

Redlynch & District Local History Society

Old Fordingbridge

By Ian Newman

Ian Newman gave a very entertaining talk on the History of Fordingbridge. The talk started at St Mary's Church end of the town and worked through to the other end of town by relating stories of the various businesses and families of the town along the way.

We learnt that the Church and a lot of the town was owned by Kings College, Cambridge for many years. The town was the centre of Calico industry from the 1780's through to mid Victorian times. Pirates used the river to bring contraband up into the forest and that the Neave family ran a large company that made and exported their unique children's rusks throughout the world.

Fordingbridge had a large Quaker population and they had a Meeting Room and burial ground in the centre of the town. The old cinema which closed in the 1960's has recently reopened and is once again a valuable community asset.



Ian peppered his talk with many anecdotes about the various members of the population, including one of the most famous, the "disreputable" Augustus John, whose statue now faces away from the town, a position that the Parish Council very much favoured. Also, Ian's love for the town he calls home was evident as he showed us many photos of the town and its population.

Our next talk is A History of Redlynch Lodge and its Inhabitants by Malcolm Birch on Tuesday 8th January at 7:30pm at Morgan's Vale & Woodfalls Village Hall.