

NEWTON ST CYRES HISTORY GROUP



Our annual outing this year was on Saturday, June 11th, when we drove up to North Wyke, near Okehampton. This old manor house dates from at least the 13th century and was the home of the Week family, who took their name from the placename, and lived there for 500 years. It was then split into two, let out to various tenants and farmed until a descendant of the original family bought both halves of the house in 1895 and united them, by building a linking wing in a sympathetic style. The estate is now farmed as a scientific research station, working on soils and grasses. It is not open to the public but we were able to go because Roger Wilkins worked there for many years and kindly arranged the visit. He gave us a fascinating tour of the house and gardens and explained the history of the family and the buildings and also arranged for an excellent cream tea in the dining room, very welcome as it was a cool and wet afternoon.

We then proceeded down the road towards Dartmoor and the village of South Zeal, where ex-colleagues of Roger, Nick Atkinson (member of their history group and former National Park officer) and their associates in the South Zeal history group met us and took us for a walk through the village. It is a relatively rare and unspoilt example of a 'new town' built in the 13th century and planned so that each house had a large burgage plot behind it – in effect a vast back garden where the tenants could carry out industry and farming of various kinds. The woollen industry was important throughout the Middle Ages and there was a brief copper mining period at the end of the 19th century. The group have produced a walk leaflet which gives information of the village history, and a visit to this interesting place is thoroughly recommended.

Our thanks go to Roger and Jean Wilkins, the Principal and the caterers at North Wyke, as well as the South Zeal history group, for a most enjoyable outing.

Next Meeting

Our first Autumn meeting is on Thursday 15th September.

Planned programme to be confirmed

Simon Tootell, Volunteer and Events Co-ordinator at Poltimore House, will talk to us briefly on the house project and also the archaeology of the grounds.

There will also be a report from Christopher Southcott about the excavations of the Court Barton Water Power Scheme.

**7.30pm Village Hall club room
£1.50 to include tea and biscuit**