



BERKHAMSTED LOCAL HISTORY AND MUSEUM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 803417

Founded 1950 as Berkhamsted & District Local History Society

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2009

Society Matters A number of you will have been aware that Les Mitchell has been very ill in hospital. I am pleased to be able to report that he is making good progress and complete with three new heart valves and a pacemaker is now at home again. We hope to see him at meetings again before very long.

Summer Outings Two very successful outings have already taken place, the first in May to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and, for those who wished, afterwards to the Museum of Garden History. In June we were guests of the Sarratt Local History Society, enjoying an interesting guided tour of the village finishing with tea in the Chairman's garden and the opportunity to see the Great Book of Sarratt. Fortunately the rain held off until we left the village. The outing for August is scheduled to take place on 15th August when there will be a walk along the Wendover Arm to see some of the restoration work being carried out by the Wendover Trust. Final details from Ken Wallis, 877592

Forthcoming Programme The new season's programme is enclosed. Do remember we are always willing to receive your comments or your suggestions for new topics, you would like to have included, or good speakers you have heard elsewhere. The season opens on 9th September when we welcome Victor Ludlow of the Signals Museum, who will give a talk entitled 'Flags, Feathers and Further Methods of Communication.' This takes place, as usual at 8pm in the Civic Centre, Berkhamsted.

Castle Matters The Castle Visitor Room opened for the Easter weekend and then for the summer season from 1st May until 27th September. I am very grateful to Brian Norris for taking over the organisation of the rota. Thank you to the many who have acted as stewards. Your help is much appreciated. If there are any other members who would be willing to act as stewards in the future please do let me know. We have had a steady number of visitors to the Visitors Room, averaging around 100 every weekend. We have had a number of group visits, for which we have provided guided tours. These range from Nursery children, to a special needs group from Milton Keynes College. In conjunction with the Chiltern Conservation Board we have taken part in 'A Walk Back in Time', providing a guided tour of the Castle and a tour of some of the historic sites of the town on four occasions during the summer. I am grateful for the assistance of Ken Wallis, Jimmie Honour and John Waller in helping me with the guided tours.

Percy Birtchnell Memorial Prize 2009 The topic for this year's prize, awarded each year to two Year 4 pupils at Victoria School, was 'Berkhamsted in World War II'. This year, the eighth year we have run the competition, attracted a large number of entries, 28 in all. The two prizes were awarded to Harvey Allsop, for 'Berkhamsted in World War II' and Maddie Bentley for 'Nursing in Berkhamsted 1939-1946'. Adam Hawkswood and Cara Wardle were Very Highly Commended and Emily Baxter, Olivia Beadle, Macie Dell, Ellie Lawson, Polly Maxted, William Oldman, Adam Robinson and Rhianna Williams were Highly Commended.

Help in the Museum Store Many of you will be aware that in the last two years we have lost several members who helped regularly in the Museum Store. Our Society has a very large collection of documents and artefacts, some of which still need to be accessioned and entered on the MODES system. I am seeking volunteers from among our members who would be prepared to help, preferably on a regular basis. We are currently carrying out an audit of our Collection, a requirement for the museum accreditation. For more details please contact me on 865158 or by e mail Ksherw9100@aol.com

Foundling Voices Isobel Aptaker, the Museum Curator, and I are on the steering committee for this exciting project, set up as a result of lottery funding and based at the Foundling Museum in London. An important part of the project is the recording of memories of former foundlings who were at the hospital either in Redhill or in Berkhamsted. Help will be needed with transcribing and video recording and with other aspects of this project. Any members who have memories of their schooldays with pupils of the Foundling Hospital would be welcome to contribute. For further details please contact me.

DHT Matters Work is proceeding with the initial stages of the lottery bid for money to refurbish the Museum Store to gain more exhibition space and extend the possibilities for education in the community. In connection with the Festival of Archaeology DHT is staging two events, in Tring Library on 25th July and in Berkhamsted Library on 1st August, both 10.30-1.30. Contact Nina Bevan on 879525 for further details.

Heritage Open Days 12th-13th September These include some new sites in addition to those of former years. Full details are enclosed. After we had submitted our entries the Civic Trust, under whose auspices the HODs are held, went into administration in April and for a while this year's HODs were in jeopardy. Their future has now been assured as their organisation has been taken over by English Heritage.

The 'Story of Sunnyside' and other publications Many of you may have visited the recent exhibition staged in connection with the centenary of the consecration of the present Sunnyside Church. Copies of the book, *'The Story of Sunnyside'* are available from me, price £10. There are still a few copies remaining of Birtchnell's *Bygone Berkhamsted*, Nash's *Reminiscences of Berkhamsted* and Eric Meadow's *Gateway to the Chilterns*, all at reduced prices. Those of you familiar with Paul Remfry's book on Berkhamsted Castle may be interested to know that he is currently working on an updated version. I will keep you posted of developments.

Forthcoming Exhibition 2010 is the 60th Anniversary of the founding of our Society as the Berkhamsted & District Local History Society. In this connection we are planning to hold an exhibition entitled *'60 Years of Preserving History'* from 29th June-3rd July 2010. Preliminary work has already started.

Graham Greene International Festival Your attention is drawn to a talk on Friday October 2nd entitled *The Other Greenes*, by Jeremy Lewis, which may be of interest to some. Details are enclosed.

Age Concern, Dacorum is planning a sponsored walk starting and finishing at Berkhamsted Castle in the Spring of 2010. Our Society has been asked to supply historic information for the various sites on route. There will be three levels of walks, giving wheelchair and battery car users also the opportunity to participate.

New Lodge Development This is an important site, which at present provides a pleasant rural entrance to this end of the town. The latest planning application has been turned down by Dacorum Borough Council. The residents of the eastern end of the town especially those of Bank Mill Lane are anxious that an attractive 'gateway' to this end of the town is provided so far as possible and have approached the History Society for support and suggestions as to how this can best be achieved. I would welcome opinions and suggestions. The earlier Hall and its extensive grounds and the presence of New Lodge, a dower house to Ashlyns Hall, have meant that this end of the town has until now escaped the urbanisation of the western end of our town.

Acquisition We have just received as a donation, via Tring Natural History Museum, a number of Wellcome 1970s posters by Frank Judge, a Berkhamsted artist who worked at Wellcome. They highlight various diseases affecting animals and were probably produced for advertising to farmers, encouraging them to purchase Wellcome products to treat the diseases. They are an interesting addition to the Society's Cooper/Wellcome archive.

I wish you all a pleasant summer and look forward to seeing you again on September 9th, if not before.

Jenny Sherwood, July 2009