

OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY NEWS

The Newsletter of the Oxfordshire Local History Association

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Chairman's Musings

On the right tracks?

Almost two centuries have passed since the first passenger railway was built in the Thames Valley, yet today trains are making big news in and around Oxfordshire.

The controversy over HS2, the proposed high-speed line from London to the West Midlands, which would run close to Oxfordshire's northeast border, continues unabated. Just over the county's southern border, Reading station has been thoroughly modernised and expanded. Apart from the lines already running in five directions from Reading, it will soon be possible to catch a Crossrail train from there to the far side of London without the need to change trains. Direct rail services from Reading to Heathrow Airport are also promised.

Within Oxfordshire itself, things are also on the move. Didcot station has recently had a revamp, with much-improved parking and road vehicle access. And this summer sees the opening of the new Oxford Parkway station on the northern outskirts of the city. It will offer an alternative rail route from Oxford to London. So, just as Reading has long offered the options of Paddington or Waterloo as London destinations, Oxford will now give a choice between Paddington and Marylebone.

But progress often comes at a cost. Anyone travelling by car or bus through the Vale of White Horse, in south-west Oxfordshire, is likely to have experienced frustrating delays or diversions resulting from electrification of the Great Western line from Paddington to Bristol and Oxford. These delays stem from the fact that Britain pioneered railway development and, in so doing, restricted itself to the lowest feasible height clearance ("loading gauge") for bridges and tunnels. Other countries, many of which had railways built by British engineers, took advantage of a higher loading gauge. This enabled them easily to accommodate the overhead catenary necessary to support high-tension electrical cables to power electric trains. It also meant they could run bigger freight wagons and double-decker passenger trains, a commonplace sight on French, Belgian, Dutch and many other railways.

To accommodate overhead wiring on the London to Bristol line, our low loading gauge has necessitated lowering the railway tracks in some places, notably the famous Box Tunnel near Bath, thus creating dips in the line. This would have been anathema to the Great Western's Victorian engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who prided himself on the exceptionally flat course of his "billiard table" through the Vale of White Horse.



More often, though, the solution to the low loading gauge problem has been to maintain existing gradients and instead raise the road bridges that cross the railway. This has caused immense disruption when Oxfordshire roads such as the A417 at Challow Station (site of the Great Western Railway's first crash, back in 1840) have been closed for weeks on end. In the case of the A338, the main road from Wantage to Oxford, a concerted campaign involving the local Member of Parliament was necessary to persuade Network Rail to adopt a less disruptive bridge replacement programme.

In the late 19th century, no village in the Vale of White Horse was more than six miles from a railway station. Today there are no stations at all in the Vale proper, the nearest being Oxford, Didcot and Swindon. And the trains are no longer built just down the line in Swindon: the sleek new electrically-powered rolling stock is being constructed in Japan. The Hitachi company already has its engine sheds at Old Oak Common on the line into Paddington.

Back in the 1960s, it was often said that Britain had won the war but lost the peace. Soon, as you whizz by Didcot power station (owned by a German company) in your sleek Japanese-built train, you will be able to reflect on the fact that the new railway service from Oxford Parkway to Marylebone is run by a subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn, a company wholly owned by the German government.

**Oxfordshire Local History Association
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(Chairman's Musings, cont from p 1)

If you are interested in the history of railways in that part of Oxfordshire which was formerly North Berkshire, I can recommend a new and profusely illustrated 160-page book by Adrian Vaughan, entitled *Railways through the Vale of White Horse*. I bought

my copy from the excellent Pendon Museum at Long Wittenham, which is always worth a visit.

Tony Hadland, Chairman

UPDATES FROM THE SHIRES: RECORDING OUR HISTORY

Oxfordshire History Centre Update

We are writing this at the end of April, traditionally the month when we analyse how we have fared over the county council year. In 2014/15 service usage of the county's archives, local studies and photographic resources remained fairly stable. Total visitor contact (on-site and remote) was slightly down on 2013/14, but our online presence is growing, with much more information now accessible on our web pages. Website hits have increased by 4% in the past 12 months. It was also encouraging to see that, as last year, about 20% of our visitors were first time users of the History Centre

Archive Service Accreditation

The History Centre is busy preparing its application bid for Accreditation. This is a UK-wide scheme which examines in detail whether we are providing a high level of service to our users and other stakeholders. It also assesses if we are preserving our collections in line with national standards and have robust plans and policies to manage and develop the service. It has led us to review and expand on our existing documentation

and processes. We are aiming to apply in July, for panel assessment in November.

Preservica cloud storage*

Oxfordshire History Centre signed a contract with Preservica on 1st April to provide us with 'cloud storage.'

Preservica is a company which specialises in not just the storage of digital material, but also its active preservation, to ensure that today's digital formats don't fall into obsolescence and become unreadable. We currently hold somewhere between 15 and 20 terabytes of digital material stored in a variety of places, including network drives and portable media such as USB



drives, disk and tape! Properly managed cloud storage should help us amend the considerable vulnerability of our current situation and make it easier to provide direct public access in the near future to certain resources from our Searchroom computers – eg digitised oral history sound recordings and video.

Digitisation projects' update

Three sets of our archival records which have been scanned in the past couple of years are now available in digital form in our searchroom:

- **Tithe maps** of over 150 Oxfordshire parishes, covering the period 1838-1865, though not the accompanying written apportionments. These represent the first detailed mapping of some of these towns and villages.
- **District Valuation maps and survey books** dating from 1910-1915 and covering land and property holdings in pre-1974 Oxfordshire
- **Baptism, marriage and burial registers** of about 300 Oxfordshire parishes.



One of the reasons for digitising these collections is to preserve the original documents, many of which are in fragile condition, and inevitably deteriorate further

through handling. The other main purpose is to widen access to and knowledge of the resources; with this in mind, plans are in hand to make the District Valuation records and parish registers available online. Hosting the tithe maps on the web is not likely to be feasible in the foreseeable future.

Social media

Following a successful few weeks' trial, Oxfordshire History Centre now has its own Twitter account and Facebook page. Our aim is to provide a mix of news feeds and topical items from our collections. If you use these media, please have a look at our posts and get in touch with us. You can find us at:



<https://twitter.com/OxHist> and

<https://www.facebook.com/OxfordshireHistoryCentre>

Photographic volunteers

We are delighted with the response to our appeal in the previous newsletter for new photographic volunteers to help out at the History Centre, and have managed to fill all five of our current vacancies. Finishing even the smallest cataloguing and scanning project takes time of course, but we now have the capacity to make some forward progress and further improve the content of Picture Oxon – <www.pictureoxon.org.uk>. We shall, for example be digitising 2,000 of our early prints and engravings, allowing more of them to be viewable online.

Mark Priddey & Mark Lawrence

Oxfordshire History Centre Managers

*As reported in the Oxford Mail, 16th May, 'Oxfordshire's past treasures being digitised and saved in the cloud':

<http://m.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/top_news/12954607.Oxfordshire_s_past_treasures_being_digitised_and_saved_in_the_cloud/?ref=mac>

Berkshire Record Office Update

Introductory Visits

We have been running our introductory visits to BRO for a while now, but if you haven't been on one before you still can and this time it's in the evening - 6pm on Tuesday 9th June. There are 10 places available on each visit and they last about an hour. You can find out more about what we do and how to conduct your research at BRO. If you would like to book a place, please call 0118 937 5132 to put your name down on the list.

Digitisation of School Records

The BRO has been involved in a digitisation project with *Find My Past* to put school admission registers online. They cover the period up to 1914 and the first batch of records from other record offices is already available on their website. See the *Find My Past* website for details <www.findmypast.co.uk>.

School records can provide you with a great deal of information as they often contain details about the parents, such as an address, as well as the children. Keep an eye out for images from the Berkshire school records as we have been told they will be online imminently.



Illus: Cuddesdon tithe map, above left; Pupils from Cholsey Primary School re-enacting war time evacuation to Oxfordshire on the 70th anniversary of VE Day, May 2015

What's new?

The archive of the Companions of Jesus the Good Shepherd, founded in Wantage in the 1920s, sheds lights on a small religious community of unmarried women teachers (reference D/EX2398). Also available are 20th century records for Cholsey Primary School (SCH32), as well as title deeds for various properties in Grove and Wantage (D/EX2335), Letcombe Regis (D/EX 2304), Wallingford (D/EX2231 and D/EX2294) and Wantage (D/EX2257).

Ivone Turnbull, Senior Archivist, Berkshire Record Office

Victoria County History Update

Much of our time since Christmas has focused on two things: first, fine-tuning our Ewelme Hundred volume, which is currently with VCH Central Office in London and will be published next spring; and second, pressing on with new work on the Wychwood area. In addition, thanks to a recent legacy, we now have the exciting prospect of beginning some new South Oxfordshire work later this year!

Drafts of all of the Ewelme Hundred parishes are available as pdfs on the VCH Oxfordshire website and, as I hope they'll show, this has been an extremely interesting area to work on – exceptionally well documented, thanks to the presence of several institutional landowners (including Oxford colleges), and covering a diverse landscape from the Chiltern uplands down to the low-lying clay vale, around Benson, Chalgrove, and Great Haseley. Throughout, we've also benefited from close liaison with a separate South Oxfordshire Project run by Oxford University, which, amongst many other discoveries, has produced several new tree-ring dates for buildings in the area. (Some OLHA members will have heard Dr Stephen Miles on talking about the South Oxfordshire Project at a recent OLHA Study Day.) Watch out for more on all this in a future issue, as publication moves closer.

Meanwhile, the latest addition to the VCH Oxfordshire website is the Wychwood parish of Bruern, which lies towards the Gloucestershire border west of the main Forest area. This is an exceptionally interesting and unusual parish by any standards. In 1147 an isolated Cistercian abbey was founded there on heathland by the river Evenlode – the place-name actually derives from a French and Latin word for heath. Like most Cistercians the monks exploited the land directly with the help of lay brothers, establishing two monastic 'granges' as the centre of their operations. As a result, the landscape was transformed, sweeping away the earlier settlement of 'Tretton' which was recorded in Domesday Book. Following Henry VIII's suppression of the monasteries, the parish was again transformed, with a large private mansion built on the site of the abbey, and the two granges re-established as farmhouses which became known as Bruern Grange and Tangle Hall. A separate parish church may have

The Dodeka Book Club

We have an exhibition on the Dodeka Book Club on display between May and July. The Dodeka Book Club was formed in 1892 and closed in 2009. Initially its meetings were held in Reading, but they gradually spread all over Berkshire. Members discussed various topics from politics and sport to geography and travel. Hosts were even expected to lay on dinner! The exhibition provides an insight into the club, its members and its activities - well worth a look.

survived into the 17th century, although its precise fate remains shrouded in mystery. Work on neighbouring parishes also continues apace, with drafts in progress on Milton-under-Wychwood, Lyneham, and Shipton-under-Wychwood. Those will be added to the website over the next twelve months.



The Wychwood volume will appear as Volume 19 in a few years' time and, in the meantime, a generous legacy from a long-term supporter is allowing us to appoint an additional researcher to begin work later this year on remaining South Oxfordshire parishes from Shiplake across to Crowmarsh Gifford and Newnham Murren. Those will eventually appear as Volume 20, leaving just three further volumes needed to complete the Oxfordshire series! Progress updates on the new project will appear in due course.

This exciting development underlines two key points. The first is that the VCH project is finite, and that we still hope to complete it. The second, however, is that in the modern world we can only hope to achieve that through a mixture of public funding and private donations big and small. That, I'm afraid, is why the Trust's contact details continue to follow these regular updates!

Simon Townley (VCH Oxfordshire County Editor)

Trust fundraising: Liam Tiller (Treasurer), East House, Roke, Wallingford OX10 6JB; 01491 839618;
LiamTiller@waitrose.com

Illus: Late 17th-century farmhouse, Bruern Grange

Group Members of the Oxfordshire Local History Association

Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society	Henley on Thames Archaeological and Historical Group
Abingdon Library, Local Studies Centre	Hook Norton Local History Group
Adderbury History Association	Iffley History Society
Ashbury Local History Society	Kennington History Society
Asthall Parish Survey Group	Kidlington and District Historical Society
Aston History Group	Launton Historical Society
Banbury Historical Society	Littlemore Local History Society
Bartons History Group	Long Wittenham Local History Group
Bensington Society (Historical Group)	Longworth and District History Society
Bicester Local History Society	Lower Windrush Historical Society
Blewbury Local History Group	Marcham Society
Bloxham Village History Club	Mercia Project
Chalgrove Local History Group	Minster Lovell Historical Society
Charlbury Society	North Leigh History Group
Chinnor Historical and Archaeological Society	Oxfordshire Family History Society
Chipping Norton History Society	Oxfordshire Gardens Trust
Centre for Banburyshire Studies	Otmoor Archaeological and Historical Society
Clanfield and Bampton Historical Society	Radley History Club
Cowley Local History Society	Sibfords Society
Cumnor and District History Society	Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust
Deddington and District History Society	Stanford in the Vale and District Local History Society
Denchworth Local History Group	Steeple Aston Village Archive Trust
Didcot and District Archaeological and Historical Society	Stratton Audley Historical Society
Dorchester Historical Society	Sutton Courtenay Local History Society
Enstone Local History Society	Thame Historical Society
Eynsham History Group	Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society
Finstock Local History Society	Weston on the Green Society
Friends of the Vale and Downland Museum Centre	Whitchurch and Goring Heath History
Friends of Tom Brown's School Museum	Witney Museum and Historical Society
Goring and Streatley Local History Society	Witney Library, Local History Centre
Great Haseley Archives	Wolvercote Local History Society
Hanney History Group	Wootton, Dry Sandford and District History Society
Henley Library, Local Studies Centre	Wychwoods Local History Society

SPOTLIGHT on OXFORDSHIRE'S LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES AND MUSEUMS

Kennington History Society



To the casual observer, Kennington is not a very historic settlement, regarded as it is as a modern dormitory for the nearby city of Oxford, but in fact this is far from the truth. The village lies on a narrow strip of land bordered by the ancient woodland of Bagley Wood to the west and the water meadows of the Thames to the east and, whilst there is some evidence of Roman occupation, it seems it was the Anglo-Saxon people who, moving through his part of the country in the 5th and 6th centuries first regarded this site as ideal for a settlement. The river was a convenient waterway, the soil, a rich loam with patches of sand and clay, was fertile, and an outcrop of limestone provided dry foundations and good building material. Additionally, Bagley (Anglo Saxon *Bacgan leah*) Wood offered timber as fuel and pannage for pigs and was rich in game, with the nearby Thames and water meadows well-stocked with fish and water-fowl. A small hamlet was probably established about this time and it is thought that the village derives its name from its Anglo-Saxon founder, *Cene*, meaning 'bold, valiant, keen'.

The earliest mentions of the village by name are in a Charter of 821 and in a Cartulary of Abingdon Abbey. This included a Charter of Edwig which granted it in 956 to his faithful priest, Brythelm Cenigtun, to go to any heir he chose. In early documents the settlement is variously spelt, the nearest to the modern title being *Kenigton* which is thought to mean 'the place of *Cene*'s people'. Bagley Wood was first mentioned by name in an Abbey Charter of 955 by which King Eadred granted certain lands, including Bagley Wood, to the Abbot of Abingdon Abbey. It is recorded in the Domesday Book that *'Berner holds 5 hides in Sunningwell and in Kennington and Alwine 1 hide in Kennington. 6 Englishmen held them and could not withdraw from the church. There is land for 6 ploughs and it paid geld with the other hides. There are 3 ploughs and 7 villans and 8 bordars with 1 plough and 5 slaves, and 110 acres of meadow worth £10'**. It is worth noting that the population then (1086), based on the numbers given in Domesday for villans, bordars, cottars and slaves, is estimated at 120-130 and in the 1881 census it is recorded as 129, so the hamlet had not

grown in almost 800 years. It was not until the early 1900s that the rapid development of Kennington began, with the population steadily increasing until it had reached 4000 by the 1970s.

In the late 1980s, a group of residents under the leadership of local schoolteacher, Shirley Jones, formed the Kennington History Project which sought to compile a record of the village's history by conducting interviews, collecting photographs and producing publications. In 2002 a larger group of interested residents decided to form a History Society to build on the earlier work of the History Project and also to arrange talks of a historical nature about both local and national topics. Since then, the Kennington History Society has organised more than 120 talks attended by almost 6000 people and has also arranged visits to most of the cathedral cities in the South of England. Details of the current activities of the Society can be obtained by visiting the village website at www.kennington.org.

*(Domesday Book, Alecto Historical Editions 2003)

George Ross, Kennington History Society



St Swithun's Chapel, Kennington

The original Anglican church of St Swithun in Kennington may have been administered by the monks of Abingdon Abbey. By the 17th century it had become a chapel-of-ease to Sunningwell Church and in 1724 was described by Thomas Hearne, as a 'very small, mean building' which 'cannot, by the make of the building, be very ancient'. This church seems to have collapsed and disappeared by the end of the century and was replaced in 1828 by a chapel, still standing today, which is an early example of the Norman revival building style. It served the parish until the development of Oxford's suburbs in the 20th century and was deconsecrated when a new, larger church was built close by in The Avenue in the 1950s. The design of the new church in the Regency style was praised by John Betjeman in the national press for having a central altar. He wrote, "In a new community where so many people do not know about the sacraments of the church and how they are administered, the parish priest needs to rivet attention by his actions".

Witney Museum and Historical Society



Witney Museum and Historical Society was set up in 1996 and is an independent museum run entirely by volunteers. Situated in Gloucester Court Mews, High Street, Witney, it occupies a traditional Cotswold stone building, part of which was once used as a smithy. It was also the workplace of the builder Malachi Bartlett.

The ground floor houses a long-term exhibition relating to the history of the town and the industries for which it was renowned; blankets, brewing and engineering. Witney blankets are no longer made in the town with the coming of duvets but examples of the famous 3-point blankets, exchanged for furs with traders in America, are on view in the Museum. De Havillands aeronautical engineers have gone but photographic evidence of the war time airfield in Witney is on display. Brewing however, in the form of the Wychwood Brewery, still takes place in the town.

New this season, in the Bartlett Taylor Gallery on the first floor, is 'Crawley' the story of a village from the earliest times of the hunting forest to the present day. Also in this gallery is our WW1 exhibition of papers, photographs and other items, including the story and letters home from the trenches by Captain Sidney Smith, who wrote home daily. Captain Smith, a member of the Smith blanket-making family was prominent in the town and after the war was active running the Territorial Army in Witney. Also on the first floor is a reconstruction of a 1950's kitchen which many visitors can relate to from the lives of their own families.

The Museum is the custodian of two important collections of local photographs: the Tom Worley Collection and the Arthur Titherington Collection. It also holds deeds and related items from the 18th and 19th centuries from the Witney area, business records from local businesses, and the only known surviving register of inmates at the Witney Union Workhouse.

The Museum is open from April to October Tuesday-Saturday 10am-4pm and on Sunday afternoons. Over the winter months, the Historical Society holds a series of monthly talks on subjects of historical interest at the local Methodist Church. Further details are on the website: <witneyhistory.org>.

Ian Petty, Witney Museum and Historical Society

The Old Workhouse Chapel, Tower Hill, Witney



There were small workhouses in Witney at 33 High Street and, subsequently, 45 Corn Street by the first half of the eighteenth century which provided 'indoor' relief in exchange for labour, in order to keep down the cost of Poor Law Relief. By 1747, the overseers found that 'the poor of the parish of Witney are becoming very numerous', and that 'the idle poor who are well able to work have taken to charity'. In 1834, the Poor Law was amended and 'outdoor' relief was brought to an end. The Witney Poor Law Union was formed and it built a substantial new workhouse at Razor Hill (later Tower Hill).

Families admitted to workhouses were segregated, issued with institutional clothing and given frugal food rations, forbidden to leave without permission and the emphasis was on work. Only the desperate would go there. They were designed to deter the 'indolent and feckless' poor from seeking poor relief but the register in the Witney Museum tells the often harrowing stories of the poverty and misfortune which brought many of the inmates to the workhouse, in spite of the harsh conditions within.

The new workhouse was designed by a local builder and carpenter, John Wilkinson, who went on to build many others in the Cotswolds and Ireland. It was designed in a St Andrew's cross shape and could accommodate 450 people. A purpose built chapel was added in 1861. In WWI, as the old Poor Law system came to an end, the building housed prisoners-of-war and it was then taken over by engineering firm of Crawford Collets which used the chapel as a works canteen. Most of the buildings were demolished in the 1970s and replaced by modern buildings. The site was redeveloped for housing in 2004 but the chapel and entrance block were preserved. The chapel lay derelict for some years but was restored and sold as commercial premises in 2011.

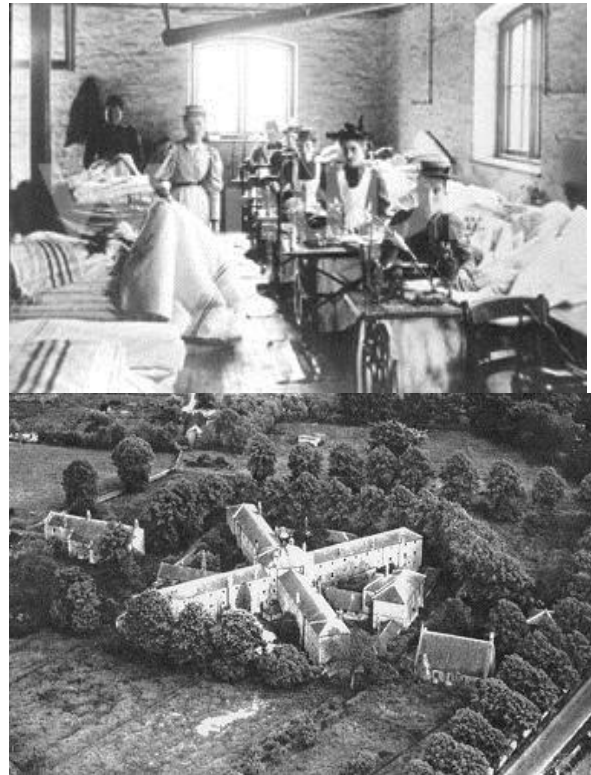


Illus: The Old Chapel in 2009 (top) and 2011 (below)

Gravestones in Witney parishes

The latest release in the Oxfordshire Family History Society series of illustrated CDs of monumental inscriptions is for the church of St John the Evangelist at Hailey, now one of four churches within the parish of Witney. The CD contains photographs and transcriptions for all the stones in the graveyard surrounding the present church and also those in the graveyard surrounding the original chapel (opened in 1761 but demolished after the present church was consecrated). A similar CD for St Mary's church in Witney was published several years ago and many of the team members who recorded the monuments at Hailey are now busily recording at another of the Witney parish churches, Holy Trinity, at Woodgreen, Witney.

The CDs cost £6.00 each including postage. Further details on the OFHS website at www.ofhs.org.uk/CDsales.html



The New Book of Witney

Since it was first published in 1986, there have been several revisions of *The Book of Witney* which tells the fascinating story of the history of the town. The latest edition (2007), by local historians Charles and Joan Gott, is now out of print but is available in its entirety on the internet at:

www.witneyhistory.org/Book%20of%20Witney%20Charles%20Gott.pdf

Illus: above top right, The Blanket Industry: Whipping Room (from the Museum's archives); above lower right, Aerial view of the Witney Workhouse (chapel on the right)

The Bishop's Palace, Witney



The remains of the 'Bishop's Palace' are situated in the grounds of Mount House, just east of St Mary's Church in Witney. In reality the 'palace' was a manor house, the working centre of the estates owned by the Bishops of Winchester, but bishops and royalty frequently

visited the house in the early 13th century. Archaeological excavations have revealed a series of stone buildings arranged around a courtyard and surrounded by a wall and moat.

The surviving medieval buildings of the Bishop's Palace were demolished and replaced by a new house, probably just after 1757 when it was acquired by the Duke of Marlborough. This in turn was replaced by the existing Mount House in about 1905, probably built for JF Marriott, owner of the Mount Mills blanket factory which once stood behind the house. Mount House remained a private residence until 1983 when it was bought by Oxfordshire County Council. A permanent canopy was erected to protect the excavated parts of the medieval manor house in the grounds which have been open to the public since 1992.

The site is open from Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm. The interpretation centre is open by appointment only. Admission is free.

East Hendred Museum at Champs Chapel

East Hendred (*Hennarith* in the 10th century) is one of several springline villages which lies below the northern slopes of the North Wessex Downs, close to the ancient Ridgeway track. It was an important centre for the wool and cloth trades before Henry VIII's reign, and the heart of the village, containing many houses of historic interest, has largely survived from this time.

Hendred House, the Manor of the Arches, has been occupied by the Eyston family for nearly 600 years since 1443. The house contains the chapel of St Armand and St John, built by permission of the Pope in 1256 and one of only three Roman Catholic chapels in the country where, apart from a period of desecration in the 17th century, the Catholic Mass has been celebrated continually since before the Reformation. There is another Roman Catholic church in the village (St Mary's) and also the 12th century Anglican church, St Augustine's, notable for its 'faceless' chiming clock built by John Seymour in 1525 which rings every quarter of an hour. In the 18th century, a carillon of bells was added to the clock which still plays a full rendition of the '*Angel's Hymn*' by Orlando Gibbons on the canonical hours at 12, 3, 6 and 9.

www.hendred.org/clock.htm

The Chapel of Jesus of Bethlehem was built in 1453 by Carthusian monks from Sheen in Surrey who acquired the plot of land in the village known as the King's Manor when it was seized from the Abbey of Noyon in Normandy by Henry V in 1414. The chapel was 'profaned' in the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII but remains as an unusual relic from this period because the roof was not removed during the deconsecration and so the original ashlar stone building and tracery windows, together with the half timbered



Priest's House, built adjoining the north side in the late 15th century, survive in almost their original form.

By the 18th century, the chapel had become the property of the Champ(e) family whose names appear in the parish records from 1577 onwards and whose Wills identify them as substantial farmers, shopowners and mercers. The chapel is known to have been used as a pigeon house, a wash house and for storage until the early 20th century when it was restored by the Eyston family after they acquired it for the Hendred Estate.

Champs Chapel was converted into a small museum in the 1970s to house records and memorabilia of village life and it now also has a reserve store at nearby Snells Hall. One of its most treasured relics is the 19th century village fire pump which is on display in the Snell Hall garden. A team of people are currently making an oral history record of the memories of the people of East Hendred and also hold occasional Family History Days to help people start family history projects of their own. The museum is run entirely by volunteers who open it to the public free of charge on Sundays, 2.30-4.30 pm, from the end of April to October.

East Hendred Museum

The 2015 annual exhibition, *The Secret History of your Street*, focuses on Cat Street.



The 1900s photograph on the left shows rag and bone man Tommy 'Puff' with his wife on the doorstep of their home. The 1920s photograph on the right shows a large car and chauffeur outside Southernwood in Cat Street. What is the connection between international socialism and the car in the photograph? Why were James Keir Hardie and George Lansbury frequent visitors to Southernwood? Why did the house become a meeting place for a remarkable group of émigré musicians including Jascha Heifetz?

And there is more... What is the connection between Steve McQueen, *The Great Escape* and Southernwood Cottage? Who allegedly kept her savings under her bed? What were the Cat Street Revels? Do you know what backwording is and what did St Catherine have to do with it?



Visit the Museum and find the answers to all this and more! Come and we share your memories of Cat Street - tell us what we have missed!

Holton Park Museum and Archive

The Holton Park Museum and Archive is hidden away in the buildings at Holton which now house Wheatley Park School. We will soon be applying for a Heritage Lottery Grant for the refurbishment of the old pony stables to house the archive. We shall also be cataloguing the archive and providing a local history meetings/work room that will be available for organisations like yours to meet at. It will have a view along our medieval moat! The school (and its Archaeology Club) has just been accepted as only the second school to have associated membership of the national Young Archaeologists Club too. If you would like to find out more about us, please go to <holtonparkarchive.com> where you will find my booklet on the history of the site as well as details of our other archives.

Kevin Heritage, Archivist, Holton Park Museum and Archive



Members of the public who are interested in visiting the Holton Park collection can do so by contacting the archivist on <kheritage@wheatleypark.org> to arrange access.

Holton Park Oxfordshire



Holton House in 1787 showing the Elizabethan gothic facade and moat

The ancient parkland of Holton, situated between Shotover Forest and Bernwood, is now the grounds of Wheatley Park School and Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley Campus. Holton is situated five miles south-east of Oxford, adjacent to the A40 and near the Buckinghamshire border.

In the 1086 Domesday Book, *Eltone*, or *Holtun* (the tun in the hollow) was owned by Godfrey from Roger D'Ivery, a close follower of William the Conqueror. There was obviously a Saxon settlement that '*was and is worth £4*' in 1086, but it was only one of at least two manors from the early medieval period, the other one being Grove and another called *Senileice* which is probably the Norman settlement around St. Bartholomews' church with a manor house on the site of the current Church Farm. In the early 14th century the site was in-and-out of crown hands, being owned for a period by the Earls of Cornwall, including for a short time by Piers Gaveston.

The present site of Holton Park is centred on a former royal hunting lodge which became the manor house of the Brome family in the middle of the 15th century. By the early 16th century, this had become the one and only 'manor of Holton', with a house on an island surrounded by a substantial moat fed by natural springs, which still feed this stretch of water today. The Bromes were a family of 'recusants' whose internal arguments even reached the Privy Council in the 1590s when George Brome accused his own mother, the widowed Lady Eleanor, of keeping secret Jesuit priests as stable boys. George refused to pay his mother's fines until she had spent a period in the Tower. How they managed to be civil to each other after that, with both of them living at Holton, is anyone's guess.

George's daughter, Ursula, inherited the estate, and married Thomas Whorwood of Sandwell in the West Midlands. During their period of control over the estate, the English Civil War occurred. The Whorwoods were supporters of Charles I, and their son, Brome's wife, Jane Whorwood née Ryder, was a close friend and confidant of Charles I. She had grown up at the court of James I as her father, Sir James Maxwell, was Groom of the Horse, living adjacent to the Royal Stables in Charing Cross on the south side of Trafalgar Square today. Her betrothal to Brome Whorwood was part of a deal to secure her father-in-law's escape from a murder charge, but he did not escape, dying the same day as the wedding between Brome and Jane in the crypt of Old St Paul's Cathedral in September 1634.

Jane was forever afterwards regarded as a curse upon the family, and her life at Holton was one of misery. Brome kept an in-house mistress, Katherine Allan, and humiliated Jane at every turn but Jane came into her

own during the Civil War. She operated as an agent for Charles I based at nearby Oxford, and not only smuggled some of the royal jewels for him from St. James' Palace, but was also responsible for raising gold funds for the King's cause from friendly sources. In the end she was behind two failed attempts at escape for the king from Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight. Recent letters have disclosed that she probably became the King's lover at Carisbrooke for a very short time, and it is likely that she was present at the King's execution in Whitehall on the 30th January 1649.

The island house of Holton Manor had been requisitioned during the siege of Oxford by Fairfax and was witness to the marriage of Oliver Cromwell's daughter, Bridget, to his deputy, Henry Ireton, just 10 days before the fall of Oxford in June 1646, which was negotiated at Marston by Ireton himself.

After Brome's return from France at the end of the war he fought to retain his estate at Holton, which he managed, but Jane returned to her unhappy married life, and even attempted to use the privilege of an MP's wife when she appealed to the Commons at the bar of the House in 1663. She was the last wife of an MP to be given this privilege, but it only resulted in defeat for her. In 1684, after 50 years of marriage, she sued for divorce after having sustained several beatings from her husband. He died that April, and she died in the same September. Both are buried in unmarked graves in Holton Church. Their son, also Brome, drowned in the Solent in 1657, and their childless daughter, Diana Masters, eventually passed on the estate to her illegitimate brother, Thomas Whorwood, in the early 18th century.

By the end of the 18th century the Whorwoods had abandoned the manorial estate of Holton to tenants (while they lived at their new manor of Headington) until it was purchased by a wealthy bachelor, Elisha Biscoe, in 1799. The Biscoe fortunes had been made throughout the 18th century via plantations in the West Indies and the trade it encompassed. When Holton Manor House became free of sitting tenants in 1804, he decided to demolish it and build a new house just south of the island and incorporate the moat and island into pleasure gardens. The new house reflected, in Georgian

Gothic style, the medieval elements of the old manor house.



The south side of Elisha Biscoe's 1809 Manor House

The Biscoe's and, from the 1850s, the Tyndale-Biscoe's, were still 'Lords of the Manor of Holton' and the park house became a family home. With dwindling personal resources and the effects of the agricultural depression from the 1870's onwards, the family were no longer able to maintain the estate and sold it in 1911. It was resold and split into lots in 1913. The Balfour family owned the Park House at the beginning of the second world war but in 1942 the park was requisitioned and a massive American Hospital (specialising in head injuries after D-Day) was built in the grounds. In 1948 the Balfours sold the park to Oxfordshire County Council and the Park House became East Oxfordshire Girls' Grammar School in 1949. The military hospital, now British, did not close until 1963.

The 'Old House' is now the Arts Centre of Wheatley Park Secondary School and it, together with the history of the estate and village, are celebrated through a substantial archive. The rich history of the site is also used as inspiration by the school History department.

For more information please go to <www.holtonparkarchive.com>, or access the site directly through the website of Wheatley Park School at <www.wheatleypark.org>

Kevin Heritage



**Holton Park Museum and Archive Open Day
27 June 2015, 2.00-5.00pm**

Enjoy a summer afternoon visiting the Museum and Archive at Wheatley Park School and see the Annual Art Show by our students in the Old House at the same time.

Illus: The moat at Holton Park, 1888

Resources for Museums and Local History Groups



Museum Freecycle

Temporary exhibitions, by their very nature, are about change. Newness, fresh ideas, innovative displays and the creation of a setting specific to the exhibition's theme are all key elements in the creation of an engaging and stimulating experience. But what this means is that many of the materials, settings and showcases used in temporary exhibitions end up in the skip as soon as possible after an exhibition finishes in order to make way for the next. What a waste! With only three months' of use, the equipment is reusable but, with storage at such a premium, it is simply not viable for museums to keep hold of the items on the off-chance that they will be reused.

And so, a year ago, architects and exhibition designers, Urban Salon (where I was Managing Director) set up a UK-wide museum recycling network, Museum Freecycle, to encourage recycling and reuse between museums and help the sector save money. The network, which I run with the help of the Collections Trust and Share Museums East, connects museums that are discarding equipment and those looking for new elements. It's free to join, free to use and open to join for all UK museums. The network has gone from strength to strength and now boasts over 350 members from across the UK ranging from small independent museums to national museums. Through the site, museums have found and given new homes to many exhibition design items including display cases, mannequins, and display plinths but also to other museum items such as donation boxes, hygrographs, plan chests, storage boxes, halogen light fittings and retail display units.

The more members who join Museum Freecycle, the better it will work for everyone. I want our Museum Freecycle network to grow and there are plenty of museums out there who aren't yet members. So please join, if you are not already a member, by going to <https://groups.freecycle.org/group/MuseumFreecycleUK/posts/all>. And if you are a member, please do help to spread the word and get as many museums and as many departments within museums signed up to this scheme as possible. (Ed. Caroline says Oxfordshire Local History Groups, looking for equipment for local exhibitions, are welcome to join Museum Freecycle even if they are not affiliated to any museum.)

Caroline Keppel-Palmer, Museum Freecycle

Oxford Drama Wardrobe

A treasure trove of costumes for your local drama productions and historical recreations.

The Oxfordshire Drama Wardrobe has a stock of over 5,000 costume and props available for hire. They have costumes from almost every period, from Roman through Elizabethan to Georgian and Edwardian, with a large choice of WWII Allied uniforms. The drama wardrobe is housed in a warehouse at Steventon and is run by a team of volunteers: Alex Graham, now in her ninetieth year, has been involved with the Wardrobe since it started in 1965. Further details: www.oxondramawardrobe.co.uk



OLHA STUDY DAY, MAY 2015

OLHA Uffington Meeting, Sunday 10th May

The pretty downland village of Uffington was the venue for our Spring meeting, which followed a snappy AGM.

Sharon Smith, curator of Tom Brown's School Museum, began by introducing us to Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and *The Scouring of the White Horse* in which he put forward the idea that the chalk figure of the White Horse was made to celebrate Alfred's victory over the Danes. He was brought up in the vicarage (no trace of which now remains), with events in the books mirroring his experiences. We were shown many photographs of the village as it was during his lifetime, and heard of his work as lawyer, judge, MP, and social reformer. Garrards Farm was rented by John Betjeman from 1934 to 1945. The family was known locally for their tennis tournaments, and for Penelope's four-wheel dog cart drawn by little white horses. No poem of Betjeman's appears to have been written about the village itself, but Sharon showed us several that referred to the locality.



occasion. He suggested that their uses were economic, social or religious, and that the White Horse was one reason for the siting of Uffington Castle. The figure had been created by the digging out of the lines to the bedrock, about a metre down. The lines were then filled with beaten chalk. Optically Stimulated Luminescence had established that the figure was about three thousand old, and therefore already an ancient monument when the Romans arrived. As the figure has to be "scoured" at least every ten years or so, its survival is remarkable.

Our afternoon was spent admiring the displays at the Thomas Brown's School Museum, the notable St Mary's Church, and lastly driving up to the White Horse to wonder, and admire the view.

Vicky Jordan



Professor Gary Lock, who has excavated the three hillforts on the Ridgeway above Uffington put forward a different view of the origin of the White Horse. While accepting that pre-history had to be based only on interpretation of evidence, his excavations had revealed that the site had been used from Neolithic times (a long barrow), had Bronze Age round barrows, and also other structures which pre-dated the hill fort. He had found that the Uffington, Segsbury and Alfred's Castle enclosures had no evidence of fighting, and seemed to have been occupied only on



The *Oxford Local History News* Editor is looking for a replacement. Are you interested in taking over the editing and production of this newsletter? If so, please contact the Editor, or the Chairman of OLHA.

OTHER STORIES FROM THE DISTRICTS

Oxford View Cones Study

In the early 1960s, when high-rise development began to threaten Oxford's iconic skyline, the City Council introduced a policy to protect the character of the city's skyline from the impacts of high buildings, and this has served the city well for fifty years in successive development plans. Although it has been modified a number of times, the essential policy remains. Notwithstanding this, it became apparent when exercising this policy in the context of ever-increasing pressure for development in Oxford, that some review was necessary to make it fit for present and foreseeable future use. The understanding of what constitutes 'harm' and the significance of 'views' was being given widely varying interpretation. *Significance* is the key word here. A development may be visible in a historically important view but it may not necessarily harm its significance.

Oxford City Council, Oxford Preservation Trust and English Heritage (now Historic England) collaborated to produce a new study of views aimed at providing a methodology which could be used not just in Oxford, but also much more widely in other areas. The study explains how to assess the impact of a proposed development on views having some significance for the historic environment.

The starting point was to assess the significance of what you can see in current views. English Heritage has produced guidance on how to do this for any heritage asset (ie a building, monument, landscape, area or site) by analysing the values which add up to its significance. These are *historic* values, which can be narrative, telling part of a story about the view or associative, being connected in some way to a person or event; *aesthetic* values, whether designed or fortuitous; *communal* values, which have meaning for groups of individuals or communities, and *evidential*

value, which expresses the archaeological potential of a site or a place and possibly is the most difficult one to articulate in terms of views.

Having assessed the significance of individual heritage assets, the elements making up each view are described, covering foreground, middle ground and background and taking into account different times of day and seasons. So often, planning applications for development include an illustration of its impact using a photomontage taken from one position at one point in time, which can only give an unrepresentative impression of the proposal. Views are not static. They change throughout the day, and with the seasons, as vegetation changes and sunlight varies throughout the year. Also the view can change dramatically in between actual viewing points within a wider viewing place. A new development inserted into a sensitive view can have different impact depending where it is viewed from. Even small changes in viewing position can make a big difference.

Whilst not all places have the high profile of Oxford views, most have historically important, and locally cherished, places whose views need protection. The aim of the study was not just to help in managing change to Oxford's views, but to produce guidance for members of the public as well as professionals for application in other areas. It should be equally useful in helping to assess the impact of a small housing development in a village setting, or new retail development in a town centre. It can also help in managing views more generally, for example in managing trees which can obscure designed views.

It's worth checking this out if you want to comment on any development which might affect historically sensitive views. The study will be online shortly.

Kathryn Davis, English Heritage



Unusual sight lines in Oxford

Motorists who have to crawl daily in their cars along Oxpens on the west side of Oxford may have noticed, while circumnavigating the building sites and road works, that, for the first time since the 1970s, the spires of Oxford can again be seen above the city rooftops following the demolition of the Westgate car park. Long since gone, however, is the retro smoked glass geodesic dome that once perched rather ludicrously over the entrance to the car park but was amputated from its stalk more than 20 years ago, apparently unmourned by all but a few. People who like watching building sites can now tune in to the online webcam which records the view - westward, away from the spires - every 20 minutes while the new Westgate Shopping Centre development takes place, for better or worse, for the citizens of Oxford. westgateoxford.co.uk/YourWestgate

Wychwood Manor in Ascott-under-Wychwood and Lord Sanderson

While OLHA members were enjoying a day out at Uffington on 10 May, the VCH was publicising its current Wychwood work at the Wychwood Manor Open Garden day at Ascott-under-Wychwood. This was held not at the village's better known (and Grade II* listed) Manor House on the site of the d'Oilly family's medieval castle, but at a much more recent Costwold-style mansion on the village's western fringe, known until the 1960s simply as Chestnut Close. Nevertheless it turned out to be a very attractive Arts-and-Crafts building with an interesting history.



The house was built in 1914 for Harry Sanderson Furniss (1868-1939), later Lord Sanderson, who was descended from a family of prosperous Sheffield steel manufacturers. Partially sighted from birth, he was mostly home-educated but in 1889, he persuaded Hertford College, Oxford, to admit him to study for a degree with the help of an amanuensis. This was the start of a notable career. Given his family's wealth, Furniss could easily have settled for an idle life as a country gentleman. Instead (with the help of his wife Avril) he studied economics, and embarked on part-time lecturing at Ruskin College (Oxford's newly

formed trade union college), where he became Principal in 1916. Beginning life as a Conservative, he moved steadily to the Left, joining the Labour party in 1918 and standing (unsuccessfully) as Oxford University's first Labour candidate. He became a Labour peer in 1930, and sat subsequently on the Labour Party national executive, until his stance as a pacifist led to his resignation in 1936. His oversight of Ruskin College also saw the college's first admission of women in 1919.

The Furnisses stumbled across Ascott-under-Wychwood in 1909, renting a house there for the 'rest and quiet'. After his father died in 1912 (leaving him a considerable fortune), Furniss bought the 199-acre Coldstone Farm in Ascott, which included a field called Chestnut Close. There the house was completed in July 1914. The architect is unknown, but the builders were Groves of Milton-under-Wychwood, a firm which specialized in many of the Arts-and-Crafts and Vernacular Revival houses which grace the area. Its local stone now weathered in, the house's gables, mullioned windows, stone-slate roofs, and tall chimney stacks could easily fool a casual visitor that this is a 'genuine' 17th-century Cotswold manor house. Unfortunately it remains largely invisible from the road – but as the Open Garden day has now been a fixture for some years, hopefully there will be chance for another look next spring.

Meanwhile the Dictionary of National Biography has an interesting article on Furniss's career, while a much fuller account of the house (by Peter Leslie) can be found in *Wychwoods History* 18 (2003) – the journal of the Wychwoods History Society, on which this account draws heavily.

Simon Townley, VCH Oxfordshire

Illus above: Wychwood Manor, Ascott-under-Wychwood;

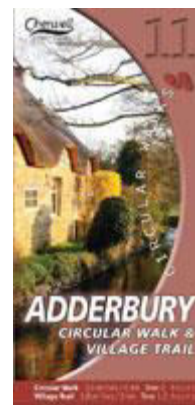
Adderbury History Association will be holding its second **Annual History Day** on 18 July 2015, 10.00am-4.00pm in the Adderbury Institute

The theme for the 2015 Day will be *Family History*. The day's events will include advisory sessions on researching family history as well as 'walkabouts' to Adderbury House and local historic industrial sites. Next year's History Day will be at Twyford Wharf where there is a surviving ensemble of canal and brick making buildings: a guidebook to Adderbury and the Oxford Canal is currently in preparation.

Adderbury Circular Walk and Village Trail is Number 11 in a series of 12 full-colour circular walk leaflets published by Cherwell District Council to aid the exploration of hidden North Oxfordshire.

The leaflets can be purchased in a sturdy, splash-proof pack from local Tourist Information Centres for £5.95 (+£1 p&p) or they can be downloaded from:

www.cherwell.gov.uk/circularwalks



Illus overleaf: top, Kinston Bagpuize War Memorial Crescent; upper right, Clare Belk with the 'Southmoor Henge' stones before they were rescued for the memorial project; lower left, the Devil's Quoits, Stanton Harcourt; lower right, abandoned air field hut.

Thames Valley 'Henges'

Reference was made in a footnote on the New Publications section of the last Newsletter (p17) to the Kingston Bagpuize War Memorial Crescent project which resulted in the re-erection in 2012 of the five 'Southmoor henge' stones as a permanent memorial to local people who died in 20th century armed conflict. You can read Rob Belk's report about the project on *Kingston Bagpuize-Southmoor Online* at <www.kbsonline.org.uk/war-memorial-crescent>, or you can visit the stones themselves at the junction of the A415 and Oxford Road on the outskirts of Southmoor.



The plaque on the back of the central memorial stone reminds us that 'ancient monuments' may not always be what they appear to be. The 'Southmoor henge' is

not featured in an archaeological reports because it was built by local landowner, Richard Cox, in 1992 when he acquired the stones after they were unearthed during the construction of the Longworth-Southmoor bypass. They were erected on the boundary between his property and land owned by St John's College to celebrate the opening of the new road then gradually fell into the hedgerow before they eventually acquired a new lease of life in the new war memorial.

There is another spurious 'henge' a bit further north on the banks of the River Windrush at Stanton Harcourt but this henge site, dating from the 3rd millennium BC, is actually well documented. The Neolithic stone circle, the Devil's Quoits, is still standing and recorded up to the early twentieth century but the remaining three stones were flattened when an emergency airfield for WWII Whitley bombers was constructed on the site in 1940. The site and the surrounding landscape, rich in prehistoric barrows and settlement remains, was finally obliterated by subsequent gravel working along the river valley and its present use as a landfill site. In 1994, palaeontologist, Dr Kate Scott, working at the site received world-wide publicity when her team discovered mammoth remains at Dix Pit on land owned by All Souls College. In 2002-8, archaeologists from Oxford Archaeology reconstructed the circular trench and rampart of the Devil's Quoits with the assistance of English Heritage and the Waste Recycling Group. Nine of the original stones were unearthed and re-erected and the circle was completed with new conglomerate stones provided by Smiths & Son of Bletchingdon.



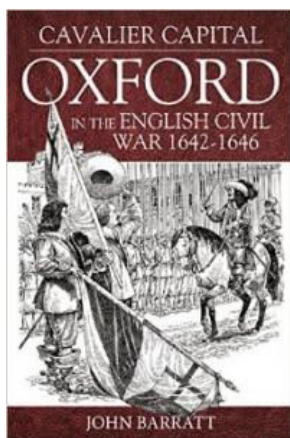
The original circle, one of 6 henges in the area, had 28 stones in it, plus a single outlier stone which may have been used for taking bearings. The modern rampart is probably about half the height of the original and is now located in a desolate moonscape of landfill but, if you are willing to dodge the stream of refuse trucks arriving at the weighbridge opposite, the new stone circle is well worth a visit. There is a small car park at Dix Pit along the road to the Waste Management Site and an entrance by the 'Assembly Point' notice in the corner leads to the fenced walkway to the 'henge'. Sections of the disused runway and abandoned huts and hangars from the old

airfield can also still be seen beyond the landfill. You can consider fortifying yourself with a large breakfast at the fisherman's cafe (open 8am to noon) at the nearby Linch Hill Fishery before embarking on your expedition.

If you would like to find out more about the archaeology of Stanton Harcourt, you may be interested in the book *Gravelly Guy* (2004), by George Lambrick and TG Allen. If you are more interested in old airfields, you might catch the exhibition *Witney's Forgotten Airfield* (1918-51) by Peter Davis which is on display at Bampton Public Library until 27 June. There are views of the Stanton Harcourt airfield site at <sites.google.com/site/derelictioninshires/military-sites/raf-stanton-harcourt> (Thanks to Cliff Summers, who re-erected the stones on behalf of WRG, for information about the Devil's Quoits)



NEW PUBLICATIONS

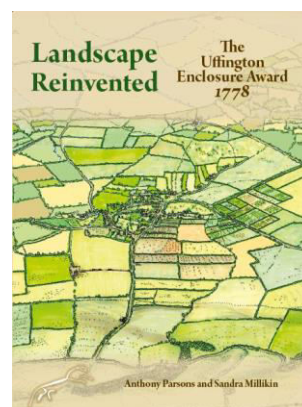


Cavalier Capital: Oxford in the English Civil War 1642-1646, by John Barratt,

This is the first detailed account of Oxford's role as "Royalist capital" to appear for almost three-quarters of a century. The book examines all aspects of Oxford's experience in the English Civil War. As well as the effects on the town and university, special emphasis is placed on the various aspects of the Royalist occupation, including its role as a major manufacturing centre of munitions and armoury. The King's court and the operation of Royalist government and administration are examined, as are the organisation and life of the soldiers of the garrison. Leading personalities are described, as well as the military campaigns which were focused on Oxford during the war. The final siege leading to the fall of Oxford is also described. The book makes full use of both contemporary and modern accounts and research, and is copiously illustrated. Helion and Company, 2015. ISBN 9781910294581

Landscape Reinvented: The Uffington Enclosure Award 1778, by Anthony Parsons and Sandra Millikin

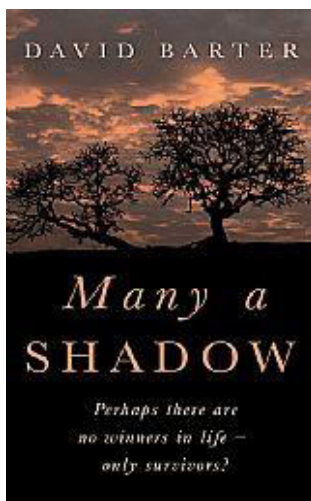
In 1778, enclosure of Uffington's large open fields and pastures dramatically transformed the pattern of agriculture as well as the physical characteristics of the landscape. Land, which historically had been farmed communally, was divided into separate allotments, facilitating more productive agriculture and husbandry. The pattern of fields, defined by straight hedges, fences and ditches, which today still characterize our landscape, evolved from enclosure. Many other arrangements, including tithe payments, were brought to an end. The Enclosure commissioners did not produce a map, so having transcribed the Enclosure Award document, the authors have located each of the 119 allotments using landmarks referenced in the Award, satellite images and area analysis, as well as contemporary estate maps and 19th century tithe maps.



This book captures and explains data on enclosure in Uffington, Baulking and Woolstone with specially drawn maps and artwork to illustrate the analysis. With its documentary sources, this work should stimulate and facilitate further research into the local 18th century landscape and the individuals who shaped it.

Published by Uffington Museum Trust, 2014 ISBN 9780993074707

The 2015 exhibition at Tom Brown's School Museum in Uffington, also called ***Landscape Reinvented***, draws on material from this book. The exhibition itself goes further and also looks at how our landscape has changed over a longer period of time and the different uses we have made of it.



Many a Shadow, by David Barter,

The story of William Turner, a country lad, born in a small farm cottage in Goring Heath at the end of the First World War. Growing up in this rural idyll, William thrived, attended school and became an apprentice carpenter at Gallowstree Common. At the outbreak of war, he was conscripted into the army to serve with the Royal Berkshire Regiment which was part of the Normandy invasion and the subsequent bitter fighting throughout France. This story of Bill's early years is very much a story of South Oxfordshire.

Troubadour Publishing, 2015. ISBN 9781784622497

Our Common Heritage, Chilterns Conservation Board History Project, e-book

Our Common Heritage, a new publication from the Chilterns Conservation Board, is a collection of six essays about the social history of Chiltern Commons. The essays were all written by volunteers from the Chilterns Commons Project, a four year Heritage Lottery-funded project about commons in the region.

Commons have been at the heart of our communities since medieval times, providing the poorest members of society with essential resources to supplement their livelihoods. The six essays in this publication reflect the diversity of uses provided in a region that was both a major route to the capital and a hotbed of nonconformity and dissent. They reflect the everyday difficulties of living in a place where the water supply away from the spring-line was insufficient and farming was hard work on soils that were either heavy and stony, or thin and poor. The undulating relief and steep slopes meant travel was challenging. For some, the commons and heaths provided rough grazing and fuel, for others they were a place to stay for a night or two. Common rights were regulated and restricted by tradition, charter, and social position. Many of the largest wooded areas were wood-pasture commons that attempted to combine multiple uses. Industries like brick making and pottery kilns were located on the commons on the Chiltern plateau at places such as Nettlebed. As the dedicated research in these essays shows, their legacies survive in the archives and on the ground.



Our Common Heritage is available as a free download from www.chilternsaonb.org/commons/history-project. Printed copies can be consulted at the Oxfordshire History Centre, and other local libraries in the county.

Rachel Sanderson, Chilterns Conservation Board

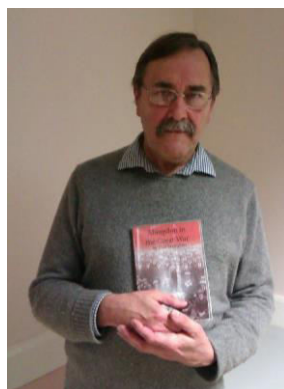
***Percy Manning: The Man who Collected Oxfordshire***

Following the conference reported in the last issue of the Newsletter, proposals are now being sought for contributions to *Percy Manning: The Man who Collected Oxfordshire*, a book celebrating the life and work of the Oxford antiquary Percy Manning (1870-1917). The work will be published by Archaeopress in the series *Archaeological Lives* early in 2017 on the centenary of his death. Proposals should be based on research into the life of Manning; into his collections in the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers museums and the Bodleian Libraries, which embrace a wide field of interest relating to Oxfordshire and its people; and into his relations with his network of friends, colleagues and agents in his field. Proposals will be assessed by members of the review panel of *Oxoniensia*, the journal of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, and should be sent to michael.heaney@bodleian.ox.ac.uk no later than 31 July 2015.

Some Recent Additions to Oxfordshire Libraries' Collection

Abingdon in the Great War, by Bob Frampton ((*pictured right*)), 2014. An account of the events which affected the lives of Abingdon's residents during this era, from material in Abingdon County Hall Museum, the Oxfordshire History Centre and contemporary local newspapers.

In it Together: Adderbury at War by Barry Davis, 2014. Documenting how the people of Adderbury adapted to the demands imposed by conflict from the Civil War to WWII,



Bygone Memories of Bicester Shops, by Christine Bloxham & David Watts, 2013. An illustrated history of more than 60 shops and family businesses in Bicester.

An Alphabetical Digest of Rusher's Banbury Directory (Trades and Occupations) 1832-1906, Edited by JSW Gibson, Banbury Historical Society, 2014. A listing by surname and forename of Banbury tradespeople over three-quarters of a century: the result of many hours of dedicated indexing!

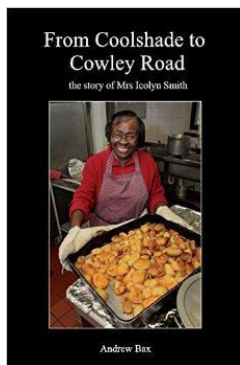
Once upon a Time. Queens Road: Its Origins, its Growth, its Character, by Derrick Knight (pictured right), 2015. A brief account of Queens Road in Banbury from its origins in the 1850s to some of its 21st Century community events.



Caversham Court Gardens: A Heritage Guide, Friends of Caversham Court Gardens, 2012. An illustrated guide to the history of the houses on the site, the families who lived there, and the development of the gardens through the ages.

The Life and Times of a Charlbury Quaker: The Journals of William Jones, by Hannah Jones, 2014. A record of one man's spiritual journey, with glimpses of North Oxfordshire in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as well as the wider Quaker world, both national and trans-Atlantic.

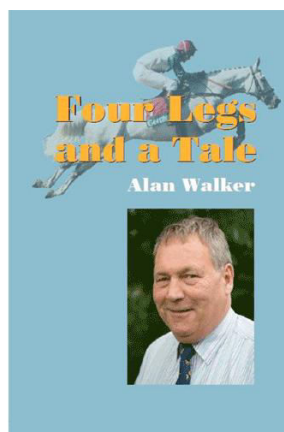
Chipping Norton High Street: Its Shops and People through the Years, by Janice Cliffe, 2014. A systematic look at each of the buildings in Chipping Norton High Street, listing the people and activities associated with each one. In some cases, records have been traced back to the 16th century. The research underpinning this publication will feed into the Chipping Norton Buildings Record.



From Coolshade to Cowley Road, by Andrew Bax, 2015. The life story of Mrs Icolyn Smith MBE, who arrived in Cowley from Jamaica in the 1960s and ran a soup kitchen there for homeless people for more than twenty years.

A History of the Village of Cuxham, by Joan Barker and Foy Treloar, 2013. An expanded version of the information exhibited in Cuxham for the Millennium, outlining the history of the village and its inhabitants from pre-history through to the 20th Century.

Four Legs and a Tale, by Alan Walker, 2014. Alan Walker, an equine vet, traces his extraordinary family history from the humble beginnings in a white wooden shed, to the creation of a modern Veterinary Hospital. His forefathers have been country vets for over 300 years and nine generations, based in Long Compton on the Oxfordshire /Warwickshire border. This autobiography also includes an insight into country life in rural Oxfordshire in the days when his father and grandfather did their rounds of outlying farms in a pony and trap and



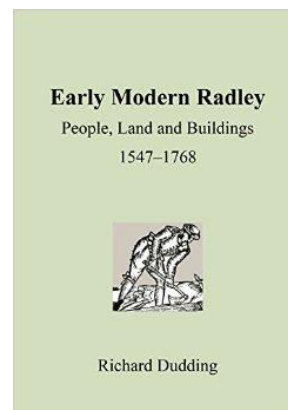
mixed their own potions using herbs and plants collected from fields and hedgerows.

The Sheldonian Theatre: Architecture and Learning in 17th Century Oxford, by Anthony Geraghty, 2013. An illustrated history of the Sheldonian Theatre from its inception in the 1630s to implementation in the 1660s, with 21 pages of notes to the main text and an extensive bibliography.

Full of Hope and Fear, by Margaret Bonfiglioli & James Munson, 2014. The Great War letters of an Oxford family.

The Changing Boundaries of Radley and Sunningwell Parishes as Effected by Boundary Changes at Abingdon, Bagley Wood, Chandlings, Kennington, Northcourt, St Helen Without and South Hinksey, by Stanley Baker & Peter McWhirter, 2014. The result of research by the authors into boundary changes in these parishes, inspired by a shared interest in old maps.

Early Modern Radley: People, Land and Buildings, 1547-1768, by Richard Dudding, 2014. A look at the way that Radley's social and economic make-up, land tenure and farming practice changed between the dates of two detailed surveys of land holdings.



A Young Man's War: The Diaries and Letters of WL Ward 1918, by Alec Ward, 2008. William Ward's diary entries, postcards and letters to his family while serving in France with the Oxford Yeomanry in 1918

Grandad Did a Dastardly Deed: 50 More Family History Traps, by Kate Broad & Toni Neobard, 2014. A very entertaining and pertinent book for family historians. A few of the potential "traps" apply equally to local history research - the acronyms on p.71 reminding users of record offices about good behaviour could be of help to newcomers to this field!

Oxoniensia Vol 79, OAHs, 2014. Includes articles on Ewelme, the Allestree Library at Christ Church, Hollar's maps of Oxford, George Wyndham (Warden of Wadham 1744-77), Dorchester, and St Luke's Church (Canning Crescent, Oxford) plus reports of archaeological work at Sonning Eye, Cumnor, Bicester and Oxford.

Stella Wentworth, Reader & Information Services, Local & Family History, Oxford Libraries, <www.libcat.oxfordshire.gov.uk>.

NOTICES

The Thames Valley Country House Partnership

The Thames Valley Country House Partnership (www.tvchp.org) links researchers in and around Oxford(shire) with curators and managers of country houses in our region. The aim of the partnership is to promote world-class research into the archival collections of country houses and estates, which can then be disseminated to a wider audience through its partners in the heritage sector. The project currently provides opportunities for University of Oxford students and faculty members to work with a variety of country houses with different ownership structures: private, charitable trust or National Trust.

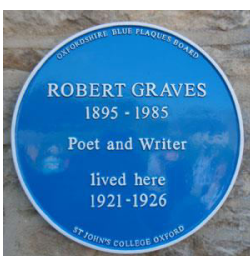
Dr Oliver Cox (oliver.cox@humanities.ox.ac.uk), a Knowledge Exchange Fellow in the Oxford University Research Centre in the Humanities and the leader of the TVCHP project writes: "I am interested in facilitating research projects that push forward the academic study of the country house, whilst also improving visitor experience. I would be delighted to work with groups from the Oxfordshire Local History Association, especially on a project relating to working peoples' wages between 1260 and 1860. I would also welcome suggestions for aspects of country house life that you feel may be overlooked in properties that are currently open to the public."

Congratulations

Congratulations to Rebecca Probert, Oxfordshire Winner of a 2014 Award for Research and Publication from the British Association of Local History, for:

'Co-habitation and marriage among the Victorian poor in Notorious Neithrop' (*Cake and Cockhorse: Journal of the Banbury Historical Society*, vol.19 no.1 Autumn 2012, pp.1-17). www.balh.org.uk/awards

Robert Graves in Islip



Many apologies to Chris Hall and the people of Islip for moving the blue plaque for Robert Graves to 'Iffley' in headings on page 9 of the last edition of the OLHA newsletter, instead of locating it in 'Islip' where it correctly belongs.

University Church: Volunteer Welcomers and Guides

The University Church is looking for friendly and enthusiastic people with a passion for local history to act as welcomers and guides.

The University Church of St Mary the Virgin has been a site of Christian worship and the focus of lively debates for over seven hundred years. The church was once a meeting place for the University governing body and the Chancellor's Court, as well as being home to the first Oxford University Library. It has played host to a number of key speakers and historical events, from the trial of Cranmer in the sixteenth century to the birth of the Oxford Movement and the founding of Oxfam. It continues to play a key role as a place of worship and venue for lectures and public events. In January 2010, the church was awarded a £3.4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the conservation and refurbishment of the church building, and the development of new learning and interpretation resources. These resources include an education programme for visiting schools, adults and families, and also the recruitment of volunteer welcomers and guides.

Contact: Penny Boxall, smv.heritage@gmail.com, 01865 279110

Conservation of War Memorials

Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement in England, in partnership with Historic England, Imperial War Museum and the War Memorials Trust, is looking for volunteers to carry out condition surveys of local war memorials. The four-year project will provide an overall picture of the condition of memorials throughout England and enable funding to be directed to those in need of conservation. Volunteers will also be encouraged to apply to have their local memorials listed, giving them protection for the future.

A free workshop was held at the Wesley Memorial Chapel in Oxford on 28 April to make contact with interested groups in the area and to provide some training in condition surveying. More information about the project can be obtained from Civic Voice, www.civicvoice.org.uk

COURSES, WORKSHOPS, WALKS

Telling and Protecting your Church History

Free training day organised by the Angus Library and Archive, Regents Park College
 Saturday 13 June, 2015, 10.00am-5.00pm
 at Kidlington Baptist Church

Morning session: *Archiving for the Future*

All you need to know about archiving, conserving and protecting your church records. Help protect your church history in the electronic age!

Afternoon session: *Writing your Church History*

What should you include and where can you find the information? We'll help you find the answers.

Morning and afternoon sessions can be booked separately or you can join us for the whole day! Parking is available at the Church. Lunch will be provided.

Further details: sukie.trowles@regents.ox.ac.uk

Medieval Day at the Oxford Castle

27 June, 10.00am-4.00pm

Re-enactments, family activities, workshops, talks.

Lecture on *Oxford Castle, Osney Abbey and the Magna Carta* by Professor Richard Sharpe, 11.15am

Magdalen College School Arts Festival
www.artsfestivaloxford.org/whats-on

Want to Write History: Fact or Fiction?

Creative writing and history workshop. Dept of English and Modern Languages, Oxford Brookes University

Saturday 13 June 2015, 9:30am -5.30pm, followed by drinks reception

Suitable for anyone writing for a non-academic market. The workshop will be led by novelist Sarah Dunant, and historian Professor David Nash and hosted by Peter Furtado. For the final session, the team will be joined by literary agents and publishers.

Cost: £130

Further details: c.cox@brookes.ac.uk

Oxford University Department of Continuing Education Courses, Michaelmas Term 2015

Short Online Courses in History

- ❖ Age of Revolution, 9 Sep (start)
- ❖ Churchill: Soldier, Politician and Statesman, 16 Sep
- ❖ Elizabeth I, 21 Sep
- ❖ English Landscape Gardens, 21 Sep
- ❖ Civil War and Revolution: Britain Divided, 1640-60, 28 Sep
- ❖ Politics: An Introduction, 23 Sep
- ❖ The First World War in Perspective, 28 Sep
- ❖ The Making of Modern Britain, 28 Sep

Day and Weekend Events

- ❖ Vernacular Revivals, 25-27 Sep
- ❖ Understanding Title Deeds, 10-11 Oct
- ❖ Agincourt! Agincourt! Know ye not Agincourt! 17 Oct
- ❖ The Making of the English Landscape, 17 Oct

<www.conted.ox.ac.uk>

Oxford Water Walks

Alice in Wonderland's 150th Anniversary

"I don't much care where --" said Alice ... "-- so long as I get somewhere." ... "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

WEA Day Courses and Walks:

Alice's Adventures in Oxford, 17 June and 18 July., Price, £25. <www.wea.org.uk>

Alice's Day Walks:

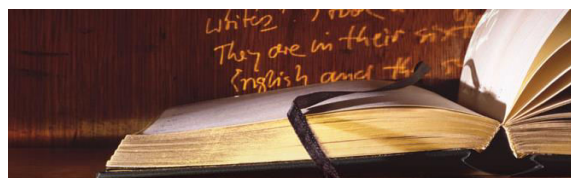
Pictures, Parks, and Pleasure: 3 July, 2pm. Price, £6. <www.oxfordwaterwalks.eventbrite.co.uk>

Wonderland Walks: 4 July at 10am and 12.30pm and

Pilgrimage Walk: 4 July at 4pm. Price, £3

<www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com>

Other Alice walks will be offered at various dates throughout the summer. Walks can also be arranged for groups at other times. The walks are led by Mark Davies. <oxfordwaterwalks.co.uk/?page_id=22>



Oxfordshire Past 2015

Oxfordshire Past 2015 will be held on Saturday 13 June at St Mary's Church, Chipping Norton from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. The Chipping Norton Museum will be open on that day until 5.00pm. This annual event in the Oxfordshire calendar is for all those interested in history, archaeology and architecture.



The public car park at Chipping Norton is in New Street, 5 minutes' walk from the church. There is no parking in Church Street. Buses from Oxford, Witney, Woodstock and Banbury run hourly.

The cost of attendance is £7 and tickets must be booked in advance. This includes tea/coffee but not lunch. Bookings can be made by post or online; see the website at <http://oxfordshirepast.org/> for further details.

Programme

Time	Subject	Speaker
10.00	<i>Welcome</i>	Chris Day, OAHS
10.05	<i>Building Recording in Oxfordshire, 2014/15</i>	David Clark
10.35	<i>Recent Archaeological work in the City of Oxford</i>	David Radford
11.05	Break	
11.25	<i>William Smith Online</i>	Kate Santry, OUM
11.45	<i>The Didcot Mirror</i>	David Moon
12.15	<i>Chipping Norton: Early Fabric in Historic Towns</i>	Paul Clark
12.30	Lunch and OAHS AGM	
13.50	<i>Researching Charlbury British School, founded 1815</i>	Barbara Allison
14.10	<i>Managing the Rollright Stones</i>	George Lambrick
14.40	Break	
14.55	<i>VCH Update: Wychwood and the Chilterns</i>	Simon Townley
15.25	<i>Reflections on County Archaeology in 2014</i>	Susan Lisk
15.55	<i>Closing address</i>	Chipping Norton Museum & LHS
16.00	Close of Oxfordshire Past	

Oxfordshire Local History Association Website

See website at www.olha.org.uk for:

Up-to-date list of events - List of OLHA journal articles and reviews - List of speakers and guides

Also: The facility to buy or renew OLHA membership and the facility to pay for OLHA study days

Postal address for all paper correspondence: c/o Liz Woolley, OLHA Membership Secretary, 138 Marlborough Road, OX1 4LS

DIARY OF TALKS AND MEETINGS

June 2015

- 15th – **Adderbury** – Visit to Rousham House and guided tour by Charles Cottrell-Dormer.
- 15th – **Bicester** – Liz Woolley, *Leisure and Entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7:30pm.
- 15th – **Headington** – Andrew Roberts, *The Duchess of Richmond's Ball*. New Lecture Theatre, Oxford Brookes University, 6:30pm. Tickets £30, proceeds to the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire's Charitable Fund.
- 15th – **Kennington** – Trevor Rowley, *Oxfordshire Castles*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7:45pm.
- 18th – **Abingdon** – *Members' Evening* highlighting members' interests and recent research. Details to be confirmed. Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, 7:45 pm.
- 18th – **Wychwoods** – Mervyn Benford, *Milestones*. Shipton-under-Wychwood Village Hall, 7:30pm.
- 19th – **Finstock** – Chris Howgego, *The Finstock Aureus*. Village Hall, 8:00 pm.
- 22nd – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – AGM followed by Alan Simpson, *Finding Your Ancestors on the Internet*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8:00pm.
- 23rd – **Enstone** – *Historic Garden Picnic*. Venue tbc (Tel 01608-677246, 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, 01865-341977.

July 2015

- 13th – **Radley** – Tony Gillman, *The Story of the Harwell Site*. School Hall, 7:30pm.
- 16th – **Sibfords** – Evening visit to Radway to see a new exhibition in the church on *The Battle of Edge Hill*. Afterwards at The Castle at Edge Hill.
- 18th – **Adderbury** – Village History Day.
- 20th – **Bicester** – Martin Way, *Tin Helmets & Gas Masks*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7:30pm.
- 27th – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Kirsty Gray, *One-Place Studies: Tracing the history of a community*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8:00pm.
- 28th – **Kidlington** – Tony Hadland, *The Duke and the Miner's Daughter*. St John Ambulance Hall, High Street, 7.50pm.

September 2015

- 8th – **Marcham** – AGM and Jim Asher, *Saving Butterflies*. Marcham Church, 7:45pm.

- 10th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Russell Cherry, *A History of the Ridgeway*. Wootton Community Centre, 7:30pm.
- 14th – **Chipping Norton** – Mark Davies, *Daniel Harris: Oxford Castle's Gaoler Extraordinaire*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.
- 14th – **Radley** – AGM followed by Tony Rogerson, *The Oxford Dambusters*. School Hall, 7:30pm.
- 16th – **Littlemore** – Nick Millea, *From Black Death to Breznev: Maps of Oxfordshire through the Ages*. Littlemore Community Centre, Giles Road, 7:00 for 7:30pm.
- 17th – **The Sibfords** - Julie Ann Godson, *The Water Gypsy: How a Thames Fishergirl became a Viscountess*. Sibford Gower Village Hall, 8.00pm.
- 17th – **Whitchurch & Goring Heath** – Martin Buckland, *The Invisible Brick Revealed in the Local Area*. Goring Heath Parish Hall, 8:00pm.
- 17th – **Wychwoods** – Tim May, *The Oxfordshire Yeomanry and Winston Churchill*. Milton-under-Wychwood Village Hall, 7:30pm.
- 21st – **Adderbury** – Alan Thornton, *The Cadbury Story: A film and talk on George Cadbury*. Methodist Chapel, Chapel Lane, 7:30pm.
- 21st – **Bicester** – Bill King, *Archaeology in your Shed, Garage or Attic*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7:30pm.
- 21st – **Kennington** – Robert Gasser, *Film Making in Oxford*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7:45pm.
- 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.
- 24th – **Aldworth** – John Harper, *Experiencing Worship in the Medieval Parish Church*. Tickets £15 on the door, £10 in advance from <christopherjpaterson@btinternet.com>. All proceeds to the St Mary's Fabric Fund.
- 28th – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Sarah Paterson, *What Great Grandma did in the First World War: The Imperial War Museum's Women's Work Collection*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8:00pm.

October 2015

- 6th – **Henley** – Shaun Morley, *Drunk and Riotous – Oxfordshire Friendly Societies*. Kings Arms Barns, Market Place, 7:45pm.
- 8th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Jackie Smith, *Christ's Hospital in Abingdon*. Wootton Community Centre, 7:30pm.

October 2015 (cont)

- 12th – **Chipping Norton** – Bill King, *Yesterday's Runways*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.
- 13th – **Marcham** – Martin Buckland, *The Invisible Brick: Revealed in Language and Literature, Film and Fiction, Music and Murder in the Local Area and Much More*. Marcham Church, 7:45pm.
- 15th – **Sibfords** – Maureen Hicks, *The Sibfords 1914-1918*. Village Hall, Sibford Gower, 8:00pm.
- 15th – **Whitchurch & Goring Heath** – Peter Hawley, *The Grey family of Whitchurch House and the Foundling Hospital*. Goring Heath Parish Hall, 8:00pm.
- 19th – **Adderbury** – Martin Bloxson, *The Importance of Local Railways in WWI*. Methodist Chapel, Chapel Lane, 7:30pm.
- 19th – **Bicester** – Stephen Barker, *Oxfordshire on the Home Front, 1914-1918*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7:30pm.
- 19th – **Kennington** – Ivan Cadge, *The History of the Abingdon GWR Branch Line*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7:45pm.
- 20th – **Enstone** – Alan Simpson, *Tracing Ancestors*. Venue tbc (contact 01608-677246/01608-677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7:30pm.
- 21st – **Littlemore** – Simon Townley, *The Victoria County History in the Chilterns*. Littlemore Community Centre, Giles Road, 7:00 for 7:30pm.
- 28th – **Dorchester** – Robert Kidner, *Railway Poster Art: A Special Genre*. Village Hall, 7:30pm.

November 2015

- 3rd – **Henley** – Gary Lock, *Excavations at Marcham, Oxon – A big Roman and Iron Age Site*. Kings Arms Barns, Market Place, 7:45pm.
- 9th – **Chipping Norton** – Stephen Wass, *William Castle – a Notable Banbury Eccentric and Morris Fool*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.
- 10th – **Marcham** – Rosemary Kitto, *The Hush-Hush Factory in Tubney Woods*. Marcham Church, 7:45pm.
- 12th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Clare Sargent, *A History of Radley College*. Wootton Community Centre, 7:30pm.
- 16th – **Adderbury** – Michael Picker, *Adderbury Song and Culture Revisited*. Methodist Chapel, Chapel Lane, 7:30pm.
- 16th – **Bicester** – John Leighfield, *Putting Bicester on the Map: From Gough to Google*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7:30pm.
- 16th – **Kennington** – David Holt, *Vincent: His Life and Art*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7:45pm.
- 19th – **Sibfords** – Dr Richard Buckley, *Richard III: The King under the Car Park*. Village Hall, Sibford Gower, 8:00pm.

- 19th – **Whitchurch & Goring Heath** – Clive Williams, *Basildon Revisited*. Goring Heath Parish Hall, 8:00pm.
- 23rd – **Oxfordshire Family History Society** – Tony Hadland, *Papists at the Manor: The Yates and Throckmortons of the Vale of White Horse*. Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, 8:00pm.
- 24th – **Enstone** – Jeremy Burton, *The Late Queen Mother's Jewels*. Venue tbc (contact 01608-677246/01608-677246, carolawt@gmail.com), 7:30pm.
- 25th – **Dorchester** – Jane MacDonald, *Feasts and Feasting*. Village Hall, 7:30pm.

December 2015

- 14th – **Chipping Norton** – Valerie Burton, *History and Memories of Witney Blankets*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.
- 21st – **Bicester** – Bob Hessian, *Topic to be announced*. Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, 7:30pm.
- 21st – **Kennington** – Richard Dudding, *Radley Gentry, Yeoman and Land*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7:45pm.

January 2016

- 11th – **Chipping Norton** – *Members' Supper and Quiz*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.
- 14th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Bill King, *The Upper Thames Patrol in WWII*. Wootton Community Centre, 7:30pm.
- 18th – **Kennington** – Geoffrey Tyack, *The Buildings of Berkshire*. Methodist Church, Upper Road, 7:45pm.

February 2016

- 8th – **Chipping Norton** – Gillian White, *Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth I and the Kenilworth Entertainment of 1575*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.
- 11th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Cory Starling, *Mapledurham Water Mill*. Wootton Community Centre 7:30pm.

March 2016

- 10th – **Wootton & Dry Sandford** – Richard O Smith, *The First Englishman to Fly*. Wootton Community Centre, 7:30pm.
- 14th – **Chipping Norton** – AGM followed by David Howe, *Prime Ministers and the Midlands*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.

April 2016

- 11th – **Chipping Norton** – Donald Ratcliffe, *Failing on the Frontier: An English family tries America*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.

May 2016

- 9th – **Chipping Norton** – Martin Greenwood, *The Role of a Country Carrier*. Methodist Room, West Street, 7:30pm.