

Rotary Club of Romsey Test – Meeting Notes 16 Oct 2019

President Bill Gidley Chaired the meeting

Brian Davies (standing in for Peter Hurst) said grace

48 members present.

Speaker was Martin Radford on “Joseph Wright of Derby and the Lunar men of Birmingham - a story of art Science and Engineering”.

Martin’s talk started by describing the remarkable paintings of Wright (b.1834) a talented artist who trained at the `Thomas Hudson` school of art in London and exhibited at the Royal Academy. His paintings all had a quality of luminosity usually due to a central light source in the painting. They featured contemporary scenes of people often depicting, often family groups, and many depicting scenes from the early stages of the industrial revolution. One such featuring an orrery (representation of the solar system) highlights that this was the era known as the age of enlightenment. One paint was once owned by Lord Palmerston at Broadlands and is now in the Tate Gallery. Many others are in Derby Museum.

Martin’s interest in Wright stems in part from their shared Derby roots and Martin’s association with Staunton Harold hall - seat of the Shirley family, patrons of Wright’s art and once a Cheshire Home where Martin once worked and where he met Leonard Cheshire. (Now a National Trust Property).

The later part of the talk focussed on the Lunar Men, a group of people who were the pre-eminent thinkers of their time (movers and shakers in modern parlance). They met monthly at the time of the full moon (so as to safely see their way home) in Birmingham. Martin briefly described John Whitehurst (instrument maker), Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles), Josiah Wedgwood (potter), Matthew Bolton and James Watt (steam engineers), Joseph Priestly (who discovered oxygen), William Withering (who discovered the benefits of digitalis (foxglove) for treatment of heart conditions and Thomas Day (best described as oddball) .

The vote of thanks for this ‘enlightening’ talk was given by Colin Staples.

A.O.B.

Tony Trowsdale had visited Winchester rotary and circulated a copy of their annual report.

Martin Radford circulated shoebox labels. Boxes need to be ready by early November (Council meeting).

Some members had visited Honeypot House (Forces Chaplaincy Centre).

Handing out Dictionaries almost complete.

Please reply to Clive Collier’s request to identify who has tabards.

John Gould