



New Forest

History & Archaeology Group

Registered Charity no 1160219

Programme Secretary

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WINTER/SPRING LECTURE PROGRAMME 2025/2026

11th September 2025.

Mary Montagu-Scott, Director of the Buckler's Hard Maritime Museum, will tell the story of Lord Nelson's favourite ship, built and launched in 1781, and after a very distinguished 28-year Naval service record, including the Battle of Trafalgar, ended up wrecked in 1809 on the River Plate off Uruguay. Mary has returned from diving on the wreck with a team of maritime archaeologists from the UK and Uruguay, who seek to record and preserve the wreck and its famous memory before she is lost by time and tide. Mary has recently fulfilled her long held dream to see the wreck, those huge timbers, made from Beaulieu Oak planted in the 17th century and surviving against all the odds, miles from home under the sea.

What does the wreck reveal? And how can we protect her? What can we learn about her, the only surviving Buckler's Hard built ship in the world?

Mary will also tell the story of all the 6 Royal Navy "Agamemons's" including the latest and the recently launched Astute class hunter killer nuclear submarine.

9th October 2025.

Talk by Wessex Archaeology. Speaker and topic to be advised.

13th November 2025.

'Special Operations Executive: The Secret Saboteurs of WWII'. A talk by Peter Power FIRM FBCI BA JP. A fascinating and secret unit tasked by Winston Churchill to "Set Europe Ablaze". However, from the outset SOE faced considerable opposition from the allies, well before the enemy had ever heard from them. Yet SOE agents demonstrated remarkable courage and resourcefulness in their guerrilla war, resulting in General D Eisenhower saying "...they played a very considerable part in our complete and final victory". This talk will bring back to life the organisation, its Obstacles, Triumphs, Tricks & Tragedies".

11th December 2025.

Members Evening with a review of the 2025 excavation at New Copse, and Fieldwork plus presentations from members.

8th January 2026.-Meeting via Zoom.

Dr Martin Smith, Associate Professor of Biological Anthropology, Bournemouth University will give the Zoom talk entitled 'Fraught with High Tragedy' New insights on the Maiden Castle 'War Cemetery'. Presenting new work by Archaeologists at Bournemouth University using radiocarbon dating to arrive at new conclusions regarding the dead of Maiden Castle and why they were laid to rest within the ramparts of this iconic site.

12th February 2026.

Nick Saunders, MA (History) BA(Hons) Hist. and Local Historian will give a talk entitled 'Treason and Treachery in the New Forest'. In May 1685 The Duke of Monmouth raised an army of about 6000 men, largely agricultural workers, and deserters from the local militias. He attempted to overthrow his uncle James II. The rebels were defeated in July 1685 and the Duke was executed. Two men who had taken part in the uprising were given sanctuary at Moyles Court in the New Forest by Dame Alice Lisle. She was arrested when the two men were found by a government search party. She was put on trial at Winchester Assizes overseen by the notorious Judge Jeffries. The talk will review the events that took place during this period which led to Alice Lisle being put on trial.

12th March 2026.

Group member and local military historian, Marc Heighway will give a talk entitled "Wings Over the Forest: The New Forest's Aviation Pioneers" The New Forest has a rich aviation history; from the early dreamers and inventors, to the pioneers of Great War aircraft. This presentation explores the innovative spirit of those magnificent men and their flying machines. Marc Heighway presents tales of adventure, bravery, sacrifice, plus many strange inventions that didn't quite take flight.

9th April 2026.

Annual General Meeting.

This will be followed by Julia Baker and colleague from The Minstead Trust who will give a talk entitled "A History of Furzey Gardens", with some lovely slides, which covers the 100 years of history of Furzey Gardens, how the gardens came to be part of Minstead Trust and details about the rare plants there and associated plant hunters and a bit about the current work of the Trust, including a short video at the end. There will also be some plants, craft items and jams and chutneys for sale, all of which are produced in some way by the people the Trust supports.

Meetings are normally held in the Beech Room (unless stated above) at the Lyndhurst Community Centre, High Street, Lyndhurst SO43 7NY on the second Thursday of the month. Meetings commence at 7.00pm. The cost to members is £2.00 and for non-members £4.00.