

The Wychwoods Local History Society

At the first meeting of the year Bryan Atkins spoke on the history of Eynsham Abbey, which, founded in 1005, rose to become the second most valuable abbey in Oxfordshire. It flourished during four centuries of peace. Nothing now remains apart from a few re-used pieces of masonry, and the place-names of fields, roads and houses. From documentary and archaeological evidence Dr Atkins built up a 'picture' of the life and times of the abbey in its glory days.

Sir John Graham addressed the February meeting with a talk on Ditchley and its owners from the 16th century when the Lees, with their connections with royalty, took over the estate. Succession then passed, by marriage, to the Earls of Litchfield. It was the Litchfields who were responsible for the erection of the present building in the early eighteenth century. Succession, again by marriage, then passed to the Viscount Dillons who continued to occupy Ditchley until the death of the 17th Viscount in 1932.

Sir John then spoke of the modernisation of Ditchley in the 1930s by Ronald and Nancy Tree, both Anglo-Americans. It was this connection, and as an escape from German bombs, that Winston Churchill and his entourage made week-end visits to Ditchley during the Second World War. Subsequently the property passed through Wilton and Wills' hands before becoming the Ditchley Foundation which provides facilities for high-level conferences in the setting of an English country home.

The Society's bone china mugs are still available. There are two patterns, one each of Milton and Shipton and they cost £4 each and are available from Jack Chapman on 01993 830498 or at any of our meetings. The last two meetings of this season will be:-

April 11	at Shipton	Tale from the Archives	Carl Boardman
May 9	at Ascott	Wychwood, Past Present and Future	Alan Spicer

Please note the new venue for this last meeting when we shall be using the New Tiddy Hall.

During the summer there will be two tours of Shipton and Milton Churches led by Tim Porter. The first is on 24 May starting at 2 pm at Shipton Church, the second on 4 July starts at 6.30 pm also at Shipton Church. A charge of £1.50 per person will be levied to defray the leader's expenses and the cost of tea in Milton Church Room. All welcome. More details from Sue Jourdan 01993 830179 or Wendy Pearse 01993 831023

On 13th June there will be a walk round Swinbrook conducted by Charlie Chambers. The group will assemble in Swinbrook Church at 6.30 pm for an introduction at which all are welcome. The following full walk will be quite strenuous but anyone can leave the walk when they wish. Again, there will be a small charge to cover the lecturer's expenses.

The next season of monthly meetings begins at Milton on 12 September which will be a short Annual General Meeting followed by a talk on Combe Mill by Arthur Keen.

John Rawlins