



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

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Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society
SPRING NEWSLETTER 2013

Society Matters I am sorry to have to report the death of two of our long-standing members, Andrew Wilson of Castle Street, who was a prominent member of the Book Plate Society and, more recently, of Rhoda Whitehouse, who was a regular attendee with her husband Lewis at meetings until the last two years. We extend our condolences to both of the families. The family of the late John Ponsonby has very kindly donated a large number of history books, which belonged to John, a history graduate and teacher for many years. A list is attached. Please contact me if you are interested in having any. They are mostly in very good condition. The family of the late Polly Rafter has donated a number of paintings, photos and books to the Society's collection. They include a Harry Sheldon and an Agnes Turner painting. There is shortly to be an exhibition of Polly's own paintings in the Gallery above the Way Inn. Those who are also members of the Friends of Dacorum Museum will be very sorry to hear that Margaret Stanyon, their Chairman, died suddenly on 3rd March.

Meetings For our December meeting Alfred Fisher gave us a very enjoyable comprehensive talk on stained glass and in January we were able to delve into Colin Oakes' family history with 'An Abbots Langley Butcher's Day Book of 1828'. Last month Ros Partridge gave us a most interesting talk on the 'History of Sunnyside Church' and its community. There has been some concern about the amplification system in the Town Hall recently. We are addressing this and I hope we shall soon be able to use the radio aid again.

Summer Outings Some outings are again being planned in conjunction with PROBUS. On 16th May there is an outing to the Jockey Club and National Stud at Newmarket, on 20th June the day is devoted to 'The Rothschilds and the Vale of Aylesbury', including Halton House and the new Archive Building at Waddeson. On 21st July there is a visit to Chinnor Railway and on 19th September the outing is to Waltham Abbey and the William Morris Museum at Walthamstow. Further details from Bill Willett on 01442 863760 or bill@billwillett.co.uk

Heritage Open Days 12th-15 September 2013 I know it is sometime hence but plans for this year's events are well under way. Full details will be available on the Society's website, probably in June and on the HOD website in July. We shall be including many of the old favourites but also more recent additions, such as the BFI at Kingshill, and

Berkhamsted Place. We are hoping we can also introduce a new one, but that is not yet confirmed. Any members who have missed the BFI in the past will need to be quick off the mark, but I am not taking bookings until about June, although I received my first request at the beginning of February!

DHT Matters The new Curator, Dr. Paul Hyman, took up office in February. We were pleased to welcome him at our January meeting. A number of members work regularly in the Museum Store, working on the Society's collection and assisting the Curator in other ways. Jimmie Honour has finally retired as Archivist since we now have someone willing to take over from him.

'Berkhamsted Through Time' This is currently with the printers and I am assured by Amberley Press that it will be available in time for Easter, if not for our meeting on 13th March.

Chronicle X This is available with your Spring Newsletter. It is the last issue under the editorship of Tony Statham. We are grateful for his assistance and direction in the last ten years. We shall be looking for a new editor for next year's production.

New Lodge Members who live at the eastern end of the town and anyone driving to Bourne End will have noticed the clearance of the large site of New Lodge and some will have noticed the house, the existence of which they may have been unaware. New Lodge was used for many years as a dower house for Ashlyns Hall, being purchased by James Smith, the father of Augustus Smith early in the 19th century. Unfortunately the house is in a sorry state having been sadly neglected by the last owner and further vandalised since it has been empty. It is hoped that it may still be saved from demolition. Interesting finds have been made during excavations of the site, evidence of several structures, mostly dating from the 18th century but at least one from the 17th century or earlier. A kiln or similar industrial feature has been uncovered and ditches with 13th century pottery. These finds would seem to confirm the historical research that was carried out some years ago which indicated that New Lodge was on the site of the original Townsend Farm. We await the archaeological report with interest.

Subscriptions These were due on 1st January. If you have overlooked this, our Membership Secretary would be pleased to receive it.

Meetings for the new season Our Programme Secretary is currently working on the arrangements for next year's programme. Details will be available with the summer newsletter and on the Society website as soon as arranged. The first meeting will take place at 8pm on Wednesday 11th September in the Town Hall.

Have a good summer! I look forward to seeing you again in September if not before.

Jenny Sherwood March 2013