TIVERTON'S WOOLLEN TRADE: THE MERCHANTS WHO MADE THE TOWN

Lecture by Peter Maunder, Author of Tiverton Cloth: the story of the town’s woollen trade. 1475 – 1815

DATE: Saturday 27th May 2023 (1 session) TIME: 10:30am – 12:45 HOURS: 2:00 + 15 break
LOCATION: Tiverton Baptist Church Hall, Park Hill, Tiverton, EX16 6RP [Tbc]
COURSE FEE: £10

COURSE SUMMARY

The textiles trade has been a crucial industry for the development of Tiverton since the Middle Ages. Many buildings and features of the town still reflect that activity. Peter Maunder has extensively researched the town’s woollen trade and written its definitive history. This talk will explore the work of some of the key figures who promoted the trade and had a vital role in developing the town. Linked events will be a Museum talk introducing the story of the wool trade and a guided walk around key buildings and sites in the town centre linked to the merchants who left a lasting legacy for Tiverton.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The lecture will cover four periods of the woollen trade in Tiverton:

1. The early years of Tiverton’s cloth trade, with particular reference to John Greenway (1475 - 1530)
2. Tiverton’s cloth trade to London, and Peter Blundell - 1545-1600. How some people including John Waldron and George Slee broke away from that in the latter years of the sixteenth century.
3. The period 1655-1690 which was led by Samuel Foote and his trade with the Dutch.
4. The mid-eighteenth century - 1745-65 and Oliver Peard’s domination of Tiverton.

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students will be able to:

a. Understand something of the history of the cloth trade in Tiverton.

b. Know who were some of the key figures in that trade – names that are reflected in buildings and sites in the town today.

c. Recognise how the merchants mentioned contributed to the development of the town.

d. Know how to continue a study of the textile industry in Tiverton.

PRE-COURSE ACTIVITY

Tiverton Museum is offering an introductory talk on the history of the wool trade in Tiverton, Spinning a Yarn”, on Thursday 18th May at 6:30pm. Bookings through the Museum website: https://www.tivertonmuseum.org.uk/. A second introductory talk may be arranged if there is demand.

POST-COURSE ACTIVITIES

A handout will give readings and sources of further study. Copies of Peter Maunder’s book will be available for sale at his talk.

A guided walk led by WEA volunteers will follow those parts of the “Tiverton Merchants’ Trail” which relate particularly to the figures mentioned in Peter’s talk. This will take place on the same afternoon, Saturday 27th May at 2:00 – 3:30pm. Places limited – bookings through https://www.wea.org.uk/.