



Berkshire Local History Association

**39th Annual General Meeting
12th March 2016
Southmoor Village Hall, Southmoor, Oxfordshire, OX13 5BY**

HOSTS: Longworth & District History Society. **ARRIVAL:** 11:00 – 11:30 – refreshments.

AFTER LUNCH: There will be a visit to the nearby historic building, Kingston Bagpuize House, a seventeenth century manor house, where we will conclude our day with tea and cake.

TRANSPORT: There are public bus services from Abingdon and Oxford. Realistically, however, driving is the best option. Members may wish to liaise with fellow members regarding carpooling. Free parking is available at Southmoor Village Hall.

COST: £8 each PAYABLE ON THE DAY. Please note that this includes lunch, visit to Kingston Bagpuize House followed by tea and cake. **This cost is being subsidised by your Association.**

AGENDA: The Agenda will include a discussion about future plans for the Association. This item will be considered in the light of recent visits undertaken by the Executive Committee to local societies. See summary of findings on reverse of this sheet.

Send booking details to; Ann McCormack at secretary@blha.org.uk. Alternatively, return completed hard copy of form with **SAE** to: **Ann McCormack, Touchstone, 4 Silwood Close, Ascot, Berks, SL5 7DX**. Booking form is also available on the BLHA website: www.blha.org.uk

PLEASE LIST NAMES OF THOSE MEMBERS WHO ARE ATTENDING

I am/We are members of (NAME OF SOCIETY) – please print in block capitals

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Please provide an email address or phone number in case of query:

Nominations for the Election of the Officers and Executive Committee membership of the Berkshire Local History Association at the 38th AGM, 12th March 2016.

My nominations/My organisations' nomination(s) are:

Chairman.....

Treasurer.....

Secretary.....

Membership Secretary.....

A Member of the Executive.....

Signed.....

Seconded.....

I/We wish to reserve a display space.....yes/no.

Set up 10.00 - 10.45am

Please respond by **Friday, 4th March, 2016.**

Visits to Member Societies – Summary of Findings

The Executive Committee has been considering ways in which to better serve our membership – and those who are not yet members. There is minimal uptake of many of the benefits of membership. And it has proved difficult to find replacements for Committee members, most of whom have served well beyond the five-year limit stipulated by our Constitution. We have been pondering 'the future of the Association'! To assist with this conundrum, we embarked on a number of visits to local societies. The purpose was as follows:

- to make direct contact with the local membership to ascertain their main interests and seek ways to support them in their activities;
- to reiterate the range of services and activities to which our members are entitled as part of Berkshire Local History Association.

Elias Kupfermann wrote to all our affiliated local societies, requesting an opportunity for a member of the Executive Committee to make a short visit. Of our approximately 40 societies, only seven replied to the request! The following is a short summary of the visits undertaken:

Committee members visited societies in all parts of the county, including the Ancient County. They were warmly received and the meetings were enjoyable occasions, friendly, lively and interesting in content. Some societies are involved in primary research, produce publications or are engaged in other worthwhile history projects in their own localities. It was clear that, for many of our members, the activities of their own local societies are sufficient to meet their local history interests. Some members were aware of the activities of the BLHA, attended some organized events, and read or contributed to our publications.

However, it was disappointing to learn that some of our wider membership were unaware of the many benefits of membership of the Association, the several funds available to assist with research and publication or the potential to attend educational study days. There seemed to be little demand for future special events.

It was pointed out to us that many members are quite content to attend only the events in their own immediate locality. Several members have mobility concerns and do not wish to undertake extra-long journeys. And this lovely County of Berkshire is very spread out geographically, especially when we aim to embrace all corners of the Ancient County! There are ongoing difficulties getting our communications to all our members. This involves communication with between the BLHA and the societies, between the BLHA and our wider membership and, indeed, within societies. These issues are compounded by the fact that many members do not use email. These factors are seen as impediments to participation in wider activities of the Association. In addition, individual societies find it difficult to replace long-standing committee members.

How best to meet to move the Association forward and keep it going for the benefit of future local historians – this is a topic which has exercised your Committee recently. We will discuss this at the Annual General Meeting – THE FUTURE OF THE ASSOCIATION – the subject will have its own special place on the Agenda!

To end on a positive note, our visit to Longworth & District History Society resulted in an invitation to hold our next AGM in the Vale of White Horse! So, we will be returning to the Ancient County on 12th March 2016. We look forward to seeing many of you there – and hearing your thoughts on the future of the Association – RSVP 4th March 2016.

Ann McCormack, Hon Secretary, BLHA