



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2016

SOCIETY MATTERS Since our summer newsletter was written two of our long-standing members both born and bred in Berkhamsted have passed away. Barbara Ross donated many photographs and other memorabilia to the Society's Collection. She died in July, aged 91. In September Gerald Gudgin also died aged 91. For a number of years he served on the Committee and donated his memories of the Sunnyside area of the town.

The season of indoor talks started with an Edwardian snapshot of Berkhamsted School for Girls by Louise Gent, which gave us a glimpse of some very different lives led by two Old Girls. This was followed in October by Ken Griffen who told us of the crimes and fates of various Berkhamsted convicts between 1770 and 1870. In our November meeting Jelena Belkvac, of the Museum of London spoke to us of the fairly new science of human osteology, the study of bones and skeletons unearthed during excavations. We stay with archaeology for our December meeting when Alex Thompson will speak to us on Roman remains along the Bulbourne valley. We will end the evening with Christmas drinks and mince pies.

The last of this year's summer outings took place in September when a very successful visit was paid to Ham House and Strawberry Hill.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 8TH – 11TH SEPTEMBER 2016 These were all, with the exception of the Town Hall, well supported, with numbers being high. Only the heavy rain on Saturday afternoon restricted the numbers of some outdoor events. The Festival of Light at Rectory Lane Cemetery was a great attraction and made a most moving end to this year's HODs.

A LIVING HISTORY EVENT AT BERKHAMSTED CASTLE

Earlier in the year we were unsuccessful in obtaining permission from English Heritage to stage a re-enactment event by the Medieval Siege Society mainly because appropriate English Heritage staff were preoccupied with their major commemorative events. It may be possible to stage a lower key 'Living History' event next year. This would entail a large body of positive help and time to make the event a success. Would you be prepared to support actively such a venture?

ALDERNEY BAYEUX TAPESTRY FINALE EXHIBITION This took place in the first two weeks in November with four days at the Civic Centre and five days in Old Hall, Berkhamsted School, for school parties

only. Approximately 900 people visited the exhibition. Accompanying the tapestry and an explanatory text were pop-up stands giving a brief outline of the history of various aspects of the town. There have been a number of requests for the text of these either in 'booklet' form or on loan as a whole or part.

A MUSEUM FOR BERKHAMSTED There have been several meetings of the Museum Sub-group with representatives from the Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust, BTC, BDAS and BLHMS. We are currently about to submit the initial Resilient Enquiry form, which if successful, starts the HLF bid process.

UNVEILING OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR The bronze statue of William the Conqueror was unveiled in the Castle grounds by Professor David Bates on the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings. An appropriate place for the permanent display of the sculpture is still being sought.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR DAVID BATES A public lecture is to be held on Friday 7th April 2017 in Old Hall, Berkhamsted School, given by Professor Bates on 'Why the English submission to William the Conqueror still matters'. Questions will be invited from the audience and Professor Bates will sign copies of his latest book on William. The bust will also be exhibited. Tickets cost £5. Students are free. To book your place contact jculverhouse@btinternet.com

DAVID PEARCE November saw the passing of a well-known and well-loved citizen of Berkhamsted, David Pearce. Although he was never a member of the Society he was always supportive of our activities. One of his many interests was the history of the town, especially of the School. Members will remember his talk on Dean Incent and more especially his dramatisation of Thomas Dupre and the neglect of his duties.

RESEARCH QUERIES AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION. These continue to come in from all over the world through Facebook and the website or directly by email. They cover a wide range of topics. We also receive many requests for back numbers of 'the Chronicle' from people researching particular topics.

WWI AND BERKHAMSTED ON THE HOME FRONT. Work is proceeding steadily on this book and it is scheduled to be launched in 2018, probably at a County led exhibition in Berkhamsted devoted to WWI. Full details will be available later.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2017 Subscriptions for the coming year are due on 1st January. In accordance with the resolution passed at the AGM in March the new rates are as follows: single members £10, couples £15 per annum. For the subscription you can attend lectures free and also receive three newsletters a year together with 'the Chronicle'.

A Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year to you all!