



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

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www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

Winter Newsletter 2018

First, the Heritage Open days. This year they ran over two weekends, September 6-9th and 13-16th. Many, many, many thanks to Jenny Sherwood for once again organising these open days that are so worthwhile and enlightening, and to all the tour guides and volunteers. Altogether we had 979 visitors. There were two new events, Repton's Ashridge and the Lost Wharves canal tour in conjunction with Berkhamsted Citizens Association. Next year is the 25th year of HOD's. Suggestions for new sites or ideas welcome.

While we are thanking, many thanks to the volunteers who man the Visitor Room at the Castle. Your time and goodwill is greatly appreciated. Also, to those who lead local tours, both around the town, and of the Castle. The total number of people to the Castle Visitor's room this year was 2759.

Berkhamsted Castle 24.2.47 H.C. Casserley



In the Summer we went on two coach trips: into Northamptonshire to visit Althorp House, home of the Spencers, and the Charles Rennie Mackintosh house in Northampton; in September we went to Blenheim Palace and while there we visited the Churchill tombs in Bladon Church. We were blessed with good weather.

Adrian Barham, Chairman of the Berkhamsted Castle Trust writes:

Since the start of October, Berkhamsted Castle Trust has taken on responsibility for locking and unlocking the Castle and for monitoring the site, working in partnership with English Heritage. Discussions are continuing between the parties on the potential for a wider local management role for the Trust. The Trust has jointly commissioned with English Heritage a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Castle, to help record the historical significance of the site and plan where further research is required. The consultants preparing the CMP are asked to complete it by next summer.

The Trust has also just received a licence from Historic England under section 42 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to undertake a geophysical survey of the whole Castle site. This is to be carried out by RSK Geophysics, one of the UK's leading geophysical consultancy practices outside of the natural resources sector (and whose head office is based nearby in Hemel Hempstead). RSK have, very generously, offered to provide these services to the Trust on a free of charge basis. The Trust is hopeful for some exciting and informative results by next summer. The Trust has already been asked whether there are any former monarchs connected with the Castle whose final resting place is unaccounted for!

Norman Groves, Project Officer writes on the Hub and Network investigations:

We're very pleased to report that, following the Heritage Lottery Fund's approval of the BLHMS's application for the £65,000 research project, a team of heritage industry professionals has started to help the Society investigate, consult on and scope the Berkhamsted Heritage Hub and Network, and test its feasibility. This follows, over the summer, a written Request for Proposals to 16 consultancies, an extensive tender process, and competitive interviews with three companies.

The lead consultant is David Geddes of Fourth Street Place Consultants Ltd (see <http://fourth-street.com>), who will lead a team of eight specialists in heritage planning, architecture, exhibition designing, community engagement, and collections assessment.

The bulk of the research, consultations and options analysis will be undertaken from October through to spring, followed by a period of in-house consideration of draft proposals and further consultation; and then moving onto final recommendations and draft Business Plan in the autumn.

An important part of the project, with the recent establishment of the Berkhamsted Castle Trust, will be looking at the feasible options for physical and other improvements that assist the Trust to promote "improvements in the organisation and provision of information and other services and facilities for visitors and... fostering the use and enjoyment of the castle by the public."

Other key research will look at how enhanced and accessible information about "*how Berkhamsted got to now*" can be provided for residents and visitors in a network, in a way that is affordable and sustainable.

The Hub and Network project also includes provision of training in 2019 for community groups and individuals, including those who might wish to be involved the Hub and Network in the future. Key topics for this will be consulted on in Stage 1, but

examples include techniques for fund raising and income creation, how to benefit from social and other media, trustee skills, recruiting and supporting volunteers, and appealing to new audiences.

1918-2018 - Commemorating Peacetime In Dacorum Exhibition

Dacorum Heritage Trust held a very successful Lottery-funded exhibition from 20th - 31st October marking 100 years since the end of the First World War. They were able to hold it in Hemel Hempstead in an empty shop in the Marlowe's. From 9th November from 12 noon to 4pm and on 10th November from 10am-4pm it was held in the Civic Centre, Berkhamsted. Altogether 8,202 people attended the exhibition. Thank you to those who volunteered to sit.

Taking the symbol of a dove for peace over the last few months adults and children have been making paper doves, each representing the Fallen of WWI and a special workshop held by Berkhamsted Arts & Crafts of Lower Kings Road. Also, they generated many colourful and emotive canvas pictures representing the theme. Children especially were keen to show parents and grandparents their works of art thus swelling the visitor numbers.

We were only able to bring the exhibition to Berkhamsted because Berkhamsted Lions gave us the funds to hire the Civic Centre. Without their funding it wouldn't have been possible.

BLHMS pays an annual subscription to Herts Archive & Local History (HALH). We are one of the largest societies in the county. We are also a member of the Battlefields Trust for which we receive information about all their events nationwide, which you can attend at member's rates. We contribute to Enjoy Dacorum who promote tourism. We also have links with the Chiltern Conservation Board.

The two WW1 books produced by the society are still available from Jenny Sherwood or Janice Boakes or at the bookstall at our talks. Jenny and Janice are also progressing with sorting and cataloguing the Northchurch Society artefacts and evaluating storage.

Our season of talks goes from strength to strength with audiences of around 150. Thanks to our Programme Secretary, Sandra Lawman

In September we started well with a talk by Patric Dickinson, Clarenceux King of Arms and Secretary to the Order of the Garter 26th. He spoke about William Camden and the 1618 grant of arms to the Borough of Berkhamsted. We were privileged to have such an eminent speaker to talk to us on this anniversary. October saw Paul Chamberlain tell us about the Napoleonic Prison at Norman Cross, near Peterborough, housing thousands of French Prisoners of War. In November we welcomed Murray Neil, a Trustee of the Tring History Society, who talked about Daniel Axtell, Berkhamsted's Regicide.

At the Christmas meeting Kate Harwood will tell about the historic gardens around Berkhamsted from Capability Brown to the Arts and Crafts.

We look forward to seeing you at the meetings in the New Year:

January 16th, 2019. Art & Design in the Chilterns. Dr Graham Twemlow writes and lectures on design history and decorative arts subjects. The Chilterns have played host to many artists and craftsmen. Graham's talk will focus on some of the 20th century artists who either made the Chilterns their home or found inspiration here: Paul & Jon Nash, John Piper, Eric Gill, Clare Leighton, E. McKnight Kauffer and the textile designer Marion Dorn.

February 13th - The Siege of London in 1066 (*which concludes with the surrender of rebels at either Westminster or Beor ham stede (identified as Berkhamstead by Victorians)*). Kathleen Tyson is a geographic historian particularly interested in the connections between trade, conflict, conquest and migration in ancient Britain and has recently published a book with a controversial view of the Norman Conquest and she will have copies of her book for sale.

March 13th - Lord Austin and Lord Nuffield, giants of the British Motor Industry. Julian Hunt, who is a regular brilliant speaker for us, comes to give us a talk nearly every year and this is his latest. These men were giants of their time and Nuffield one of the greatest of British philanthropists. There is a local connection; come and find out what it is.

Chronicle XVI is currently under way. There is still space before the Spring publication for anything of interest that members may have researched and would like to share

I do want to thank those who help the society, especially at our talks; our booksellers, our doorkeepers, and George and Steve the Town Hall caretakers. An especially big thank you to Linda Rollitt who runs and updates our Website, and our Facebook page which almost weekly has something of topical local interest from the archive.

**The Society wishes you a Jolly and Merry Christmas
and a Happy and Healthy New Year**

Mary Casserley, December 2018

