



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2016

SOCIETY MATTERS We have had two interesting meetings since the New Year. In January Julie Wakefield titled her talk 'Medieval Wall Paintings and the Medieval World View' illustrating her talk almost entirely with examples from Piccotts End and St Albans Abbey. This stimulated some interesting discussion. In February we were entertained by Kevin Varty telling us of the early magic lanterns with 'Pictures in the Parlour'. We will be concluding this season's indoor talks which follows our AGM in March with a talk on discoveries at Ashridge in recent excavations, when our retiring Programme Secretary, Ken Wallis, will give a talk 'From Business College to Monastery'

SUMMER OUTINGS All-day joint outings with PROBUS are being arranged, 2nd June Cromer Windmill and Henry Moore Foundation, Much Hadham. 4th August Lullingstone Roman villa and Chartwell (Churchill) 20th September Strawberry Hill and Ham House. Further details and bookings on 01442 863760 or Bill@billwillett.co.uk

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 8TH-11TH SEPTEMBER We are still at the initial stages of organising these and are hoping to try out some new ideas. It is still not too late to make suggestions. We need to register nationally by the end of April to meet the first deadline. The full programme will be included with the Summer Newsletter.

COMMEMORATION OF THE SIEGE OF 1216 The Committee is still in negotiation with the Medieval Siege Society and with English Heritage over the possibility of staging this event in June. There are a large number of difficulties to overcome when dealing with an unmanned site, which normally has free entry, not to mention the restrictions as an archaeological site. If it goes ahead it will take place on the weekend of 11th-12th June. In this event we shall need a great deal of support from members to help with stewarding etc.

THE ALDERNEY BAYEUX TAPESTRY FINALE We have been given the opportunity of displaying this in Berkhamsted as a contribution to one of the many anniversaries being commemorated this year. It is being displayed in a museum in Battle before coming to Berkhamsted. It was offered to Westminster following the depiction of William being crowned at Westminster Abbey, but that has been declined. We have only been able to book a hall for 4 days in a row, November 2nd -5th because of regular bookings. If the Alderney people agree it could be displayed then for a week in the Visitor Room at the Castle. Many of you will remember when

in the 1990s we displayed Jan Messent's Bayeux Finale. This Alderney one is based on her tapestry.

PERCY BIRCHNELL MEMORIAL PRIZE 2016 Children from Year IV of the Thomas Coram C of E Junior School will again be participating in this competition, the topic of which will be the 'Foundling Hospital in Berkhamsted'. The Society awards two prizes of £20 book tokens for the projects, which are carried out in the children's own time.

CHRONICLE XIII The latest volume of the Chronicle is included with this newsletter. There is a variety of articles, some long, some short. I hope you will all find something of interest. Once again we have an article by a PhD student who requested access to the Society archives and in return has written an interesting article on Berkhamsted's soup kitchen. Those of you who have spent two hours in the Castle Visitors' Room on a cold wet day would no doubt think longingly of the hot soup, which was once dished out to the poor from within those walls.

AN ACCOLADE FOR THE SOCIETY. Last year, for the first time, I sent a copy of the Chronicle to the British Association of Local History. We recently learnt that we have been awarded a prize. Linda Rollitt has been placed 4th in the category of short articles for 'The Church Rates Controversy.' We have both received complimentary tickets to this year's 'History Day.'

A MUSEUM FOR BERKHAMSTED ever since our Society was founded in 1950 our dream has been to have a museum for Berkhamsted. At present there are two possibilities of premises, which may be practicable. This is particularly important when the Museum Store in Berkhamsted no longer has the space to take any more collections of any size.

RECTORY LANE CEMETERY PROJECT I am sure most of you will be aware that this project was successful in its HLF bid in the Parks and Gardens Section. There is a great deal of work to do and more volunteers are needed. There is a stall in the market every last Saturday morning of the month where more information is available, or check the website for contact details www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk

CASTLE VISITOR ROOM We are opening for the Easter weekend and then from the beginning of May until the end of September on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. We are very grateful for the large number of members, aided by members of BDAS, Rotary and NADFAS who act as stewards and particularly to Brian Norris who masterminds the rota. We offer guided tours to schools and adult groups throughout the year. I am grateful to those who assist with these. I wish you all a good summer and look forward to seeing you at the next meeting on September 14th if not before. **Jenny Sherwood. February 2016**