

Programme of events: January to March 2026

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		JANUARY	
Tuesday 6th January 7:30pm Zoom	Botany Lecture	Sustainable Gardening with Climate Change <i>Speaker: Mary Payne MBE</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Jill Abbot
	This talk discusses our desire to avoid damaging our precious planet: the effect of climate change on plants and industry, water management, peat and soil improvement, plastics in horticulture, pests, disease and weed control, plant breeding, planting style, fossil fuels and conservation. All of these affect what plants we use and how we use them. Mary Payne was awarded the MBE in 2004 for Services to Horticulture in the South West and spent 10 years teaching horticulture at the University of Bath. Now a horticultural consultant to many gardens, she also runs her own gardening classes. She has a clutch of gold medals from Chelsea and Hampton Court, including The Tudor Rose Award for the Best Exhibit at Hampton Court in 2009, and regularly broadcasts on BBC Radio Bristol.		
Saturday 10th January 10:00-12:30	Young Explorers	Ancient Egyptians	<i>Leader:</i> Steve Limburn
Saturday 10th January 2:30pm In house and Zoom	General Lecture	History of Poole Quay <i>Speaker: David Warhurst</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Robin Hewitt
	Poole Quay has a rich history. It was a busy port from the 13th century, a base for smugglers in the 15th century and boosted the town's economy from the 16th century to the 19th century with fishing voyages and trade with Newfoundland. It is now a centre for tourism and boat trips, sculpture and a luxury yacht manufacturer. The quay is the home to many old buildings, some dating back to the medieval period. David Warhurst, a local historian and writer, will describe the important role the quay has played in the history of Poole.		
Tuesday 13th January 7:30pm Zoom	Technology Lecture	From script to screen: Where sustainability comes in and why it matters in Film and TV production <i>Speaker: Dr Pamela Agbahor</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Margaret Ross
	This presentation explores how sustainability weaves through every stage of film and TV production and why this integration is vital. It examines the industry's responsibility to reduce its environmental footprint, highlights global initiatives that drive accountability, standardisation, and progress and analyses contrasting examples of sustainable and unsustainable productions. The presentation reveals how sustainable practices strengthen creativity, reduce impact, and define excellence in modern film and TV. Dr Pamela Agbahor holds a BA (Hons) in Foreign Languages and Literature with a major in French but has built a 15-year career in IT. She earned an MSc in Computing (Software Engineering) from the Open University, with a dissertation that uncovered major barriers to environmental sustainability data collection in the Film and TV industry through interviews with key stakeholders which led to further research in this very topical area.		
Tuesday 20th January 7:30pm Zoom	Astronomy Lecture	Bear Myths and Rituals: The Moon, Women, Stars and Possible Ancient Links to Eurasia in North America. <i>Speaker: Herman Bender</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Kate White
	The programme, originally created for the Circumpolar Bear Cult exhibition at the CeSMAP museum in Pinerolo, Italy, explores the connections between the 18.61-year lunar maximum cycle, a bear effigy mound in eastern Wisconsin, and ancient circumpolar bear cult traditions. It discusses potential links between Old World and New World bear mythology, highlighting the significant roles women played within these cults as healers and shamans. Rich in symbolism, myth, and cosmology, the programme adopts a Jungian perspective. The speaker, Herman Bender, is an independent researcher, astronomer, geologist, founder of the Mid-America Geographic Foundation, and head of The Hanwakan Center for Prehistoric Astronomy, Cosmology and Cultural Landscape Studies. He is also the author of <i>Lands of the Shamans</i> .		
Saturday 24th January 10:00-4:00pm		Museum Open to the public RSPB Garden Birdwatch & more	<i>Contact:</i> Sally Grant

Tuesday 27th January 7:30pm	Science Lecture	Extreme Environments for Clinical Benefit: Harnessing Stress <i>Speaker: Dr Ant Shepherd</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Grenham Ireland
Zoom	<p>Dr Ant Shepherd's lecture will discuss the clinical benefits of controlled exposure to extreme environments, such as saunas, hot tubs, and low-oxygen conditions. The talk will draw on recent sport and health science research to showcase how thermal and hypoxic stress can positively affect cardiovascular and metabolic health. Attendees will learn how these environmental interventions, once seen as niche, are now being adopted more widely for health promotion and innovative therapies.</p> <p>Dr. Shepherd is the Deputy Director of the Centre for Integrated Health and Wellbeing Research at University of Portsmouth and leads the Clinical, Health and Rehabilitation Research Team (CHaRT).</p>		

		FEBRUARY	
Tuesday 3rd February 7:30pm	Botany Lecture	Countryside Regeneration Trust <i>Speaker: Helena Darragh and Ruth Moss</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Charlie Light
Zoom	<p>We will share how the CRT works with their tenants and graziers to manage various farms across England to create havens for flora and fauna, focusing on hay meadows, floodplain meadows, arable plants, grassland fungi and field margins. Learn about these habitats, what we are doing to safeguard more bio-rich areas and how you can help monitor and manage these special places in Dorset and beyond.</p> <p>Helena Darragh is Head of Conservation, and Ruth Moss is a Conservation Officer for the Countryside Regeneration Trust.</p>		
Tuesday 10th February 7:30pm	Technology Lecture	Construction of the Havant Thicket Reservoir <i>Speakers: Eleanor Shipton, Mark Jessup and Hollie Fisher</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Margaret Ross
Zoom	<p>The lecture on the construction of the Havant Thicket Reservoir will feature Hollie Fisher discussing the site's geological conditions and their impact on the dam's design and construction, Mark Jessup outlining the environmental initiatives associated with the project, and Eleanor Shipton providing a broader overview of the reservoir, including its necessity and benefits for both the local community and the wider region. Notably, the Havant Thicket Reservoir is the first to be built in Southeast England since the 1970s.</p> <p>Eleanor Shipton, Communications and Engagement Lead, Mark Jessup, Environment Manager, and Hollie Fisher, Principal Engineering Geologist.</p>		
Saturday 14th February 10:00-12:30	Young Explorers	Food	<i>Leader:</i> Steve Limburn
Saturday 14th February 2:30pm	Botany Lecture	The Amazing Coconut <i>Speaker: Nick French</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Bryan Popple
In house only	<p>The coconut tree is the most useful tree on this planet, with its trunk, foliage and fruit having a wide range of uses that benefit us in our daily lives. Nick will share how components of the fruit, when separated and processed, yield a range of chemicals with unique properties. You'll learn how these add value to our daily lives.</p> <p>Originally from Harare, Zimbabwe, Nick French holds advanced degrees in Material Science and Business Administration. He built a successful career in international petrochemical sales before pursuing his passion for speaking and training, which led to a new direction in people development. His training business began in Singapore, where he delivered workshops and keynote speeches, and in 2016 he moved to Cape Town, where he developed an interest in historical research and presentations. He is currently based in Hampshire.</p>		
Tuesday 17th February 7:30pm	Astronomy Lecture	Source of Elements and Isotopes in the Solar System <i>Speaker: James Fradgley</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Grenham Ireland
Zoom	<p>Background: notation; nuclear processes; lighter elements. Hydrogen reactions: hydrogen to helium by the P-P and CNO reactions; other elements made by these processes. Other reactions: S-, R-, and P- processes; silicon burning network. Frequency of certain isotopes. Where did Earth's water come from?</p>		

Tuesday 24th February 7:30pm	Technology Lecture	The Fairey Swordfish – 1930s biplane and its successful role throughout WWII as a torpedo bomber <i>Speaker: Dr Nick Blackman</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Margaret Ross
Zoom	By the start of WWII, the Fairey Swordfish was already regarded as obsolete, with a large number already in service it was nonetheless put to good use. The crew of three were not afforded too much comfort, there being no heater and the fabric covering and open cockpit affording little shelter from the cold in winter. Swordfish actually sank 21 submarines over the course of the war, most whilst escorting Arctic convoys to north Russia. The aircraft was incredibly versatile and has the distinction of being one of the few aircraft that remained in operational service throughout the WWII, and was responsible for the highest tonnage of enemy shipping sunk by any allied aircraft type. Dr Nick Blackman is an independent aerospace engineering and business consultant, and a part-time naval aviation historian with the <i>Navy Wings</i> charity. He served for 36 years as an Air Engineer Officer in the Fleet Air Arm and retired as a Captain Royal Navy in 2017. Dr Blackman completed his PhD with King's College London in 2023, with a thesis on British naval helicopter history.		
Saturday 28th February 10:00-2:00pm		Museum Open to the public	<i>Contact:</i> Sally Grant
Saturday 28th February 2:30pm	General Lecture	Medieval Women <i>Speaker: Dr Cindy Wood</i>	<i>Chairman</i> Kate White
In house and Zoom	Dr Cindy Wood is a Senior Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of Winchester, teaching both subject-specific and generic historical themes. These include, the Crusades; material culture; monasticism; local history; medieval death and the late medieval period in general.		
		MARCH	
Tuesday 3rd March 7:30pm	General Lecture	Polynesian Seafaring <i>Speaker: John MacDonald</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Bryan Popple
In house and Zoom	This presentation by Dr John Macdonald, Chair of Weymouth Astronomy Club, will discuss the impressive navigational techniques of the Polynesians, who managed extensive sea voyages across the Pacific between 1500BC and 1300AD. Despite lacking modern technology, they used natural indicators such as clouds, waves, bird behaviour, and star patterns to guide their travels and pinpoint their destinations.		
Saturday 7th March 2:30pm	Science Lecture	Saving Dorset's Butterflies - the role of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme <i>Speaker: Stephen Brown</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Grenham Ireland
In house and Zoom	Stephen is the UKBMS Dorset Regional Coordinator, Butterfly Conservation. He is a trainer for BC and will tell us about the survey and the use of citizen scientists in their work.		
Saturday 14th March 10:00-12:30	Young Explorers	Astronomy	<i>Leaders:</i> Kate Earl and Andrew Cook
Saturday 14th March 2:30pm	Science Lecture	An Isle of Wight Dinosaur Renaissance; how 10 species were discovered in 5 years. <i>Speaker: Dr. Jeremy Lockwood</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Grenham Ireland
In house only	Jeremy is a retired General Practitioner with a PhD in palaeobiology from the University of Portsmouth and currently researches dinosaurs as a Scientific Associate with the Natural History Museum in London. As a palaeontologist, he specialises in Early Cretaceous dinosaurs and the vertebrate faunas of southern England, with a particular focus on the Isle of Wight. His work explores how fossils and geology help us to reconstruct diversity in ancient ecosystems.		
Tuesday 17th March 7:30pm	Ornithology Lecture	Cuckoos <i>Speaker: Dr Tony Fulford</i>	<i>Chairman:</i> Margaret Ross
Zoom	Cuckoos, as everyone knows, are brood parasites: they lay their eggs in other birds' nests. They aren't lazy; they put in a lot of effort into fooling their hosts. Why do they do it, how do they benefit and what do they need to do to maintain this odd lifestyle? Their hosts certainly don't want to be parasitised. What then are the evolutionary consequences of the ensuing arms race between host and parasite? The Common (or European) Cuckoo is far from alone in this habit: brood parasitism is recorded in some 234 species of birds from across the phylogenetic tree. We shall take a look at some of these exotic species and their often-flamboyant hosts and explore other corners of the animal kingdom where brood parasitism occurs, i.e. almost everywhere where animals lay eggs and look after their young. Tony has a lifelong interest in birds and has recently agreed to become the BNSS Ornithology Chair.		
Saturday 21st March 10:00am-4:00pm		Museum Open to the public	<i>Contact:</i> Sally Grant

Tuesday 24th March 7:30pm Zoom	Zoology Lecture	Pests, What Pests? <i>Speaker</i> Jonathan MacGowan	<i>Chairman:</i> Margaret Ross
	All about rats, squirrels, pigeons, wasps and spiders etc etc! In a world where humans have always persecuted certain types of wild animals as pests, is it time to reassess the narrative. Isn't it about time we learned to live with inconvenient or dangerous animals? Who is really the pest? Homo sapiens or wild animals? The truth is, we are responsible. And maybe many so-called pests have actually helped humanity rather than hinder it?		
Saturday 28th March 2:30pm In house and Zoom	General Lecture	Trees and the Urban Environment <i>Speaker:</i> Steve Cox	<i>Chairman:</i> Robin Hewitt
	Steve has over 35 years' experience of dealing with trees, having worked as a forest manager in Africa and the Pacific and then as an arboricultural officer for the Borough of Poole in Dorset, where he was leader of its arboricultural team for five years. Steve will talk about trees in urban areas and how they improve the environment. Steve will discuss the effects of pollution and climate change, the trees that could be the most affected and what the landscape may look like in the future. Finally, Steve will look at trees that are of special interest in Dorset.		
Tuesday 31st March 7:30pm In house and Zoom		Assembly led by John Smith Quiz led by Bill Coombes:	<i>Chairman</i> John Smith