

SPEAKER PROGRAMME FOR 2025/2026

Wednesday 24th September 2025

Andrew Hamilton

Wollaton Cottages Survey

An update on the recent research and new discoveries



Wednesday 22nd October 2025

Yvonne Morley-Chisholm

A Voice for King Richard III: the search for the real man behind the myths

What started for Yvonne, voice teacher and specialist vocal coach, over ten years ago as an after-dinner entertainment to compare Shakespeare's character with what we know of the real man, developed quickly into a research project with a unique focus: to explore the possibility of recreating a literal voice for a long dead King. Experts from various fields came together in a pioneering collaboration to build the vocal profile.



Wednesday 26th November 2025

James Wright

Historic Building Mythbusting in Nottinghamshire

Go to any ancient building in Nottinghamshire and there will be interesting, exciting, and romantic stories presented to the visitor. They are commonly believed and widely repeated – but are they really true? These stories include those of secret passages linking ancient buildings, spiral staircases in castles giving advantage to right-handed defenders, ship timbers used in the construction of buildings on land, blocked doors in churches which are thought to keep the Devil out and claims to be the oldest pub in the region. James will explain the development of such myths and investigate the underlying truths behind them. Sometimes the realities hiding behind the stories are even more interesting, romantic, and exciting than the myth itself...



Wednesday 28th January 2026

Sharon Bennett Connolly

Heroines of the Medieval World

Turning the spotlight on amazing Medieval women with strong ties to Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. The legendary Lady Godiva, the indomitable Nicholaa de la Haye, Matilda de Cauz, the legendary Maid Marian, and Isabella of France, Queen of England, who fell from power at Nottingham Castle. Sharon Bennett Connolly will look at the impact of these women, not only on the history of the region, but also on the history of England.



Wednesday 25th February 2026

Karen Slade (Company of Artisans)

Medieval tiles from Lenton Abbey & beyond

An insight into the world of medieval tiles, their history, manufacture, symbolism and the messages hidden in them.



Wednesday 25 March 2026

Memories of Wollaton

Stories and recollections gathered over the course of the 2025 exhibition at The Dovecote presented by WHaCS members.



Wednesday 22 April 2026

AGM & Anja Thompson-Rohde

Coins as the First Social Media

How messages contained in the portraits and symbols on coins acted in the past to spread news and propaganda.



Speaker Bios

Andrew Hamilton

Andrew has previously been a committee member of the Nottingham Civic Society for twenty-five years, served on the Planning Committee of the City Council for eighteen years and was Chair of the Wollaton Historical & Conservation Society from 2011 to 2024. He remains on the committee as the archivist. Andrew has written several books including *Historic Walks in Nottingham* and *Restoration of a Victorian Cucumber House*.

Yvonne Morley-Chisholm

Yvonne has been established as a versatile voice teacher and vocal coach for over thirty years. She has been involved in actor training for several drama schools, including being Head of the Voice Department for the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art until July 2007 when she decided to return to freelance work. She is an Associate with the Royal National Theatre's Voice Department, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

James Wright

James is an award-winning buildings archaeologist. He has two decades of professional experience in ferreting around in people's cellars, hunting through their attics and digging up their gardens. He hopes to find meaningful truths about how ordinary and extraordinary folk lived their lives in the mediaeval period. He is the author of the book *Historic Building Mythbusting* which was released via *The History Press* in June 2024.

Sharon Bennett Connolly

Sharon is the best-selling author of 8 non-fiction history books, including *Women of the Anarchy* and *King John's Right Hand Lady: the Story of Nicholaa de la Haye*. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, she also writes a popular history blog and co-hosts the podcast "A Slice of Medieval" with historical fiction novelist Derek Birks. Sharon regularly gives talks on Women's History, is a feature writer for magazines, and her TV work includes "Who Do You Think You Are?" in Australia.

Karen Slade

Karen trained as an illustrator at Brighton and started taking part in re-enacting Tudor life at Kentwell Hall in 1988 where she learned to make tiles in a hand-built wood-fired kiln. Her twin loves of art and history have led her to work all over the UK at heritage sites including Nuneaton Priory, Hereford archives and St. James Priory, Dudley. She appeared, along with her husband Charlie in the BBC series "Tudor Monastery Farm".

Anja Thompson-Rohde

Anja is Collections Officer at Mansfield Museum, Nottinghamshire. Her undergraduate degree was in Archaeology and Ancient History, and her postgraduate training was in Heritage Management. Her focus has been on archaeological collections, where possible, with a particular interest in numismatic collections and how they are used (or not!) in museums, and her PhD thesis reflected this, focusing on the English coinages of William the Conqueror and William Rufus held in public collections. Her experience has encompassed a broad range of collections areas, including social history, industrial history and costume & textiles.