

Spring 2025

# SPARTA Newsletter



## SPRING INTO ACTION



Welcome to SPARTA Spring 2025 Newsletter.

Yes, it's 2025 and the SPARTA clubs are unrolling their fixtures and events for the new year.

We try to cover all the different and exciting opportunities that are coming up in this newsletter, but there are many more available that we haven't been able to include here that can be found through our website.

The Civil Service Choir are sad to announce that their long term member Rosalyn Phillips passed away on Boxing Day. A memorial service was held for her on 31<sup>st</sup> January where a special recorded performance by the choir was played.

The CS Choir have announced a big concert on 30<sup>th</sup> **March** and an Easter concert on 15<sup>th</sup> **April**. Full details can be found on their website using the link below:

[civil service choir performances](#)

The SPARTA History Society has a load of great lectures and events this spring. Full details can be found on our website but we have included a flavour of the first few later in this newsletter.

If you are interested in the theatre then the St James and Westminster Players latest production is just about to start so hurry and buy your tickets now.

Details can be found later in this newsletter.

If you happen to be based in Sheffield and enjoy cycling then there are details of an exciting group that you can join on page 5.

We are also working to create a new **Northern Golf Society** with the first test event due to take place on 17<sup>th</sup> **April** in the Leeds or Barnsley area.

If you are interested in taking part then please contact Nick Lyell at [nick.lyell@dft.gov.uk](mailto:nick.lyell@dft.gov.uk)

If you are interested in golf and based in the south then details of the upcoming SPARTA Golf Society fixtures are in the blue panel on this page.

If you have anything that you would like included in a future newsletter then please let me know.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Jason Marchant -SPARTA General Secretary

Fitness Class  
Free Every Friday 12.30  
Live Online or in GMH

## SPARTA GOLF SOCIETY

Here are the list of Sparta Golf Society Events 2025

**Thursday 24 April 2025** at Knole Park Golf Club, Sevenoaks, Kent

**Friday 23 May 2025** at Chigwell Golf Club, London

**Friday 27 June 2025** at Old Fold Manor Golf Club, Barnet

**Thursday 31 July 2025** at Kingswood Golf Club, Tadworth, Surrey

**Friday 5 September 2025** at Ealing Golf Club, London

The Sparta Golf Society to open to all Sparta members and competitions are subsidised by SPARTA.

If you would like to become involved, want more information then please contact our secretary via email: [secretary@spartagolf.co.uk](mailto:secretary@spartagolf.co.uk)

They look forward to hearing from you. Any standard of golfer is welcome.

Check out the SPARTA website for upcoming events



# ST JAMES AND WESTMINSTER PLAYERS

*St James and Westminster Players have some exciting new productions this spring.*



The St James and Westminster players are the only civil service drama society and have been going for over 70 years!

They are pleased to announce their first production for 2025, Twelfth Night, which they are performing at the Camden Peoples Theatre on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> February. Link is below to secure your ticket.

<https://cptheatre.co.uk/whatson/Twelfth-Night#tickets>

They are always on the look out for new people to join, whether you fancy trading the boards, or working behind the scenes on

directing, producing, tech or stage manager. No experience necessary either!

Not based in London?? – No problem, this year they are also venturing into an online production in May.

If you are interested in joining, please contact [karen.notaro@justice.gov.uk](mailto:karen.notaro@justice.gov.uk)

They also have their own website which can be viewed at

[http://www.sjplayers.org.uk/sj\\_home.html](http://www.sjplayers.org.uk/sj_home.html)



## UPCOMING SPARTA CLUB FIXTURES/EVENTS

### February

13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> – St James & Westminster Players production of Twelfth Night.

25<sup>th</sup> – SPARTA History Society Talk – Motherland: 500,000 Years of African History, Cultures, & Identity – Luke Pepera – GMH Room LG11, 1pm

27<sup>th</sup> – SPARTA History Society Talk – Road to the Stockton & Darlington Railway – Chris Valkoinen – GMH Room LG1, 1pm

### March

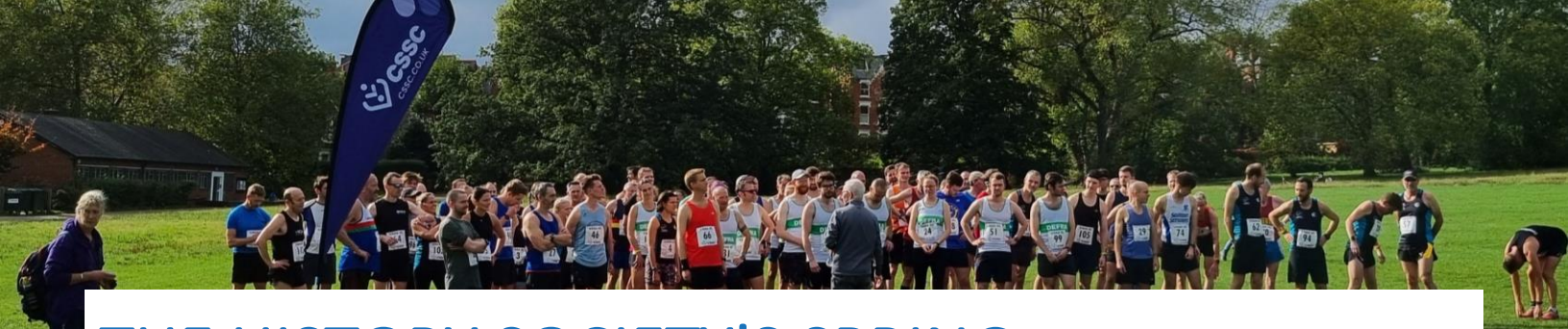
3<sup>rd</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> – SPARTA History Society Talk – A History of Homelessness – Online Talk 1pm

11<sup>th</sup> – SPARTA History Society Talk – The Rise of Henry Tudor - Nathen Amin – GMH LG 9 1pm

30<sup>th</sup> – CS Choir Concert – Spring concert – Mozart’s Requiem – Sinfonia Smith Square, Smith Square, London, UK (formerly St John Smith Square) 7PM Tickets: [Mozart: Requiem – Sinfonia Smith Square](#)

Keep up to date on the SPARTA website.

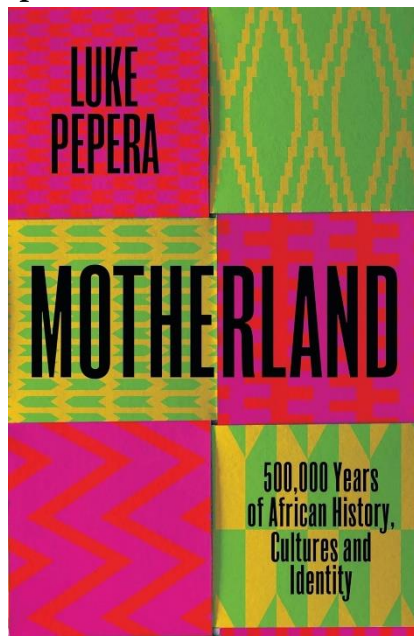




# THE HISTORY SOCIETY'S SPRING

*The SPARTA History Society have got a number of exciting lectures coming up this year here are details of the next few.*

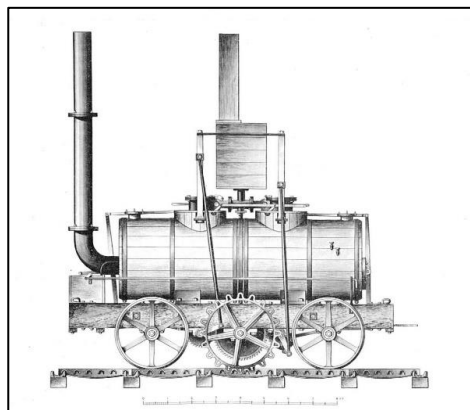
**Tuesday 25 February**  
**Luke Pepera - Motherland:**  
**500,000 Years of African History,**  
**Cultures, and Identity**  
**Great Minster House room LG11,**  
**1pm**



Historian, archaeologist, and anthropologist Luke Pepera takes us on a personal journey discovering 500,000 years of African history and cultures in order to reclaim and reconnect with this extraordinary heritage.

He tackles the question many people of African descent ask - Who are we? Where do we come from? What defines us? And it explores how knowledge of this deeper history might affect current understandings of African identity.

Through thematically-linked chapters that explore aspects of African identity from nomadic culture and matriarchal society to beliefs about the afterlife and the tradition of oral storytelling, and interwoven with Luke's own experiences of exploring his Ghanaian family history and his personal questions of identity, this is a comprehensive, relevant and beautifully told new history of Africa, and how it has shaped the world we know today.



**Thursday 27th February, Road to the Stockton & Darlington Railway: The first steam powered passenger train on a public railway - Chris Valkoinen, curator of railways and communication at the National Railway Museum Great Minster House Room LG1, 1pm**

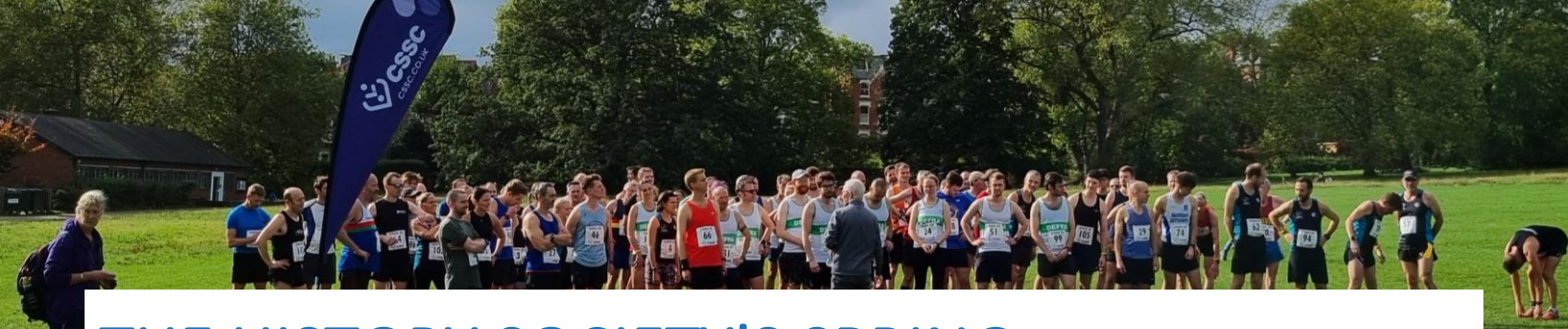
As part of DfT internal events celebrating Railway 200 Chris

Valkoinen, curator at the National Railway Museum will present a talk about the road to the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

On 27 September 1825 a small steam locomotive, now known as Locomotion, left Shildon on a momentous journey. Pulling a mix of coal wagons, a carriage, and wagons full of passengers, this was the first steam-hauled passenger train on a public railway. Its progress was watched by huge crowds who sensed that the world had just changed. However, railways had existed in various forms before 1825. The talk will look at what led up to 27 September 1825 and what happened in the following few years.

Chris Valkoinen, is curator of railways and communication at the National Railway Museum and curator of the Railway Firsts exhibition in Locomotion in Shildon, he looks at 200 years of railways that led to the Stockton and Darlington Railway. He is the author of *Railways: A History in Drawings*, and *The Big British Railway Journey Puzzle Book*.

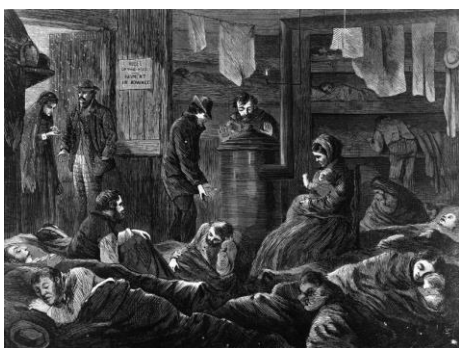




# THE HISTORY SOCIETY'S SPRING

*More details of the History Societies events coming this spring*

**Tuesday 3rd March A History of Homelessness Online Talk 1pm**

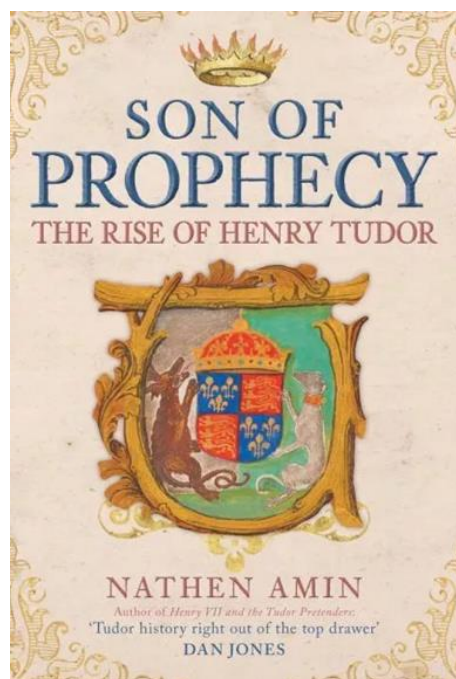


Join us for a thought-provoking talk on A (Short) History of Homelessness, charting the story of one of society's great challenges through the lens of legislation, the birth and evolution of the homelessness charity sector and the lived experience of the roofless and those facing housing insecurity.

MHCLG policy official Troy Fores Masculet will be joined by Matt and Jess Turtle, co-founders of the first-of-its-kind Museum of Homelessness to offer perspectives and pinpoint key moments from the Georgian era through to the present day. The event will be presented live from the museum, in north London.

**The Son of Prophecy: The Rise of Henry Tudor - Nathen Amin**  
**Online Talk from Great Minster House LG 9 1pm**

**Tuesday 11th March**

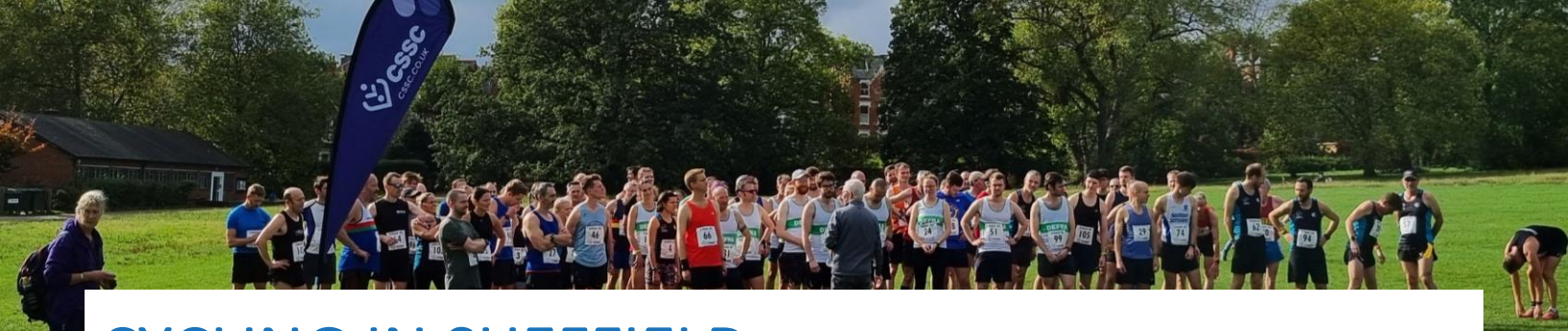


As England's most celebrated royal dynasty, it's often overlooked that the Tudors have their origins in rural Wales, far from the urban centres of English power where they dared to become great.

When Henry Tudor won the English crown by defeating Richard III in battle, he was a stranger to the people he now ruled, an 'unknown Welshman' in the words of his defeated foe. In his native Wales, however, Henry had long been championed as the Son of Prophecy, a foretold national messiah who would free his oppressed people from their lengthy misery. How had this remarkable situation come about?

In this lucid and riveting account, Nathen Amin deftly explores how one redoubtable Welsh family thrived during lean years of political chaos, national instability, and inter-generational bloodshed to leave behind a complex legacy that changed the face of England and Wales forever. It is a passionately told tale of treachery, cunning, love, and heartbreak. From Penmynydd to Bosworth, this is the enthralling, action-packed story of the Tudors, but not as you know it.

Nathen Amin is an author and broadcaster from Wales, who focuses on the 15th Century and the reign of Henry VII. He wrote 'Tudor Wales' in 2014 and 'York Pubs' in 2016, followed by the first full-length biography of the Beaufort family, 'The House of Beaufort' in 2017, an Amazon #1 Bestseller in three historical categories (Wars of the Roses, Norman England, and The Plantagenets & Medieval History). Henry VII and the Tudor Pretenders; Simnel, Warbeck and Warwick'



# CYCLING IN SHEFFIELD

*Are you based in Sheffield? Do you fancy joining your colleagues for a cycle! January 2025.*

The Sheffield Cycling Network are inviting all cyclists to join them this spring for a series of cycling events

That they are running over the next few months. Get you bike out and enjoy a ride

Around the streets and countryside with like-minded colleagues.

**Get your bike ready, mind and body set, and get moving – week two.**



**For all Sheffield site staff, this is the second week of your February programme of activities to help get you moving, try out travel to work on wheels, foot or public transport, and improve your health.**

### Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb

Lunchtime information stalls with:

**Sheffield CycleBoost** – info. on safe cycle routes and free cycle training. See examples of ebikes on offer via Sheffield ebike trial scheme and reconditioned bikes for sale.

**Civil Service Sports Club** – find out about CSSC's special Sheffield 25% discount on membership and all your local benefits.

**@ St Paul's Reception  
12:00 – 14:00**

### Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> Feb

Lunchtime webinar:

#### Urban Cycling Skills

Discover the two **Cycling Superpowers** for safe and confident urban riding.

A fun online session with local cycling instructors, Q&A and information on other free cycle training.

**Join the meeting with this link**

**Online from 12:00 to 13:00**



Scan to download the free BetterPoints app, or visit the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) and enter the code **stpauls** on registration. If already using the app, tap the menu icon, then Add Code.

### Photo competition prizes.

Send us a photo of you and your bike with a sentence that says what you love about cycling to win one of three £50 vouchers from Cycle Solutions and other prizes. Send entries to [sheffield.cyclingnetwork@education.gov.uk](mailto:sheffield.cyclingnetwork@education.gov.uk) by 14 April.

### Weekly £10 gift card prize draw

BetterPoints are giving away a £10 Sheffield Gift Card every week to use in local shops and businesses. St Paul's staff who sign-up and register with BetterPoints for the first time each week will be in with a chance to win. Winners drawn on Friday.

### Daily hot drink prizes.

Everyday be in with a chance to win one of four free hot drink vouchers when you log a journey to work by foot, wheels or public transport on BetterPoints.

**Keep on moving by cycling into spring 2025 with our monthly cyclist breakfast rewards and group cycle rides on:**

#### 13<sup>th</sup> March

Thursday after work Sheffield Civil Service group ride and social

#### April

(date tbc) after work Sheffield Civil Service women's only ride

#### 4<sup>th</sup> May

Sunday Sheffield Civil Service family ride with Ed Clancy.

**Look out for information on these and next week's activities**

**Programme brought to you by Sheffield Cycle Commuting Network.**

Contact us via: [sheffield.cyclingnetwork@education.gov.uk](mailto:sheffield.cyclingnetwork@education.gov.uk)

## WANT TO START A CLUB OR MAYBE HELP AT A CLUB?

SPARTA are always looking to build on our portfolio of clubs. If you want to start a club or are already running one and want SPARTA's help, then please get in contact.

Want to help at a current club? Then please get in contact with us:

[SPARTA@dft.gov.uk](mailto:SPARTA@dft.gov.uk)

Details of current club contacts can be found on the SPARTA website

[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/)







# THE SPARTA CLUBS

*SPARTA supports a number of clubs and associations across the UK and is always looking to start new clubs. Here is just a taster of the current clubs*

SPARTA TABLE  
TENNIS CLUB



[www.spartarecreation.co.uk](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk)

SPARTA  
GOLF SOCIETY



[www.spartagolf.co.uk/](http://www.spartagolf.co.uk/)

YOGA CLASSES



[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/yoga](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/yoga)

SUPERSTARS  
CRICKET CLUB



[www.superstarscricket.org.uk](http://www.superstarscricket.org.uk)

NETBALL CLUB

[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/netball](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/netball)

BOARD GAMES CLUB

[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/board-games](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/board-games)



CIVIL  
SERVICE CHOIR



[www.civilservicechoir.org.uk](http://www.civilservicechoir.org.uk)

HISTORY SOCIETY



[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/history-society](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/history-society)

FITNESS CLASSES



[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/fitness-class](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/fitness-class)

TENNIS CLUB



[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tennis](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tennis)

TENPIN BOWLING



[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tenpin-bowling](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/tenpin-bowling)

RUNNING CLUBS



[www.spartarecreation.co.uk/running](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk/running)

**Check out all the SPARTA clubs on our website**

SPARTA  
[SPARTA@dft.gov.uk](mailto:SPARTA@dft.gov.uk)

Phone 07884 390878

[www.spartarecreation.co.uk](http://www.spartarecreation.co.uk)

Follow us on Twitter [https://twitter.com/SPARTA\\_REC](https://twitter.com/SPARTA_REC) Facebook [www.facebook.com/sparta.recreation.16](http://www.facebook.com/sparta.recreation.16) and Instagram [www.instagram.com/spartarecreation](http://www.instagram.com/spartarecreation)