



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society
CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2012

Society matters Local members will already know that our President, Leslie Mitchell, passed away in October. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Joan, the children and grandchildren. Les was a great character and had a wealth of knowledge of local history. We are touched that he remembered the Society in his Will and that the family donated a large part of the retiring collection at his memorial service to us as well. We also report the death of Glynden Trollope and Joan Cook and extend our condolences to their families too. The news has just reached me that Polly Rafter has passed away. She was Art mistress at the Girls' School for many years and in recent years has illustrated calendars, notelets etc with views of Berkhamsted. She will be greatly missed.

Meetings Since September our meetings have been held in the Wellcome Hall at the Town Hall. We are gradually becoming accustomed to the change after years of using the Civic Centre. For our September meeting we welcomed Eileen Wallace, formerly Education Officer for HALS to speak on 'The Working Lives of the Labouring Poor'. Her book 'Children of the Labouring Poor' is well worth reading and unlike many books on our County contains a number of references to Berkhamsted and Dacorum. Our October meeting was a comprehensive recorded talk with excellent illustrations, entitled 'The Royal Palace of Kings Langley,' by Richard Boustred. Our November talk was a well-documented talk by Alison Wall on 'Pest Houses and Public Health.' Our December meeting is a talk by Alfred Fisher MBE, former stained glass advisor to English Heritage and the National Trust. He has entitled his talk 'The Story of Stained Glass.' This will be followed by seasonal drinks and mince pies.

Heritage Open Days 2012 These were on the whole well supported with the tours of the British Film Institute again being heavily over-subscribed in spite of the number of tours being doubled. We also had to close the bookings for the two tours, 'A Walk into the Past-Berkhamsted Place, Successor to the Castle' in which we were also able to include the Great Barn, since the house accompanying the barn is not yet sold. It is hoped we can repeat this next year. We are also hoping to include another site in the High Street next year if the owners agree. I am grateful to the very many people involved in the HODs, not all of them Society members, for their assistance.

The Castle 2012 season First of all I am very grateful for the assistance of the many members, assisted by members of BDAS, NADFAS and Rotary, who have acted as stewards at the Visitor Room or helped with guided tours for schools and other groups. In the course of the year we gave guided tours to 20 groups, including three groups of Beavers, a group of young people from Malta and one from Spain, a group from Mencap and a group from the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust, as well as 3 WBIT groups. The HBPT and the 'Walk Back in Time' tours included tours of the historic sites of the town centre. In the course of the year 3,240 visited the Visitor Room, which was fewer than last year, but bad weather, the Olympics and Jubilee celebrations no doubt contributed to this. Parking has become an increasing problem making it difficult for stewards and visitors.

Most of you will be aware that five events, masterminded by Paul Rozelaar, of Berkeley Galleries, took place at the Castle this year. The future of such events will be discussed at the next Castle Liaison Group meeting. A number of you will have seen the damage done to the turf in the bailey, either by badgers or deer. Similar damage has never happened before.

DHT Matters. In August Isobel Aptaker, Curator of DHT, left for a new post at Alexandra Palace. Meanwhile Nina Glencross has been Acting Curator. Interviews for the post of Curator will be held on 20th December. Some of you will have seen reference to a possible DHT Museum at the Bury in Queensway, Hemel Hempstead, in last week's Gazette. This is still in the early stages and is dependent on a successful lottery bid. It is still, however, the aim of this Society to achieve a Museum for Berkhamsted.

'Berkhamsted Through Time' The Society is producing a book for the Amberley Press in their series 'Through Time'. This compares photos then and now. It is likely to be out in the spring. The bulk of the work has been done by Ken Wallis.

Nominations for the Committee It is still several months to our AGM but we are currently without a President and also without an Archivist. Last March Jimmie Honour resigned from that post but has very nobly continued working in that capacity, but does not want to do so after March 2013 at the latest. Suggested nominations for both posts would be gratefully received.

Subscriptions for 2013 Subscriptions for 2013 fall due on 1st January. Renewal forms are enclosed.

**I wish you all a Happy Christmas and
a Happy and Healthy New Year!
Jenny Sherwood, December 2012**

