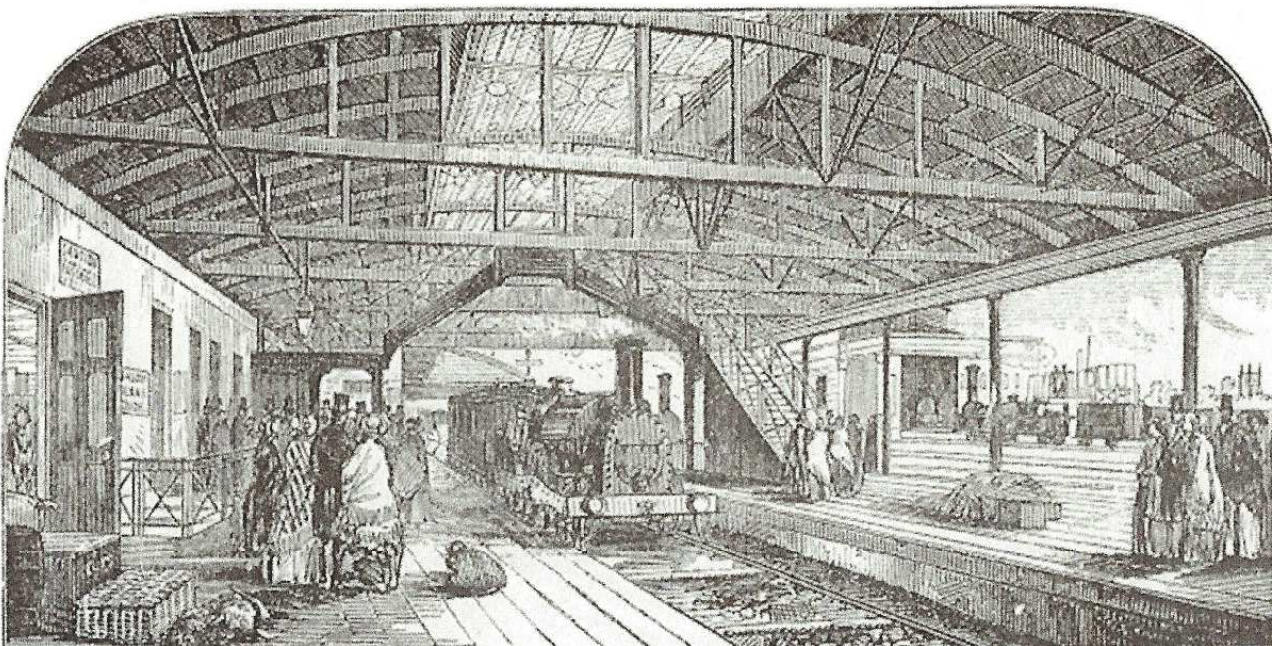


Berkshire Local History Association



**Newsletter No 115
May 2016**

***Berkshire Local History Association
Newsletter***

Editor: John Chapman

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We ask all member societies and institutions to provide a short report on their activities for inclusion in the Newsletter. We are always interested in brief news reports on other matters and notice of events likely to be of interest to our members.

A word limit of 400/450 words is in place to allow for as many of you to contribute as possible, please note that when space is limited, contributions over this amount will be subject to the editorial pencil!

Contributions should be e-mailed to:- newsletter@blha.org.uk and arrive not later than the 15th of the month preceding publication (January, May and September) Word, Text or pdf copy is acceptable, but keep it simple and please do not use spaces or tabs to lay out presentations. Photographs and images should be sent separately

Alternatively material may be posted to the Editor: John Chapman, 5 Cecil Aldin Drive, Tilehurst, Berks, RG31 6YP

Cover picture - Reading Station in the 1840s - see page 21

Chairman's Corner

Sometimes, I'm inclined to think that one of the greatest benefits of BLHA membership is the Annual General Meeting – a rather unusual state of affairs, but one perhaps borne out by the 2016 meeting!

A debt of gratitude is owed to the Longworth and District Historical Society, who looked after us so well, and also to everyone at Kingston Bagpuize House. The lunch at Southmoor Village Hall was well prepared and tasty, with more than enough for all, and the tea and cake at the big house were excellent. As ever, thanks are also due to our out-going secretary, Ann McCormack, who did all the liaison work between our friends at Longworth and District, and the rest of the committee.

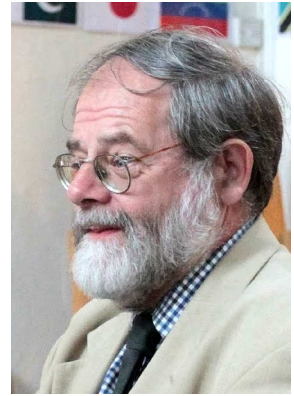
Committee members weren't at all sure about taking up the recommendation from Longworth and District that we visit the big house. We wondered if we would get enough takers to make the visit viable, especially because for a lot of people, the journey to this A.G.M. would be longer than usual. Then there was the question of whether we should subsidise the cost of the visit, and if so, to what extent.

It came as a pleasant surprise that more members than usual wanted to attend, a few of them even bringing friends and spouses. They were rewarded with glorious weather, which made a walk round the gardens at Kingston Bagpuize a "must" for many of us. I overheard a lot of happy voices there, and the committee received a number of complimentary e-mails afterwards. It had all been worth while.

At the A.G.M. I'm glad that we were able to have a discussion on the future of the Association, and glad that people wanted to have their say. Over time, things change. Sometimes change is gradual, and sometimes it comes with a jolt. The Association is in its 40th year. How we did things in the past may not be appropriate for today. For myself, I was glad we decided to remove the password from the electronic version of the Newsletter. It seemed an unnecessary barrier to communication, and I'm conscious that under our constitution, we exist to promote local history to everyone, and not just those who are members of societies. I was glad we decided to keep paper copies of the Newsletter for those who wanted them – and were paying extra for them. And I was relieved that we didn't want a symposium every year, when I thought of what was involved in organising the last one!

The talk that followed the A.G.M. I found interesting. I'd been to the meetings of several member societies over the past year, and one of the things that had struck me was how different they were! Peter Keene told us about the Longworth and District Society and the area it covered, and its activities, publications and organisation.

Next year's A.G.M. will be at St. Nicolas' Church Hall in Newbury, and we're grateful to the Newbury and District Field Club for agreeing to act as hosts. I've always thought it was a pleasant town to visit – I was last there on Easter Saturday,



and spent some time in the recently refurbished West Berkshire Museum, and had a wander around the church, the bridge, the lock, and West Mills, in between the showers. For 2018 we probably ought to find somewhere in the east of the county.

So, it looks as though in the coming year, the Association will see some changes in its organisation. As we learned at the A.G.M., Ann McCormack, our indefatigable secretary, is stepping down, as is Amanda Harvey, our membership secretary. Our President, Prof. Ted Collins, has expressed the wish to step down at the 2017 A.G.M., so the committee will have some thinking to do. Meanwhile, on the other hand, we have elected David Axford to the committee, and since the A.G.M., Ann Smith has expressed an interest in joining. Ann is the enthusiastic and energetic librarian looking after the extensive local history collection at Reading Central Library, who will be retiring from paid work this summer.

As for myself, I'm happy to continue as chairman a bit longer. Ideally, I'd like to step down for a year or two, and let someone else have a go. Then, all being well, I'd come back, maybe in a different role. On balance, I'm rather grateful to Pat and Jim Smart, who first got me involved in the Association – on the editorial panel of "Berkshire Old and New." And then it was Joan Dils and Margaret Simons who persuaded me to become chairman. After I had agreed, I thought I must be mad – I wasn't even a committee member, and I didn't much like committee work anyway. It's funny how things have turned out!

David Cliffe, Chairman, B.L.H.A.

Words from the Editor

We have just come across a glitch in the system. It seems that a number of e-mail systems treat messages that have a large number of recipients as junk or spam and they never get through. I am afraid this is what has been happening to my system and I am grateful to Dave Osborne for suggesting I search through my spam folders and lo and behold I found a number of missing messages. However while I managed to retrieve some of them, others just vanished so I must apologise to anyone who sent in a contribution and it has not appeared. A lot more investigating to be done I'm afraid.



I was pleased at the response to the Newsletter at the AGM and most of you still like to receive a paper copy. We will be lifting the password protection on this edition on our website so can you suggest that your members have a regular look at the website and you may wish to send details of your future programme to Dave Osborne to go in the future events section.

A little while ago I asked if anyone had photographs of the ruins at Palmyra and I am pleased to report that Oxford Archaeology in conjunction with Oxford and other Universities have built a digital image of the site, it's a bit odd at the moment as few

contributors bothered to photograph the back of some of the temples and even fewer have flown over them and taken photos from the air. This leaves a rather peculiar black hole when you exploit the full 3-D capabilities. However the Egyptian government have generously donated a supply of marble and a reproduction of the Triumphal Arch has been cut and is exhibited in Trafalgar Square.



The arch as photographed in 2008

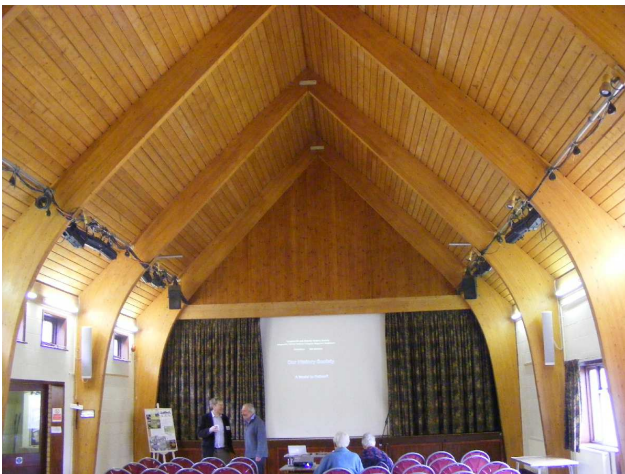


The reproduction arch unveiled in April 2016

John Chapman

The Annual General Meeting

Our Chairman has told you about a very successful Annual General Meeting hosted by the Longworth & District Society. Here are a few photos of the event:



The venue - Southmoor Village Hall



The Wargrave LHS display



Kingston Bagpuize House



Members exploring the gardens of the house



The Longworth & District display



The Project Purley display

Miscellanea

Windsor Great Park

I thought your members might like to know that we've just relaunched the Windsor Great Park website to make it easier to find information and plan a visit across the 16,500 acre Royal estate. It's an interactive website which includes an historic timeline of Windsor Great Park and we'd love to know what you think of it.

See www.windsorgreatpark.co.uk

Amanda Sillitoe

West Berkshire Heritage Forum

West Berkshire Heritage Forum is a voluntary body which works in partnership with West Berkshire Council to implement the Council's policy on heritage matters. West Berkshire has a very rich heritage, with its conservation areas, important buildings, and fine landscapes. We are keen to preserve and protect what is important to future generations in West Berkshire, including both nationally listed buildings and those of

local significance.

One method of local conservation is local listing, which identifies and describes heritage assets of exceptional local significance and value which have not been designated by English Heritage, and records these in West Berkshire Council's Historic Environment Record. Local listing will not alter the legal status of a building or the owner's permitted development rights, but will be material consideration for any relevant planning application.

Assessors submit applications and a Selection Panel of at least four independent experts meets in formal public session to decide whether or not to recommend the asset for listing. The owner of each asset is consulted and can be represented at the hearing. The final decision is taken by West Berkshire Council.

As of April 2016, twelve assets have been approved, and information on these is published here:

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=30781>

If you wish to suggest a building, or another structure of heritage interest, for the West Berkshire Local List, please contact the Secretary, Susan Ellis, email susancarveth@gmx.com or phone 01189 712428 to discuss the submission process. The Forum has its own website which promotes local societies and their events.

<http://www.westberkshireheritageforum.org.uk>

Sue Ellis

Can you Help?

Here is another photograph of an unidentified building, thought to be somewhere in the county, which has ended up on a postcard in the local studies collection at Reading Central Library. Please get in touch if you recognise this house – it will enable me to catalogue it properly. It's obviously large, and timber-framed, with exposed timbers in the two gables to the left, but with tile-hung gables to the right. The windows to the left have little triangular gables above them, with seem to mirror the gables of the roof.



The character standing by the porch strikes a proprietorial pose, with one forearm thrust deep into the pocket of his Norfolk jacket, and the other held across his waist.

The picture of St. James's Church, Newbury, in our January Newsletter, was correctly identified by Chris Atkins, Librarian: Local Information Studies for the Royal Borough. It is good to know

that there is at least one local studies librarian still in existence in Berkshire! The church turned out not to be in Newbury, but in New Bury in Lancashire! Chris found a part of the Church of England website, "Closed Churches Available for Disposal," which lists St. James's, New Bury, and he also alerted me to Leonard Poole's Picasa Web Gallery, which has several photographs of this church and confirms it is indeed the church in question.

The cataloguing and scanning of the collection at Reading continues, and a batch of images from the Wallingford area has just been added to the Reading Library website. I particularly liked the old photographs of the travelling funfairs at Wallingford in the 1890s. Some pictures turned out have been taken at Crowmarsh, on the other side of the bridge, and they have also been added and are viewable.

David Cliffe (e-mail: chairman@blha.org.uk)

Geophysics survey at La Hyde

Last year the Berkshire Archaeological Society carried out a geophysics and topographical survey of the suspected site of a deserted medieval village - La Hyde to the east of Sulham Lane between Pangbourne and Purley on Thames and several members of the Society enjoyed a walk round the site and lunch in the pub at Tidmarsh.

This year we are planning to return to the site to survey two more fields to the east of the field we surveyed last year. We are still discussing the details with the landowner but are expecting to be on site between 31st May and 10th June 2016. Martin Labram has kindly agreed to organise this event so if you would like to help please contact him by emailing Martin@m2cc.co.uk.

Andrew Hutt

New Books and Reviews

The Royal Abbey of Reading

by Ron Baxter

published by Boydell & Brewer ISBN 978 1 78327 084 2

This richly illustrated volume is the first full-length survey of Reading Abbey, one of the most important ecclesiastical buildings of the Middle Ages. It offers a new virtual reconstruction of church and shows how the abbey formed the backdrop to many key historical events.

Orders can be placed by phone on 01394 610600, by fax on 01394 610316, by email at trading@boydell.co.uk or on-line at www.boydellandbrewer.com. Cost is £60.00 Postage is £3.00 in the UK.

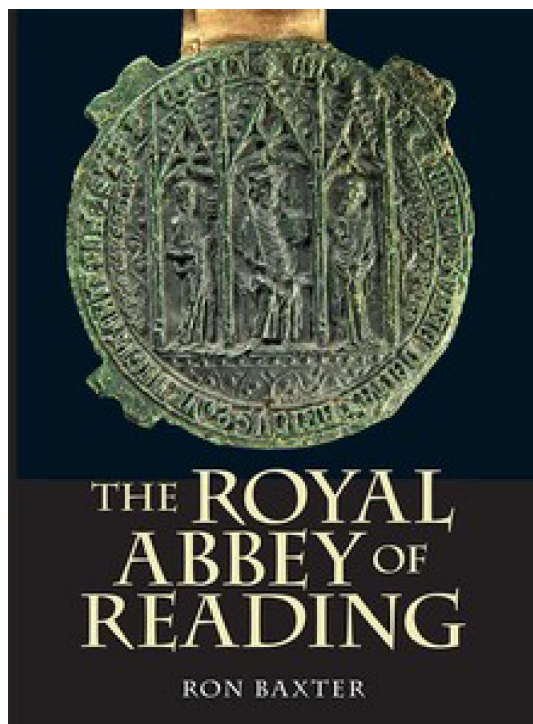
Reading Abbey was built by King Henry I to be a great architectural statement and his own mausoleum, as well as a place of resort and a staging point for royal

itineraries for progresses in the west and south-west of England. From the start it was envisaged as a monastic site with a high degree of independence from the church hierarchy; it was granted enormous holdings of land and major religious relics to attract visitors and pilgrims, and no expense was spared in providing a church comparable in size and splendour with anything else in England.

However, in architectural terms, the abbey has, until recently, remained enigmatic, mainly because of the efficiency with which it was destroyed at the Reformation. Only recently has it become possible to bring together the scattered evidence - antiquarian drawings and historic records along with a new survey of the standing remains - into a coherent picture. This richly illustrated volume provides the first full

account of the abbey, from foundation to dissolution, and offers a new virtual reconstruction of the church and its cloister; it also shows how the abbey formed the backdrop to many key historical events.

RON BAXTER is the Research Director of the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland, a project based at King's College, London that is recording all the stone sculpture in these islands carved between 1066 and 1200.



Great War Centenary

July 1st marks the 100th anniversary of the start of the Battles of the Somme. It was not just one battle on this date, it was a whole series of engagements lasting until mid November when the fighting died away leaving the Allies with an eight mile advance and 615,000 casualties and the Germans with around 500,000.

Our local county regiment, the Royal Berkshire Regiment played its part. On the 1st July the 2nd Battalion attacked at Ovillers suffering 437 casualties. They attacked again at Zenith trench on the 22nd October suffering another 203 casualties. The 5th Battalion attacked over the same ground at Ovillers on July 3rd with 320 casualties and around 170 casualties when the Germans counter-attacked on the 8th August.

The 8th Battalion were engaged 14th July, 18th August and 3rd September (35, 160 and 100 casualties) The 6th Battalion attacked at Montauban on the 1st July (330 casualties), at Delville Wood on the 19th July (200 casualties) and Regina Trench on the 21st October (75 casualties) The 1st/4th Battalion attacked at Pozieres 23rd July (230 casualties), at Bouzincourt on the 11th August (140 casualties). Finally the

2nd/4th were engaged at Fromelles on the 13th July (35 casualties) and 19th July (160 casualties). The establishment of a battalion was around 900 men but typically only around 650 to 800 were actually engaged at any one time. The casualty figures quoted are based on the returns made at the time as accurate figures are very difficult to determine, even in retrospect.

Another battle which we recall was the Battle of Jutland which opened on 31st May 1916 and which both sides claimed to have won. There were 151 ships of the Royal Navy and 98 of the German High Seas Fleet. The Royal Navy lost 6094 lives and the Germans 2551. The real result was the Germans retreated to their base and would never again menace British shipping with their battleships. There were many Berkshiremen involved. They were almost all regular seamen as the Navy was a favourite service for men from Berkshire and almost all had joined well before the war began.

There were many Berkshiremen serving with other regiments who were involved and the memorials in our towns and villages bear sad witness to their sacrifices.

Newbury and District Field Club have organised a series of talks on the battles with some eminent speakers (see Opportunities on Page 22)

Society News

Friends of Reading Abbey

The Spring Lecture, on 14 April, was given by Dr Martin Heale, from the University of Liverpool, on *the late Medieval Abbot*. The venue was St Laurence church, which is rarely open nowadays apart from services, and the lecture was preceded by a short guide to the church monuments from our President, Prof. Brian Kemp. We are very grateful to Dr Heale for a very entertaining illustrated lecture, which was attended by 90 people, a very good attendance. It was also a pleasure to get back inside St Laurence's church, which was part of the Medieval Abbey precinct.

This year's garden party will be held in the Forbury Gardens on the afternoon of Sunday 19 June, between 2.00pm and 5.00pm. This is Father's day, and the day after the monks arrived in Reading in 1121 to found the Abbey. It is being held in Forbury Gardens specifically to promote the Council's successful Reading Abbey Revealed Heritage Lottery bid. The Architect's plans for the conservation work will be on display.

The annual summer garden party is a joint event between Reading's three Friends' groups: for the Abbey, Reading Museum, and Caversham Court Gardens. For the past four years it has been held at Caversham Court. The event is free, and open to all-comers. It promises to offer an entertaining afternoon, with the Trinity Band playing from the bandstand, and impromptu rehearsals by both the Progress Theatre and

Reading Between the Lines of their forthcoming plays: Progress are performing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Caversham Court in July (open air), whilst Reading Between the Lines are creating a new play based on the life of King Henry I, to be performed in St James church in November.

There are also plans for a scratch community singing of *Sumer is Icumen In* in the late afternoon. There will be rehearsals at St James church during the afternoon, interspersed with talks about aspects of the round, which was written down by the monks of Reading Abbey in the C13th. They will be followed by a public singing of the round in the Forbury Gardens in the late afternoon. Other possible entertainments include a steel band, a children's history trail, and guided tours of the Abbey Quarter (sadly not the Abbey Ruins). The refreshment kiosk will also be open. On a sunny summer afternoon this should be a delightful place to be, so make sure you get it in your diary.

John Painter

Hungerford Historical Association

The Hungerford Historical Association is flourishing, increasing in membership and with an audience averaging 100-140 for each lecture. The programme includes topics of local, national and international interest.

The opening talk by Suzette Davis, an N.B.C.T.V. journalist who headed up the news coverage in Central and Eastern Europe, gave a dramatic account of “*The Fall of the Berlin Wall*.” She and her small T.V.crew were in East Berlin on that historic night, capturing the iconic footage which flashed across T.V. screens worldwide.

Lord Owen gave a riveting account of *His Reflections on 50 years of political life*. His amazing career, very early on, as a Cabinet Minister for Health and then as Foreign Secretary on the world stage, brought extensive travel and meetings with world leaders. Later, his defection from Labour and becoming a founder of the Social Democrats gave insights into the politicians and issues of the day: a fascinating “insider” view. His impressive role later in the negotiations in the Balkan War and his continuing passion for health care and his career in neuroscience all brought “history” vividly alive.

“*Lawrence of Arabia – an Archaeological Investigation*,” by Col. Mike Relph, gave an interesting account of the ongoing excavations in the desert areas relating to the Arab uprising and Lawrence’s campaigns. The vast areas are still littered with the debris of war. Lawrence’s charismatic leadership in winning Arab confidence and inspiring a highly effective fighting force was graphically described. The historic background to the current issues were especially relevant and of interest today.

“*The Aldbourne Stables – the Band of Brothers Link*,” by Tim Green, was of local interest. The dismantling of the U.S. 101st Airborne Training Centre at the Aldbourne Stables attracted U.S. veterans’ support in Toccoa, Georgia, who raised funds to remove, re-construct and establish it there as a museum. Some of the

recovered U.S. items remain in a small museum, however, at Littlecote House. It was a most interesting account of the U.K./U.S. “special relationship.” Many recalled the thousands of U.S. troops massed in the area before D-Day.

Dr. David Peacock, the distinguished local historian, gave an excellent illustrated account of “*Donnington Castle – Newbury’s Iconic Ruin.*” Famous for the prolonged siege in the Civil War as a Royalist stronghold, it eventually surrendered in 1646, having had a long history since being founded by Sir Richard Adderbury in 1386.

In “*The Postal History of Hungerford,*” Dr. Hugh Pihlens gave a detailed coverage of the 500 years of this vital local service. Dr. Pihlens was a founder of the H.H.A. in 1979, and is a writer, archivist, and also creator of the impressive “virtual museum.” It was a most absorbing account of the 21 postmasters, buildings, post boxes, and “golden era” of the coaches, with many excellent photos.

Members look forward to the next talks: “*The Royal Berkshire Regiment in the First World War,*” by Mac MacIntyre, who has written an excellent book on the subject, and Col. Mike Cornwell, and lastly, “*Revolting Marlborough,*” by Nick Baxter.

In addition to the outstanding talks, which members have supported throughout the season, visits have been arranged to The Vyne, Stourhead, Mottisfont, and Romsey Abbey.

Daphne Priestley, Chairman, H.H.A

Newbury District Field Club

2016 began with the Club’s AGM and a new President. Michael Perkin stepped down after four years in the rôle and Phil Wood was elected in his place. Further changes saw Tony Higgott become Deputy President and Jane Burrell Hon Secretary. Dick Godfrey continues as Hon Treasurer. More new names were welcomed on to the committee, which now comprises the officers above plus Jeanne Scott, Jenny Peet and Kay Lipscombe. Particular thanks are due to outgoing committee members Michael Perkin, Ray Hopgood and Suzanne Fish for their contributions to the Club. The members also expressed their sadness at the death a few days before the meeting of committee member, Eileen Lambert, for many years the Club’s Lecture Secretary. After the AGM the outgoing President gave a short talk on *Berkshire Writers*.

Since the AGM members have been treated to excellent talks on *The Wharf, Newbury* (David Peacock), *The Battle of the Somme* (Phil Wood), *Lord Falkland* (Dave Stubbs), *The Bombing of Newbury* (David Clow), *Mediaeval Kintbury* (Margaret Yates) and *Newbury 365* (Nick Young).

Thoughts now turn to the summer’s big event - our annual History Day; this year it is on the theme of Speenhamland. For long a part of the town but not the borough, this northern section of Newbury has a fascinating history, notably being at the heart of the coaching trade along the Great West Road. We shall start with an Introduction to Speenhamland (David Peacock) before covering a range of topics: the Coaching Era

(Tony Higgott), the Pubs and Breweries (Phil Wood), a look at The Changing Faces of Speenhamland (Jane Burrell), the Speenhamland System (Phil Wood) and the works of the notable local architect James H Money (David Peacock).

The History Day event takes place at St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury from 10.00am to 4.30pm on Saturday 2nd July – doors open at 9:45pm for registration. Tickets may be purchased in advance (£10) from the Corn Exchange in Newbury <http://cornexchangenew.com> , or £12 on the door. More details on our website www.ndfc.org.uk

Phil Wood

Pangbourne Heritage Group

Our first meeting in the New Year was at our new venue, the Rosewood Hall of the Pangbourne Working Men's Club, Whitchurch Road. It was devoted to an informal exhibition of photos, postcards and maps from our Archives. Membership was up to standard with 3 new Members and much lively discussion about the exhibits. Future meetings will continue at Rosewood at the usual time of 7.30 pm on the second Wednesday in the month, with messages to members and publicity about any future changes.

What followed were three meetings about Pangbourne itself. Mike Hurst, from the Goring Gap Local History Society spoke at the February meeting on the subject of "*Goring's Wonderful Railway, the Great Western Railway from Pangbourne to Cholsey*". That section of the GWR, including Pangbourne Station, was opened on the 6th June, 1840, and the story came right up to the present day, attracting a good audience, including railway enthusiasts as well as regular members.

In March, Lyn Davies explored *Pangbourne's 41 Listed Buildings*. Bere Court, summer home of the Abbots of Reading, subsequently home of the Lords of the Manor, remodelled in the 17th and 18th centuries, was the first in the parish to be listed, in 1951 as a Grade II building, later upgraded by English Heritage to Grade I in their 1983 review of Listing. We then discussed the other 40 Listed Buildings in the parish, covering every century from the 17th to the present day, the most recent being a Fowl House, 1897 by Arnold Mitchell, built for Sir Benjamin Baker, as part of Bowden Green. We concluded with the latest form of listing, the so-called Local List, working with the West Berkshire Heritage Forum. A number of suggestions were offered for future listings.

At the April meeting Nick Brazil gave us the privilege of the world premiere of his video film on "*The Reconstruction of Whitchurch Bridge, 2013/2014*" between Pangbourne and Whitchurch, the fourth since the first in 1792. This was a fascinating 35-minute film of the removal of the old 1902 bridge, construction of a temporary foot bridge, and re-opening in September 2014, a little delayed by the floods. As a Grade II Listed building there had to be great care especially in restoring the original parapets as lattice girders. There were many astonishing scenes, such as

manoeuvring the massive girders through the Square, along Whitchurch Road, under the railway bridge, past Rosewood Hall, to the riverside. The film has been entered at the International Video & Film Festival in Hollywood, so we wish Nick success.

The programme will continue with talks at Members' Meetings on *Discovering family history* in May and *'How you use Archaeology to find out about where you live'* in June. Other work is in hand on researching the history of our shopping centre with a view to a future publication.

Lyn Davis

Project Purley

Our first meeting of the New Year was focused on people stories of the First World War. Three Project Purley members, Rita Denman, Janet Southall and Richard McDonald, talked about personal links to men who served in the First World War, though much of the information shared had to be dug up by painstaking research both here and across the Channel. In February Catherine Sampson shared her research into *The Canning family*, inspired by the family's dilapidated Georgian chest tomb in St Mary's churchyard. Catherine traced the family back to medieval Bristol where they were important cloth manufacturers and merchants, and showed the family's subsequent fall in wealth as they maintained their allegiance to the Catholic Church after the Reformation. Despite the challenging times the Cannings went on to produce one prime minister and were related by marriage to a further two and to the Royal family.

March's meeting began with the society's 34th AGM during which Catherine Sampson, Ann Betts and Marjorie Butler were re-elected as chairman, secretary and treasurer respectively. John Chapman then gave a short talk on *the archive material held by Project Purley*. Members have collected many photographs, press cuttings, documents and other ephemera to chart the history of Purley on Thames, and some was displayed for members to look at before and after the talk. John demonstrated the indexing system and database that he has put in place to identify the material, so that anyone looking for (for example) information on a street can look up the street name and identify all the information that we have stored. He also appealed for more help from members to archive the collection. In April, in a change to the previously advertised speaker, Catherine Sampson once again gave the talk but this time on *lesser known images of Purley*. She took the audience on a trip round Purley (and a bit across the borders) in a series of old photographs from the 1880s to the 1960s, with a few recent ones put in for comparison. The talk concluded with a few unattributed images in the hope that the collective memories of the audience may solve their location.

In recent months members of the society have been actively supporting Long Lane Primary School with its plans to celebrate its fiftieth birthday in late April and early May. Members will be present at an open day in early May to view the exhibition, during which they hope to collect more oral memories from former pupils and teachers and copies of more memorabilia. This summer we have outings planned to Sudeley Castle and Hughenden House. In June we once again host the Rain or

Shine Theatre Company, with a production of *a Midsummer Night's Dream*, and also hold our annual barbecue.

Catherine Sampson

History of Reading Society

Archbishop William Laud was the subject of the January talk. The speaker was Ian Lowry: he was a teacher of history and English literature and since retirement, a guide at Reading Museum.

William Laud was born in a house at Broad Street, Reading in 1573 to a wealthy clothier originally from Wokingham also named William. Baby William was baptized at St.Laurence's Church, where his father was a churchwarden. The font still exists and there is a memorial window to him. He was educated at Reading (Grammar) School which in those days was next door. In 1589 he would attend St.John's College, Oxford as a scholar to study theology and where he would spend the next 32 years of his life becoming chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1628. Later, St.John's College would establish at Reading today's university.

He was ordained a priest in 1601 and later, under the patronage of King Charles I, Laud's career in the church would flourish; he was ambitious and rose through the hierarchy of the church eventually to become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. During his episcopacy, Laud tried to reverse the Protestant religious reforms enacted during Queen Elizabeth I's reign, however, this policy made him many enemies among churchmen and parliamentarians and eventually, in 1643, he was found guilty of treason and executed by beheading at Whitehall, London.

As a surprise, at the close of the meeting Ian invited from the audience John Butler to show a silver memorial medal in his possession minted in the 1680s to commemorate William Laud which he recently bought at an auction.

Feeding Reading in the Two World Wars was the subject of the February talk the speaker was Mike Cooper. Mike is a well known public speaker on local and military history; after graduating from University of Reading he worked in the local library service and has published books about local history. On the eve of the First World War in 1914 Britain was a mostly urbanized industrial society with agriculture a relatively small part of the economy. 60% of the country's food was imported from the colonies which made it vulnerable to a sea blockade by an enemy. During the war many agricultural workers joined the armed forces leading to a severe labour shortage; the authorities had to take action and the Women's Land Army was formed; many were trained at Reading's University College. The government encouraged citizens to grow their own food. Public parks and school playingfields were requisitioned for the growing of food.

In 1916 food rationing was introduced and many basic food stuffs were affected: meat, butter, eggs, beer and tea for example. Meatless days were introduced and fish served as an alternative. In Reading communal kitchens were established; one at the

British School in Southampton Street served two thousand meals in its first couple of weeks. When the war ended in 1918 the British Government's food control measures had proved successful in keeping the country fed, unlike in Germany where there was widespread starvation and public unrest.

At the start of the Second World War in 1939 the first commodity to be rationed was petrol. In January 1940 many food stuffs would be included: bacon, butter and sugar for example. With the German invasion of Western Europe later that year the enemy was able to operate submarines (U-boats) from French Atlantic ports, this would cause severe disruption to Britain's imports of foods and raw materials.

Citizens were issued with ration books to buy food and the government established workers' restaurants to provide cheap, wholesome meals; three were opened in Reading, one, the People's Pantry in Friar Street was bombed in an air raid in 1943 with great loss of life. In the event of enemy action disrupting the town's food supply emergency feeding centres (mobile canteens) could be established to feed most of the population and they would be staffed by the Women's Voluntary Service. Mike concluded the talk stating that rationing continued for some items until 1954 ten years after the war ended.

In March after the Annual General Meeting was concluded the members were given a performance of *the Swing Riots* by volunteers from the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) in Reading. The MERL Players Company was formed in 2012 to entertain and educate children on aspects of rural life and local history. In 2013 the idea for public performances of the Swing Riots as part of an outreach programme to senior school pupils and community groups was realised.

During the summer of 1830 agricultural labourers in the south of England rebelled against their employers in a bid to improve living standards. The protests started in Kent and were caused by recent poor harvests, steep increases in the price of bread and the introduction of labour saving technology. The rioters were said to be led by a Captain Swing who in fact was a mythical figure.

The performance focused on the unrest in the Berkshire towns of Hungerford and Kintbury where the uprisings were lead by William Winterbourne. The tableau comprised re-enactments of conversations between the wives of labourers on the hardships suffered by their families because of high food prices and the unemployment caused by the introduction of threshing machines, local farmers recounting attacks on their farms by angry labourers and the testimonies of witnesses heard by magistrates. Between the acts accounts as reported in the Berkshire Mercury newspaper were read aloud.

The performance concluded with the trial of the ring leader William Winterbourne and his two co-conspirators for machine breaking and robbery for which they were all found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. Eventually, only Winterbourne was executed; the sentence was carried out at Reading Gaol on 29th December 1830

where a large crowd gathered to witness his execution.

At the Annual General Meeting in April it was announced to the members present that Sidney Gold would stand down as the Vice Chairman, however, he wishes to continue as a member of the committee.

Sean Duggan

Sandhurst Historical Society

As we had no meeting in December, 2016 started off with a talk by Mr. Nelson, a retired customs officer of some 40 years' experience of *Smuggling at Heathrow*. Customs officers work in teams, the head of which is known as Alpha 1 and they are deployed in various parts of the airport. Anything suspicious is reported back to Alpha 1. Relative information is passed on to the teams from the Police and MI5. Identities of people who buy tickets with cash or who take unusual flight routes are checked out. Soft top cases which appear to be hard come under scrutiny and profiles of people who come from different countries are taken note of. Sniffer dogs are used not only for detecting drugs but also for cash, tobacco and radioactive material too. The dogs that search for cash are all bitches!

Drugs are not only swallowed, concealed in clothing and suitcases but they can be found in wigs which have been sewn on to the traveller's head! Our speaker related many amusing stories of smugglers' ploys used to avoid detection and he has also written a book on his experiences.

Unfortunately our speaker for February was unable to attend but one of our members, Maurice Clark, kindly entertained us by reminiscing on *the old houses in Sandhurst*, most of which no longer exist.

March brought along *the Town Crier of Farnham*, Mr. Jones, who was dressed in full regalia.. His outfit was not only very colourful and expensive but very warm too, so he apologised for disrobing shortly after he arrived! The first town criers appeared in 1066. In the 18th century they had to be literate as part of their job involved reading newspapers to spread the news. News was also picked up from the incoming stage-coaches. Having been read in various places in the town the scrolls were then pinned to a post. Should a crier be abused it was punishable by death. Nowadays town criers have roles not unlike a mayor. The Liverpool town crier greets the liners when they come into port and the Blackpool town crier is an official taster for Boddington's beer! Competitions are held to elect a crier and their 'shouts' usually consist of a poem relevant to the occasion. There are also women criers and the world record for a 'shout' is held by an Irish woman at 126 decibels! There are around 700 town criers worldwide.

Janice Burlton

Shinfield & District Local History Society

Our December meeting was our Christmas Party during which one of our members, Barry Boulton, and his wife Carolyn gave an introductory talk on *researching family history*.

In January our AGM was followed by a return visit from Tony King who delivered his presentation on "*Vanished London*". As usual with Tony's presentations this was full of facts and well illustrated with paintings and old photographs, including W H Fox Talbot's 1843 photograph of Nelson's Column under construction, thought to be the world's first photograph of a city. The list of grand buildings lost to fire, bombing and development is long and includes Northumberland House (demolished 1874), Gore House (now the site of the Royal Albert Hall), Crystal Palace, Hotel Cecil (once the world's largest hotel, demolished 1930; now the site of Shell Mex House), Euston Station, Hungerford Market, Adelphi Terrace (demolished 1930s), the Coal Exchange (demolished 1962 for road widening), the Wool Exchange and the Baltic Exchange (bombed by IRA in 1992).

Our February meeting consisted of some general discussion on our current projects and other matters of interest followed by sorting through some old Parish Council papers prior to their being archived.

Our March meeting saw a return of Dr Margaret Simons who, this time, gave a talk on "*Home Front Reading, 1914-1918*". Her presentation, which was the result of over 2 years' research, covered the full period of WW1 and the impact on various aspects of Reading life. At the outbreak of war on 4th August 1914, the Royal Berkshire Regiment was quickly mobilised and horses required for military transportation were commandeered from local businesses, Simonds brewery providing 32 horses. The war rapidly had an impact on local businesses; working hours were reduced at Huntley and Palmers as import of raw materials became affected, local shopkeepers' trade declined while the Post Office had to work flat out to keep up with the extra official mail. Children's education was adversely affected by the war as the town took in refugees from Belgium and Serbia and evacuees from London while school places were reduced owing to schools being commandeered for use by the army or, later, as military hospitals. Local manufacturers turned to producing items for the war effort; Huntley and Palmers, for instance, manufactured artillery shells. As elsewhere in Britain, women in Reading took on jobs previously done by men; these included working in factories, driving trains and delivering post.

The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), passed 4 days after Britain entered the war, placed restrictions on what people could say or do with the aim of preventing release of any information that might be of interest to the enemy. The act introduced restrictions on opening hours of pubs which remained in force until 1988!

To encourage volunteers to join the army various recruitment events, including marching parades, were held in the town. The introduction of conscription in 1916 required men between the ages of 18 and 41 years to enlist unless in a reserved occupation vital to the war effort. Those who objected on grounds of conscience were put before a tribunal and, if found to have a genuine case, were assigned to alternative non-combatant service.

Wantage Hall became No.1 School of Military Aeronautics where all officer

cadets of the Royal Flying Corps received basic training. This included practising navigation and bomb aiming in a mock-up cockpit suspended from a zip wire. To provide more practical experience an aerodrome was established at Coley Park. Over the course of the war 33,000 flying personnel passed through training at Reading.

This talk provided a comprehensive account of life in Reading during WW1 and put this in the context of the national situation.

George Taylor.

Swallowfield Local History Society

By the time this Newsletter is published we will have welcomed back in April Tony Eaton who carries out in depth investigations into 'what actually happened'. This time he will have presented us with his latest entitled "*INVASION 1940 - WHAT IF?*" His research is always par excellence and we know we will have had a lively, thought provoking evening full of intrigue and revelations.

On 19th May we're welcoming back one of our favourite local speakers Mike Cooper. His knowledge and enthusiasm is transmitted throughout his presentations. This time he will be talking about: *The Abbey and the Castle: Reading in the Middle Ages* with updates on the latest developments to the Abbey site. Worked around two symbolic buildings, this introduction to mediaeval Reading looks at the growth of the town, and its relationship to the crown and the church from Domesday Book to Henry VIII'

About the speaker: Mike has had a lifelong interest in history, especially military and local history. Following a history degree at the University of Reading he worked as a librarian, with both the University and Reading Library. In addition to work on librarianship, he has had two books on the history of Reading published – *We Cannot Park on Both Sides* (1999) dealing with Reading volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, and *A Hamlet Called Harmour* (2001) about the Armour Road area of Tilehurst.

It's time for a day out and we're off to visit Milestones on 16th June. A trip to Milestones, Hampshire's living history museum in Basingstoke, brings the past to life. The museum is home to over 20,000 objects either made or used in Hampshire, and is a record of the county's social, industrial and transport history. We are looking forward to taking a trip back in time, with a walk through the late 1800s and 1900s streets equipped with shops, factories, a garage, houses, vintage vehicles, a Romany encampment and a Victorian showground - and we won't miss the Baverstoke Arms working pub!

On 21st July we will be welcoming Richard Marks to talk to us for the first time, we are so glad we have found another young man who has researched events and the history of our local area. "The railway has been an important part of the transport infrastructure of Reading since the Great Western Railway arrived in the town in 1840 but Victorian railway building has always been associated with massive social and economic upheaval and the destruction of property and homes. Was this also true in

Reading ? Richard Marks will look at how the railways arrived in Reading and what influence they really had in '*The Train Now Arriving...*'

Our full Programme for the rest of the year is on our Web Site www.slhsoc.org.uk New Members and visitors are always welcome, if a subject attracts your attention, just come along and join us for the evening. The Rose Room, Swallowfield Parish Hall, 7.45 for 8 pm. If you would like to know more about the History Society please contact either Ken Hussey (Chairman) on 0118 988 3650 or Maggie Uttley (Secretary) on 0118 988 2954 or email kcuttley@aol.com.

Maggie Uttley

Thatcham Historical Society

The Thatcham Historical Society has had a busy few months since the beginning of the year. The members enjoyed a social evening and raffle at the AGM in January, and the Committee paid tribute to the work which Dr Ray Asher has carried out in support of the Society, including several terms as Chair, with an Honorary Membership.

In February Peter Lavarack, one of the Committee, gave the third in a series of talks on the *Boer War*. This was a fascinating end to a series of talks which approached the war from a completely different perspective, and gave background and substance to a period of history usually ignored in British schools. Our speaker in March was Peter Halman, whose talk on *the Royal, and public parks of Britain*, delivered with a wealth of information on the formation of the parks and their use and purpose was fascinating, and well illustrated.

In April Steve Masters spoke about *Anna Munro: A Life Forgotten*. Anna Munro was a women's rights activist. More than a suffragette she worked for and supported women's rights throughout her life, retiring to Padworth and dying there in 1962.

Meetings are held on Monday evenings in the Sixth Form block at Kennet School, Stoney Lane, Thatcham, starting at 7.30pm and followed by refreshments. Members pay £10 for the year, but as a special concession, any member joining in April or after will pay £6 for the final six meetings of the year. Visitors pay £2 per meeting.

<http://www.thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk/events>

Sue Ellis

Twyford and Ruscombe Local History Society

Our Christmas party was a great success, and this was followed in January by another visit from Graham Horn, who on that occasion spoke to us about '*Portsmouth and Southampton - Maritime Contrast*': and very interesting the history of those towns proved to be. With some excellent slides Graham described how Portsmouth became linked with the Royal Navy, whilst Southampton's role was linked with trade: and today, with its double high tide, ever-larger ships are able to gain access to the port-enabling it to specialise as a cruise terminal and container port.

Our February talk was to have been ‘*Animal Heroes and Villains*’, but unfortunately Mr Edward Dixon was unable to come to our meeting. Instead, one of our members - Sue Goddard, stepped in, and gave us a splendid talk entitled ‘*Community Matters in Twyford*’. Sue, who sadly is leaving Twyford, has been a very active member of the Twyford Village Partnership, and was very involved in the production of a Parish Plan which would create a vision for Twyford in 2020. An enormous amount of work was involved in the production of this Plan (finalised in 2010), and in implementing many of the 116 Actions which it contained, though some have still to be achieved.

Needless to say, Sue had a very appreciative and interested audience, and it is with great sadness that we have to say good-bye to her.

Our 39th AGM took place on 14th March 2016, with James Fort in the Chair.

Apologies for absence were received; and the Minutes of the 2015 AGM were read and approved. Lesley Jarvis, Treasurer, presented a very satisfactory report, and it was agreed that membership rates should remain unchanged. Neil Patchin was re-elected as Auditor. Audrey Curtis, Secretary, reviewed the year’s activities; and it was announced that she had agreed to continue to arrange the speakers whilst Peter Burrows would take the Minutes.

In his Chairman’s report, James Fort gave special thanks to Audrey, and to all the members of the Management Committee who had worked hard to make the Society a success. In the absence of Pauline Humphreys, Peter Burrows presented the Editorial Report, and members were delighted to learn that Pauline had agreed to take over the position of President in place of John Moule. The formal meeting closed at 8.30pm., after which members enjoyed a glass of wine and a chance to chat.

Denise Wilkin

Wargrave Local History Society

In January, Phil Davis give an outstanding presentation entitled *Hennerton Hexagon*, in which he related the stories of 6 people who had been associated with the property. He began with Zachary Allnutt, (1775 – 1856), a Henley solicitor and the clerk to the Thames Navigation Commissioners who farmed 40 acres for lavender. Next was Charles Frederick Johnson, one of the original members of the Stock Exchange, who bought the land in July 1815 and engaged the architect C H Latham to “design him a house at Hennerton” – apparently the first mention of the name in the area. The next owner was, John William Rhodes (a Yorkshire industrialist). Phil told interesting, and tragic, tales of several of the Rhodes family. The last of the six Hennerton people was an American serviceman who had been there during WW2. All that was known was that he was called Caruso and Phil was able to identify which of the 8.5 million soldiers in the US Army enlistment records he was!

Ann Griffin’s presentation in February was *Large, Dark and Handsome*, about

the Revd James Edward Austen-Leigh and the building of St Peter's Church in Knowl Hill. The story was closely tied to that of Jane Austen, so Ann outlined their family history – the title being Jane's description of James Edward. Although educated at Exeter College, Oxford, he did not wish to follow his father into the church. However, coming to live in Wargrave, and helping the vicar, it was suggested that he pursue the "occupation for which he had trained". He became the first vicar of Knowl Hill, later moving to Bray, and in 1870 wrote "A Memoir of Jane Austen" - the book that brought Jane's work to "the nation's notice".

In March, following the AGM, John Fryer delighted the meeting by sharing some of his *Memories of people and events from Wargrave*, from the pre-war period through to the 1950s. With tales of boating up the Loddon, the testing of high speed boats for the RAF on the River Thames, and various village personalities, he recalled a time when it was safe to walk from the village to Henley, or to leave a baby in its pram outside a village shop – the High Street then including such as fishmonger, butcher, tobacconist and hairdresser, etc – the last mentioned being Charlie Lunn's, where he probably bought his first cigarettes, as well as having his hair cut.

Our next meeting is on May 10th when Valerie Alasia will be talking about *Henley Workhouse – the Story of Townlands*

Our meetings start at 8 pm in the meeting room at the Old Pavilion on the Recreation Ground. Details of our future programme can be found at <http://www.blha.org.uk/diary-dates/> or see the Society's website www.wargravehistory.org.uk/ or contact me, Peter Delaney, on 0118 940 3121, for more information about the Society.

Peter Delaney

Museums and Libraries

Abingdon County Hall Museum

The town of Abingdon was granted Borough status in 1556, beginning an exciting new chapter in its civic history. The Corporation replaced the abbey and medieval guilds in administrative duties, and oversaw the funding of the County Hall's construction, the conversion of the Medieval St. John's Hospital into the Magistrates' Court and Council Chamber. The Attic exhibition displays the wonderful collection of silverware that was gradually assembled since the Charter was granted, representing the Town's eclectic history and a proud tradition of civic responsibility.

Please note there are 86 steps to the attic gallery. There are landings and chairs available at intervals.

Reading Local Studies Library

This is the last article I shall write for the newsletter. I have enjoyed my five years looking after the Local Studies collection at Reading Central Library. But with 11.5 redundancies on the way at Reading Libraries, I felt it was time to retire. I shall

compile the Berkshire Bibliography for the last time in May. Then I will finish what work I can : a never-ending task in local history then leave at the end of the month.

In the last few months, the Central Library has had small exhibitions on William Stables, the Twyford author who wrote adventure stories for the *Boys Own Paper*, and on John Snare and his connection with the Velasquez portrait of Charles I. We have hosted two excellent talks by Paul Lacey on Smith's coaches, and by the Trooper Potts Trust on their work.

Reading is holding a Year of Culture in 2016 with a different theme each month, and May's theme is The Story of Reading. Libraries will be hosting various talks.

Ann Smith

Reading Museum

Gallery Tours - Every Saturday. Join a trained volunteer for an introductory tour of the galleries and a personal insight into the museum's collection. Each tour guide gives a different tour and will pick out items that fascinate them.

All ages, 2.30pm – 3.15pm (approx.) Donations welcome, drop in.

Bayeux Tapestry Tours - Every Saturday. Enjoy a guided tour of the famous full-size facsimile Tapestry – no need to book.

On Track - Reading's Railways, Past, Present and Future - A major exhibition starting 21st May

Slough Library

Thank you for your recent support of our local history talk on Victorian Broadmoor. There was a good turn out for a very interesting talk. There are two more events your groups may be interested in: an author talk with Gillian Slovo and a talk by local historian Grant Masom.

Slough Library is hosting an author talk with Gillian Slovo as part of CityRead London, as her new book "*Ten Days*" is the book the celebrations are centred round this year. The talk is on Monday 4th April at 11am at Slough Library.

Ten Days is a gripping novel from Orange Prize-shortlisted author Gillian Slovo influenced by research for her play *The Riots* (2011). Told through the shifting perspectives of three main characters - the newly appointed Police Chief, the Home Secretary and Cathy Mason, a resident on the estate due to be demolished - *Ten Days* is about what happens when politics, policing and the hard realities of living in London collide. Free copies of the book will be available at the event, and in advance by request (email me to arrange pick up on gaby.koenig@slough.gov.uk).

Grant Masom will be visiting Slough Library on Thursday 7 April at 2pm to talk about Slough between the wars and will be covering aspects such as jobs, homes, migration and people.

Museum of English Rural Life

The Museum galleries and garden are **closed** until Summer 2016 for work on our exciting Heritage Lottery funded redevelopment project, We are running some events and activities related to the redevelopment, and others inspired by the MERL archives and library, and the University's Special Collections, which will remain open throughout the redevelopment.

Vale and Downland Museum

10 – 28 May 2016 **Landscape – An artweeks exhibition by Martyn James Bull**

In the Upper Gallery - Martyn James Bull is a writer and filmmaker as well as a talented painter.

Opportunities

For talks, walks, seminars and visits

3rd May - Southcote: a Historical Introduction

Southcote Library 10.30 am - Very little has been written on the history of the Southcote area. This free talk by Mike Cooper covers the area from the first signs of human occupation to the building of the post war estate.

5th May - The Story of Amelia Dyer

Reading Central Library 7.30 pm - Local author Angela Buckley talks about Reading's serial killer of babies.

Tickets £4/£3 for library members. E mail libraryevents@reading.gov.uk

11th May - History of Tilehurst

Tilehurst Library (Reading) 7.30 pm - Historian Mike Cooper talks about the development of Tilehurst from village to suburb. Tickets as above (5th May).

17 May - West Berkshire Heritage Forum

AGM & HERITAGE WORKSHOP

A very short AGM will be followed by a workshop where groups will discuss and debate topics related to the ways the forum could help promote West Berkshire's rich historical heritage. Venue: Shaw House, admission free, Contact Phil Wood if you want more details.

18th May - The Train Now Arriving

Battle Library (Reading) 7.30 pm The Great Western Railway reached Reading in 1840. What impact did it have on the town? A talk by Richard Marks. Tickets as above. (5th May)

19th May - The Mansion House: its History and Occupants

Battle Library 10.30 am A free talk by Katie Amos about the history of the big house in Prospect Park.

Reading Before Reading

Chalkboard Café, Palmer Park (Reading) 6.30 pm A talk by Mike Cooper on the early history of Reading from the Ice Age to the Romans.

26th May - Reading in the 1970s

Central Library 7.30 pm - The 1970s was the decade of demolition and transformation in Reading. Ann Smith looks at the way new roads, buildings and The Butts shopping centre changed the town to the place we know today. Tickets as above (5th May) .

Thursday 9 June - The unseen National Trust

A lunch time talk by John McGuinness at Maidenhead Heritage Centre starts 12:45

1st July - 1st Somme Talk

Catastrophe 1914: Europe Goes to War.

Sir Max Hastings

The first of five talks on WW1 topics to be held in the Town Hall to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme. Sir Max will talk on the lead up to war and its opening months – subject of his best-selling book of the same title.

Venue: Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall, 6.45 for 7.00pm. Ticket £5 from the Town Hall Reception Desk (office hours) A Series Ticket for all five WW1 talks is available for £20 - Town Hall Reception Desk.

2nd July - Speenhamland

NEWBURY DISTRICT FIELD CLUB'S 4TH ANNUAL HISTORY DAY

A day of talks with a common theme: The History of Speenhamland.

Local historians Jane Burrell, Tony Higgott, David Peacock and Phil Wood will talk on a variety of topics: Speenhamland's historic relationship with Newbury; the changing faces of Speenhamland's buildings over the years; the boom years of the Coaching Era; the area's pubs and breweries; the much maligned Speenhamland System; and James H Money a leading local architect responsible for many local landmark buildings.

Tickets £10 available from the Newbury Corn Exchange Box Office.

8th July - 2nd Somme Talk

The Battle of the Somme: Disaster or Victory? Phil Wood

Phil Wood (President of the Field Club and the man behind the Newbury Remembers project) will tell the story of the Battle of the Somme – to some the greatest military disaster in Britain's history, to others one of Britain's greatest victories.

Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall, 6.45 for 7.00pm. Ticket £5 from the Town Hall Reception Desk (office hours)

15th July - 3rd Somme Talk

Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig: Hero or Villain?

Peter Hart

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum, a popular and entertaining speaker on numerous WW1 topics (as well as a best-selling author with numerous WW1 titles to his name). His topic will be the controversial Commander in Chief of the British Empire's forces on the Western Front. Loathed by some, admired by others, Haig remains a controversial figure to this day.

Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall, 6.45 for 7.00pm. Ticket £5 from the Town Hall Reception Desk (office hours)

22nd July - 4th Somme Talk

The War Poets of the Somme. Jane Burrell

The Great War had a lasting impact on British poetry, names like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon are among the best known British poets. Both were present at the Battle of the Somme, as were other notable poets, some of whom did not survive. Jane Burrell (Field Club Secretary and past Curator of West Berkshire Museum) will look at the poets who experienced the battle, how it affected them and the poetry they wrote.

Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall, 6.45 for 7.00pm. Ticket £5 from the Town Hall Reception Desk (office hours)

29th July - 5th Somme talk

WW1 Stained Glass Around Newbury by Dr David Peacock

David Peacock, author of The Story of Newbury, and well known local historian, will look at the influence of WW1 on stained glass in the Newbury area.

Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall, 6.45 for 7.00pm. Ticket £5 from the Town Hall Reception Desk (office hours)

History Societies

- Arborfield Local History Society:** Secretary Tina Kemp, Kenneys Farm, Maggs Green, Arborfield RG2 9JZ [tina@geoffkemp.force.co.uk]
- Berkshire Archaeological Society:** Andrew Hutt, 19, Challenor Close, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 4UJ [info@berksarch.co.uk]
- Berkshire Family History Society:** Research Centre, Yeomanry House, Castle Hill, Reading, RG1 7TJ [www.berksfhs.org.uk]
- Berkshire Industrial Archaeological Group:** Secretary, Peter Trout, 7 West Chiltern, Woodcote, Reading, RG8 OSG or Mr. Weber, [bentwebershops@waitrose.com]
- Berkshire Record Society,** Secretary Margaret Simons, 80 Reeds Ave, Earley, Reading RG6 5SR [margaretsimons@hotmail.co.uk]
- Blewbury Local History Group:** Audrey Long, Spring Cottage, Church Road, Blewbury, Oxon, OX11 9PY tel 01235 850427 [audrey.long@waitrose.com]
- Bracknell & District Local Historical Society:** Geoffrey Moss, 31 Huntsman's Meadow, Ascot, SL5 7PF [MossSandalwood@aol.com]
- Burnham Historians:** Mary Bentley, 38 Conway Road, Taplow, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 0LD tel 01628 665932 [burnhamhistorians@btinternet.com]
- Cox Green Local History Group:** Pat Barlow, 29 Bissley Drive, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 3UX. tel 01628 823890 weekends only. [alan.barlow2@btinternet.com]
- East Garston Local History Society:** Jonathan Haw, Goldhill House, Front Street, East Garston, Hungerford, RG17 7EU [jonathanhaw@btopenworld.com]
- East Ilsley Local History Society:** Sue Burnay, White Hollow, High St, E.Ilsley, Berks RG20 7LE tel 01635 281308 [info@eastilsleyhistory.com] [www.eastilsleyhistory.com]
- Eton Wick Local History Group:** Teresa Stanton, 35 Eton Wick Road, Eton Wick, Windsor, SL4 6LU tel 01753 860591 [teresa.stanton@talktalk.net] [www.etonwickhistory.co.uk]
- Finchampstead Society:** Mohan Banerji, 3 Tanglewood, Finchampstead, Berks, RG40 3PR tel 0118 9730479.
- Goring Gap Local History Society:** Janet Hurst, 6 Nun's Acre, Goring on Thames, Reading, Berks RG8 9BE tel 01491 871022 [goringgaphistory@gmail.com] [www.goringgaphistory.org.uk]
- The Hanneys Local History Society:** Ann Fewins, 'Lilac Cottage', East Hanney, Wantage, OX12 0HX. tel 01235 868372 [annfewins@beeb.net]
- The History of Reading Society:** Vicki Chesterman, 7 Norman Road, Caversham RG4 5JN [vickichesterman@yahoo.co.uk] [www.historyofreadingsociety.org.uk]
- Hungerford Historical Association: Secretary:** Secretary Mark Martin, 23 Fairview Road, Hungerford RG17 0BP. Tel: 01488 682932. [mandm.martin21@btinternet.com] [www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk]
- Longworth & District History Society:** Pam Woodward, 22 Cherrytree Close, Southmoor, Abingdon, OX13 5BE. tel 01865 820500 [prwoodward@btinternet.com] [http://www.longworth-district-history-society.org.uk/]
- Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society:** Brian Madge, 11 Boulters Court, Maidenhead, SL6 8TH [bandgmadge@btinternet.com]
- Mid Thames Archaeological & Historical Society:** Jane Wall, 143 Vine Road, Stoke Poges, SL2 4DH [sec.mtchs@yahoo.co.uk]
- Mortimer Local History Group:** Mrs Janet Munson, The Laurels, Ravensworth Road, Mortimer, RG7 3UD [munsonsinmortimer@yahoo.co.uk]
- Newbury District Field Club:** Ray Hopgood, 23 Lipscombe Close, Newbury, RG14 5JW [secretary@ndfc.org.uk]

Oxfordshire Family History Society: Wendy Archer, The Old Nursery, Pump Lane, Marlow, SL7 3RS [chairman@ofhs.org.uk]

Pangbourne Heritage Group: Lyn Davies, 1 Hartslock Court, Pangbourne, RG8 7BJ [lynndaw87@aol.com]

Project Purley: Catherine Sampson, 32 Waterside Drive, Purley on Thames, Berks, RG8 8AQ tel 0118 9422 255 [chairman@project-purley.eu] [www.project-purley.eu]

Sandhurst Historical Society: Janice Burlton, 16 Scotland Hill, Sandhurst, Berks GU47 8JR tel 01252 872504 [janiceburlton@hotmail.co.uk] [www.sandhurst-historical-society.org]

Shinfield & District Local History Society: Ann Young, 'Roselyn', School Green, Shinfield, Reading, Berks RG2 9EH. tel 0118 9882120. Reporter George Taylor [georgetaylor29@btinternet.com]

Sonning & Sonning Eye History Society: Diana Coulter, Red House Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning, Berks, RG4 6UF tel 0118 9692132 [diana.coulter@orange.net]

Stanford in the Vale & District Local History Society: Philip Morris, 71 Van Diemens, Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon, Oxon, SN7 8HW tel 01367 710285

Swallowfield Local History Society: Ken Hussey, Kimberley, Swallowfield RG7 1QX [www.slhsoc.org.uk]

Tadley Local History Society: 5 Church Road, Pamber Heath, Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 3DP [www.tadshistory.com]

Thatcham Historical Society: Alf Wheeler, 22 Park Lane, Thatcham, RG18 3PJ 01635 863536 [enquiries@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk] [www.thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk]

Theale Local History Society: Graham Reeves, 52 Parkers Corner, Englefield, RG7 5JR [thealehistory@aol.com]

Twyford & Ruscombe Local History Society: Audrey Curtis, 39 New Road, Ruscombe RG10 9LN tel 0118 9343260 [audreycurt@googlemail.com] reporter Denise Wilkin

Wargrave Local History Society: Peter Delaney, 6 East View Close, Wargrave, Berks, RG10 8BJ tel 0118 9403121 [secretary@wargravehistory.co.uk] [www.wargravehistory.org.uk]

Windsor Local History Group: Sue Ashley, 49 York Avenue, Windsor, SL4 3PA [nutritionasshley@hotmail.com] [www.windsorhistory.org.uk]

Friends of Windsor and Royal Borough Museum: Malcolm Lock, 1 Duncannon Crescent, Windsor, SL4 4YP [malcolmlock@hotmail.com] [www.windsormuseumappeal.org.uk]

Wokingham History Group: Trevor Ottlewski, Uani, Holly Bush Ride, Wokingham, Berks tel 01344 775920.

Would you all please check these entries and let us know of any changes. The entry should show:-

The name, postal address and e-mail address for formal correspondence with the society and optionally a telephone contact number.

Your website url (if you have one)

Optionally the name and e-mail address of the person who will send in reports of your society's activities (if different from official contact)

e-mail changes and corrections to membership@blha.org.uk

Archives, Libraries & Museums

Abingdon Library: The Charter, Abingdon, OX14 3LY. tel 01235 520374
[abingdon_library@yahoo.co.uk]

Allen County Public Library: Genealogy, PO Box 2270, Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA tel 001 468 012270 [www.genealogycenter.org]

Berkshire Record Office: 9 Coley Avenue, Reading, RG1 6AF tel 0118 901 5132
[www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk] [arch@reading.gov.uk]

Bracknell Library Local Studies: Hue Lewis, Town Square, Bracknell, RG12 1BH. tel 01344 352400 [bracknell.library@bracknell-forest.gov.uk]

Centre for Oxfordshire Studies: Helen Drury, Central Library, Westgate, Oxford, OX1 1DJ tel 01865 815741 [enquiries@oxst.demon.uk]

Eton College Library: Eton College, Windsor, SL4 6DB [archivist@etoncollege.org.uk]

Guildhall Library: Andrew Harvey, Principal Library Assistant Printed Books, Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London EC2V 7HH. [Andrew.Harvey@cityoflondon.gov.uk]
[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/guildhalllibrary]

Hungerford Virtual Museum: – [www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk]

Maidenhead Heritage Trust: Fran Edwards, 18 Park Street, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 1SL.
[administration@mhc1.demon.co.uk]

Maidenhead & Windsor Local Studies Library: Chris Atkins, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1QU tel 01628 796981 [chris.atkins@rbwm.gov.uk]

Newbury Reference Library: Fiona Davies, Newbury Central Library, The Wharf, Newbury, RG14 5AU tel 01635 519900

Reading Central Library: Local Studies Librarian, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ tel 0118 9015965

Reading Museum Services: The Curator, Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading, RG1 1QH. tel 0118 9399800 [www.readingmuseum.org.uk]

Reading University Library: Val Davis, Library Assistant, PO Box 223, Whiteknights, RG6 6AE. tel 0118 378 8785 [v.j.davis@reading.ac.uk]

Museum of English Rural Life: The University of Reading, Redlands Road, Reading, RG1 5EX. tel 0118 378 8660 fax: 0118 378 5632 [merl@reading.ac.uk] [www.merl.org.uk]

Windsor & Royal Borough Museum: The Guildhall, Windsor, SL4 1LR. tel 01628 796846
[museum.collections@rbwm.gov.uk] [www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/museum_index.htm]

Slough Library Local Studies: Slough Library, High Street, Slough, SL1 1EA. tel 01753 787511 [library@slough.gov.uk] [www.slough.gov.uk/libraries]

Slough Museum: The Curve, William Street, Slough, SL1 1XY tel 01753 526422
[info@sloughmuseum.co.uk]

Vale & Downland Museum: Dorothy Burrows, Church Street, Wantage, OX12 8BL tel 01235-771447 [vale.downland@gmail.com] [www.wantage-museum.com]

West Berkshire Museum: The Wharf, Newbury, RG14 4AU [museum@westberks.gov.uk]

Wokingham Library Local Studies: Denmark Street, Wokingham, RG40 2BB. tel 0118 9781368

Berkshire Local History Association

Registered Charity 1097355

President: **Professor E J T Collins**

Vice-Presidents:- **Brian Boulter, Joan Dils,
Dr Margaret Yates**

Officers

Chairman **David Cliffe**

1 Priest Hill, Caversham, Reading RG4 7RZ
tel: 0118-948-3354,
e-mail chairman@blha.org.uk

Treasurer **Dr David Lewis ACA**

5 Gloucester Place, Windsor, Berks SL4 2AJ
tel 01753-864935,
e-mail treasurer @blha.org.uk

Secretary **Ann McCormack**

4 Silwood Close, Ascot, Berks SL5 7DX
e-mail secretary@blha.org.uk

Committee Members

Dr Jonathan Brown (Journal Editor)

Sue Burnay (Berkshire Bibliography)

John Chapman (Newsletter Editor)

Amanda Harvey (Membership Secretary)

Dave Osborne (Web Designer)

Dr Margaret Simons (Newsletter Distributor)

Elias Kupfermann

Dr David Axford

Membership

Berkshire Local History Association exists to provide a meeting place for all those interested in the history and heritage of the Royal County of Berkshire. We cover the areas of Berkshire both before and after the 1974 review of local government. We are a registered charity.

We have three classes of membership

Institutional - for institutions, including libraries, archives and museums

Society - for local history and similar societies

Individual - for individual or couples living at the same address

We publish a **Journal** (Berkshire Old and New) once a year containing detailed articles on Berkshire's past - all members get one copy

We publish a **newsletter** three times a year in January, May and September and you can opt for a hard copy version by post or an electronic version by e-mail

We hold an **Annual General Meeting** in Spring each year with an exhibition and followed by a **Presidential Lecture**

We usually hold a **Day School** in the autumn with a number of eminent speakers

We organise **day trips** to visit archives and places of interest (usually with privileged access to material)

We award a number of **prizes** to authors of articles and students at the University.

We offer **grants** to assist authors to publish their results.

We maintain a **website** to keep you up-to-date with society activities [www.blha.org.uk]

We maintain a **Bibliography** of publications held in our public libraries relating to the history of Berkshire

We work with a variety of organisations to protect and document the heritage of Berkshire

Membership fees

The rates for 2014 are:-

	version of newsletter		no of copies	
	electronic	hard copy	Journal	Newsletter
Institutional	£18.00	£20.00	2	3
Society	£18.00	£20.00	2	3
Individual and Family	£9.00.	£12.00	1	1

A surcharge of £2 will also be levied on those who opt to pay by cheque.

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary membership@blha.org.uk

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Forthcoming Events

see also Opportunities Pages 22-24

21st May - **Railway exhibition** at Reading Museum opens (see page 21)

19th June - **Summer Garden Party** in Forbury Gardens, Reading (see page 8)

2nd July - **History Day** at St Nicolas Church Newbury (see page 11)

8th-11th September - **Heritage Open Days** - watch out for local announcements

We do not list meetings of our local societies, but see our website www.blha.org.uk

Next Newsletter

The next Newsletter is due to be published in September 2016.

The DEADLINE for copy is 15th August 2016 - preferably we would like to have it much earlier. To avoid some of the problems we have had with this edition could you please address e-mails to newsletter@blha.org.uk and copy it to j.chapman458@btinternet.com