



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society
SPRING NEWSLETTER 2011

Meetings Since our last newsletter we have had two very successful meetings, both attracting very large audiences, members and visitors. In January Judy Faraday, archivist for the John Lewis Partnership gave us an excellent insight into the history and unique structure of the Partnership and our local Waitrose, tracing it from the small beginnings to the vast concern it is today. In February many turned out to hear Bob Clark, until recently the owner of Birtchnell's, give a talk entitled 'Small Man Beorcham,' telling us of his very special memories of Percy Birtchnell, a founder member of our Society and a remarkable man. A special point of interest was added by the tragic collapse of the building only two weeks previously. Bob also showed us some of the many photographs Percy had taken, some of which he needed help in identifying. In March following the AGM Ned Hunt, a Society member, will be telling us of 'The Tring Hundred, its Boundaries and Berkhamsted', another opportunity to widen our knowledge of Berkhamsted's history.

Summer Outings A guided tour round the village of Redbourn has been arranged for Wednesday 22nd June at 2.30pm. £3. Parking at Cricket Club on the Green. In July there will be a visit to the Luton Hoo Walled Garden, Talk, Tour and Tea. Cost £5. It is hoped an outing based on the archaeology of the Ashridge Estate will be arranged for August. Please contact Ken Wallis on 01442 877592 for details, and let him know if you need or could provide transport.

The Castle Brian Norris is currently setting up the rota for the Castle Visitor Room, which will be opening for the Easter weekend, not Good Friday, and then from 30th April – 25th September, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. If there is anybody who would like to join the team of stewards please contact Brian on 01442 865262 or bhnnorris@talktalk.net You will meet interesting people from all over the world. During the week and at weekends throughout the year we offer guided tours of the Castle to schools and other groups. Please contact Jenny Sherwood, 01442 865158 or KSherw9100@aol.com

'Walk Back in Time.' We are again organising these 2 ½ hour tours, which include a tour of the Castle and of historic sites of the town centre, in conjunction with the Chiltern Conservation Board. Price £3 for adults, £1.50 for children. Dates, 27th March, 17th April, 15th May, 19th June, 17th July, 25th September. Bookings to Jenny Sherwood, as above.

Ashlyns School Are you a past pupil/teacher/parent of Ashlyns School? The School is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the year in which local children joined the foundlings at Thomas Coram Schools, later to be Ashlyns School. Special celebrations will be taking place on the weekend of 14th – 15th May. For more information please contact governors@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk. Help is needed. Please get in touch if you have anything connected with the beginnings of the school or from your time at the school, photos, old uniform etc. Please contact David Pipprell on dpipprell@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk mentioning the years you were at the school.

Foundling Voices Project You will have heard this mentioned often in the last two years. The project is now almost complete. Memories of a large number of former foundlings have been recorded. Some former Ashlyns Pupils have also contributed their

memories. The specially-commissioned play has been performed in Redhill and in London. It is hoped that Ashlyns pupils will perform it next year. It is also hoped there will be an audio trail ready before long for Ashlyns School to use for school Open Days.

Heritage Open Days Plans for the HODs are already underway. We are hoping to include the British Film Institute archive at Kingshill this year, but it is not proving very straightforward. If there are any other suggestions for inclusion in our programme or suggestions for improvement please do let me know.

The Census You will all have received your census forms for March 27th. We feel it would be a good idea to conduct our own census survey of our ever-changing High Street, recording the names and types of shops and the length of time each has been there. If time and the number of volunteers allow it would be worth extending the survey to Lower Kings Road and Castle Street. We could also include isolated shops elsewhere. Those interested in taking part please contact any committee member.

Percy Birtchnell Memorial Prize Year 4 children will be working this year on the topic of 'Heroes', choosing someone who is well-known locally or nationally, but with a specific connection with Berkhamsted. Two prizes will be presented at the end of the summer term.

Book Sales We still have a few copies of books, which Nick Potts of the former 'Book Stack' asked us to sell on his behalf. We are charging a much-reduced price. Some of you may have seen that the Way Inn is selling copies of the Quiz Book, which Jimmie and Jenny Honour wrote a few years ago for Ottakar/Friths. They were purchased from a book dealer in Stroud. The Way Inn is selling them at the original retail price. The ones we have for sale were purchased from Friths and are sold at £5 (£6 for non-members)

A Potential Exhibition Area There are proposals for a small exhibition area in the former restaurant upstairs in the Way Inn. It will mainly display the work of local artists but we have been asked to display old photographs depicting earlier days of Berkhamsted. Negotiations are still in early stages.

Your Committee We now have nearly 250 members, admittedly a number of you live some distance away and some of you are no longer able to come to meetings. Amongst the hundred or so who attend meetings regularly there must be one or two who could usefully contribute to the Society by joining the Committee. We only have four committee meetings a year. How much you contribute is up to you. Please do consider volunteering.

Herts Association for Local History The Annual Garden Party will take place on 2nd July 2011 in Welwyn. Full details are not yet available. Consult Jenny Sherwood or the HALH website in April. The Annual Symposium is scheduled for 13th November 2011 at Abbots Hill School and will be organised by the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust.

BDAS Meeting I have been asked to draw your attention to the Archaeological Society's meeting on Thursday 24th March at 7.45pm in Newcroft, Mill Street. The talk is entitled 'Pre-Roman Dacorum-Forensic Archaeology'. Speaker, Geoffrey Crockford.

DHT Quiz Night Saturday 16th April 7.30pm for 8.00pm prompt. Hemel Hempstead Community Church. Tickets £4 available via DHT website, www.dacorumheritage.org.uk

Thank you for your support. I look forward to seeing you all on September 14th or at one of the summer outings. Have a good summer!

Jenny Sherwood, March 2011