



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

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

Society Matters I am very sorry to have to report the death of Kathleen Matthews and very recently also of John Bradshaw. We extend our deepest sympathy to Keith and all the family and to Lesley and all her family at their sad loss. John had helped for a number of years with the Heritage Open Days at Ashlyns School, checking in visitors and lighting visitors to the crypt with a large lantern. We shall miss his cheerful presence.

Summer Outings The last two summer outings, one to Chinnor and one to the William Morris Museum and Waltham Abbey went well and were well supported. The Chinnor outing had the added advantage of a talk from Lord Carrington.

Meetings The first talk of the season had the somewhat unusual title of '*The Gruesome History of Body Snatching*,' but Robert Stephenson, City of London and Kensal Green Cemetery Guide, gave a well-researched and fascinating history of this rather morbid subject. This was followed in October by a talk by Trixie Brabner, one of our members and archivist at Halton House. Trixie told us of the history of the house from the time of the Rothschilds in the 1880s to today when the house now belongs to the RAF. This was followed in November by an interesting, lively and well-illustrated talk entitled '*The history of Coleshill – a village once in Hertfordshire*.' We look forward in December to hearing Professor Roger Plumb of the Rothamsted Research Station speaking on '*Rothamsted: 800 years of History*,' before we break for seasonal drinks and mince pies.

Heritage Open Days 12th-15th September These were well-supported in the main although the afternoon tour of the castle was affected by the inclement weather. Once again the BFI was oversubscribed and Berkhamsted Place and the Foundling Hospital were especially popular.

DHT Matters Dacorum Borough Council has now given official backing to DHT's Heritage Lottery bid to obtain a grant to refurbish the Bury in Hemel Hempstead as a Museum for Dacorum. The details of the first phase of the bid are now being finalised. Nine members of the Society work regularly in the Museum Store, accessioning documents and artefacts, carrying out research and assisting in curatorial tasks.

The Castle The number of visitors to the Visitors' Room recorded this year was just short of 4,000. This included a large number of School and adult groups, Cubs and Beavers, a group from Age Concern and from a

Special Needs school, not forgetting the Spanish children who come every year. We are grateful for the support of all those who act as stewards, mostly from the Society but also from the Archaeological Society, NADFAS and Rotary. Especial thanks go to Brian Norris who nobly draws up the rota for us. I should also like to thank our small team of guides, especially Ken Wallis, who help with school and adult groups and the '*Walk Back in Time*' tours.

Books I still have a number of books given to us by the family of the late John Ponsonby. Please let me know if interested. We also have copies of '*Berkhamsted, a History and Celebration*' and the accompanying Quiz book, books from the former '*Book Stack*' which we are selling at a very favourable price. '*Berkhamsted Through Time*' is selling well and has received several favourable reviews.

Chronicle XI We are working on this now. If anyone has interesting research they would like to share please do let us know. Copy has to be ready by mid-February.

Commemoration of World War I Several members of the committee are researching the names and stories of those who served and lost their lives in WWI in readiness to produce a book about Berkhamsted during those years and its aftermath. If any member has particular family memories or connections they would like to share with us please do let me know. The Society is linked up with various other organisations in Berkhamsted, which are arranging events over the next four years.

Subscriptions These fall due on 1st January 2014. You will see from the enclosed subscription renewal form that you now have the opportunity of paying by direct bank transfer or by standing order if you so wish. You may of course pay in the same way as you have always done.

Society website If you have not looked at the Society website recently please do so. I receive information on all sorts of events and courses in the area which I try to advertise at meetings but also on our website. We also have a most interesting Facebook, which anyone may look at and read whether they are enrolled with Facebook or not. There are many extracts from the press over the years with delightful snippets of local history. The website address is www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk

**I wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful
New Year and look forward to seeing you at our next meeting
in the Town Hall on 15th January 2014**

Jenny Sherwood December 2013