



# Henley Archaeological & Historical Group

**NEWS-  
LETTER  
NO. 132  
November  
2014**

## **Chairman's Introduction:**

This is an SOS for new HAHG officers to be elected at the AGM on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both the Hon Secretary and Chairman have come to the end of their term of office so new blood is needed for your Committee to continue the thriving activities underway. So please consider helping out as follows:

HONORARY SECRETARY is sought to cover the following:

Assist Chairman in all matters to do with the affairs of the Group;

Prepare agendas for committee meetings, ensure the circulation and tabling of all relevant papers, take notes and circulate minutes to committee members before the next meeting.

Be responsible for the organization of the AGM, including the circulation of the agenda and any necessary supporting papers, in liaison with the Treasurer and other relevant committee members, keeping the minutes, elections of committee members, advise on short talks, ensure venue is available and ready & all necessary equipment present and attend to any other pertinent matters. Dealing with members' and general enquiries from the public and other Interest Groups; receiving information from other Groups for assessment and distribution to members.

CHAIRMAN is sought and shall:

Be responsible for the smooth running of the Group;

Act as Chair for committee, monthly and general meetings;

Cast deciding votes on committee matters on which a vote is required;

Facilitate and monitor membership of and, where necessary, assist in the liaison with organizations closely associated with the Group's activities. Provide the introduction to the Newsletters. Act as Journal editor.

Nomination forms for ordinary committee members as well as the officer posts are included with this newsletter.

Valerie Alasia

**AGM** to be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December in the Barn at 7.45 p.m. followed by brief members' contributions on historical or archaeological subjects;

Paul Smythe on Army Uniform;

Viv Greenwood on Humphrey Gainsborough;

Ruth Gibson on Diocletian's Palace Split;

John Cave on World War I

**A reminder from our membership secretary. The annual subscriptions are now overdue. Please pay or you will not be able to vote at the AGM**

**First three Lectures in 2015**

<b>6<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b>	Hazel Williams	‘Gatehampton Roman Villa’
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015</b>	Ruth Gibson	‘ Henley and its changing relationship with the Thames’
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015</b>	Alastair Lack	‘The History of Oxford University’

**All lectures are held at 7.45 p.m. in the old ‘Kings Arms’ Barn; entry from Kings Road Car Park.** All welcome, members free, non-members £ 3

**About our next three lecturers**

**Hazel Williams** has been associated with the Gatehampton Roman villa site (near Goring) since 1997. Hazel completed her archaeological degree from Reading University in 1994 and as an undergraduate worked on the north gate at Silchester; then, as her final project on artefact assemblage, she worked at a Roman temple site at Lowbury Hill near Aldworth. Hazel became co-director, then director of the Gatehampton site in 2009 and is now President of the South Oxfordshire Archaeology Group (SOAG). Hazel will bring some of the finds of the many digging seasons spent at this location.

**Ruth Gibson** has had an interest in vernacular buildings since the early 1980s when she first joined the HA&HG. What is significant about vernacular buildings is not only how they were built and what local materials were used, but also what they can tell us about their uses over time, sometimes about their owners and how they contribute to the visual enjoyment and connection to the place, landscape or town they are part of.

This talk will focus on the changing role of river transport, the very reason for the town’s foundation as a royal market place and entrepôt; its prosperity due to that role in the first place, then came the development and expansion of different trades and the processing of local produce and their export to satisfy the ever increasing needs of London. Improvement in road and river transport in the C18<sup>th</sup> brought many changes until the arrival of the railway changed everything!

**Alastair Lack** is well qualified to tell us about the history of Oxford University, the oldest and one of the most respected universities in the English speaking world, having studied History there at University College. He has spent most of his working life with the BBC, mainly in the World Service. Since moving back to Oxford he became Secretary of The Oxford University Society, worked free-lance for the city and university guiding, in journalism and tutoring students. He will show us some of his favourites amongst the 38 colleges, which make up the finest assembly of medieval buildings in England, but also remind us of some of the great names associated with this University Town.

## Lecture Programme for the rest of 2015

7.4.2015	David Moon	‘The Prehistoric Guide to Oxfordshire’
5.5.2015	Rosemary Jury	‘The medieval to C18 <sup>th</sup> landscape; the development of the English Garden’
2.6.2015	Deborah Hayter	‘The Poor Law in the 18 <sup>th</sup> C. – The crisis in the parishes’
6.10.2015	Shaun Morley	‘Drunk & Riotous – Oxfordshire Friendly Societies’
3.11.2015	Gary Lock	‘Excavations at Marcham, Oxon – a big Roman and Iron Age Site’
1. 12. 2015	AGM	Refreshments and members’ contributions

## Planning Applications with archaeological interest

Recently there have been two applications for planning permission in the historic core of Henley, which have potential archaeological implications. Your chairman and secretary alerted the County Archaeologist and wrote to SODC Planning to ensure that the archaeological interest of the sites would not be ignored. We have been assured that archaeological conditions will be attached to any planning consents.

The long burgage plot behind **No. 18 Hart Street** is occupied by a kiln and long malt house. The application was for conversion of part of the rear section into two dwellings. Excavations for drainage, new flooring and possibly wall underpinning will be subject to an archaeological condition. The building was listed Grade II only in 2010 following an investigation by English Heritage and its *‘Intactness; The sequence of buildings, complete with kiln & heavy cistern and malt floors consistent with maltings demonstrate special interest’* was the reason for Listing it in 2010. – Alas its division into separate dwellings as well as offices (part of an earlier application) will bring many alterations and will inevitably destroy much of this special interest of the very last of the many maltings Henley once had.

View of the long range of malting floors and the kiln with its conical roof behind No. 18 Hart Street.



The plot behind **No. 15 Thameside** used to be the yard of Parrots for many years, but was originally part of the long Hart Street burgage plot of the former Rectory of St. Mary’s. This is recorded as having many outbuildings such as a barn and stables, and even a fish pond is mentioned. The application is for two houses on this plot replacing an assemblage of sheds. It would be interesting to find out more of the previous uses of this garden and back yard of the former rectory.

**Highlands Farm ( Neighbourhood Plan).** Before the owners can put in a planning application for this site for housing a complete archaeological survey of the site will have to be carried out to assess the extent of gravel extractions, existence of intact Palaeolithic deposits and the impact of any development on the SAM (Scheduled Ancient Monument). Three of your committee members met Duncan Hawkins, archaeologist and Director of **cgms**, a well respected and experienced planning consultancy, who explained the various lines of research, surveys and tests which would be carried out at Highlands. This would inform the location and extent of possible building works, or where it would not be possible to build, at the site and would form part of any future planning application by the owners.

## Good news about Old St. James church, Bix Brand

During the recent Victoria County History research into the past of the parish of Bix (see Volume XXVI) much more attention was paid to its two documented medieval churches; only one of which, St James’s, has survived as a fast decaying ruin.

The excavations at Keepers Cottage in Bix Bottom in 2010 culminated in the discovery of a Christian graveyard and with it the confirmation that this was indeed the site of the lost church of St Michael’s at Bix Gibwyn.



This new interest in what remains of the two medieval churches, which bear witness to the earlier, now lost settlements of the two manors, has focused minds on what can be done to preserve the still standing structure.

To my delight I saw scaffolding and a fence around the church when walking in the area recently. On closer inspection it shows that consolidation and re-pointing of the fast decaying flint work as well as the rebuilding of the Norman doorway (the arch had totally collapsed) was well underway – all of it done with apparent great care and skills using traditional lime mortar – not a single bag of cement on site!



Oxoniensia Vol. I,  
1936. Article by Greening Lamborn.

The 1875 photograph was taken soon after the new church at Bix Common had been built and consecrated. It captures the Old St. James’s before it was robbed of its roof covering, so vital to the protection of flint & lime mortar walls.

Hopefully, after consolidation of the standing fabric the historic site will be safe to visit and enjoy once more by those who have an interest in historic landscapes and ancient buildings.

P.S May be HA&HG members will be interested in a walk and visits to both St. Michael's and St. James's as a little local summer outing? The graveyard of St. Michael's is now again well hidden in the garden of Keeper's Cottage, but its enthusiastic owners are not only members of the HA&HG, they also have numerous photographs taken during excavations, which they are happy to share, as well as personal experiences of the main discovery, right at the very end of the second season.

Ruth Gibson

## **OUTINGS - 2015**

As a Group we seem to dislike long coach journeys and much prefer to travel independently to the place of interest. We have enjoyed very interesting expeditions, such as the visit to Hardwick House and Harpsden Court. Our visit to London was different and gave us the opportunity to get to know each other outside the Lecture room so perhaps we could try something like this again

Some ideas are: -

Dorney Court where we could meet for lunch first and then gather at the house by 1.30pm.

A walk and visit to the lost churches of Bix; the recently excavated graveyard of St. Michael's and the newly consolidated romantic ruin of St. James's.

A Blue Badge Guide could take us on interesting London walks and then leave the afternoon free for 'shopping' etc. The Docklands Museum is one interesting place and easy to travel to from Paddington.

Please tell me or email any other ideas you might have.

Pam Syrett

## **Family history researchers take note**

Our two web sites on former Henley residents are open for research to family historians.

The **Census Returns** for the period 1841 – 1901 have been transcribed by Group members and can be searched on [www.henleycensus.info](http://www.henleycensus.info) allowing selection by:

- Last names, first names with exact, partial or metaphone matching
- First names
- Birth year or range of years; Birth County
- Sex; marital status, relationship to head of household
- Occupation
- Street

The **probate documents**, mainly C18th wills can be accessed on [www.henleyprobate.org.uk](http://www.henleyprobate.org.uk) using

- Surname of testator, including Metaphone matching
- Occupations and location of testator
- Names of benefactors, witnesses and others mentioned in a will
- Type of bequest, e.g. property, money, gold, rings etc.

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**HENLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL GROUP**  
**AGM 2<sup>ND</sup> December 2014**

Nomination for ordinary Committee member

Nomination for officers (Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer)

Name:.....

Sponsor: .....

Nominated person has agreed to stand .....

Please, send/give completed form to: Membership Secretary Hilary Fisher, 50 Queen Street, RG9 1AP by 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014

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