



# BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

[www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk](http://www.berkhamsted-history.org.uk)

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

## Spring Newsletter 2020

You will have received your Chronicle through your door as we have postponed this year's AGM due to the Corona virus. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this good publication. Remember, we are always looking for new articles and will gladly accept your local research. The deadline is Jan 2021 for the next issue.

We would like to acknowledge and thank **Paul Dottridge** and **Rita Jones** for their work on the committee. Paul has been on the Committee for almost 15 years. He contributed to the original Castle website and gave tours of the Rex for Heritage Open days. Rita came on the Committee 5 years ago when she came off the Berkhamsted Citizens Association Committee and has helped with town tours and manning our bookstalls. Paul and Rita step down from their roles at the AGM (date tbc) where we will present them with a gift, and we wish them well in the future.

You will see in your "**Berkhamsted Living**" magazine a short article on William Cowper by Linda Rollitt. Linda has kindly agreed to write quarterly local history articles for this free publication. Jenny Sherwood writes similar for the "**Your Berkhamsted**" parish magazine (every other month 50p) and Richard North for the "**Northchurch parish newsletter**" (monthly, free).

**Oral Histories Project.** If you would like to record someone or be recorded yourself for local history memories please contact **Mary Casserley** who will pop round with our voice recording gadget (later in the year!), we record half -hour sessions. These recordings then go into the archives.

Addendum to the Chronicle article on the St Peters Bells from **Mike Below-**

(St Peters ringing captain.)

"... It was with interest that I noted your statement in the article that the tower clock was from **Thwaites and Reed of Clerkenwell**, as then in the ringing chamber when I was winding the wall clock there I noted that it was also from **Thwaites and Reed of Clerkenwell**. I don't know very much of the history of the wall clock; however, I do

remember **Priscilla Watt** telling me that it used to be in the vestry until it got stolen. After a pause it was recovered by the police and returned to the church. Having had it stolen it was then decided that it would be safer up in the ringing chamber. To the best of my knowledge it has just remained there ever since. I do not recall seeing a date on that clock.”

this little addendum is of interest to add to the story, thank you Mike.



**Summer outings:** **Bill Willett** writes: I am sorry that all summer outings are now cancelled

Hughenden Manor, Rousham Gardens, Sezincote Bentley Priory museum in Bushey were planned and we hope to run these next year

**Berkhamsted Castle: Adrian Barham**, Chairman of Berkhamsted Castle Trust writes:

A lot has been going on during the winter months. A new panel radiator has been installed in the visitors' room and the door fitted with a draught excluder. This should help to keep the damp at bay during the winter months and stop the information panels and leaflets from curling. English Heritage has just finalised the Local Management Agreement appointing the Trust as local manager of the Castle for an initial period of 5 years from April last year (2019). We have also finally had the gate line people counter agreed, purchased and delivered. It is due to be installed shortly. Berkhamsted Town Council has also just awarded us a grant towards the costs of a habitats survey of the whole castle site. The last such survey was conducted 25 years ago!

Unfortunately, our bid to the Castle Studies Trust for funding to do core sampling of the moats this summer was unsuccessful. In the absence of other funding, this work will not now happen in 2020.

On the evening of Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March a car crashed through the Castle fence on Brownlow Road and dropped the eight feet or so into the moat. The driver got rather wet and cold (the temperature was only 3°) and was taken to hospital. Our thanks go to the Police and paramedics for their assistance, particularly in the current circumstances.



Please take care if walking along Brownlow Road as the fence is badly damaged, and please keep away from the edge as there is a steep drop into the moat!

### *Coronavirus / Covid-19*

As you might expect, in an effort to stem the spread of Coronavirus, English Heritage has decided that the Castle will remain **CLOSED** to the public until further notice. Please do not now attempt to enter the site for any reason.

We would, however, really appreciate your continued support in these challenging times. Our visitors make such a vital contribution to every aspect of our work and play a crucial role in keeping Berkhamsted Castle safe for this and future generations. The donations and purchases normally made in our visitors' room allow us to continue critical preservation and maintenance work at our site, as well as undertake key research and education work. Closure of the Castle will severely impact this. May we please encourage you, therefore, to continue supporting us by making a donation online at [www.berkhamstedcastle.org.uk/donate](http://www.berkhamstedcastle.org.uk/donate) Thank you.

We look forward to welcoming you back to the Castle again soon, and we will let you know about our plans for reopening as soon as we are able. Until then, I hope that you and those close to you keep healthy and safe.

## **Norman Groves** reports: **Berkhamsted Heritage Hub**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund project came in just under budget and has been signed off. **Dr James Moir** has now taken over as overall Project Director. The Hub strategy full report is available on the BLHMS website, with a separate summary leaflet.

To test the possibility of National Lottery Heritage Fund funding of about £1m+ for full delivery, a (mandatory) Expression of Interest document is being prepared and will be submitted in the spring. This document has a maximum of 1000 words, and is therefore limited in scope, but it does give the NLHF an early opportunity to look at potential outputs compared to other options for the East region, although priority areas for the region are not located locally. If approved, full implementation proposals will be developed later in 2020. This again would be a competitive bid.

BLHMS Committee Member **Norman Groves** is co-ordinator for one of the four key initiatives in the Strategy, the Virtual Hub. This initiative is looking at reviewing and rationalising existing local collections; a targeted digitisation programme; a drop-in digitisation scheme; options for a comprehensive website; and the possibility of local heritage apps. A sub-group meeting of people and bodies interested in the Virtual Hub will be organised as soon as world health issues allow.

**Heritage Open Days** we hope that these will be able to return for two weeks 11-20 September 2020 depending on Government advice "Hidden Nature" is this year's theme. **Jenny Sherwood** is busy organising these and all details will be advertised in the summer newsletter. Remember all events are free. Last year we had almost 400 bookings.

We hope to resume our talks on 16th September with **Zena Dickinson** speaking about Luton Hoo - Past, Present & Future – again this is tbc. We look forward to seeing you then. Take care everyone.

**Mary Casserley**, Chairman