

GUARDEROBE
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HISTORICAL THEMED TALKS FOR 2023 onwards

Here is the complete list of 40 talks that Paul currently offers. All are delivered in “costume” as appropriate.

Arming the Knight involves a demonstration of undressing and then arming the notable Lancastrian knight Sir Thomas Tresham by his squire in to a full ‘harness’ of mid to late 15th century armour, concluding with his weapons. It includes an explanation of the clothing and fashions of the day.

Soldier and Citizen covers the equipment and life of a 1st century AD auxiliary soldier in the *COH I BRITANNORVUM* and his equivalent in the Legions. If time allows, we can also briefly cover three necessary soldier’s trades (bone working, armour manufacture [*fabricari*] and shoe making [*svtor*]). Participants are granted citizenship after their 25years service.

Armour through the Ages a rapid journey charting the development of armour through the ages, focusing on particular periods of British history: 60 BC; 60, 360, 660, 1066, 1265, 1471 and 1588 AD.

Powder Treason! Developed for 2005’s 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, Guy Fawkes renders his own account of his actions in this tragedy of faith that have led him to the scaffold:

In 2018 it will be 413 years since the discovery of the great “Powder Treason” and it is still Guy Fawkes’ name that is primarily linked with this historic event which had aimed to blow King James I and Parliament to smithereens. But Guy was only one of a band of fourteen Catholic plotters lead by the charismatic Robert Catesby. As a mercenary soldier Guido was recruited for his skills with gunpowder. Caught red handed by the authorities posing as a servant John Johnson, Guy steadfastly refused to give away the names of his fellow plotters under torture even as their doomed uprising came to a bitter end at Holbeach House....

But how did the persecution of Catholics by the state lead this Yorkshireman and the other plotters to this desperate act in the first place and why did the plotters believe that their “stir” was aided by God? Even when the plot was obviously doomed the Plotters refused to believe that the State could possible know what was afoot since all had sworn to secrecy. But with the benefit of today’s hindsight we know that the State had been aware of a plot for at least 6 months and it seems likely that the plotters were manipulated so that the Plot was eventually discovered on King James’ lucky day: Tuesday the 5th.

Guy and the surviving plotters from Holbeach were tried and condemned for Treason and suffered a terrible fate of hanging, drawing and quartering. Cruelly left until last, and still suffering from the effects of the rack, Guy does not know that he will be spared the worst agonies as his neck will be broken on the scaffold. Perhaps his faith and loyalty to his friends was rewarded after all...

Life in and out of the Tudor Court a typical Elizabethan gentleman (Sir Thomas Tresham [d.1605]) who will tell of his life and everyday items. Sir Thomas' fortunes changed several times. Having supported Queen Mary's succession to the throne, he nevertheless managed to obtain Queen Elizabeth's favour, and was knighted by her fair hand at a joust at Kenilworth Castle. He converted to Catholicism, which brought heavy recusancy fines, and imprisonment at Ely. His eldest son Francis was implicated in the Essex rebellion. Thomas' diplomatic wife stooped to sending Lady Cecil 30 cherry trees for Hatfield House. With all these affairs on Sir Thomas' mind, he was still able to give lavish banquets, (no doubt with much sugar) with Tudor dance and riddles. His other pride was his orchard.

Roman Burials a practical demonstration of the rituals and rites of burial in second century Britannia. *Geminus* as *disignator* (funeral arranger) will advise on the current popular modes of transport across the River Styx, at a time when the custom was changing from cremation to inhumation burial with the influence of Christianity. Can be given with or without volunteers from the audience.

Roman Gladiators: *Lvdvs Gladiatorii!* Find out about the training, diet and life of a typical slave gladiator and what happened if you won your fight or indeed if you lost it. What are the differences between the five main types of Roman gladiator (*hoplomachus, secutor, retiarius, murmillo and thraex*) that you might expect to see in the arena. Find out the strengths and weaknesses of their equipment and fighting styles.

Io Saturnalia! Stuck for ideas this Christmas? Well come along and find out how the Romans celebrated the midwinter feast of Saturnalia. Long before the Christians adopted this week long festival for their own purposes it was a time associated with much merrymaking, eating and drinking and of course gift giving! Candles and flames were a feature of mid-winter celebrations as in many cultures today. Social rules were relaxed and slaves were even allowed to exchange roles with their masters. Local Roman *Geminus* will be pleased to show how the household are making preparations for the feast and to share some of their favourite family recipes of the food that they have prepared especially for Saturnalia

George and Arthur A practical look at later Roman Britain in the age of Constantine the Great and into the period known as the Dark Ages, which may have seen the martyrdom of St George and the rise of that other popular legendary figure, King Arthur.

Them and Us, comprising a D-Day type briefing, and has been in much demand these past few years being the 60/5th anniversaries of the Normandy Landings/ VE day. This talk involves a 'first-person' presentation, and includes many original quotes from the time as well as the original equipment and weapons. For the first session (exactly 1 hour) Paul delivers, as Major Thompson, a briefing as though you were part of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, followed by a reminder about equipment and weapons. This is followed by a quick change (15mins maximum during tea and or notices – somewhere out of sight) and he returns to give the story from the other side of the Channel. The second half takes 45 minutes and time should be allowed for at the end for questions. Audience participation is strongly encouraged!

The Medieval Household involves a practical examination of everyday life, in particular pottery and objects in the upper class mid-15th century household, briefly touching on medieval women and their clothing.

The Medieval Household at Christmas an adaptation of the above to include the extra preparations and customs that the household would observe at Christmas.

The Tudor Household at Christmas an adaptation of the above to include the extra customs that the household would observe in Tudor times (Henrician or Elizabethan) at Christmas.

Hastings 1066 Compare the equipment and tactics of an Anglo-Saxon and a Norman. Who would you prefer to be? Could you have lasted a whole day in a shield wall? How different were their household's life styles?

Burying your Anglo Saxon Ancestors An inhumation/cremation 'burial' with appropriate grave goods as befitting their status during life in the 6th century AD.

'Tommy and Dennis!' Find out the brief career of the only known British lady to fight at the front during WW1. Find out the daily life and equipment of the British soldier at the Front that Dorothy Lawrence would have had to familiarise herself with and what happened to "Dennis Smith" once discovered.

Stille Nacht: The 1914 Christmas Truce Find out the truth about the famous truce at Christmas 1914 when soldiers from both sides of no-man's land fraternised together. Discover the everyday food, equipment, uniforms and weaponry of the First World War trenches 1914– compared to that of the German infantryman and how each side celebrated Christmas as best as they could in the trenches.

Keep the Home Fires Burning Meet Major Thompson who is home on sick leave from WW1 in the Trenches. Find out about life on the Home Front and how Mrs Thompson manages without her husband and her servants – with her involvement in the newly formed WI; women's suffrage, and rationing. What do they think the world will be like after the war?

Border Reivers Come face to face with one of England's late Elizabethan Border Reivers. Raiding was not just the sport of the common man but of the knightly classes as well. Find out the range of armour and weapons that they might wear for the raid and of the perilous life on the border at the time. Find out the derivation of the Reivers coined terms 'bereaved' and 'blackmail' and other customs of the English marches.

'The ABC of ARP' looks at the preparation of and Civil Defence provision on the Home Front in case of air-raid or invasion. It includes an air raid and incendiary bomb training drill including a working air-raid siren, gas rattle, bell and whistles so ear-plugs might be needed!

Seen and not heard A Victorian evening with Major Wyatt (Victoria's body guard). Explores the do's and don'ts of etiquette, Victorian fashion, new ideas surrounding death and burial, and some of the latest gadgets and foods that Victorian times had to offer.

The Medieval Barber Surgeon Find out about the tools and techniques of surgery and medicine in the Medieval period from Master Thomas the Barber Surgeon. Learn about the medieval view of health and the four humours, and how to diagnose ill health from tasting urine. Master Thomas would be very pleased to see you in his consulting room to cure your scrofulous sores, amputate limbs or bleed you with leeches.

The Tudor Barber Surgeon Find out about the tools and techniques of surgery and medicine in the Tudor period from Master Thomas the Barber Surgeon the Younger. Learn about the Tudor view of health and the four humours, and how to diagnose ill health from tasting urine. Master Thomas would be very pleased to see you in his consulting room to cure your scrofulous sores, amputate limbs bleed you with leeches or practice upon you with a new-fangled syringe.

Medieval death and burial Find out about the rites and rituals that surround the medieval ways of death and burial in the high medieval period.

Bodices and Bloomers A hands-on exploration of Victorian fashion using a selection of original garments to illustrate the basics of men's and women's outer and underclothing from the latter part of the 20th century.

Robin Hood: fact and legend Robin Hood's adventures in Sherwood Forest and his legendary use of the longbow are well known. Now find out about the real Robin Hood from the man himself! Living on the King's deer, hiding in the greenwood and helping those suffering our greedy Norman masters. Hero, outlaw or thief, listen to the story behind the enchanting legend from the mysterious man in Lincoln Green. See the clothing, equipment and weaponry from both sides of the forest.

The Way of Victorian Death Find out how some of the post-medieval English customs and rituals surrounding death and burial rapidly evolved and changed in the Victorian period but formed the basis of what we see at funerals today. Find out about the clothing and etiquette involved in the Victorian's way of mourning using a selection of original clothing.

Beware the Resurrection Men (and Surgeon*) Find out from Mr Thompson the local surgeon whether or not he is on the receiving end of the goods on sale from the Resurrection Men. How did these men go about grave robbing, why some of them went on to commit murder and what did the Victorians do to try and stop them? Mr Thompson can also tell you about the rapid medical advances of the time and about the tools of his trade. * can be done together or as two separate talks.

The Greenfly and the Rose Would you have the nerve to become an SOE agent? Under the threat of imminent German invasion, Major Thompson will instruct you in the basic “arts” and “dirty tricks” needed by the network of the Special Operations Executive to keep the “Greenfly” under control. Learn how to find and how to pass your ciphered messages on; German unit recognition plus basic bayonet and grenade drill.

The Late Victorian Soldier A look at the lives and equipment of the last soldiers to wear the redcoat in the British Army c.1850 – 1900.

The Egyptians. Numti the soldier introduces you to the life, death and objects that he is familiar with in the time of Pharaoh Ramases III who lived between 1184 and 1153 BC during the 20th Dynasty in the New Kingdom.

Trouble and Strife. The English Civil War – in Coventry: the history and the practicalities.

National Service

Find out about National service, 1948 – 1963 from the perspective of either an RAF conscript or an army conscript. We will recreate a “bedbox” of kit and you can find out the art of polishing boots with spit and polish; “blanchoing” your web kit and of course “square bashing”, from an RAF drill corporal or an army sergeant.

Vikings: The Norse Code Thomssen, a Hersir in Denmark has decided to exercise his right to lead his freemen of the village on a raid to the rich Christian isle of England. The year is 940 AD. England is still divided between Saxon held territory and the Danelaw, but things could be very different in another 20-30 years. Thomssen has then decided to settle with his family in the border of the two kingdoms at Rugby. Thomssen is a fully armed warrior of the period. But he can tell of his family’s clothing, shoes, jewels, accessories and household items and what he will eat. You can experience for yourself what it was like to practice manoeuvring in a shield wall as a member of the raiding party.

Chocks Away! Find out about four important roles within the RAF~ Pilot, Plotter, Bomber and Police ~ during WW2 in this 100 anniversary since the RAF’s creation.

Heavy Metal! Luga’s guide to everyday living in the middle ~ later Bronze Age in Britain, approximately 3,000 years ago. The talk will include a large handling collection of original and replica artefacts.

Stalin’s Lady Sniper and Coventry

Lyudmilla Pavlichenko was the most successful Russian female sniper of WW2. Within a year she had over 300 confirmed kills. In 1942 on Stalin’s personal orders she travelled as part of a Soviet delegation to the West and visited Coventry in November. She spoke of gender equality, pushed for a ‘second front’

and formed a long friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, wife to the American President. Find out more about the Eastern Front soldiers, the snipers life, their equipment and this amazing lady's visit to Coventry.

The Ancient Greeks: Part 1 Archaic Period (currently in prep)

Discover the reality behind the myths and legends of the Archaic Period of the Greek Bronze Age c 1,500 to 1,250 BC. We examine material culture, fashion and warfare, life and society using replica objects re-created from a fusion of written and archaeological sources. We use some slides to illustrate the evidence and give an introduction to a wider architectural and geographical context.

The Ancient Greeks: Part 2 Classical Period to 30BC (currently in prep)

Examine the life and times of a family in the Classical period in Greece, a period of around 200 years between the 5th and 4th centuries BC. We examine material culture, fashion and warfare, life and society using replica objects re-created from a fusion of written and archaeological sources. We use some slides to illustrate the evidence and give an introduction to a wider architectural and geographical context.

The Ancient Greeks: Part 3 the Ptolemaic Period 332 to 30BC (currently in prep)

A look at the period of the uniting of Greece under the control of the Macedonians, war and expansion into Asia and Egypt, and the founding of the Ptolemaic Period of Egypt, a dynasty founded by Alexander the Great in 332BC and ending with Cleopatra in 30BC.

We can also offer multi-period themes such as underwear through the ages or surgery through the ages and so on.

Best wishes

P. and A. THOMPSON