

Dear Member,

Welcome to the September Newsletter. Last month, we had an excellent talk from Richard Adams about his time working for the City of London. It was called 'A Life Surrounded by Dragons', because the 12 entrances to the City of London are marked by a statue of a dragon. The picture on the right is not of me, but of one of the dragons! His knowledge and passion for the buildings in the City really came across. Our September talk looks equally fascinating: it's about Darwin's voyage to the Galapagos. Also in August, we had a stall at the Farmers' Market. Thank you to everyone who helped, or even just visited for a chat. The stall had a real buzz to it.



We now have a date for our Christmas Lunch. It will be held on December 21<sup>st</sup> at the Waie Inn. Ron will start collecting money in a month's time but put the date in your diary. Looking forward to seeing you at our next Open Meeting,

Liz Ouldrige (Chair)

### Important dates:

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September:** Monthly coffee morning at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September:** Open meeting: James Taylor on 'The Voyage of the Beagle'. **Refreshments from 9:30am, announcements start at 10:00am. The talk starts at 10:15.**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October:** Monthly coffee morning at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am,

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October:** Open meeting: Tim Harrold on 'The Enigma Behind the Fingle's Memorial Plaque'

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December:** Christmas Lunch

### News from the Groups

New groups continue to form. The Wine Appreciation group has its first meeting in September, and the Boules group now seems to be getting off the ground. We are hoping to form a second Current Affairs Discussion Group and are looking for members. If you would like to join these or any other group, there are sign-up sheets at every Open Meeting, or you can contact the group leader or the groups coordinator via our website.

### August's talk: 'A Life Surrounded by Dragons' by Richard Adams

The City of London, also known as the Square Mile, more or less covers the footprint of the Roman City of Londinium and Richard took us through the history of the City from Roman times to the present day, The Romans arrived in 43 AD and built a classic Roman settlement that became a vibrant port. Many Roman remains still exist under present day buildings, including the amphitheatre which lies under the Guildhall and its courtyard, the outline being marked by paving slabs. The Romans left in 410 CE, and the City fell into decline. It later recovered its importance when the capital of the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Essex was moved from Colchester to the City.

After the Norman Conquest, William I granted the City of London a charter giving it authority "to do as their fathers had done", which effectively gave the right to self-government that still exists to this day. For example, it was exempt from the Domesday book. In 1189, the City was given the right to appoint a mayor. The City continued to grow as a vibrant trading centre and developed many of the traditions that are still in place today, such as the Lord Mayor's Parade.

In 1666, the Great Fire of London destroyed 13,000 houses and 80 churches including St Paul's Cathedral. The fire started in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane and is commemorated by a monument. Rebuilding took many years. Ironically, many of these buildings were then destroyed in WWII. Today 75% of the buildings are recent additions, with such iconic buildings as the Gherkin, the Walkie-Talkie and the NatWest Tower.

Richard told us many amusing stories about the juggling of priorities that needs to be done to maintain both the history of the site while allowing it to continue to be an important financial centre,