



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society
Society Matters –Meetings

The season of indoor meetings started with a talk by Oonagh Kennedy, Walled Garden Research Co-ordinator, entitled 'The History of the Walled Garden of Luton Hoo from the 17th to the 21st century.' Oonagh relayed her obvious enthusiasm and explained not only the details of the garden itself but showed how it reflected the social aspects of the owners of the house. Our October meeting was entitled 'A Local Parish Scandal', in which Michael Soole QC, with the assistance of dramatic interludes from David Pearce, presented the scandal of the younger Du Pre's absentee headmastership. The November meeting, by Dr Heather Falvey, told us of an earlier occasion when 'Riotous, routous and unlawful behaviour' brought the 17th century enclosure riots in Berkhamsted to the attention of the nation. All these meetings have attracted a large and appreciative audience. For our Christmas meeting we are hoping to show you a video of the 1966 pageant, which will no doubt revive memories for many. In addition there will be a quiz and a supply of mince pies and festive drinks.

BAT Festival in October The Berkhamsted Arts Trust asked its member societies to provide an 'evening' open to the public as a contribution to the Festival. This started with the Graham Greene Festival at the beginning of October. Our Society's contribution was 'Bygone Berkhamsted' illustrated by slides from the Society's collection of Berkhamsted buildings. An audience of almost 120 supported the event. It is hoped in the future to show more from the slide collection, particularly of past events.

Heritage Open Days 11th-12th September Once again the Society staged this annual event, now under the sponsorship of English Heritage. The Dacorum Heritage Trust Museum Store had two guided tours on the Saturday and on the Sunday the Society had 10 sites open to the public, providing guided tours and small exhibitions. Numbers of visitors were up on last year. Particularly successful was the former Foundling Hospital (Ashlyns School) when we had approximately 100 visitors to be guided round the buildings by two former foundlings. Other popular sites included 173, High Street (formerly Figgs) the Old Hall and Chapel of Berkhamsted School and the Town Hall among others. It is hoped it will be possible next year to include the British Film Institute at Kingshill as an additional Open Day site. I should like to thank all those who supported these events in any way and especially those who acted as guides or stewards.

The Castle Visitor Room This year English Heritage granted us permission to extend our opening hours from 10am-6pm to bring them into line with those of the Castle itself. We opened for the Easter weekend and then for the summer season from 1st May till the end of September on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. I should like to thank all those members who have acted as stewards and particularly Brian Norris for masterminding the rota. The number of visitors to the room was 4,144 about 800 more than last year. We have provided a number of guided tours for schools and other groups during the week and at weekends, fifteen this year. These take place throughout the year. We had a school group in November and already have a school group booked for January 2011! Grateful thanks to Jimmie Honour, Ken Wallis and John Waller who have helped with these.

'A Walk Back in Time.' We have together with guided tours of the Castle provided guided tours of some of the historic sites of the town centre. Further details available from me on 01442 865158 or email KSherw9100@aol.com

The Clark/Birtchnell Collection As mentioned in the last newsletter Bob Clark has donated to the Society the remainder of Percy Birtchnell's photographs and other memorabilia, which was in the house above the shop, which has now been sold. There are many very fine photographs, a number that have not been seen before. They are being carefully sorted and identified so far as possible prior to being accessioned. Some are in the form of lantern- slides, which can perhaps be changed into more appropriate format. There are also printing blocks of some of Percy's books.

Foundling Voices Project The play, which has been produced as part of this lottery-funded project is to be shown in Redhill and London in December. It is hoped that it will be performed by Ashlyns School next year. There are also to be travelling exhibitions, the details of which are not yet finalised.

Chronicle VIII Work is progressing with the next volume of the Chronicle. A number of articles have already been prepared and others are under way. If any member has researched a topic of local history and would like to share his or her findings please do contact the Editor, Tony Statham. If it is too late for this year there is always next.

Subscriptions for 2011 Subscriptions for 2011 are due on 1st January. A renewal slip is enclosed with this newsletter. The full-year subscription remains the same as last year.

**A Happy Christmas to you all and a Healthy and Peaceful
New Year !**

Jenny Sherwood