

# MIDDRIDGE HISTORY SOCIETY

## Talks for 2024/2025

10<sup>th</sup> October 2024

### **Alastair Fraser: The Emperor's tiles, the missing lances and the eye wateringly expensive sea snails: a somewhat haphazard history of Roman Carlisle**

This talk is a general history of Roman Carlisle as far as we can determine it. It also looks at the new excavations on the north bank of the Eden involving the largest building ever found on Hadrian's Wall. Who built it? Who lived in it? What was it for?

14<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### **Geoff Harrison: Letters to a soldier**

In late 2021 some renovation work was taking place at Brancepeth Castle. A trap door was exposed and underneath was found an archivist's treasure trove. Going back to the time when the Castle was the regimental headquarters of the Durham Light Infantry, here were such things as instruction booklets, posters and magazines along with cups, bottles and other artefacts. However, of most interest was the twenty or so letters which had been written to soldiers based in the Castle. Written by mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and sweethearts they paint a wonderful picture of the realities of domestic life in the 1940s. This talk is based on the content of those letters.

12<sup>th</sup> December 2024

### **David Hastings: Wooden boats and iron men. How tragedy, bravery and generosity have shaped the RNLI to what it is today!**

An inspirational history of lifesaving at sea and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution from 1790 to the present day and how volunteers have braved all weathers and shown immense courage to save over 146,000 lives.

9<sup>th</sup> January 2025

### **Chris Lloyd: Screechers & Suffragettes: Darlington's role in the campaign for votes for women**

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first women getting the vote, a look at how local women played a surprisingly important role for many decades. They were nearly all peaceful campaigners, but they rubbed shoulders with the most violent of campaigners.

13<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**Michal Roff: The first Inter-City railway in the world**

The story of the building of the Liverpool and Manchester railway. This is a non-technical telling of the story uncovering some of the personalities and the intrigue involved in the project in an accessible and entertaining way:- The delays and tribulations of the launch of the idea, construction of the line, selection of the motive power source, the 'Rainhill Locomotive Trials' and how the outcome was 'fiddled' by the Stevensons, the 'Grand Opening Day' in 1830 which combined comedy and tragedy, and ultimately success. The triumph of the Project and the beginning of the Railway Age.

13<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Dr David Petts: New light on early medieval Lindisfarne**

Holy Island / Lindisfarne is the site of one of the most important early medieval monasteries in Britain; it was the home of St Cuthbert and the site of the production of the Lindisfarne Gospels. This talk explores the results of recent archaeological work on the Island which is starting to unpick the archaeology of monastery.