

NEWTON ST CYRES HISTORY GROUP



June is when we usually have an outing instead of a meeting. In view of the recent wet and stormy weather we were lucky to have a dry day on Saturday 9th for our trip to Poltimore House. Simon Tootel, who had given us an informative and detailed talk on the house and its history last September, took us around. He is the Events Co-ordinator for the Friends of Poltimore House. Anyone who remembers when the house was on 'Restoration', the BBC television programme in 2003, will have an idea of the ruinous state of the building. It is depressing to hear how up until 1975 the house was in good order with its interior largely intact, despite having been used as a hospital since the war. It was only in the 80s and 90s, because of an ownership deadlock between bank and mortgage society, that it was neglected, looted and damaged, so that the roof leaked and decay rapidly took over. The Friends of Poltimore house have embarked on a programme of repair, funded by their own efforts and contributions from English Heritage and other bodies. It is, of course, an enormous task, but it was very encouraging to be shown how much has already been achieved. The early twentieth century chapel, built by the girls school then in residence, has been restored for use as a function room, and we had a delicious tea there. The early twentieth century kitchens are repaired and redecorated and now house the necessary offices and toilets. A vast amount of volunteer work over the last ten years has cleared and revealed the beautiful gardens, with many features such as the Victorian aviaries, as well as some impressive specimen trees. Simon has set up an impressive programme of events; plays, craft and food fair, photography, guided walks, talks etc. Take a look at the web page because there is something there for everyone in a beautiful setting.

We thoroughly enjoyed our afternoon and recommend a visit to one of the events, to support an exciting project that is on our doorstep.

NEXT MEETINGS

There are no meetings in July or August.

Sept 20th

John Allen the Cathedral archaeologist will speak on 'The Building of the Bishop's Throne and Norton, Newton St Cyres'. He will tell us how the area around Norton (a little to the north east of the Beer Engine) was important in the building of the Cathedral. This meeting will be held in the big hall and groups from other villages will also be very welcome.

Meetings are usually on Thursday evenings in the village hall club room and start at 7.30pm. Everyone is welcome. There is a small charge of £1.50 which includes tea and biscuits.