

Dorothy Nicolle: Brother Cadfael – The fact behind the fiction.



Dorothy Nicolle

Dorothy, a Blue Badge Guide in Shrewsbury and Shropshire, gave a most engaging talk on 'Brother Cadfael', the medieval detective monk created by author Ellis Peters. Although a fictional character, Dorothy spoke of Brother Cadfael as a 'real' person, giving a 'biography' and putting the stories into their historical context. Some characters in the series were based on real people who were alive at the times that the books were set, such as Prior Robert and Rudolphus. The time setting is at the time of the First Crusade in the C12.

Ellis Peters, real name Edith Pargeter, wrote the first book, 'A Morbid Taste For Bones', as a one-off, but found it was so popular that she began a series of books, twenty in all, each book having a different historical theme or event at its core. The books incorporate actual facts and events based in or around Shrewsbury, and Dorothy explained Ellis Peter's techniques to create the 'life' of Brother Cadfael.

Dorothy spoke with humour and related personal anecdotes about her meetings with Edith Pargeter. She revealed that as well as plenty of historical detail in the books, the names of the characters were also carefully thought out.

The group appreciated Dorothy's entertaining style and her detailed knowledge of these popular books, immortalised by Derek Jacobi in the television series some years ago.

Heidy Hague