

Talks delivered by Worthy's Local History Group members are always popular and David Spurling's *Rediscovering Hyde Abbey* was no exception. A large audience listened with great interest to David's story of his involvement in the Stones of Hyde Abbey project which is part of the Hyde900 organisation. The story began in 1969 when David and Trish bought Silverstream in Headbourne Worthy. The previous owner, a builder, had spent 17 years renovating the house and covered up many original features in the process. David then spent 20 years painstakingly uncovering them again.

One of the projects that David undertook was using stone from the rockery to build a bridge over the stream. Sensing that the stones were unusual, David wondered if they had come from Hyde Abbey. A google search led him to the Hyde900 organisation and they confirmed his theory. Following a meeting in their committee rooms, the Hyde Tavern, David was asked to look after the Hyde Stones project.

The Abbey was established at Hyde in 1110 and prospered over the centuries owning property in Hampshire and beyond. David showed an artist's impression of what the Abbey would have looked like. Forty monks and one hundred lay staff would have worked there. They were headed by a mitred Abbot who sat on the Privy Council.

Of course the fortunes of the Abbey changed when Henry VIII decided to dissolve the monasteries. All of the Hyde Abbey buildings were demolished, except for the Hyde Gate and chamber. By 1541 virtually nothing was left of the Abbey. The stone was sold, wood was reused in other properties and the lead went to Portsmouth for ship building.

So far Hyde stones have been found in Hyde, Abbots Barton, Micheldever and of course Headbourne Worthy. There is a record of the stones being taken to Headbourne Worthy to 1592 and they can be found at Lower Farm, Laundry Cottage, Bedfield Lane and Silverstream.

<http://www.hyde900.org.uk/about/stones/>