



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

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www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

Summer Newsletter 2018



This is the Hatchment to ERI in St Peter's Church, restored, and unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II on her visit to Berkhamsted in 2017

First, the Heritage Open days. This year they run over two weekends, **September 6-9th and 13-16th**

Remember, they are all free! (See the list at the end of this Newsletter). And many, many thanks to Jenny for once again organising these open days that are so worthwhile and fun. It is local History Fortnight - Spread the word; they are open to **ALL** and **FREE** not just the members of our society, so tell your friends and neighbours.

While we are thanking, also many thanks for the volunteers who man the Visitor Room at the Castle. Would anyone like to help doing group tours (mainly school and young persons groups) of the Castle?

With this newsletter you will be getting your programme card and it will show our talks beginning in September and into next year. The first talk is about the Town's Coat of Arms which was granted 400 years ago this September. We are honoured by being given this talk by one of the three Kings of Arms, Patric Dickinson, Clarenceux King of Arms. But, the Coat of Arms of Berkhamsted has never been officially granted!, and what is more, the form that appears all over the place is not as shown on the original grant. It costs a lot of money to have the Queen to sign the documents that grant the town their official Coat of Arms, and steps are afoot to rectify this matter. If you would be interested in pledging a contribution towards the cost of applying for the Royal Warrant, please email Adrian Barham (adrian.barham@blhms.org.uk or 07834163065).

As I have reported earlier in the year Adrian Barham, a Committee member, set up the **Berkhamsted Castle Trust**, and on the 11th of May the President of the American Pharmaceutical Company, Mallinckrodt, officially handed over the documents giving the piece of land to the East of the Castle to the Trust. This was a grand affair attended by the local dignitaries and our MP, David Gauke, then newly appointed as Minister of Justice, or as they used to be called, Lord Chancellor. The latter gave a short speech. This was of course held in the Castle bailey. The gift of the land was also joined with a substantial cheque to set the new Trust into financial motion. If there is such a thing as Freedom of Berkhamsted, then the President of Mallinckrodt should be offered it.

We have two more coach trips this season. August 2nd to **Althorpe** and the **Charles Rennie Mackintosh house** in Northampton, and on 27th September to **Blenheim Palace**. If you wanted to go, get in touch with Bill Willett (01442 863760 or bill@billwillett.co.uk) Cost is in the £30-35 range.

New season talks: all on Wednesday evenings in the Town Hall, 8pm

September 26th. William Camden and the 1618 grant of arms to the Borough of Berkhamsted. Patric Dickinson, Clarenceux King of Arms and Secretary to the Order of the Garter will talk about the granting of Berkhamsted's coat of arms and about William Camden, the eminent antiquary who in his day was also Clarenceux King of Arms actually made the grant.

October 17th. The Prison at Norman Cross: The Lost Town of Huntingdonshire. This talk tells the story of the prisoners through the prison economy: who made money, how, why, and what that money was used for. It is a story of bone ships, domino boxes, forgery of banknotes and bribery of soldiers. It also explains why such a prison was built at this site, and what remains of the prison today. Paul Chamberlain has a life-long interest in the Napoleonic era, writing and lecturing extensively on the subject, with a

specialist interest in prisoners of war of that period. His book *The Napoleonic Prison of Norman Cross: The Lost Town of Huntingdonshire* was published in March 2018.

November 14th. Daniel Axtell: The Berkhamsted Regicide. Murray Neil is a Trustee and Committee member of the Tring Local History and Museum Society and the author of *The Washingtons of Tring*. Daniel Axtell, from Berkhamsted, fought as a Parliamentary soldier in the Civil Wars in England and Ireland. He was the Captain of the Guard at the trial of King Charles I and, as a result, he was deemed to be a Regicide and paid the ultimate penalty. The talk is set in the context of the Civil Wars and the fate of the other Regicides together with information on the Axtell family descendants in America.

December 12th. Historic Gardens around Berkhamsted. Kate Harwood is the Planning and Conservation Officer for Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and a former university lecturer (in Garden History). The talk will be about the historic gardens around Berkhamsted, from Capability Brown to the Arts and Crafts.

January 16th 2019. Art & Design in the Chilterns. Dr Graham Twemlow writes and lectures on design history and decorative arts subjects. The Chilterns have played host to many artists and craftsmen. Graham's talk will focus on some of the 20th century artists who either made the Chilterns their home or found inspiration here: Paul & Jon Nash, John Piper, Eric Gill, Clare Leighton, E. McKnight Kauffer and the textile designer Marion Dorn.

February 13th. The Siege of London in 1066 (*which concludes with the surrender of rebels at either Westminster or Beor ham stede (identified as Berkamstead by Victorians)*). Kathleen Tyson is a geographic historian particularly interested in the connections between trade, conflict, conquest and migration in ancient Britain and has recently published a book with a controversial view of the Norman Conquest.

March 13th. Lord Austin and Lord Nuffield, giants of the British Motor Industry Julian comes to give us a talk nearly every year and this is his latest. These men were giants of their time and Nuffield one of the greatest of British philanthropists. There is a local connection; come and find out what it is. This talk follows the AGM.

On the 9th and 10th November in Berkhamsted Civic Centre there will be an exhibition **1918-2018 Commemorating Peacetime in Dacorum** This free exhibition marks 100 years from the end of World War I

On Saturday morning, 24th November, in the Court House, the two World War I books produced by members of our society, concerning the Berkhamsted Heroes: **"Men of Berkhamsted : Lest we forget"** and **"Berkhamsted in WW1"** will be on sale as well as **"The Devil's Own Time"** Inns of Court OTC book (at a reduced price). Teas, coffees and cakes also available.

Heritage Open Days details:

A Walk Back in Time guided tour of historic town centre. A Tour of our historic market town centre. Meet at main gate to Castle. Tours Thursday 6th Sept at 1030, Friday 7th 1500, Thursday 13th 1030

A Walk into the Past- Berkhamsted Place -successor to the Castle. This tour takes you into what remains of this once very large Elizabethan mansion and explains its link to the Castle. It includes a visit to the Great Barn, probably older still. Meet at top of Castle Hill near to entrance to Berkhamsted Place. Tours, Friday 7th Sept 1000 and Saturday 8th September 1400

Ashlyns School- former Foundling Hospital Open 9th Sept 1300-1730. Tours 1330 and 1530. This gives you the opportunity to learn what life was like for the children who grew up there during those years 1935-55. Make the most of this since few former foundlings remain. Tours led by former foundlings. Booking essential

Berkhamsted Castle Sunday 9th Sept 1030, 1400, 1600. Friday 14th Sept. 1030, 1400. Best example remaining of a Norman motte and bailey castle in the country and has extensive royal connections.

Berkhamsted Town Hall Market Hall, Assembly Hall and rooms for the Mechanics' Institute Sunday 9th Sept Open 1015-1330 Tour 1100. This replaced the old market house burnt down in 1854 and included an assembly room and rooms for the Mechanics Institute as well as a Market Hall. later a Sessions Hall was built at the back. There is a display of photographs associated with the Town Hall.

Inns of Court, Then (1914-19) and Now Meet at back of station. Sunday 9th Sept 1100, Sunday 16th Sept 1200. During WW1 from 1914-1919 the IOCOTC was stationed in Berkhamsted and surrounding area. This tour takes you to some of their haunts and shows you with the aid of photographs what it was once like.

Post a Letter Meet at front of station. Berkhamsted's postal history. Sunday 16th Sept 1030

Rectory Lane Cemetery Sunday 9th Sept Open 1100—1800. A myriad of events and activities, 'Let them RIP'. Come and see the tremendous transformation that has taken place and plans for the future.

Memorials to Fallen of WWI. Meet by War Memorial by West door of St Peter's. Sunday 16th Sept 1500. This tour will trace something of the memorials erected in memory of the people of Berkhamsted and the grandiose schemes that were planned originally and did not come to fruition. We shall visit the Town memorial, the memorial in St Peter's, the roll of honour in Berkhamsted School, the memorial in the Baptist Church, the British Legion memorial, the War Commission Graves in Rectory Lane cemetery, and some family graves where mention is made of a lost son or husband.

Repton's Ashridge Assemble outside main entrance to Ashridge House. Thursday 6th Sept 1400 and Thursday 13th Sept 1400 Booking essential. Numbers strictly limited.

These tours mark the bi-centenary of Repton's death and are led by Mick Thompson, Gardens Manager of Ashridge and BLHMS member. Repton was commissioned by the 7th Duke of Bridgewater to design gardens to go with his new gothic style mansion.

St Peter's Church and Court House Meet at West Door of church Sunday 9th Sept 1500. The c.13th church has an extensive history and many memorials depicting the history of the town and its people. The Court House is Tudor

Lost Wharves of Berkhamsted Meet on Bank Mill Bridge. Saturday 8th Sept 1000. Booking required. The canal led to the growth of industry and the expansion of Berkhamsted in Victorian times. Once where flourishing trade existed along its banks even the holiday boats are no longer for hire. This tour follows lost wharves and looks back to what was there before. In conjunction with the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Old Hall and Chapel. Meet at bottom of steps leading up to Old Hall. Sunday 9th Sept 1030 and 1430. This gives the opportunity to visit the original school building 1544, the largest school building in the country at the time, and to learn something of the school's history. The beautiful little Victorian chapel is modelled on a chapel in Venice but designed by CH Rew, a local architect.

Tours of DHT Museum Store. Sat 15th Sept 1000. Here collections from the different areas of Dacorum are kept in museum conditions. They are not normally open to the public. The largest collection by far is that belonging to Berkhamsted. Booking essential. Numbers restricted. Tel.01442 879525 or email collectionsmanager@dacorumheritage.org.uk

Remembering the Fallen of WWI in Rectory Lane Cemetery. Sunday 9th Sept. 1400-1700. An afternoon of poetry, drama, and music to commemorate the Fallen and the people of Berkhamsted in WWI which will complement the " Memorials of the Fallen"

All bookings to Jenny Sherwood (apart from DHT Museum Store). 01442 865158 or KSherw9100@aol.com More details available on HOD website from July www.heritageopendays.org.uk

ALL HOD EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL

**ENJOY THIS FREE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN SOMETHING OF BERKHAMSTED'S
HIDDEN HISTORY**

Mary Casserley, Chairman, BLHMS