

OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

The Newsletter of the Oxfordshire Local History Association

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Chairman's musings

Some years ago, I chaired a conference with a high theological content. Although I am interested in the subject, I'm not a trained theologian. I was particularly puzzled by the difference of approach between a senior and well-respected theologian and typical parish clergy. It seemed that many controversies and problems would evaporate if the parish clergy were "singing from the same hymn sheet" as contemporary theologians. So I asked our eminent guest why there was such a huge gulf. He explained that, almost inevitably, many parish clergy are several generations of thought behind what is being taught in universities and seminaries. It's like having a Ferrari serviced by mechanics trained on Model T Fords.

In some ways it's the same for local historians. We used to be taught that Britain was subjected to successive waves of prehistoric large-scale immigration, each inundation bringing a new dominant population and culture. In the first half of the 20th century, Australian archaeologist and philologist Vere Gordon Childe was particularly influential in popularising this view. Big cultural change was the result of big movement of people. This view was reinforced by archaeology, using methods pioneered in Germany. So we tended to believe that huge hordes of Celts left central Europe and swept across Germany, France and into these islands, displacing or eliminating earlier inhabitants.

Then came the 1960s and a major change in these basic assumptions. Cambridge archaeologist Graham Clark was the Luther figure in this reformation. "Pots are not people" became the cry, as Clark and his followers attacked the idea of our history being one of successive waves of invasion. Clark's ideas spread to other countries, beyond the British Isles. It was easy to see his point. Just because many Middle Eastern teenagers wear baseball caps, drink Coca-Cola and listen to Beyoncé doesn't make them Americans. Clark's followers argued that it was mostly the culture that spread, and that mass migration rarely, if ever, happened.

By the end of the 20th century, Clark's ideas had filtered down to the sort of popular histories and illustrated atlases we buy on impulse at heritage centres and museums. Thus, the *Atlas of Irish History*

published by Gill & MacMillan in 1997, states: "the first Celtic peoples began to arrive in Ireland, though there is no surviving evidence of a large-scale invasion". The New Archaeology propounded by Graham Clark seemed to have triumphed completely, even trickling down to National Trust gift shop level.



But hold on, what's this? The wheel seems to be turning again. There were always some, such as Barry Cunliffe, who did not entirely buy Clark's paradigm shift. Lo and behold, the idea of mass migration is again gaining ground, bolstered by the availability of various scientific techniques, such as archaeogenetics, dendrochronology, palaeoclimatology and many more. I can thoroughly recommend a recent book on this subject by Jean Manco entitled *Ancestral Journeys* and subtitled *The peopling of Europe from the first venturers to the Vikings* (Thames & Hudson, 2013).

But what's this got to do with Oxfordshire? Quite a lot, inasmuch that there are hints and question marks in our local history concerning the great cultural changes and possible population movements of the past: questions about the Atrebates of the south of the county and their strong cultural links to Rome before Britain became part of the Roman Empire; questions about the extent of survival of the British Celtic population in Oxfordshire after the Romans left. Were they ethnically cleansed as some evidence suggests? Did some Celts survive in the Chilterns above Wallingford, as that town's name may hint? And in my own case, how come my paternal DNA, from a very long line of very ordinary Oxfordshire agricultural labourers, is, against all expectations, remarkably close to that of Ötzi the Iceman, the mummified hunter who died in the Alps on the Italian-Austrian border more than 5,000 years ago?

Oxfordshire local history naturally reflects the wider world beyond. There are many discoveries to be made as to how, where and why.

Tony Hadland

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NEWS FROM THE SHIRES

Oxfordshire History Centre Update

Building

2014 is proving to be a busy year for improvement and upgrades to St Luke's. After two years, the repair and replacement work to the stone louvres in the bell tower was completed. This has meant the scaffolding and fencing has finally been removed, the grounds on the Cowley Road side of the premises have been cleared, and we have been able to re-open the pedestrian entrance gate.

New air-conditioning units were installed in some areas of the building in March; the remaining units will have to be replaced by the end of this year. In addition, the reception floor has to be removed due to an underlying damp problem, so we will take this opportunity to revamp our front-of-house area. This means that during November and December we will have to close for 3 or 4 weeks, rather than shutting for our annual stocktaking fortnight in January and February. When we know the exact dates, we will publicise them via our web pages, notices and flyers. We will, though, maintain our remote enquiry service and are planning a presence at the Central Library on the days when access to our building is not possible.



Funding has not yet been secured to improve the lighting levels in our searchroom, so at time of writing we are trialling the use of portable desk lamps. We would welcome feedback on their effectiveness.

Staff secondment

One of our archivists, Chris Gilliam, is currently on part-time secondment with the City Council until the end of March. This is continuing the cataloguing and

other project work which he started in 2012 and is part of the long-term process to make accessible the wealth of uncatalogued archive resources in the Town Hall basement and to create a full electronic catalogue of the City archives housed at St Luke's. The History Centre has established an excellent working relationship with colleagues at the City Council, which has enabled us to make such progress

Digitisation

The scanning elements of our three projects to digitise archival resources (tithe maps, District Valuation maps and survey books, and parish registers) are finished. We are now devising the best methods of making these images

available to researchers.

World War I Exhibition



In the exhibition space outside our searchroom we have a PowerPoint presentation entitled *Oxford Journal Illustrated and the Outbreak of World War I*, highlighting newspaper headlines of the time and the growing impact that the war had on local people. The articles and photographs cover the period July to

November 1914 and tell the story of the hostilities as events unfolded.

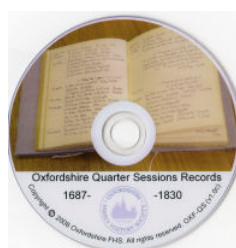
New catalogues

Our online web catalogue, Heritage Search, is updated each month to include newly-created catalogues. For example, over the past year the records of over 150

Oxfordshire schools (including log books, admission and attendance registers) have been re-catalogued and are now searchable by place. The ongoing project to catalogue the post-1830 Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions' papers continues, with the valuable help of volunteers; most years up to 1850 are now on Heritage Search. Given the wide range of business and the number of people appearing before the court in the mid-19th century, this is an important local historical resource. (www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/oxfordshire-history-centre)

Mark Priddey & Mark Lawrence,
Oxfordshire History Centre Managers

Images: Previous page, Finished tower from Cowley Road; Above left, News from Home, OJI 21 October 1914



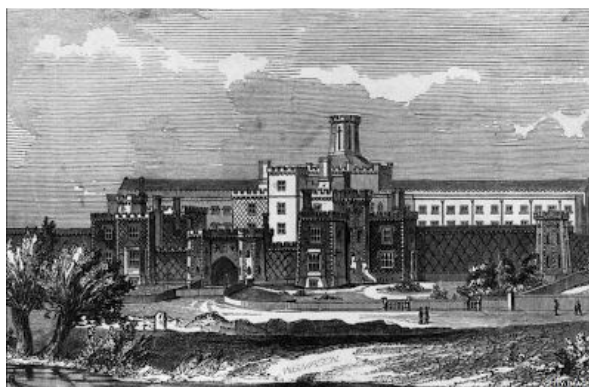
A DVD of the pre-1830 Quarter Sessions Records: *Oxfordshire Quarter Sessions Records 1667-1830* is available from the Oxfordshire Family History Society. (www.ofhs.org.uk)

Berkshire Record Office Update

Oscar Wilde and Reading Gaol

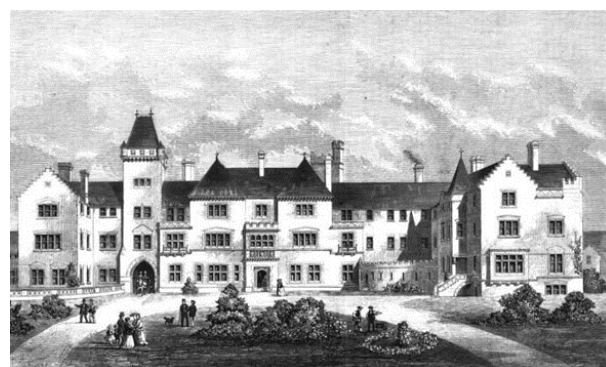
Funded in part by the lottery, this autumn we will be having an exhibition about our local Victorian prison. This will explore prison life in the 19th century as well as the life of Wilde.

The prison was opened in 1844 as Berkshire's county gaol, and received men and women from across the south of England. We have what remains of its archive - which is good in parts, and patchy in others - and some of that will be on display, as well as the Prison's Victorian key safe and examples of the fine publishing that Wilde promoted.



The exhibition is open from Wednesday 22 October, though it kicks off with an event on the evening of Monday 20 October. Merlin Holland, Wilde's grandson, will give a talk at the Record Office entitled

Oscar Wilde: In Court, in Prison and in Exile. Places at the event are free, but limited to 2 per person - please email arch@reading.gov.uk if you would like to come. If you can't come to the talk, then please do pop in at some point between October and January to see the exhibition itself.



Life in the Victorian Asylum - as inspired by Fair Mile Hospital.

What was built as the Moultsford Asylum - though became synonymous with the village of Cholsey - plays a starring role in my new book *Life in the Victorian Asylum: The World of 19th Century Mental Health Care*. I've used Moultsford to provide some real life examples in what is a description of staff, patients and ward life in a typical asylum. I've tried to provide a companion text for the stories in my book about Broadmoor - something that delves deeper into the

Images: Left, Reading Gaol, etching 1850; Above, Fairmile Hospital, print c1870

daily routine and medical practices that were found in Broadmoor, Moulsoford and similar institutions. The Victorians tried hard to promote good mental health, and perhaps they offer us some lessons for today. The book will be published in hardback in October.

World War One blog

We began our daily World War One blog in August. It gives you a glimpse of what was going on in the

county 100 years ago, and will run between now and some point in 2019 - quite an undertaking! Please take a look at berkshirevoiceswwi.wordpress.com/about-berkshire-at-war.

Mark Stevens,
Senior Archivist, Berkshire Record Office

www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk

Victoria County History Update

The VCH remains focused on two areas at present: the Oxfordshire Chilterns (Ewelme Hundred, to be published in 2016), and the Wychwood area (work in its early stages, for completion around 2018).

The latest addition to our website is a downloadable history of Benson, including its outlying hamlets of Preston Crowmarsh, Fifield, Roke, and Rokemarsh. Benson is now probably best known for its large RAF station, which began as a small grass airfield built in 1937–9 as part of the RAF's pre-war expansion programme. During the war it played a significant role in aerial reconnaissance – iconic photographs of the Ruhr dams following the Dambusters' raid were taken from a Spitfire based at Benson – and since the war it has fulfilled a number of roles, including (at present) that of a major helicopter base.

Long before then, though, Benson was a place of local importance, first as an Anglo-Saxon royal estate centre, and from the late 17th to the early 19th century as a coaching stop on the London road. At the time of *Domesday Book* (1086) Benson manor was the most valuable royal estate in Oxfordshire, and although it had already been reduced by royal grants to local landowners and religious houses, it still stretched across the Chilterns as far as Henley. The estate's gradual fragmentation, accompanied by the building of small local churches on newly separated manors, gave rise to the modern pattern of parishes and settlements across the area – a process which our forthcoming volume will trace. No Anglo-Saxon royal residence has yet been discovered at Benson, although recent VCH work has located a site in neighbouring Newington parish known as Kingsbury (king's *burh*). From parallels elsewhere the name conceivably recalls a late Anglo-Saxon royal dwelling associated with Benson, although for now this remains conjecture.

Benson's role as a coaching village is rather better documented. Commercial coaching between Oxford and London was established by the 1660s, and from the late 17th century Benson's major inns were refurbished in fashionable brick-fronted styles. Benson was never a major coaching centre like Henley or Marlow, but it became a regular stopping-off point for connections, refreshments, and changing horses – to the point where coaching's sudden collapse after the opening of the Great Western Railway caused marked unemployment

there. Even so, the village was predominantly agricultural until the 20th century, and the VCH account also traces its farming history from the Middle Ages to the present day, including the divisive quarrels over enclosure which dominated the first half of the 19th century.



So what's next? Accounts of Newington and Berrick Salome will be added to the website shortly, along with Bruern and Fifield (a different one!) in the Wychwood area. Work is also now beginning on Shipton- and Milton-under-Wychwood, Lyneham, and Ascott. The completed Ewelme Hundred volume should go to press late in 2015, and the Wychwood volume (we hope) around 2018/19 – provided, as always, that our funding through the VCH Oxfordshire Trust and its partners (including the county council) is maintained.*

Benson's hamlets are just as interesting. Preston Crowmarsh was given by William the Conqueror to Battle Abbey in Sussex, founded by the king in thanksgiving near the site of the battle of Hastings. The monks built a manor house at Crowmarsh to administer their estate, on the site of what is now Crowmarsh Battle Farm. A superb early 17th-century map shows the hamlet and its fields in 1638, a century after the abbey was dissolved and the manor sold to other owners. Neighbouring Fifield marks a part-deserted medieval settlement, while Fifield Manor itself contains tantalizing fragments of an important

Image, above: Castle Square in Benson: dominated by the brick-built former coaching inn called the Castle on account of its distinctive semi-circular 'tower'.

medieval manor house, investigated with help from the Oxfordshire Buildings Record. And finally the unpromising place name 'Roke', meaning simply 'the oak', may in fact relate to an important outlying site known later as the Roke Elm – very likely the place where, in the 11th century, outdoor gatherings of the hundred court were held.

Draft texts, details of current and future projects, and information on the Trust's crucial fundraising are available on the VCH Oxfordshire website (address below). Don't forget also that most published volumes are available free at British History Online, as well as

through your local library or at the Oxfordshire History Centre.

Simon Townley, VCH Oxfordshire County Editor

www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/Oxfordshire

www.british-history.ac.uk (online version)

Fundraising: *Liam Tiller (Treasurer)*,

LiamTiller@waitrose.com

*OLHA donated £500 in July 2014 to the VCH in support of its work in recording the history of the county.

LOCAL HISTORY IN OXFORDSHIRE

SPOTLIGHT on Oxfordshire's Local History Societies and Museums

Launton Historical Society

Launton Historical Society was started early in 1978; we have had ten meetings each year ever since.

In 1978, the only village history was an unpublished work by JC Blomfield (Rector, 1850-95). Early projects of the Society included recording of the gravestones; transcribing documents relating to the church, chapel and school; searching for village news in the local press (still on-going). We began a card index system for each person who had lived here (now several thousand cards).

We soon felt we had enough to start publishing – firstly a couple of small booklets, one describing a walk around the village, including anecdotes about the buildings and the people, then a selection of items of Launton news from two centuries of local papers. Next we undertook to do a history of our village school to celebrate its 150th anniversary (1989) and this was followed by a book when our war memorial was dedicated in 1995 – both now out of print. An enlarged version of *Let's Look at Launton* followed in 2003. Then we did booklets for the parish church



(2005), for the Village Players (*Entertaining Launton*) in 2007 and about the history behind the Island Pond Wood (for the Friends) in 2009.

Image: Above: St Mary's Church, Launton (See A History of St Mary's Church, Launton, Oxfordshire, by Pat Tucker and Margaret Mullins, 2005);

Over the years, we have put on many small exhibitions in the village featuring a variety of topics of local interest. Currently, we are researching the men who fought in WWI and whose names appear on the Roll of Honour in our church.



We have been members of OHLA from the time when it was still part of ORCC, and have attended virtually every meeting since then, hosting the meeting here in Autumn 1989. We look forward to future meetings – the topics are always stimulating, the speakers excellent and the venues interesting.

Pat Tucker, Launton Historical Society



Images: Above left: Launton Village Players banner celebrating its 10th annual pantomime; Above right: Cake baked in honour of the Island Pond Wood 10th anniversary, 2009

Launton Historical Society was inadvertently listed as one of the societies which have closed recently in the last issue of the newsletter. Many apologies to Launton for this error. It is good to be able to report that the Society is thriving and is still a valued member of OLHA. *Editor*

Dorchester Historical Society and Dorchester Abbey Museum



Dorchester-on-Thames, lying between the Rivers Thame and Thames, is one of the most important archaeological and historical areas in Britain with over 6000 years of continuous settlement from prehistoric times to the present day.

The Dorchester-on-Thames Archaeological and Historical Group (renamed Dorchester Historical Society in 1995) was started by enthusiasts whose priority was research on local history. It is now an active Society whose aim is to be 'a society open to anyone interested in history, and in particular local history, offering a range of opportunities to pursue personal interests'. We have eight meetings and a summer visit each year. The Society's archive has been integrated with the Museum collection, and together they provide an invaluable record of village life.

Dorchester Abbey Museum was the inspiration of Miss Edith Stedman, an American visitor to the Abbey. She, with help from the Ashmolean Museum and the Bodleian Library,



pioneered a small museum in the Abbey Guest House in 1959. The then vicar, the Rev Harold Best, gave her permission to go ahead 'as long as it did not cost the Abbey anything and that it was used for educational purposes'. Now it is an accredited museum.

Here the visitor can marvel at finds and artefacts from prehistoric and Roman Dorchester, and view informative panels on the *Discovering Dorchester-on-Thames* project (funded by the Heritage Lottery) which covers excavations in the village since 2007. Items on social history include the contrast between 18th and 21st century Dorchester, Dorchester women in WWI, the TV series *Midsomer Murders*, and the importance of a local flood meadow in the economy of the Abbey.

The museum is also responsible for the award-winning display of medieval stonework in the Abbey's Cloister Gallery. It can be viewed as an artistic spectacle, a lesson in history, an architectural masterclass, or all three. Do not miss it!

Opening times:

Old School Room: 2–5pm daily, Easter Saturday to 30th September.

Abbey (incl. Cloister Gallery): 8am to approx. 6pm daily, all year round.

(dorchester-abbey.org.uk)

*Gail Thomas, Chairman,
Dorchester Historical Society
John Metcalfe, Curator,
Dorchester Abbey Museum*

Images: Top Left: The Museum's main gallery; Left: Stonework in the Cloister Gallery

NEWS from the Districts

Archaeology and the 'Discovering Dorchester' Research Project

Dorchester-on-Thames is a key site in British history. It was a prestigious ceremonial centre in the Neolithic and Bronze Age, and is highly unusual in having important Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon towns in a single place which has suffered remarkably little damage from development.

As part of the long-term 'Discovering Dorchester' research project, the University of Oxford Institute of Archaeology, in collaboration with Oxford Archaeology and members of the community, has been investigating several sites in and around Dorchester since 2007. The team believes the investigations will give us a better understanding of three of the key transition points in English history: the move away

from tribal society with the growth of urbanisation in the late Iron Age, subsequent incorporation into the Roman Empire, and the rise of early Medieval society from the confused situation arising from the withdrawal of the Roman legions in AD 410.

Excavations in the Minchin Recreation Ground, and later the Village Allotments, from 2007 investigated the Post-Roman and Later Roman archaeology of the town. In 2014, the team was digging into the story of earlier phases of Roman life within the town walls and trying to put the late 1st/2nd century features and material from last season into context. The goals for this season were to excavate a section of the Roman road which runs through the centre of the Roman town,

exploring any features or structures that might indicate road-side activities, and to plumb the depths of a probable Roman well, with the possibility of finding interesting waterlogged organic deposits at the bottom.

Over the past seven years, the Discovering Dorchester project has added considerably to our knowledge of the history of this area. The annual excavation also acts as a 'Fieldschool', with lots of hands-on work, giving aspiring archaeologists a chance to 'learn on the job'. Experienced supervisors give instruction in excavation techniques, geomatics, recording techniques, and finds processing. Talks by University of Oxford tutors cover a range of subjects, including general backgrounds to British archaeology and history, the analysis of archaeological artefacts and talks on the local area and the important Oxford pottery industry.



If you would like to learn more about how you can join future excavations at Dorchester, please email Assistant Director Ed Peveler (edward.peveler@arch.ox.ac.uk). If you live in the village and would like to have a test pit in your garden or a survey of your fields, please contact Dr Wendy Morrison (wendy.morrison@arch.ox.ac.uk).

The Institute of Archaeology's web site for the Dorchester project at www.arch.ox.ac.uk/DOT1.html includes a 360 degree panorama photo of the excavation site.

The Director of the 2014 excavation, Paul Booth, has kindly provided OLHA with a summary report (below) of the 2014 season's findings.

Image: The excavation team at work at the Dorchester Allotment site

Dorchester Allotments Excavation 2014: A Brief Summary

The Dorchester Project training excavation which commenced in 2008 in the allotments in the south-west quarter of the village continued throughout July 2014. As the broad sequence of development of this site, located close to the centre of the Roman 'small town', becomes clearer some puzzling characteristics are increasingly evident.

Early Roman features are present, but not enough of these have yet been seen for their character to be clear, so it is uncertain if any relate to the postulated early Roman fort perhaps underlying the later town. All the early features were sealed beneath a deep layer of clayey loam which suggests a fairly low level of activity in the later 1st century AD. The earliest gravel surface of the main north-south Roman road at the east end of the site was laid on top of this deposit; the relatively late date for the road is surprising, as is the apparent lack of any evidence for street frontage

buildings in what should have been a prime location. The clearest structural evidence (excavated in previous seasons) lies in an enclosure set back some 20m west of the road. A well within the enclosure was excavated this year. Unfortunately it produced no waterlogged environmental evidence, but the fills included a complete small pottery beaker, perhaps deposited deliberately.

In the later Roman period the area between the building enclosure and the road seems to have remained open space. The latest of the three road surfaces overlay a coin dated AD 388-402, so it is associated with the abundant evidence for very late-Roman activity examined in previous seasons. One element of this activity is a pair of ditches aligned perpendicular to the road at the northern margin of the site, one of which now appears to have cut the road.

*Paul Booth
Senior Project Manager, Oxford Archaeology South;
Director of the Dorchester Allotment Training Excavation 2014*

Bicester Methodist Church

Bicester Methodist Church held a Flower Festival which included a Historical Display on 19-20th September 2014 in celebration of its 200th anniversary.



Mary Brydon writes: "A couple named Bowerman moved to Bicester in 1814 after they had heard John Wesley preach in Brackley and opened a room for worship at their house in Sheep Street, inviting preachers from Brackley to come and speak there. They soon needed larger premises so they adapted and

moved into an existing building nearby. The congregation grew further, and in 1841 a larger chapel was built close by in North Street. Eighty years later the congregation needed even larger premises. The chapel was sold in 1925 and two years later the present Methodist Church was opened in Sheep Street on June 23rd 1927. Until the mid-1990s, it was known as the Grainger Hargreaves Memorial Church. The interior of the church has recently been redesigned and the pews replaced with chairs."

Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam at Bicester Methodist Church 1872-1968: A Musical History of the Anniversary Services by Gillian Ruth Warson, published in 2002, takes a year-by-year look at the hymns chosen for the anniversary service since its early days in the second half of the nineteenth century and thus traces the development of hymn singing for children. Of particular interest is the contribution made by the charismatic Sunday School superintendent, Mr S G Hedges, and his influence on hymn singing and hymnbooks used in the Methodist Church, not only in Bicester but throughout the United Kingdom.

The Museum of Oxford: 40 Years, 40 Objects

Can you help?

In 2015 the Museum of Oxford will be celebrating 40 years since it opened in part of Oxford Town Hall's Old Library rooms, and to celebrate we are planning a year of activities and events, culminating in an exhibition in the Gallery, Oxford Town Hall. *40 Years, 40 Objects* will feature objects from our collections and on loan to us from local people, objects that represent Oxford's people and its past, and the stories they want to tell.

Do you have a story that you think we should be telling that could feature in this exhibition? It could be a key local story from the last 40 years that doesn't already feature in the Museum of Oxford's displays, or something from further in the past that has only been discovered in the last 40 years. The related object could be a thing, a piece of music, a photo, a painting,

a newspaper article, a song, or anything else that could feature in our exhibition. If you have a story or an object that could feature in *40 Years, 40 Objects*, we want to hear from you!



Please send a good description of the object and the story it relates to with details of where the object currently is, your name, telephone number and email address so we can get back in touch with you to find out more. Send your story by email to museum@oxford.gov.uk, or by post to: Kate Toomey, Museum & Heritage Community Learning Officer, Museum of Oxford, Town Hall, St Aldate's Oxford OX1 1BX.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme and Treasure Hunters

A varied and interesting programme at the *Oxfordshire Past* event in Woodstock on 31 May included a joint presentation on *The Portable Antiquities Scheme: Field walking and stray finds* by Anni Byard, the Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) for West Berkshire and Oxfordshire, who is based at the Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre in Standlake, and Dr Alison Roberts, curator of the European and Early Prehistory collections and the Department of Antiquities archives at the Ashmolean Museum.

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) is a national scheme, set up to encourage the increasing number of people who find small objects of archaeological interest in the ground - notably metal detectorists - to report them voluntarily so that the finds can be identified and dated and details of their location and context can be recorded by the FLO. The scheme was begun in 1997 and has recorded over 750,000 objects since it began. Many previously unknown archaeological sites have been identified

through the scheme and it has contributed greatly to the level of knowledge of the past. Oxfordshire became part of the scheme in 2003 with the appointment of an FLO in the county. Anni Byard says: "On average in Oxfordshire I record about 1,500 finds a year and about 50 per cent of them are Roman."

The Ashmolean Museum became officially involved in the PAS in 2004 when the post of National Finds Adviser for Medieval and Post-Medieval coinage became attached to the Heberden Coin Room. In 2009, the Ashmolean started its monthly identification sessions which take place on the first Wednesday in the month between 12 and 3.00pm. (See www.ashmolean.org/assets/docs/WhatsOnCurrentCalendar.pdf for dates). Anni and Alison are joined at these sessions by the PAS Finds Adviser, John Naylor.



Image: Mr Marshall's Cholsey Brooch - a silver brooch dated 1260-1340 with fleur de lis design, possibly related to a shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary; Oxford Blues MDC

Three or four finds a year in Oxfordshire are identified by the PAS as 'Treasure' in line with the definition laid out in the Treasure Act 1993 (amended 2003). Treasure includes gold and silver objects, prehistoric assemblages including base metal and coin hoards more than 300 years old. These pass immediately to the ownership of the Crown and are valued by a Treasure Valuation Committee consisting of museum experts, dealers and auctioneers. National and local museums have to be given an opportunity to raise funds to buy treasure objects and an export ban can be placed upon them. Archaeologists working professionally are prevented by the Act from selling found objects but the proceeds from the sale of objects found by amateurs are eventually shared between the landowner and the finder.

The Cholsey Brooch, declared to the PAS and bought by the Oxfordshire Museum where it is now displayed, complete with 3-D viewing glasses, was found by Ken Marshall, member of the Oxford Blues Metal Detecting Club, on a dig at Cholsey in 2004. Membership of the Oxford Blues, based in Littlemore, rose at one time to

over 200 but is now capped at around 150, mainly because of parking problems near the club's HQ, and there is usually a waiting list for membership of 15-20 people. The club operates according to the PAS's voluntary Code of Conduct and regularly reports its finds. As one member has said, "I go out hoping to find something old and interesting, not necessarily valuable." The club has been encouraging its members to visit the museum in Woodstock to see their finds on display. It believes it is "Good to support the museum. Their 'tagline' is what we do: 'Keeping the past in the present'."

Another recent find reported to the PAS was made by metal detectorist Steve Bain from Ewelme. Working on his own in a field near Cholsey one evening after work, he unearthed a gold earring which proved to be one of the earliest pieces of metalwork found in Britain, dating from the Early Bronze Age around 2,200BC. Mr Bain said: "I nearly threw it away. I didn't realise what it was, it just went straight into my pocket. It wasn't until later that evening when I rubbed the mud off it I thought, that's gold!"

A few months later, Mr Bain took his find along to a PAS surgery at the Ashmolean. When the find was reported in the press in August last year, Alison Roberts was quoted as saying "It is one of those amazing accidents. The chances of finding it have got to be one in several million. They are some of the oldest pieces of gold work in Britain. There are only a handful – six or seven – in the whole of England from a period where metal was just starting to be used. They were still using stone tools. It would have belonged to someone of a very high status. You would have had to be pretty special to have any sort of metal. They are often found with male burials so there was almost certainly a burial around there. We have a pair of similar earrings which are on display in the Ashmolean actually found in Radley, near Abingdon. It shows how important Oxfordshire was. This is probably the rarest and one of the most interesting things we have seen at the surgery."



Image: Mr Bain's earring; it was probably worn wrapped round the edge of the ear rather than through it (or it could, alternatively, have been a hair ornament); Oxford Mail August 2013

The Didcot Mirror

The Oxfordshire Museum Service's appeal to raise £33,000 to purchase this rare and beautiful Iron Age mirror by 12 September achieved its target with just hours to spare. The Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum raised half of the sum needed, including a generous donation from Wartski, the Court jewellers, and the appeal was matched by grants from the ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and The Headley Trust.

The mirror was found in 2007 by a metal detectorist working near Didcot who took it to St Albans museum for identification and repair of the handle, which was found in three pieces. The find was reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. It was recently offered for sale and was bought by an anonymous overseas buyer, but due to its historical importance - and fortunately for Oxfordshire - the Culture Minister and Wantage MP, Ed Vaizey, put a temporary bar on its export until 14 June to see if a buyer could be found in the UK and on the understanding that the decision on the export licence application would be extended until September if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase the Mirror was demonstrated.

Carol Anderson, Manager of the OMS and Curator at Oxfordshire Museum, said: "The generosity of local people in supporting the appeal has been fantastic. This mirror is a nationally important archaeological artefact as well as an outstanding work of art and piece of craftsmanship which will now stay in Oxfordshire where it was used more than 2,000 years ago. It will help us properly reflect the incredible archaeological heritage we enjoy in the county, and be a spectacular exhibit for the county's museums." The Oxfordshire Museum is hoping to put the object on display at the Cornerstone Arts Centre in Didcot and it will feature in a touring exhibition on metalwork in Oxford; thereafter, it will join the permanent displays in the museum in Woodstock.

Leslie Webster, from the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA), described the mirror as, "...an outstanding example of Celtic art in the later Iron Age... particularly unusual in the way that its delicately incised ornament challenges some of the conventional design rules for the decoration of these high-status objects." The mirror probably dates from the 1st century BC, is made of copper-alloy and bronze and iron and is decorated on the back with a highly unusual



and beautiful curvilinear La Tène style pattern. These particular mirrors are unique to Britain and only 18 complete ones from the later Iron Age (300BC-50AD) are known to exist.

Historians are unclear about what the exact function of mirrors in the Iron Age society would have been but David Moon, Curator of Archaeology with the Oxfordshire Museums service, believes that they could have been used for other purposes than just to check their owners' appearance. He said: "They would certainly have been prestigious items, owned by few people. Mirrors can be used to reflect light into dark spaces or to signal across distances as well as to apply make-up or check your hair. In many cultures mirrors are magical objects and this may well have been the case in Iron Age, Druidic society. While this mirror was a casual find with no archaeological context, some have been found in association with cremation burials, so mirrors may also have had a function connected with death or afterlife." The website www.celticmirrors.org provides a wealth of information about these intriguing objects.

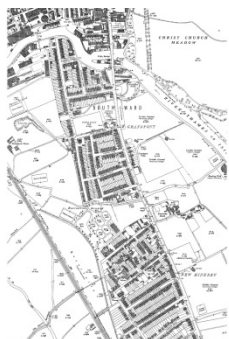
The Appeal, launched by the Friends of the Museum, remains open to receive further donations to contribute towards the costs of conserving and displaying the Mirror and undertaking further research aimed at revealing more of its hidden story. If you would like to make a donation, please visit www.friendsoftom.co.uk. You can also donate online through Just Giving, www.justgiving.com/oxfordshiremuseum or by post to: The Didcot Mirror Appeal, The Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock OX20 1SN (cheques made payable to the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum).

Local History in South Oxford

Did you know ... that the Abingdon Road in south Oxford follows the route of a causeway across the river floodplain which had more than 40 arches between the 'Grandpont' (Folly Bridge) at the end of St Aldate's and the foot of Hinksey Hill by the 16th century?

... that the first railway link from Didcot to Oxford ran through what is now Hinksey Park and terminated in a station at Grandpont?

... that several houses in Weirs Lane near Donnington Bridge had paper roofs, and a timber framed 'hut with fireplace' erected by John Towle at Redbridge, which caused no end of trouble to developers of the railways, had a roof and walls made entirely of tarred paper and eventually became quite a grand 5-bedroomed villa before it was demolished in 1996?



These and many other fascinating stories about the development of the city of Oxford south of Folly Bridge appear on a new web site created by OLHA Membership Secretary, Liz Woolley, for the South Oxford Community Association, based at the old city waterworks building in Lake Street. The project also

includes two history information boards, complete with QR code links, which have been erected in Hinksey Park with financial support from the Four Pillars Hotels, Brasenose College, the Greening Lamborn Trust and Oxford City Council.

The website at www.southoxford.org/local-history-in-south-oxford is a nested site with many embedded references to other internet sources, including some of the other excellent sites maintained by Liz Woolley, so it provides a virtual walk through the area with many



intriguing diversions along the way. Liz is keen to encourage further contributions to the site from the

public, so please let her know if you have any interesting information to add (liz@lizwoolley.co.uk).

Dwellers of South Oxford may not be encouraged to read that after the floods of 1875 some of the affected families in New Hinksey were said to be *'in a wretched condition, being confined to their upper rooms, with no firing, very little clothing and many with scarcely any food to eat. The stench, too, in their houses arising from the flood is in some cases very offensive.'*



Another well researched and illustrated website about Aston's Eyot, a nature reserve on a 30 acre 'island' in the Thames owned by Christchurch just north of Grandpont, includes a newspaper cutting of the sale of the land to the College from the Oxford Chronicle (14 March 1891), smugly noting that *"our readers will be glad to know that the purchasers are not intending to lay it out - à la Grandpont - in submarine villa residences"* - even though the island did subsequently become a huge rubbish tip for the city until it was eventually cleared in the 1940s. The Aston's Eyot site can be approached from the east side of the city over the 'Pettypont' (Magdalen Bridge) and the Iffley Road can be explored virtually at friendsofastonseyot.org.uk.

To take a guided walk in real time around South Oxford, see Malcolm Graham, *On Foot in Oxford, No. 4: Folly Bridge and South Oxford* (Oxford City Libraries Local History Collection, c. 1975). This is one of twelve leaflets with detailed walking tours of various parts of the city and outlying areas. The walks are currently out-of-print but are available at the Westgate Library and are due to be republished by the Oxford Preservation Trust.

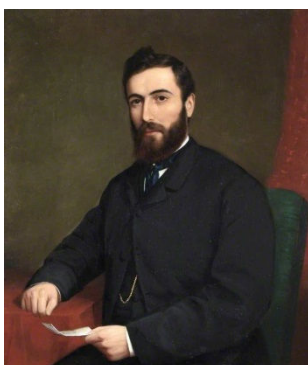
Images: Left, Two of the remaining 11th-century rubble stone arches of the Grandpont causeway, just south of Folly Bridge. Four more are visible between Folly Bridge and Whitehouse Road. Above, Skaters on the frozen Thames near Aston's Eyot, 1894

OBITUARIES

The deaths of Pamela Horn and Patricia Preece, two local historians who were well known to OLHA, were announced in the last issue of the newsletter.

Pamela Horn

Pamela Horn was a Social Historian, a lecturer at Oxford Brookes University (formerly Oxford Polytechnic) for more than 20 years and a researcher and a writer who was a popular speaker in the lecture programmes of many local history and family history groups.



She specialised in Victorian social history and wrote many books on rural life, servant life and childhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Her books

included *Life Below Stairs*, *Young Offenders*, *The Victorian and Edwardian Schoolchild*, *Women in the 1920s*, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* and *Ladies of the Manor*. Many of her classic books are currently being republished by Amberley Publishing.

Pamela Horn wrote several articles for the OLHA Journal and other local history publications on the local history of Oxfordshire, on a range of subjects including 18th century newspaper advertising, Headington pauper apprentices, Stanton St John School and Victorian village life. She made a detailed study of the diaries of George James Dew, a Relieving Officer in Victorian Lower Heyford.

Image, above left: George James Dew, Relieving Officer (1846–1928), Son of John Dew, Builder, of Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire (Oxfordshire Museum Service)

Patricia Preece

Patricia Preece was also a regular contributor to the OLHA Journal and to other publications, such as *Folk Life*. She was a long standing member of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group. Her research and interest in Oxfordshire local history focused mainly on the Chilterns and the area in South Oxfordshire around Goring. Patricia Preece had a particular interest in the rural crafts and trades of the Chiltern woodlands and

she wrote articles about coppicing, the life of medieval woodmen, and World War II tent peg makers.

Other studies were on specific sites and place names in and around Goring and on papers from the Allnut charity and a nurse at the Wingfield hospital. She made a special study of a family of 18th century chain surveyors and mapmakers, the Bedding family from Bucklebury in Berkshire

Dr D Molly Barratt, 1924-2014

OLHA has been informed by her family that Molly Barratt died on 3 August 2014 aged 90. Dr Barratt's working life was spent in the department of Western Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library where she was the longest serving member at her retirement in 1983; it was recorded that "her encyclopaedic knowledge, particularly of the local and topographic collections, would be greatly missed". At the Bodleian, she supervised for 30 years an innovative scheme launched in 1947 for training two or three young archivists per year.

Her subject of special interest and of which she had enormous knowledge was the *Probate Records of the Courts of the Bishop and Archdeacon of Oxford, 1516-*

1732, an index to which was published by the British Record Society in two volumes in 1981 and 1985. The probate records were moved to the Oxford Record Office from the Bodleian Library in 1985. *Oxoniensia* (Kate Tiller) recorded that "it is fitting that these two volumes should be published at this time forming as they do a permanent record of (Dr Barratt's) knowledge, her precise and accurate way of working and her dedication to making records more accessible to more people - not least local historians".

Molly Barratt lived all her life in Tanworth-in-Arden in Warwickshire and was devoted to the local history of Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire. Tanworth has preserved an almost complete set of parish magazines since 1906 and Molly Barratt used these and the parish minute books to compile a history of the village hall, 1927-1968.

Rev Ralph Mann, 1927-2014

The death was announced in May this year of Rev Ralph Mann. Ralph Mann trained to be a teacher after he took a degree in Oxford in History and taught in schools in England, Barbados and Sierra Leone before returning to England to a housemaster's post at Kingham Hill School in 1963. In 1973, he became head of History at Chipping Norton Comprehensive School where he remained for the next ten years until he took early retirement. Ralph then trained for the Anglican ministry and after ordination became travelling secretary for an Anglican missionary society, then priest-in-charge for several villages in Gloucestershire and finally a member of the Team Ministry in Chipping Norton after moving back to live in Hook Norton.



Ralph Mann spent a short period working as a curator and schools liaison officer at the City Museum in the city of Bristol where he met his wife Elizabeth. He became very interested in local history during their time at Kingham Hill and wrote several articles about

the history of Kingham. In 1967 he became a founder member of Chipping Norton Local History Society and, in retirement, he acted as assistant archivist for the Chipping Norton Museum. He published several pieces of local history research during his retirement including *A History of Churchill and Sarsden* (2013) which explores the birthplace of William Smith, 'the father of geology', and Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India, and a contribution to *A History of Hook Norton Baptist Church*, compiled by Rev John Paul Taylor (2010).

In 1974, Ralph came across a copy of a 1763 letter to the Royal Society from Rev Edward Stone of Chipping Norton who claimed to have rediscovered the medicinal power of *salix* (willow) bark, first recorded by Hippocrates in around 400BC but forgotten in the Middle Ages, which finally resulted, some 130 years later, in the marketing of aspirin (salicylic acid) by Bayer. So Ralph decided to undertake a history/science project with some of his pupils. He recounted how "a group of fourth-formers followed Edward Stone's directions and stripped bark off young willow branches, dried it for three weeks, pulverised it with pestle and mortar, and fed the resulting powder to unsuspecting parents on Speech Day". In 2003, Ralph joined the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire in the unveiling of a Blue Plaque in memory of Edward Stone on the site of the Hitchman Brewery in West Street where Stone had lived.

Image, Left: Ralph Mann (left) with Hugo Brunner, then Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, at the unveiling of the blue plaque for Edward Stone

*Edward Stone claimed to have discovered the use of willow to cure an attack of the ague by applying the principles of sympathetic medicine "as this tree delights in a moist or wet soil, where agues chiefly abound". Stone also wrote an astronomical treatise on the Transit of Venus.

Oxfam Draws a Crowd

An orderly group of local historians was to be seen queuing outside the Oxfam Book and Music shop in Chipping Norton when it opened its doors on Saturday 27 September. This is not something you would normally see in this pleasant market town. They were eager to peruse and buy from the wonderful collection of over 500 local history books, pamphlets and journals that had recently been donated to Oxfam. Much discussion then took place as the historians crowded around the bookcases and looked for much sought after titles.

They came from local history societies in the region to see the gems on sale, ranging in price from £1.99 to £100. The collection was donated by the family of the late Rev Ralph Mann who was well known and sought after as a local history speaker and author. His book collection was very wide ranging and covered Gloucester and the Cotswolds and most of the local

villages in North Oxfordshire. All of the books were in very good condition and in need of new homes.

The shop is run by volunteers and it took a number of weeks to gather and price all of the books to ensure that a fair price was asked. Oxfam is very grateful for the donation of books which have now not only found appreciative new homes, but also generated significant income for Oxfam's causes.

If you have similar large donations – of books, vinyl, CDs or DVDs – but cannot manage to bring them into the shop in the Market Place, please call 01608 644850 and the volunteers will be pleased to arrange to collect them. Our thanks to the Mann family for donating these books and to all of those customers who visited the shop since the collection went out. At the time of writing there is still plenty left!

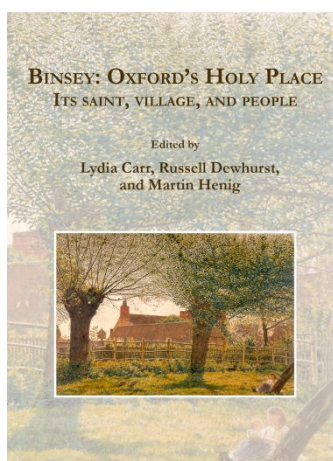
Tony Cooper, Manager, Oxfam Books and Music

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH

New Books

Binsey: Oxford's Holy Place. Its Saint, Village, and People

Lydia Carr, Russell Dewhurst & Martin Henig



The heart of the village of Binsey consists of just a row of cottages and the Perch Inn on one side of the village green. Although it now lies within the ring-road and is attached to the west side of the city of Oxford, the village is essentially rural and unspoilt. It is situated on the south bank of the main channel of the River Thames opposite Port Meadow, an open space belonging to the burgesses of Oxford since late Saxon times. At one time, when the river was wider, there was a ferry here taking travellers across to Oxford.

The village church lies a third of a mile further down Binsey Lane. Its present building is no earlier than the 12th century, although it was erected on an older site, and its association with Oxford's patron saint, St Frideswide, makes this an evocative place for anyone with an interest in the legends associated with the origins of the city. Its holy well, dedicated to St Margaret, like the church itself, was a place of resort for those with eye problems or with a desire to conceive a child. Katharine of Aragon visited the well, and in a sense, her lack of success in conceiving a male heir after doing so eventually led to the English Reformation! Later associations, which include Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) and Alice Liddell and the fictional Alice's visits to the treacle well, as well as Gerard Manley Hopkins and C. S. Lewis, render Binsey a place for the literary as well as the religious pilgrim.

This book is a collection of essays on aspects of Binsey and its environs. It is not a guidebook so much as an evocation of the place, dwelling on specific aspects from the busy river to the tranquil and silent churchyard; from the poplars, great-grandparents of the

present trees along the river and Hopkins' great poem on them, to the personalities who served the village community, from the Binsey of St Frideswide's time to the community of the present day.

ISBN: 9781905739844

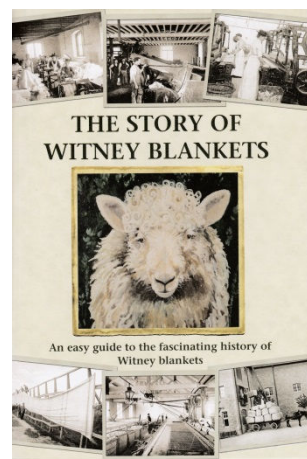
PUBLISHED BY: Archaeopress, Oxford, OX2 7ED

PUBLICATION DATE: September 2014

PRICE: £20.00 (paperback)

The Story of Witney Blankets

Keith Crawford



This delightful and informative little book has been published and sponsored by the Witney Rotary Club, with support from West Oxfordshire District Council and the Witney Educational Foundation in honour of the Rotary Club's 60th anniversary. It was written by Keith Early Crawford, who was Managing Director of Early's Blankets until 2002 when the last mill in Witney closed down, and it is illustrated by images taken from the Early Archive. The booklet is aimed at children and a copy will be distributed to each primary school child in Witney "to keep alive the history of Witney blankets". It tells the story of how the blankets were made, the people who made them and the buildings still standing that were connected with the industry.

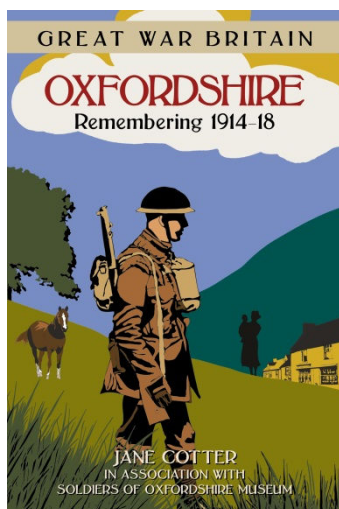
The Witney Blanket Project has been collecting recollections and archive material from people with personal or family memories of the local blanket-making industry for its website www.witneyblanketstory.org.uk. Meanwhile, the Oxfordshire History Centre is continuing its work on the papers donated to it recently by the Early family.

PUBLISHED BY: The Rotary Club of Witney,

www.witneyrotary.co.uk

PRICE: £2

**Great War Britain: Oxfordshire.
Remembering 1914-1918**
Jane Cotter in association with
the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum



The First World War claimed over 995,000 British lives, and its legacy continues to be remembered today. Great War Britain: Oxfordshire offers an intimate portrayal of the county and its people living in the shadow of the 'war to end all wars'.

A well illustrated and highly accessible volume, it describes local reaction to the outbreak of war; charts the experience of individuals who enlisted; the changing face of industry during the war years; the work of the many hospitals in the area; the effect of the conflict on local children; the women who defied convention to play a vital role on the home front; and concludes with a chapter dedicated to how the city and its people coped with the transition to life in peacetime once more. The Great War story of Oxfordshire is told through the voices of those who were there and is vividly illustrated through evocative images from the archives of the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum.

ISBN: 9780750953894

PUBLISHED BY: The History Press, Stroud, Glos, GL5 2QG

PUBLICATION DATE: August 2014

PRICE: £12.99 (also available as an e-book)

Tubney Wood at War: The Hush-Hush Factory
Nigel Dawe

A version of this book came out in 1992 and it has now been completely revised and republished by Thematic Trails for the Longworth and District History Society*. The updated edition includes additional information from people who came forward with new information in the intervening years.

The book provides a comprehensive history of the secret Bofors gun factory in Tubney Woods and the personnel who served there between 1940 and 1944.

The site was hastily established as a shadow factory to manufacture gun barrels for the 40mm anti-aircraft Bofors Gun after the Luftwaffe had repeatedly bombed the parent factory in Coventry, in November 1940.

In 1937, Oxford car manufacturer Lord Nuffield, as an honorary colonel in the Royal Artillery, learnt that Britain was ill-prepared for aerial attack. He arranged for his deputy to go to Sweden and negotiate an agreement with the Bofors armaments firm to set up a factory at Tubney on 15 acres of land owned by Magdalen College. Tubney was chosen because of its remote location and because the dense pinewood would shelter the factory away from any prying enemy eyes. Many of the workers were women who cycled there from Witney and the surrounding area to the secret location which was known as the Hush-Hush Factory.



The Bofors gun was a deadly weapon which is still in use today. Hundreds of Bofors Guns were landed in Normandy on D-Day, from the landing craft that arrived on the beaches, and many more were carried in two at a time in gliders. The guns were also used on US Navy ships in the Pacific to help combat the Japanese kamikaze aircraft attacks.

The author, Nigel Dawes, gradually uncovered the story of the factory after visiting a friend's workshop on the site in the 1990s. The factory was finally demolished in 1992 and the site is now occupied by the engineering firm, Oxford Instruments.

ISBN: 9780948444630

PUBLISHED BY: Thematic Trails, Kingston Bagpuize, Oxon OX13 5AD for Longworth and District History Society

PUBLICATION DATE: 2014

PRICE: £3.00 (paperback)

*The contact details for Longworth and District History Society given in the last issue of the Newsletter were incorrect. The current contact details are: www.longworth-district-history-society.org.uk; Mrs Pam Woodward, 2 Cherry Tree Close, Southmoor, Abingdon OX13 5BB, info@l-h-s.org.uk or prwoodward@btinternet.com. Many apologies to Longworth for this error. *Editor*

Local Authors

The Eureka Partnership

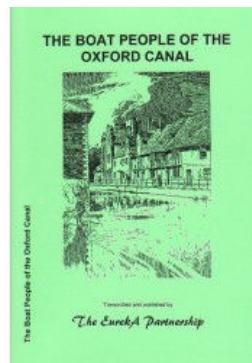
John Bartlett writes: Formed in 2000, The Eureka Partnership comprises just three individuals - myself, my wife Eileen and our friend Angela Hillier. We have all served (some time ago now) in one capacity or another with the Buckinghamshire Family History Society and taken part in some of their transcription projects. Eileen and Angela formed 'The Eureka Partnership' in 2000 as a means of pooling resources as they were both, at that time, involved in paid research work on behalf of clients. Whilst working at the county archive and waiting for ordered documents to arrive, they took to browsing catalogues. Interesting documents were identified and perused and a decision to transcribe and publish what they found of interest ensued. The first few publications were well received and the whole thing 'snowballed' from there. I became involved a few years later and in early 2008, on retirement, took a more active role.



We now transcribe and publish data from historic documents held in archives for the benefit of family and local historians worldwide, in particular those documents which may have been overlooked in the search for ancestors. We are based in Stoke Mandeville near Aylesbury, Bucks but our area of coverage includes the county of Oxfordshire as well as Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire. Our range of booklets includes transcriptions of canal boat registers, non-conformist church records, early census lists, workhouse records and wills beneficiaries. If we find an archived record is interesting, we transcribe and publish it in the belief that it will be of interest to others.

The first census of England and Wales took place in 1801 and thence every ten years up to the present day. The authorities responsible for the first four censuses

(1801 to 1831 inclusive) were interested in statistical population analysis and individuals' names were not required in the returns. However in some parishes, as an aid to compiling the statistical information, names of individuals and details of their family were written down and where these records have survived they can be very useful. Researchers with an interest in the



Oxfordshire parish of Stonesfield can be thankful that those particular writings have survived and can be viewed at the Oxfordshire History Centre in Cowley. We have transcribed the information held for all four of the census dates in our publication *The Parish of Stonesfield – 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831 Census*.

Parliamentary Acts of 1877 and 1884 introduced canal boat registration in order to ensure that conditions on board were maintained at a level considered fit for human occupation. Canal Boat Inspectors were employed to monitor boat conditions, reporting any discrepancy between registered and actual occupancy and any vessel defects to the appropriate authority. The inspections recorded by the Canal Boat Inspector, George James Dew, at Lower Heyford on the Oxford Canal in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are also held at the Oxfordshire History Centre as are the Boat Registration Books. We have published this data in two volumes, one recording Registrations, the other Inspections, under the title *The Boat People of the Oxford Canal*. We are currently transcribing further records held at Warwickshire Archives which give details of Oxfordshire Canal Company employees and this will eventually become our third volume.

The Partnership is currently working on the records of Hook Norton Baptist Church, which was founded in the seventeenth century. Our full range of books, in excess of 370 titles, can be seen on our web site at eurekpartnership.com and can be purchased by mail order. A display of booklets can be seen regularly at the Oxfordshire Family History Society Open Days, for example at the recent event on 4 October at Marlborough School, Woodstock.

John Bartlett, Eureka Partnership

Image, Above left: The Eureka Partnership stall at the OFHS Open Day, 2013

Further Education

Oxfordshire Local History Association Study Day, Autumn 2014

OXFORDSHIRE AT WAR 1914 – 1918

8th November 2014

at
The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum
(in the grounds of the Oxfordshire Museum)
Park Street, Woodstock, OX20 1SN
www.sofa.org.uk

Morning:

- 09.30 Coffee and Registration
- 10.00 *The Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars*
Tim May and Mike Cross
- 10.45 *The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry*
Brigadier David Innes OBE
- 11.45 *Oxford in the Great War*
Malcolm Graham.
- 12.45 *Oxfordshire: Remembering 1914-1918*
Jane Cotter
- 13.15 Lunch

Afternoon: Admission to the displays in the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum is included in the fee for the study day. A town walk leaflet is available at the information desk of the neighbouring Oxfordshire Museum.

Book and pay on-line at: www.olha.org.uk/?page_id=40 or send cheque for £10.00 made payable to 'OLHA' to: Liz Woolley, 138 Marlborough Road, Oxford OX1 4LS

The Oxford Central History Network (OxCen)

OxCen is a new initiative of Oxford Brookes University which aims 'to bring together everyone interested in the history of Oxfordshire'.

On 18 June this year, the core members of the group held a launch event at Headington Hall to offer support for community projects and events commemorating the First World War. Local history groups were invited to tap into the resources available at Brookes to help them with their WWI commemorations or with other future projects. The range of support offered by the Brookes team includes:

- **Workshops and training** in the use of archives, research methods, audience development and communications media (including, film, YouTube, aps, websites, drama, historical trails).
- **Space** for meetings and exhibitions.
- Advice on **funding** opportunities.
- Access to **libraries**.
- **Research advice** (particularly on the international dimensions of local historical events) and **research partnerships**.
- **Student placements** (8 hours per week in the spring term with co-mentoring of student dissertations on local history topics).

OxCen can be contacted via the website, www.oxcen.org.uk, or by email to oxcen@brookes.ac.uk. See the OxCen website for a schedule of events in the county commemorating WWI.

Oxford University Department for Continuing Education Courses, 2014-2015

Day and weekend courses in Oxford:

The Politics of the English People, 1500-1700, 18 October 2014

Exploring the Material Culture of the Early Modern Home, – 24 - 25 January 2015

The Medieval Craftsman, 9 May 2015

Weekly courses in Oxford:

The City of Oxford, 1850-1914, 15 January - 16 March 2015

Enclosures and the Landscape, 21 January - 25 March 2015

Oxford Buildings in Context: Medieval Oxford, 22 January - 26 March 2015

The First World War, 3 February - 10 March 2015

Victorians and Edwardians at Play: Leisure and Pleasure in Oxford and Beyond, 14 April - 16 June 2015

How Old is that House?, 16 April - 18 June 2015

Late Medieval Oxford, 16 April - 18 June 2015

The Villages of West Oxford, 17 April - 19 June 2015

Courses elsewhere:

The Records of the Old Poor Law, 22 November 2014, Reading

Investigating the Victorians, 12 January - 27 March 2015, online

The First World War in Perspective, 14 January - 17 April 2015, online

The Victorian Village School, 21 February 2015, Reading

William Morris, Lord Nuffield: a Man of his Age, 19 March 2015, Maidenhead

Please see www.conted.ox.ac.uk for further details.

Community Outreach by Oxford University

Oxford University has been reaching out to local communities over the past few months through its *Knowledge Exchange and Impact* programme as part of its Strategic Objective of achieving 'Wider Engagement with Society'.

Heritage Projects

The University will be allocating £35,000 over the next few months to fund a series of 'Heritage Projects' in which academic researchers will partner research proposals from the local heritage sector and work with them to develop bids for further partnership funding. A workshop will be held at the Said Business School on 29 October in order to explore the research ideas presented by community groups. It is envisaged that around 8 collaborative projects will be selected for the programme which need to be completed between 1 December this year and the end of July 2015. Applicants are asked to bring 2 or 3 ideas to the workshop and those selected to go through to the next round will be asked to submit short written proposals by 10 November 2014.

Projects which might qualify for consideration could include archaeological investigations, working with museums, school projects, building recording and conservation, developing tourist resources at a building or in a landscape of historical interest, digital projects and training. Groups or individuals who are interested in taking part in this initiative should email KE@socsci.ox.ac.uk before 24 October for further information.

Dreaming Spools

The University's Media Unit has set up the *Dreaming Spools* project to archive and digitize film footage of the city and the surrounding area. With the slogan 'From attic to archive' they are asking people to look at home for any old or forgotten film spools so that these can be preserved before they disappear. The project coincides with the recent publication of 85,000 archived films by British Pathé on YouTube.

Although the British Film Institute holds a substantial archive of Oxford films, and the University's Film Society, later to become the Experimental Film Society, dates from the 1940s, they are particularly interested in film from before 1980s when the University started making its own footage. They are no doubt hoping that real images of the 'dreaming spires', both town and gown, will counteract the image of languid privilege and indolence conveyed by the fictional film of *Brideshead Revisited*. Since its



launch the project has already acquired a few fascinating amateur movies from the 1940s, some of them made using early colour film stock. If you have some old films which you would like to feature in the project, please email the Unit at media@it.ox.ac.uk.

The Bodleian Library

In early September, three OLHA committee members (Tony Hadland, Dr Malcolm Graham and Professor John Stewart) attended a meeting at the Bodleian Library with the new University Librarian, Dr Richard Ovenden, the Keeper of Special Collections, Dr Chris Fletcher, and the Head of Cataloguing, Mike Webb.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss: 1) ways of improving awareness among local historians of the Bodleian's rich local resources in order to encourage the study of the local history of the county; 2) access to the Bodleian's local resources by non-academics; and 3) wider issues, including the future of Oxfordshire County Council's Heritage Services and the Oxfordshire History Centre, and cooperation between the Bodleian Library and OLHA. Some useful ground was covered and a follow-up meeting has been scheduled for January 2015.

The Bodleian staff were able to report that steady progress is being made on cataloguing the collections and digitising the catalogue, though they recognise that many archives and image collections remain difficult for researchers to search. An offer was made by OLHA, as an umbrella group for the county's local history societies, to support the Bodleian in future applications for grants. The Bodleian would be happy to consider collaboration with the Oxfordshire History Centre on future projects though it has no specific budget for collaborative work, and agreed that University students could be encouraged to make use of the facilities at St Luke's. The meeting also discussed how there might be scope for OLHA members (particularly members of societies affiliated to OLHA) to take part in crowdsourcing initiatives at the Bodleian, such as projects to transcribe hand written catalogues into digital form.

Bodleian readers' tickets may be issued to non-academic local historians who can provide an appropriate reference. Over 65s and certain other categories of person are offered free admission but a charge is made to other readers: the present standard annual fee is £38; six months costs £20 and the charge for one week is £6.

Oxford Ragwort

NOTICE

RAGWORT WEEK: 2013

8000 BC: A variety of Ragwort evolves to grow in the volcanic ashes on Mount Etna, Sicily.
It grows where no other plant will grow

1702 AD: This variety of Ragwort is collected by the botanist William Sherard and added to his collection at the Duchess of Beaufort's garden in Badminton, England

1712: Jacob Bohart the Younger takes a specimen of this plant from Badminton and adds it to his collection at the Oxford Botanic Gardens

1714: The Oxford Ragwort makes its escape from the Botanic Gardens and is later found growing in the Oxford City walls

1852 - 1855: The Oxford Ragwort makes its way along the newly opened rail track to Birmingham

1871: From Birmingham the Oxford Ragwort spreads via railway lines to the rest of the country

1946: In post war Britain the Oxford Ragwort spreads from rail lines to waste land, bomb sites and anywhere else that other plants will not grow

2011: Bill Drummond pulls up an Oxford Ragwort growing through a crack in a pavement in Sheffield before giving a performance lecture at the Sensoria Festival. He does not know what the plant is but someone in the audience tells him. He likes its unpleasant smell and yellow petals.
Drummond notices other ragworts growing in wasteland around Sheffield.
Drummond writes a book about being in Sheffield and calls the book RAGWORTS

2012: Drummond publishes an edition of 1,000 copies of RAGWORTS and has an exhibition at the Site Gallery, Sheffield, entitled RAGWORTS. Drummond decides to have a Ragwort Week each year to celebrate the unloved and decides that the book RAGWORTS is only on sale for one week each year – Ragwort Week. Drummond decides that only 100 copies of RAGWORTS of the edition of 1,000 should be sold each year and that Ragwort Week should be on a different week and in a different city each year – a city where Ragworts grow. The first Ragwort Week was held in Sheffield between 23 - 29 April 2012

2013: The second Ragwort Week will be on 15 - 21 July 2013 in Oxford to celebrate the tricentenary of the plant's escape from the city's Botanic Gardens. One hundred copies of the book RAGWORTS will be made available for sale during this week via the shop in The Oxford Botanic Gardens and on line from http://www.alimentation.co.uk/penkiln_burn

2014: The third Ragwort Week will be celebrated in Birmingham

pb Poster 516 2015

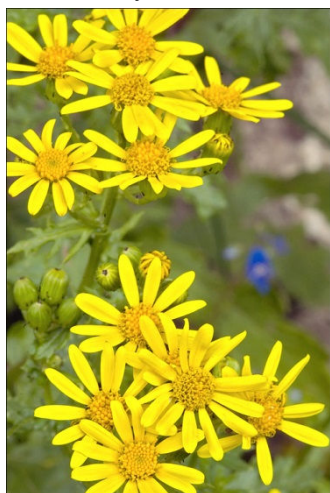
www.penkilnburn.com

Readers who visited Oxford in July 2013 may have seen large copies of this poster around the city: one was pasted onto the door of a telephone box on the London Road, another on a wheelie bin in Blackbird Leys. National Ragwort Week did, indeed, 'happen' in Oxford last year and has taken place again this year in Birmingham, but in May instead of July. This intriguing event is the work of Scottish 'artist provocateur', Bill Drummond, who achieved some notoriety for an event on the island of Jura in 1994 in which he set fire to £1m in cash. This poster forms one of his Sixty Posters project and the urban spread of ragwort features frequently elsewhere in his work.

Drummond's poster tells the often-told story of ragwort, a plant collected from the volcanic ash slopes of Etna in Sicily in around 1690, 'escaping' from the Oxford Botanic Garden in the 18th century on to the Garden wall, and later spreading along the newly-built railway lines of Britain. Each year Oxford is named as the culprit when local conservation groups and, in particular, horse owners organise ragwort culling expeditions and post emotive notices on the web about its poisonous effect on animals who eat it. Recently, however, a counter-campaign has been extolling its virtues as a plant favoured by bees and other pollinators (www.buglife.org.uk) and is questioning the evidence for widespread animal poisoning by ragwort (www.plantlife.org.uk). So what is the truth about the ragwort story?

A note from Dr Stephen Harris (Druce Curator of the Oxford University Herbaria) at least seems to exonerate Oxford from being the main culprit. He writes: "There is no end of confusion between common ragwort and Oxford ragwort. Both *Senecio squalidus* (Oxford ragwort) and *Senecio jacobaea* (now *Jacobaea vulgaris**, common ragwort) are toxic to livestock (less so to sheep) since they contain the same groups of pyrrolizidine alkaloids. However, you will not find Oxford ragwort in fields where animals graze – it is a species of weedy areas, such as rubbish tips, car parks, wall tops and urban paths. Common ragwort is native to the UK and its native habitat is in naturally disturbed areas such as sand dunes. The biology of common ragwort means that it will only colonise disturbed areas, hence fields that are overgrazed are a classic location for the species. Other large ragwort species that contain the toxic pyrrolizidine alkaloids, and are frequently confused with common ragwort, include *Senecio aquaticus* and *Senecio erucifolius*. These alkaloids are incidentally also found in comfrey – a former 'cure' for staggers in horses. A brief background to the Oxford ragwort story can be found as part of the University's *Plants400* project at <http://herbaria.plants.ox.ac.uk/bol/plants400/Pages/Seneciosqualidus>."

Readers may have noticed this year the very pretty effect of bright yellow ragwort and pale blue wild flax growing together on the side of the ring road around Oxford and other roads further afield, where current policy for road side mowing by the local authorities has allowed them to bloom. Is the flax also an escapee, perhaps from former paper-making mills at Eynsham, Grandpont and elsewhere, and from the historic local leather-making industry? Information about the use of flax in paper making in the 17th and 18th century can be found on the website www.wovepaper.co.uk/flax.html. Wild flax has not yet been covered by the *Plants400* project but Dr Harris notes that "it is on the list to do before completion of the project". By July 2021, *Plants400* will have featured 400 plants of scientific and cultural significance to mark 400 years of botanic research and teaching by the University of Oxford.



* The Ragwort Control Act 2003/2005 specifically targeted *Jacobaea vulgaris*



Oxfordshire Apples



Gloomy forecasts by Britain's apple growers earlier this year when it was feared that the effect of flood-induced drought on the trees' root stock would devastate the autumn's fruit crop have proved to be unfounded. By mid-September, Adrian Barlow, Chief Executive of English Apples & Pears Ltd, which represents apple growers throughout the UK, was able to announce an outstanding crop for 2014 which is being harvested several weeks earlier than usual. "The weather has been the critical factor with the early spring, warm temperatures, an outstanding amount of sunshine and adequate rainfall giving us excellent conditions for the apples to grow and ripen. The cold August nights have caused the apples to develop wonderfully intense colour." Apple trees in Oxfordshire are currently laden with apples.

In today's customer-driven markets, one in four British apples bought is now the Gala variety (it outstripped the Cox in 2012) even though we grow around 2300 varieties of apple in the UK. 70% of the apples we buy are imported from overseas but there is a growing if quiet local revolution, promoted by environmental groups such as Common Ground, to grow and buy local non-commercial varieties of apple. Historically, Oxfordshire had many local varieties of apple named after places or family members of their growers. The most famous of the Oxford varieties is probably the Blenheim Orange Pippin with its distinctive nutty flavour. Raised in about 1740 by a tailor, George Kempster, in his garden in Manor Road, Old Woodstock, just outside Blenheim Park, the tree was a local landmark. People came by coach loads to marvel at it and to take scions from it. Another keen grower in more recent years was Fred Wastie (Old Fred - his son was also called Fred) of Eynsham, whose family still farms in the area, who produced around 14 named varieties in the 1920s and 30s, none of them commercially but two of which (Jennifer and Jennifer Wastie, named after his daughter) are listed by the National Fruit Collection. The Milton Wonder has been in the news recently because of the campaign by the the Bernwode Fruit Trees nursery and the Milton Wonder Charitable Trust to save the apple tree in the garden of an 18th century cottage in the village scheduled for redevelopment when the elderly owner moved into a retirement home last year. The tree in question is thought to be 200 years old and to be the oldest known apple tree that has a good provenance and that still stands more or less upright. (See faringdonfreefood.org/local-fruit-tree-varieties-2/ for a list of local apple varieties.)



The Wychwood Project Orchard Group believes the apple tree is almost as good a refuge for wildlife as the English oak and they are encouraging local people to plant apple trees to promote biodiversity and conserve this traditional and diminishing local habitat. According to the group, in 1901 Oxfordshire had 1,533 acres of apple orchards but, sadly many orchards have been lost to development or cleared for farming in previous decades to the detriment of local character and wildlife. The Midshires Orchard Group is one of several groups operating in the county running events and training courses in pruning and grafting, including restorative pruning of old fruit trees and traditional orchard management. Specialist nurseries, such as the Heritage Fruit Company, and Bernwodes are promoting local varieties of fruit tree and several local community orchards have now become established in the county, including those at Wolvercote (dedicated on Apple Day 1995 to Ralph Austen, a seventeenth century Oxford nurseryman who had promoted the idea of community orchards), Elder Stubbs Allotments in Oxford and Eye & Dunsden. Many of these orchards and other Oxfordshire villages have been celebrating Apple Day in October. Apple Days at Chadlington on the 18th, Cogges Manor Farm on the 25th and Northmoor Trust on the 26th are still to come.

Image, Above right: Frontispiece of A Treatise on Fruit-trees, showing the manner of grafting, setting, pruning, and ordering of them in all respects, and along with it a pamphlet on the Spiritual Use of an Orchard (1653) by Ralph Austen, engraving by John Goddard (Bodleian Library)

Below left: Answers to 'The Streets of Oxford' quiz in Newsletter Issue no 128

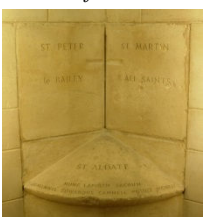


Left: Peace stone set into the wall of Carfax Tower to commemorate the Treaty of Paris in 1814 which ended a phase of the Napoleonic War between Britain and her allies and France.



Above right: 1667 milestone at the end of the 'Oxford Mile Hyway' at the junction of Cheney Lane with Old Road, the main route to London before the London Road was built in the 18th century, marking a mile distance from Oxford's Eastgate.

Below left: Parish boundary stone erected in 1952 in a former alleyway off Queen Street at the junction of three parishes: St Peter le Bailey, St Martins & All Saints and St Aldates. In 1976, the stone was placed in a glass case inside Marks and Spencer at the junction of the new boundaries between St Ebbes and St Michaels at Northgate parishes.



Right: Plaque in Latin set in the wall of an alleyway off Little Clarendon Street near Walton Street in 1976 in honour of

the hearty breakfasts provided by Keble College landlady, Irene Frude, over 35 years.



Image, below right: "An Orderly Queue of Local Historians" Oxfam, Chipping Norton, September 2014 (See p.13)



DIARY OF TALKS AND MEETINGS

If your society's talks are not listed here, please contact Liz Woolley on membership@olha.org.uk to have them included on the OLHA website and hence in the next edition of this newsletter.

October 2014

- 15th – **Littlemore** – Hazel Brown, *Medical Care for Paupers*. Littlemore Community Centre, Giles Road, 7.30pm.
- 15th – **Bloxham** – David Gibbard, *The Burford Highwaymen*. Jubilee Hall, off Brickle Lane, 7.30pm.
- 16th – **Eynsham** – Liz Woolley, *Children's Experiences of the Second World War in Oxfordshire*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 16th – **Longworth** – Colin Oakes, *Plague and Fire. The Life and Work of Samuel Pepys*. Southmoor Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 16th – **Sibfords** – Emily Medcraft, *Compton Verney*. Village Hall, Sibford Gower, 8.00pm.
- 17th – **Wantage** (Friends of Vale & Downland Museum) – Tim Allen, *Being British, Becoming Roman: Iron Age and Roman Archaeological Discoveries on the A2 near Springhead in Kent*. Methodist Church, 7.30pm. Tickets £5 for the talk only, £7.50 to include baguette. Other refreshments on sale from 6.45pm. Further information from gill@flyhighbtbc.org.uk, 01235 766655.
- 20th – **Adderbury** – Martin Greenwood, *Country Carrier*. Methodist Church Schoolroom, 7.30pm.
- 20th – **Bicester** – Muriel Pilkington, *Lost Railways of Oxfordshire*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7.30pm.
- 20th – **Kennington** – Liz Woolley, *The Coming of the Railway to Oxford*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7.45pm.
- 21st – **Clanfield & Bampton** – Liz Woolley, *Children and War: Experiences of WWII in Oxfordshire*. Carter Institute, Clanfield, 7.30pm.
- 21st – **Iffley** – AGM and Stephen Barker, *The Oxford & Bucks on the Somme 1916*. Church Hall, Church Way, 7.30pm.
- 22nd – **Dorchester on Thames** – Katherine Clarke, *Mists and Monsters. Ancient Perceptions of the British Isles*. Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 23rd – **Appleton with Eaton** – Julie Ann Godson, *The Water Gypsy: How a Thames Fishergirl became a Viscountess*. Appleton C of E School, 7.30 pm
- 27th – **Henley** – Simon Townley, – *A Thousand Years of Ewelme History*. Kings Arms Barns, Market Place, 7.45pm.
- 27th – **Launton** – Pete Chivers, *Bicester Hunt*. Grange Farm Mews, 7.45pm.

- 27th – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – John Frearson, *Was your Ancestor a Morris Dancer?* Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, **Kidlington**, 8.00pm.
- 28th – **Hanney** – AGM and two 30minute talks by members. War Memorial Hall, East Hanney, 8.00pm.
- 28th – **Kidlington** – Stephen Griffiths, *The Mary Rose and her Crew*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.

November 2014

- 4th – **Henley** – Judy Dewey, *The History of Wallingford*. Old King's Arms Barn, King's Road, 7.45pm.
- 4th – **Hook Norton** – Don Ratcliffe, *The Croakers of Hook Norton and the Threat to the Open Village*. Baptist Church Hall, Netting Street, 7.30pm.
- 6th – **Eynsham** – Andrew Moss, *The History of the Old Radcliffe Infirmary*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 10th – **Chipping Norton** – Richard O Smith, *Oxford Eccentricity: A History of Mayhem and Mischief*. Methodist Church, West Street, 7.30pm.
- 10th – **Goring & Streatley** – Liz Woolley, *Children's Experiences of World War II in Oxfordshire*. Goring Village Hall, 2.30pm.
- 11th – **Marcham** – Tony Hadland, *Foray to the Falklands*. Marcham Church, 7.45pm.
- 11th – **Thame** – Simon Baynes, *This Royal Throne of Kings: Shakespeare and English History*. Barns Centre, Church Road, 7.30pm.
- 12th – **Deddington** – Gareth Richard, *The Poor of Deddington*. Windmill Centre, Hempton Road, 7.30pm.
- 13th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Stephen Barker, *The City of Oxford during the Civil War, 1642-46*. Community Centre, Lamborough Hill, Wootton, 7.30pm.
- 14th – **Charlbury** – Charles Menteith, *NonChristmas Carols*. Memorial Hall, Browns Lane, 8.00pm.
- 14th – **Wallingford** – Rosey Meara, *Recent Cotswold Archaeology Projects in Oxfordshire*. Town Hall, 8.00pm.
- 17th – **Adderbury** – Barry Davis, *Adderbury at Leisure*. Methodist Church Schoolroom, 7.30pm.
- 17th – **Bicester** – Martin Way, *Barrels, Barley and Beer*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7.30pm.
- 17th – **Kennington** – Mark Davie, *Oxford's Historic Waterways*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7.45pm.
- 18th – **Clanfield & Bampton** – Paul Backhouse, *Excavations at the First World War Burial Site at Fromelles*. Carter Institute, Clanfield, 7.30pm.
- 18th – **Enstone** – Janet Newson, *Beakhead doorways. Design and Mysteries of Romanesque Sculpture in North Oxfordshire*. Venue tbc, 7.30pm.

November 2014 (cont)

- 18th – **Iffley** – Tim Porter, *The Cotswolds in the Wars of The Roses*. Church Hall, Church Way, 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Bloxham** – Roger Scanlan, *The Past, Present and Future of Thatching*. Jubilee Hall, off Brickle Lane, 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Littlemore** – **Members' evening** – discussion of past year, projects and social evening. Littlemore Community Centre, Giles Road, 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Otmoor** – Robert Harris, *Women in Industry during the War Years*. Islip Village Hall, 8.00pm.
- 20th – **Eynsham** – Richard Smith, *Bovington Tank Museum and the Battle of Cambrai*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 20th – **Longworth** – Tony Hadland, *Steam and Steel in the Vale of White Horse*. Southmoor Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 20th – **Sibfords** – Gerald Lesinski, *The Crown Jewels*. Village Hall, Sibford Gower, 8.00pm.
- 21st – **Besselsleigh** – Julie Ann Godson, *The Water Gypsy: How a Thames Fishergirl became a Viscountess*. – The Hayloft, Great Park, 7.30pm. Tickets £5 in advance, £6 on the door. Contact rosemarykitto@gmail.com
- 24th – **Launton** – **AGM**. Grange Farm Mews, 7.45pm.
- 24th – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Shaun Morley, *From Time Out of Mind. Custom and Ritual in 19th Century Oxfordshire*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8.00pm.
- 25th – **Hanney** – Martin Buckland, *The Invisible Brick – Revealed in Language and Literature, Film and Fiction, Music and Murder, in the Local area and Much More*. War Memorial Hall, East Hanney, 8.00pm.
- 25th – **Kidlington** – Stephen Barker, *The Story of the Chiltern Railways*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.
- 26th – **Dorchester on Thames** – Paul Booth, *A View from the Train: The Roman Archaeology of High Speed 1 in Kent*. Village Hall, 7.30pm.

December 2014

- 2nd – **Henley** – **AGM**. Old King's Arms Barn, King's Road, 7.45pm.
- 2nd – **Hook Norton** – James Tobin, *The Great Rollright Aircraft Crash of 1944*. Baptist Church Hall, Netting Street, 7.30pm.
- 2nd – **Thame** – **AGM**. Barns Centre, Church Road, 7.30pm.
- 3rd – **Otmoor** – Eda Forbes, *Blue Plaques, People and Places*. Islip Village Hall, 8.00pm.
- 4th – **Eynsham** – Richard O Smith, *Oxford Eccentricity* (with seasonal refreshments). Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 5th – **Bensington** – Anthony Church, *Tales from an Oxfordshire Town Crier*. Benson Parish Hall, 7.30pm, followed by buffet supper.

- 5th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – **Christmas and 25th Centenary Social**. Community Centre, Lamborough Hill, Wootton, 7.30pm.
- 8th – **Chipping Norton** – Shaun Morley, *Soup Kitchens, Clothing Clubs and Coal for the Poor*. Methodist Church, West Street, 7.30pm.
- 8th – **Goring & Streatley** – Alan Turton, *The Mary Rose*. Goring Village Hall, 2.30pm.
- 9th – **Marcham** – **Christmas Social**. Marcham Church, 7.45pm.
- 11th – **Longworth** – **Christmas Feast** accompanied by Christmas stories from Colin Oakes. Southmoor Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 12th – **Charlbury** – Dick Robinson *Sister Edith Appleton: – Front Line Nurse and Diarist in the Great War*. Memorial Hall, Browns Lane, 8.00pm.
- 12th – **Wallingford** – Susan Ronald, *Hildebrand Gurlitt, Nazi Art Looter*. Town Hall, 8.00pm.
- 15th – **Bicester** – Bob Hessian, *Bicester Pubs*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7.30pm.
- 15th – **Kennington** – Shaun Morley *Drunk and Riotous: Oxford's Friendly Societies*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7.45pm.
- 16th – **Iffley** – Malcolm Graham, *Oxford: The Home Front in the Second World War*. Church Hall, Church Way, 7.30pm.

January 2015

- 6th – **Hook Norton** – Brian Rider, *The Battle of Edgehill*. Baptist Church Hall, Netting Street, 7.30pm.
- 8th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Liz Woolley, *The Coming of the Railway to Oxford*. Community Centre, Lamborough Hill, Wootton, 7.30pm.
- 9th – **Charlbury** – Bill King and Helen BessemerClark, *Dad's Underground Army: British Resistance in WWII*. Memorial Hall, Browns Lane, 8.00pm.
- 12th – **Chipping Norton** – **Members' social evening with supper**. Methodist Church, West Street, 7.30pm.
- 15th – **Eynsham** – Mark Davies, *Lewis Carroll and the PreRaphaelites*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Kennington** – Richard O Smith, *Britain's Most Eccentric Sports*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7.45pm.
- 20th – **Enstone** – Jo Eames, *General Hobart: WWII Designer of Special Tanks Important to the Success of DDay*. Venue tbc (contact 01608 677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7.30pm.
- 21st – **Bloxham** – Anthony Poulton Smith, *Oxfordshire Place Names*. Jubilee Hall, off Brickle Lane, 7.30pm.
- 26th – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Liz Woolley, *The Parish of St Thomas the Martyr, West Oxford*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8.00pm.
- 27th – **Hanney** – Simon Wenham, *The History of Salter's Steamers*. War Memorial Hall, East Hanney, 8.00pm.
- 27th – **Kidlington** – Jill Saint, *Miss Read Remembered by her Daughter*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.

January 2015 (cont)

- 28th – **Dorchester** – Margot Metcalfe *Poverty in Dorchester on Thames*, followed by AGM. Village Hall, 7.30pm.

February 2015

- 3rd – **Hook Norton** – Sarah Morris, *King Henry VIII's Travels around Oxfordshire*. Baptist Church Hall, Netting Street, 7.30pm.
- 4th – **Otmoor** – Stephen Barker, *The Ox and Bucks on the Somme 1916*. Islip Village Hall, 8.00pm.
- 5th – **City of Oxford Society of Model Engineers** – Donald Gray, *The Restoration of Wheatley Mill*. COSME Club House, Cutteslowe Park, Oxford, 8.00pm.
- 5th – **Eynsham** – Steve Lord, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 9th – **Chipping Norton** – Simon Wenham, *The History of Salters Steamers in Oxford*. Methodist Church, West Street, 7.30pm.
- 12th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Michael Bartlett, *Motoring and Transport in the Forties*. Community Centre, Lamborough Hill, Wootton, 7.30pm.
- 13th – **Charlbury** – Martin Greenwood, *The Role of the Country Carrier*. Memorial Hall, Browns Lane, 8.00pm.
- 16th – **Enstone** – Evening of Poetry, Prose and Music with the Theme of the History of Courtship. Buffet dinner to be included. Venue tbc (contact 01608 677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7.30pm.
- 17th – **Clanfield & Bampton** – Bill King, *The River Thames at War*. Carter Institute, Clanfield, 7.30pm.
- 17th – **Iffley** – Alastair Lack, *Oxford in The Civil War*. Church Hall, Church Way, 7.30pm.
- 18th – **Bloxham** – Shaun Morley, *The Oxfordshire Swing Riots of 1830*. Jubilee Hall, off Brickle Lane, 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Eynsham** – Graham Bannell, *Personal Perspectives – on the Revitalisation of Older Buildings*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 23rd – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Tony Hadland, *From Trevithick to Barnes Wallis: Tracing a Family of Cornish Engineers, from Camborne to Brooklands, via the Sewers of London*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8.00pm.
- 24th – **Hanney** – Caroline Jackson, *Found in an Oxfordshire Manor House: The Diaries of General Primrose 18191892*. War Memorial Hall, East Hanney, 8.00pm.
- 24th – **Kidlington** – Alastair Lack, *A Light Hearted Look at the History of Oxford University*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.
- 25th – **Dorchester** – Kemble Croft, *All the World's a Stage: A history of our Theatres from Shakespeare's Stratford to West End Musicals*. Village Hall, 7.30pm.

March 2015

- 3rd – **Hook Norton** – Christine Gadsby, *The Ladies of Blenheim*. Baptist Church Hall, Netting Street, 7.30pm.

- 4th – **Otmoor** – Shaun Morley, *Oxfordshire's Swing Riots: Rural Unrest in 1830*. Islip Village Hall, 8.00pm.
- 5th – **Eynsham** – Anney Harris, *Beatrix Potter: Author, Artist and Countrywoman*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 9th – **Chipping Norton** – AGM and Alastair Lack, *The History of Oxford University*. Methodist Church, West Street, 7.30pm.
- 12th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Mark Davies, *Alice in Wonderland: Oxford 'Alice' and the preRaphaelites*. Community Centre, Lamborough Hill, Wootton, 7.30pm.
- 13th – **Charlbury** – Conrad Keating, *Great Medical Discoveries: 800 Years of Oxford Innovation*. Memorial Hall, Browns Lane, 8.00pm.
- 17th – **Iffley** – Christine Gadsby, *Blenheim: Battle for Europe*. Church Hall, Church Way, 7.30pm.
- 18th – **Bloxham** – Katherine Bradley, *Votes for Women: The History of the Women's Suffrage Movement in Oxfordshire, 18701918*. Jubilee Hall, off Brickle Lane, 7.30pm.
- 18th – **Clanfield & Bampton** – Alastair Lack, *Oxfordshire Country Houses*. Bampton Village Hall., 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Eynsham** – Steve Parrinder, *The Stones of Eynsham Abbey*. Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 21st – **Sibfords** – AGM followed by Chris Mason, *Swift Stories*. Village Hall, Sibford Gower, 8.00pm.
- 23rd – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Anthony Adolph, *Joining the Dots and Bringing it all Together. Connecting up Normal Genealogical Research, Origins of Surnames, and DNA*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8.00pm.
- 24th – **Enstone** – Victoria Huxley, *Jane Austen's Local Connections and the Lives of Regency Women*. Venue tbc (contact 01608 677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7.30pm.
- 24th – **Hanney** – Malcolm Graham, *Victorian North Oxford: Suburban Paradise or Leafy Sobriety?* War Memorial Hall, East Hanney, 8.00pm.
- 25th – **Dorchester** – Greg Stores, *Sleeping Through the Ages: An Historical Account of Human Sleep*. Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 31st – **Kidlington** – Brian Lowe, *Odder Oxford*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.

April 2015

- 1st – **Otmoor** – AGM followed by John Davies, *The Warden's Punishment Book, 16011851*. Islip Village Hall, 8.00pm.
- 7th – **Hook Norton** – Alice Foster, *Stanley Spencer and the Art of the Great War*. Baptist Church Hall, Netting Street, 7.30pm.
- 10th – **Charlbury** – Mark Davies, *Oxford's Historic Waterway: From Legend to Leisure*. Memorial Hall, Browns Lane, 8.00pm.
- 13th – **Chipping Norton** – Liz Woolley, *How the Coming of the Railway Changed Oxford*. Methodist Church, West Street, 7.30pm.

April 2015 (cont)

- 15th – **Bloxham** – Bill King, *On Two Wheels: The Fascinating Story of the Bicycle*. Jubilee Hall, off Brickle Lane, 7.30pm.
- 16th – **Eynsham** – Martin Harris and Pamela Richards, *Thirty Years of the Eynsham Record* (includes AGM and refreshments). Church Hall, Thames Street, 7.30pm.
- 9th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – AGM and Members' Evening. Community Centre, Lamborough Hill, Wootton, 7.30pm.
- 21st – **Clanfield & Bampton** – Paddy Walsh, *The Indian Mutiny of 1857*. Carter Institute, Clanfield, 7.30pm.
- 21st – **Iffley** – Vivien Greene Memorial Lecture. Kate Tillier *Remembrance and Community: War Memorials and Local History*. Church Hall, Church Way, 7.30pm.
- 22nd – **Dorchester** – Nick Dudley, *The History of Surgery*. – Village Hall, 7.30pm.
- 27th – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Mark Stevens, *Fair Mile Revealed: The Victorian Asylum*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8.00pm.
- 28th – **Hanney** – Stephen Parker, *Oxfordshire on the Home Front, 1914-18*. War Memorial Hall, East Hanney, 8.00pm.
- 28th – **Kidlington** – Martin Greenwood, *Charles' Painted Ladies*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.

May 2015

- 5th – **Hook Norton** – AGM, followed by a film evening. Baptist Church Hall, Netting Street, 7.30pm.
- 8th – **Charlbury** – AGM. Memorial Hall, Browns Lane, 8.00pm.
- 13th – **Chipping Norton** – Liz Woolley, *How the Coming of the Railway Changed Oxford*. Methodist Church, West Street, 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Enstone** – Munro Price, *Napoleon: The End of Glory?* Venue tbc (contact 01608 677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7.30pm.
- 19th – **Iffley** – Julie Summers, *Jambusters: The WI in the Second World War*. Church Hall, Church Way, 7.30pm.
- 20th – **Bloxham** – Stephen Wass, *Voyages to the House of Diversion: Hanwell Castle, its Jacobean park and*

the birth of Modern Science. Jubilee Hall, off Brickle Lane, 7.30pm.

- 20th – **Clanfield & Bampton** – Julie Thorne, *The Water Gypsy: How a Thames Fishergirl became a Viscountess*. Bampton Village Hall, 7.30pm
- 26th – **Kidlington** – Gillian White, *Bess of Hardwick*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.

June 2015

- 23rd – **Enstone** – **Historic Garden Picnic**. Venue tbc (Tel 01608677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 6.00pm.
- 24th – **Kidlington** – AGM followed by members' social. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.30pm.
- 27th – **Dorchester Visit to John Bunyan's Museum and Chapel and Wrest Park**. Contact Gail Thomas, 01865341977.

July 2015

- 28th – **Kidlington** – Tony Hadland *The Duke and the Miner's Daughter*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.

September 2015

- 20th – **The Sibfords** – Julie Ann Godson *The Water Gypsy. How a Thames Fishergirl became a Viscountess*. – Sibford Gower Village Hall, 8.00pm.
- 22nd – **Enstone** – Dominic Sandbrook, *The Ten Top Events that have Shaped Britain since WWII*. Venue tbc (contact 01608 677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7.30pm.
- 23rd – **Dorchester** – Shaun Morley, *Emigration from Oxfordshire in the 19th Century*. – Village Hall, 7.30pm.

October 2015

- 20th – **Enstone** – Alan Simpson, *Tracing Ancestors*. Venue tbc (contact 01608 677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7.30pm.
- 28th – **Dorchester** – John Heritage, *The History of Broadmoor*. – Village Hall, 7.30pm.

November 2015

- 24th – **Enstone** – Jeremy Burton, *The Late Queen Mother's Jewels*. Venue tbc (contact 01608 677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7.30pm.
- 25th – **Dorchester** – Jane MacDonald, *Feasts and Feasting*. Village Hall, 7.30pm.

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