



St. Peter's, Great Berkhamsted
1222 - 2022

Celebrating 800 Years



Berkhamsted's parish church is 800 years old. Here lies all the history of Berkhamsted. St Peter's was the government of our town, it oversaw our births, marriages and deaths and the myriad events since the birth of the town. And it is our future.

In May, as part of the celebrations, there will be an exhibition and three talks of particular interest to Berkhamsted historians. These have been arranged in cooperation between St Peter's and Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society and you are very welcome to come to see the show and hear our four distinguished and knowledgeable speakers. The exhibition will be in St Peter's Church throughout May and the talks will be in St Peter's at 8pm on the dates below.

Make a note in your diaries now and booking details will follow. [Stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk / 800th](http://Stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk/800th)

BLHMS Exhibition on the History of St Peter's & Berkhamsted

During May the History Society will present an exhibition in St Peter's Church. It will be centred around an audio-visual presentation made by the same team that made the film for the Rectory Lane Cemetery Project so will be first class. It will take you back to the building of the castle and church, the development of the church and the effect it has had on the town over the centuries. Feel free to look in to St Peter's during May and bring your friends and family for this spectacular experience.

Talk 1. The History of Berkhamsted

Tuesday 3rd May

Julian Hunt will trace Berkhamsted's history from the Domesday Book, when it was an important market town with 52 burgesses and when the mention of a 'ditcher,' probably related to the building of the great Norman castle. The town developed as a thoroughfare, serving travellers on the former Roman road, Akeman Street, which crossed the Chilterns through the Tring gap. Its mills and maltings exported flour and malt to London and it was a centre for the local lace making trade. With the coming of the railway in the 19th century, this Chiltern town became home to commuters to the capital and those retiring from the pressures of London life.

Our speaker **Julian Hunt** was Local Studies Librarian at Aylesbury and latterly in charge of Buckinghamshire Archives and the County Museum. He has written several histories of Buckinghamshire towns including Amersham, Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross. He is now President of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society.

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Talk 2. The History of St Peter's Church Tuesday 10th May

Christopher Green will start with St Peter's as it is today and look back across the centuries to peel away the work of successive generations as they adapted, enlarged and enriched the building in response to changing patterns of worship, changing architectural fashions and the changing fortunes of the town. He will identify the people and events that are the human dimension of this story.

Particularly important chapters have been the major restorations of the 19th century, the re-shaping of the church in the 14th century and its original construction early in the 13th century.

Our speaker

Dr Christopher Green was Churchwarden of St Peter's and Chairman of the Buildings Committee for many years. He is a Trustee of the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust and Chairman of the St Albans Diocesan Advisory Committee which offers guidance to parishes as they care for and develop their church buildings. He is a Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of Archaeology in Reading University.

Talk 3. Berkhamsted in the Next 100 Years Tuesday 17th May

Peter and Suzie will discuss topics that will make you ask if we will be led into the promised utopia or will humanity's propensity for war spread into space?

Technology is fast running ahead of social development and society needs to get in front of this trend. How are the grand-children of today going to cope with this speed of societal change? The future of work, healthcare, digital security and the future place of religion in the automated world all need understanding and debate. Ethical questions, such as low birth rate v. greater longevity, greater leisure and the modification of humans, are becoming more important than technology questions.

The impact of space and the planets on all our lives will grow and we will learn to harvest the planets and use space to power our civilisation, ending our dependence on hydrocarbons. When will the first Berkhamsted resident visit a planet?

Our speakers

Peter Matthews is a research scientist focused on the security and social impacts of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. He is the author of books on technology and management as well as many scientific papers.

Dr Suzie Imber is Associate Professor of Planetary Science at the University of Leicester and winner of the BBC's *'Astronauts – Do You Have What It Takes'*. She has held posts at NASA and is involved in instrument design for the ESA's next mission to Mercury. A highly experienced mountaineer, she has written computer code to identify and map unclimbed peaks in the Andes and Himalayas.

Everybody is welcome to join in all the events in the year we celebrate 800 years of our church and town.



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