steady membership and strong attendances at each meeting.

We've heard talks from John Tyler (Reading the Countryside), Dick Richards (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) and Bill King (Romans in Britain). After his talk on Daily Life in Tudor Times we said goodbye to Martin Sirot Smith, an engaging and entertaining speaker who has been a regular over the years. He's still going strong but Mrs Sirot Smith would like him at home more. We heard Gillian Cane talk about Bletchley Park – and then we visited it, on a sweltering day in July. It was impressive. 2025 ended with Pat Tucker's quiz, won by a table of WI members.

2026 had a memorable start. We looked forward to the speaker on Oxfordshire in the Cold War but he didn't arrive and sent no message. Happily, audience members stepped up and John and Peter gave impromptu accounts of wartime in London and Oxfordshire, which we enjoyed. Thanks also to Ed who offered to step in too.

Since then we have heard Deborah Hayter speak about how enclosure shaped the Oxfordshire landscape – bad news for the poor who relied on common land, but practical for farmers who faced challenges such as a varying climate and the ravages of the Black Death.

Last month we heard Frank Collingwood speak about the Oxford Bus Museum in Long Hanborough, starting with a look back to the days of horse drawn trams. We hope to see Frank again as he has been writing a book about the manor and park at Woodstock, before Blenheim Palace.

Finally, we've been a bit warmer in the Hall this winter, whether due to weather or the new roof. On occasions we have taken coats off. We congratulate the Parish Council on achieving funds for the continuing work.

Our meetings will carry on during the work, in a different venue. Everyone is welcome, you can just come along when you fancy or become a member.