



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

BLH&MS Spring newsletter 2024

Membership update

We have 128 paid up Households (**179** members) 29 unpaid Households (**39** members). We would like to welcome 6 new households since the beginning of the year. Additionally, we have **5** Life members (3 Households)

Old Photographs

For this newsletter we have pulled some images of the east end of town from number 18 looking west towards the centre of town.



Early photograph from the 1860's showing the Black Horse pub, a house called Waverley and East's timber yard.



The Waverley and East's timber yard have been replaced by Callaghans Garage.



The Black Horse is now the Curry Garden, and the garage has been replaced by Callaghan Court.

Annual Membership Fee

The Society's annual membership fee was last increased in 2017. Since then, our costs have continued to increase, particularly in respect of hall bookings and speakers' fees. It is now proposed, subject to the agreement of the members, to increase the annual fee to £15 for a single membership and £20 for a couple. The optional additional cost of a 2nd Class postage stamp will be abolished. This increase is in line with inflation and is comparable with the membership fees currently charged by other local history societies and remains excellent value when considering that this includes seven talks, a copy of The Chronicle and several newsletters.

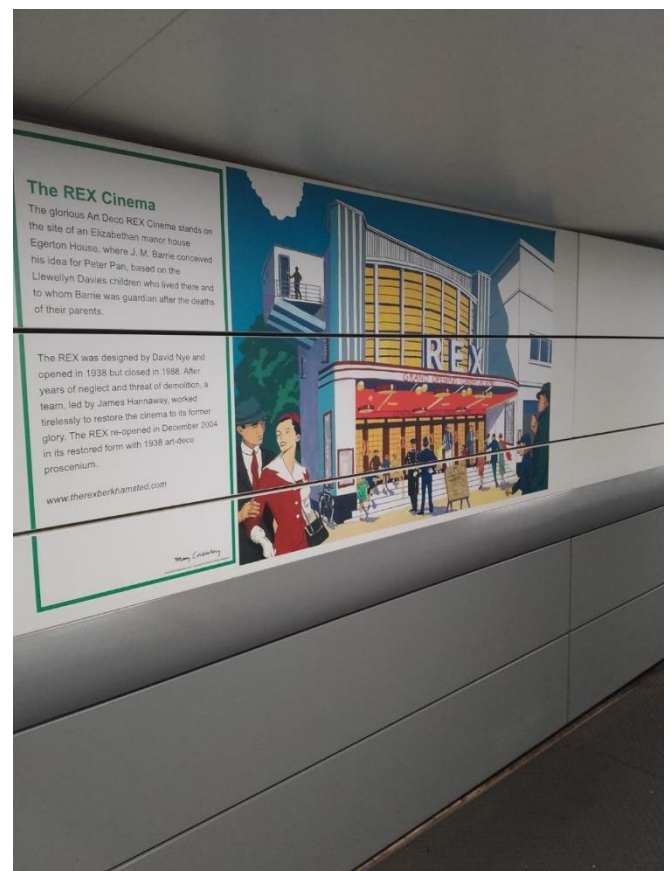
Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Currently all business conducted by the Society must be done under the names of the Trustees and not under the name of the Society. Consequently, the Trustees are personally liable for the debts or obligations that could arise. To alleviate this risk the Trustees would like to change the Society to a new form of charity called a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO for short) which provides limited liability for trustees. This change, which will require the formal agreement of the membership in due course, will mean that a new governing document will need to be drawn up and registered with the Charity Commission and the existing bank accounts closed and replaced by new

ones in the name of the new Charity. The only impact that this change would have on the existing members is that those paying their annual membership fees by standing order or bank transfer will need to update them to reflect the new bank details. When the Trustees are ready to make this change the membership will be asked for their agreement to proceed.

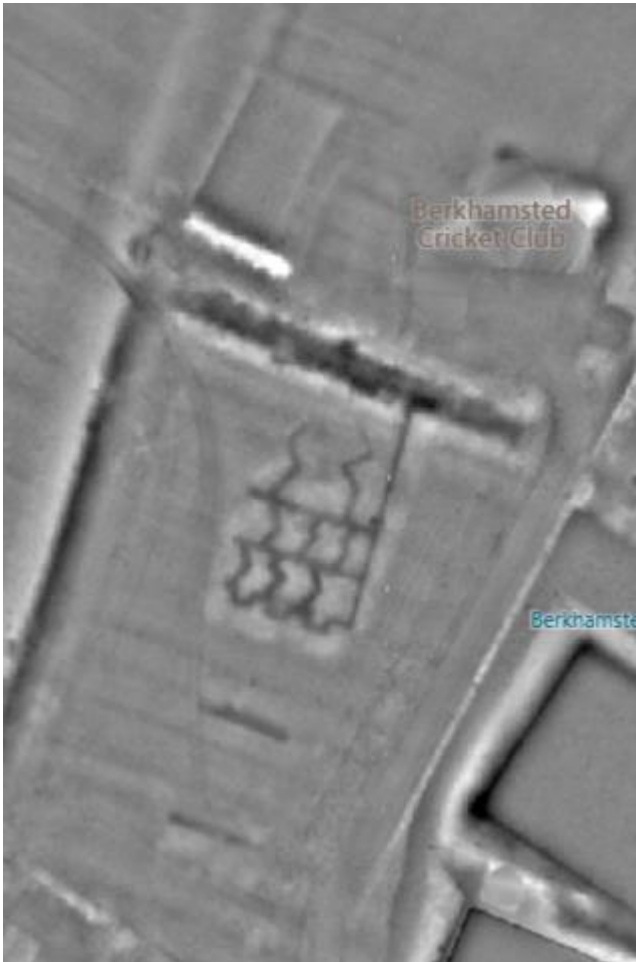
Berkhamsted Station underpass has had a makeover.

Commuters and passengers can now learn a little of the town's history alongside pictures by Mary Casserley of some Berkhamsted landmarks including the Castle, canal, school, church and the Rex cinema. Funding for this project came from West Midlands Trains, organised by The Friends of Berkhamsted Station (who plant up the areas in front of and behind the station). Mary is delighted to have had the opportunity to donate her images free of charge to this project for the good of the town.



New Scheduled Monument

We are pleased to announce that the society have been successful in its application to gain scheduled monument status for the First World War Training Trenches and associated earthworks south of Berkhamsted Cricket Club, Castle Hill, Berkhamsted.



LiDAR showing the earthworks

The area known as the Labyrinth near the cricket club is separate from the more extensive trench system on the Common and is located close to the main training ground of Kitchener's Field. The Inns of Court OTC book states: "On July 17th [in 1917] the construction of the labyrinth in Kitchener's Field was commenced." Wayne Cocroft of Historic England has advised that the Labyrinth trenches: 'are quite a small set but appear to be well preserved as earthworks and display the classic features of a First World War trench system. They also appear to be linked with a named unit with a very precise construction date. The next page of the unit diary tells us a cow fell into the trenches and died! Given their compactness they may be for acquainting troops with trench layouts and routines, or possibly they may have been dug as demonstration trenches for public fund raising events, assuming the photograph of the labyrinth is of this area, they are certainly textbook

examples constructed to a very high standard. He states that the Labyrinth: appears to represent a crenelated frontline to the south with rear zig-zag communications trenches and secondary trench lines. There also appear to be two parallel hollows to their south, these may possibly be for bomb (grenade) throwing.



Image of the finished Labyrinth



Training exercises at the Labyrinth



During WW1 13,800 men passed through the corps in Berkhamsted and nearly 12,000 gained commissions

Kings Road Planning Application

A planning application was submitted to Dacorum Borough Council by Kings Rd Church in January 2024 for a 240-seat auditorium, café, and offices on the busy Kings Rd. The site is central to the Conservation Area, surrounded by homes, and the 4-storey scheme would take up all the land. Along with many others the Committee thought it advisable to object on grounds of the inappropriate scale and height in the designated heritage area, and the impact from lack of parking and drop off space. Subsequently the Town Council also objected. To view all comments plus the plans and elevations, visit the Borough Council's planning application webpages, and search for reference 24/00127/FUL.

Dacorum Heritage 30:30 Project

The Society has received an invitation to participate in the 30:30 Project set up by Dacorum Heritage, and here is the description from DH. *"Dacorum Heritage Trust has been granted initial support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to embark on a transformative project, Dacorum Heritage 30:30, announced today. This significant funding of £91,000 will enable the Trust to conduct a comprehensive analysis and planning initiative, shaping the future of heritage services in the Dacorum area. The Dacorum Heritage 30:30 project, aligning with the Trust's 30th anniversary and projecting 30 years into the future, commences in December, and concludes in April 2024. This ambitious undertaking involves a series of scoping studies and action plans, including a stakeholder consultation exercise, collections condition review, physical infrastructure requirements statement, volunteer development plan, and fundraising feasibility study. The project aims to address urgent challenges faced by Dacorum Heritage Trust, to ensure a sustainable and conducive home that enables it to operate at its full potential as a heritage facility".*

The Society is keen to work closely with DH to ensure good co-ordination of services and future outcomes, within the context of providing a good Berkhamsted specific offering. We have discussed options with the Project's appointed consultants, the Audience Agency.

BLHMS 75th Anniversary

We will be 75 years old in 2025. A subgroup of the committee met recently to start planning our approach to the anniversary. It was decided that our collection is very rich in 19th and early 20th century content, but we lack content from 1950 onwards. To correct this, we are

planning to reach out the community (past and present) to help build our content. We have agreed three main headings.

- My first house and garden in Berkhamsted
- My teenage memories of Berkhamsted
- My memories of Coopers and Wellcome

Our plans are very much in their infancy. We are currently looking for a platform to collect contributions and looking at the possibility of grants to assist with an online platform.

Peter the Wild Boy

2024 is the 300th anniversary of the discovery of 'Peter the Wild Boy' in a forest in northern Germany, and 2025 will see the 300th anniversary of him being brought to England. St Mary's Northchurch was approached by Hamelin Museum in Germany regarding the possibility of the church collaborating with them in a new project to celebrate the life of 'Peter the Wild Boy' and to look at how children with disabilities have been perceived and treated by society over the last 300 or so years. Hamelein Museum visited the UK in November to progress their exhibition. This will be on display in Germany and there is a possibility of bringing it to Berkhamsted. If only we had a display area/location in the town.



Mary Casserley, Chairman