



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 Summer newsletter 2024

Membership update

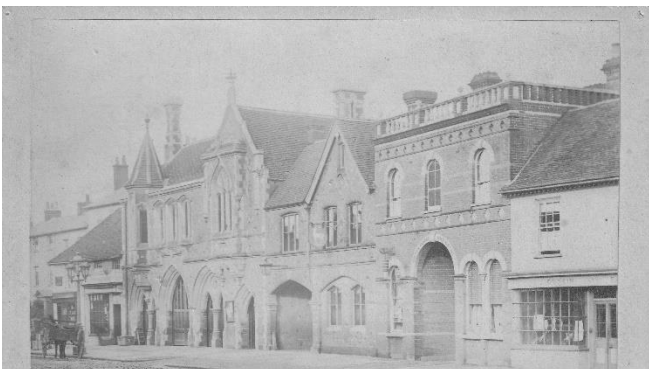
We have 142 paid up Households (**196** members) 18 unpaid Households (**25** members). We would like to welcome 3 new members since February. Additionally, we have **5** Life members (3 Households)

Old Photographs

For this newsletter we have pulled some images of the Town Hall area over the years.



Early photograph from the 1859 or 1860 showing the newly built Town Hall. The large late Georgian buildings to the left were demolished to make way for Lower Kings Road. Note the cottage to the left of the image.



A later image shows the White Hart Public House and the Waterworks to the left of the Town Hall. Note there is no clock on the Town Hall and the large late Georgian buildings are still visible.



An Edwardian image showing the clock on the Town Hall, the late Georgian buildings (demolished in 1885) have been replaced by Lower Kings Road.



An image taken in 1994. The White Hart was demolished in the 1970's.

Chronicle article wins a BALH award.

The British Association for Local History's Publication awards 2024 recognises the value of local journals. This year Louise Keil won third place in the long articles section with her Henry Lane & Son of Berkhamsted 1798 to 1945 in The Chronicle, vol. XX, Mar 2023. Alan Crosby, Editor of the Local Historian commented "It appeared in The Chronicle which is the journal of the Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society. The Chronicle is a fairly modest publication, it's not big and glossy, it's fairly modest and it has a relatively low budget for a small Society, but it produces good work and this is an example of that". WELL DONE LOUISE

BLHMS 75th Anniversary

As we mentioned in the last Newsletter, for our 75th Anniversary we are planning to reach out to the community (past and present) to help build our archive content with pictures and memories from the past 75 years. We have agreed three main headings.

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

On 3rd August we will be manning a stall outside Tesco's to start to generate interest. Come along and have a chat with us.

Berkhamsted Heritage Open Days 2024

6-15th September 2024

Every year there is a new theme to the festival and this year it is **Routes, Networks and Connections**. Berkhamsted, being the historical town that it is, has a wealth of historical connections, transport routes and social and economic networks tied up with special local places and historical characters with past links to Berkhamsted. So, come along and find out the history of special places that can normally be out of bounds and hear the untold stories of some special people.



This year the dates in the UK are 6-15th September 2024. **All events are FREE**, but places must be booked beforehand. Spaces are limited, so early booking is recommended. Bookings open from **5th August 2024** on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>

We have some exciting new walks planned this year, incorporating the new theme of **Routes, Networks and Connections**:-

'Kings, Queens, Dragons and Dungeons' - explains some of the royal escape routes to and from the castle. A guided tour through Berkhamsted looks at past travel routes starting at the siting of the first toll road and how

ancient and modern routes shaped Berkhamsted over the years and a railway walk takes a stroll around the site of the original railway station to discover why this was moved!

Some of our old favourite walks and tours are also included this year eg:-

- Memories of the Foundling Hospital,
- A visit to Berkhamsted Place and
- A tour of St Peters Church and the Tudor Court House

Plus, many more old favourites.

Information can also be found on the following websites:-

Berkhamsted History Society website for dates and times - <https://berkhamsted-history.org.uk/>

Eventbrite for booking spaces -

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/> - open from 5th August 2024

Heritage Open Days website for more informed details - <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>

There will be more Heritage Open Days events being held at the Castle and at Rectory Lane Cemetery.

Keep them peeled 😊

We recently noticed this manhole cover in the road outside the Crystal Palace. The writing on it says, "The Bury Iron Works Co Berkhamstead".



We had never heard of this company and so a little investigation started. In our digital archive we have several old directories. The 1929 directory shows Bury Irons at 15b High Street (Mrs Pocock is at 15 and E

Winter at 15a). The works are listed again in 1934 at 15b High Street. Kellys Directory for 1922 list Albert Kempster as an Iron Founder at 15 High Street, Berkhamsted. Albert is also listed in the same directory as a Blacksmith at The Boat Inn Yard, Gravel Path.

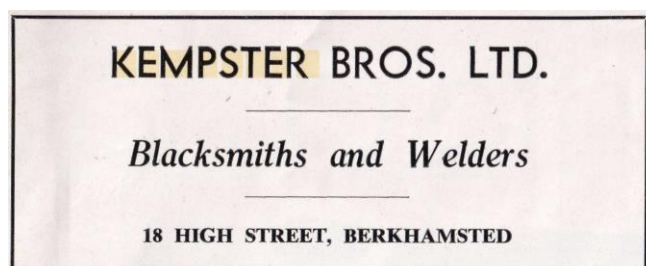
Albert Kempster (aged 42) is listed on the 1921 census at 66 Ellesmere Road, he is a Shoeing & General Smith and Iron Founder. His son, also Albert, is a moulder working for his father at 15 High Street. The drain cover would have been cast by making a mould, probably out of sand. The molten iron would then be poured into the cast to create the finished article.

It's difficult to establish how long Albert Kempster ran the Bury Foundry. The directories before WW1 show Charles Pocock, blacksmith at 15 High Street. We know from various sources that Pocock's was a well-established forge at the east end of the High Street. Charles Pocock died in 1918, his widow continued to live at 15 High Street. It is likely that Albert Kempster took over the business around this time. He was certainly there in 1921 and the electoral registers list the Bury Foundry from 1925 to 1929.



An early image of Pocock's forge at 15 High Street.

By the time of the 1970/71 directory, we have Kempster's grocery retailers at number 9, Kempster Brothers engineers agricultural at number 13 and Kempster Bros. Ltd blacksmiths and welders at 18 High Street.



Advert from 1970/71 directory.

When the High Street was renumbered in the 1950's number 15 became number 13 High Street. The premises later became the Tool Hire business until it was demolished for new housing.



Image Google Maps from 2016 when the old sign for Kempster Bros. Ltd was revealed under the Tool Hire signage.

Can you tell us anymore about Bury Ironworks or Kempster's? Are you aware of any more pieces of their work around the town?

Re-Connecting Berkhamsted Castle

Berkhamsted Castle Trust is working with LUC to undertake a feasibility study on surrounding land that once formed a medieval park.



The study area

The study is funded by the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and a grant from The Marchus Trust, and seeks to establish the potential for creating a park with a shared vision to celebrate the rich historic and

cultural heritage of the landscape linked to Berkhamsted Castle.

Berkhamsted Castle deer park was a critical part of the historic landscape for nearly 400 years until it was disemparked in the late 17th century. Its distinctive layout is still preserved today in the line of field boundaries to the north of the town. Although intrinsically linked with the castle, the deer park was so much more than a playground for the rich, it was a carefully managed sustainable resource providing timber, meat, fuel, and revenue to the royal household.

A deer park was a hunting ground, timber source and status symbol of wealthy aristocrats who had the privilege to enclose land for private use. The park was a carefully managed landscape and was surrounded by a 'park pale'; a sizeable fence to keep deer in and poachers out. Deer parks were a prominent feature of the British landscape until they were either broken up and converted into agricultural land or incorporated into post-medieval country estates.

Berkhamsted Castle Trust would like to better understand potential opportunities to bring out the story of the landscape.

It is recognised that some ideas will be aspirational given that the landscape beyond the immediate surroundings of Berkhamsted Castle has multiple owners, site considerations and constraints.

Recent enquiries

The society receives enquires from all over the world. We recently received an enquiry asking if we knew anything about Thomas Lee of Barkhamsted Common. A collector from Welwyn has an large earthenware flagon. The body is inscribed "Thomas Lee Barkhamsted Common 1808"

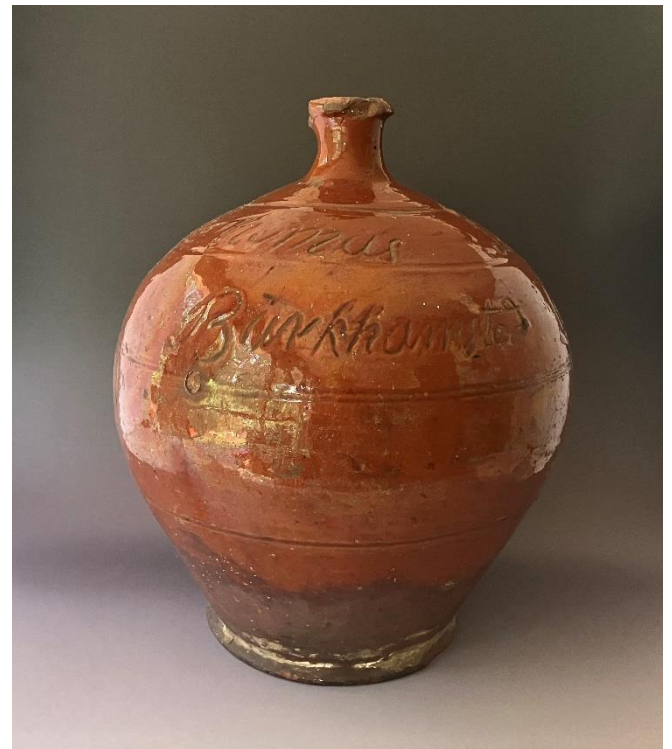
Unfortunately, we were unable to find any records. There appears to be no connection with H Lee & Sons, Henry Lee took over the Mineral Water business from William Bartlett in the 1870's. As far as we can tell Henry had no relatives called Thomas.

There is no mention of Thomas Lee in the 1794 Universal Trade Directory or in the 1839 Tithe Map. In our collection we have a rate book dating from 1789 to 1805. Again, there is no mention of Thomas Lee in 1805 for the Common or anywhere else in Berkhamsted.

The collector tells us that usually a flagon like this would have been made at a local pottery and the name and other information on the pot would have been that

of the person ordering the pot. It is unusually large, and he thinks it may have been made for commercial purposes.

Has anyone any ideas who Thomas Lee was???



Mary Casserley, Chairman