

UP WITH THE LARK - AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS (Ian Waller)

Most of us will have agricultural labourers in our ancestry. This talk discusses their lives and the wealth of records which enable us to piece together their lives. The fact that they existed means that documentary evidence exists.

SWING RIOTS AND GROWTH OF ALLOTMENTS (Brita Wood)

ALL ROADS LEAD TO SMITHFIELD - DROVERS AND CATTLE DEALERS (Ian Waller)

Many of our ancestors were “cattle dealers” or the like and may have spent many a day along the established drovers routes from Scotland or Wales to London. Those that did would have travelled with their families or met their spouses en-route. This talk explains the basis of migration and travel within the country and may just provide you with clues relating to your ancestors origin and movement around the country.

THE VICTORIAN HIRING FAIR (Clare O’Grady)

An important time of the year for any rural community, the Hiring, Mop or Statute Fair reached its peak popularity in the 19th Century as a way to seek and to provide employment. This talk will outline:

- How, when and where the fairs worked
- The evidence they leave behind
- The campaign against the fairs
- Registration societies
- Why the fairs declined as employment tool
- Some of the other attractions provided

HOW BRITISH AGRICULTURE SAVED THE NATION IN WORLD WAR 1 (Cynthia Brown)

In the early years of the 20th century British agriculture was widely believed to be ‘hastening towards decay’ - but it proved more than capable of meeting the challenges of the First World War. This talk will look briefly at the origins and accuracy of this dismal pre-war picture before focusing on the demands of the war itself and how they were addressed. Aspects to be covered will include responses to shortages of labour, the unprecedented level of government control of food production and distribution, the role of voluntary organisations such as Women’s Institutes, and some of the longer-term effects of the war on rural Britain.