

Henley Archaeological & Historical Group

**NEWS-
LETTER
NO. 127
March
2013**

Chairman's Introduction

Following the AGM in December, our thanks go to the Committee for continuing to participate in our various undertakings. It is good to have so much input on necessary tasks like the speakers programme, finances and membership, the website and associated items, research projects, not to mention the day to day activities of our Secretary.

The outings are being arranged by Pam Syrett and Cynthia Robinson and they would like to have confirmation of your interest, together with payment, for the following:

May 19th	Abingdon visit by cars, £10.50 including cost of Guide & lunch
July 14th	Geddington church, Eleanor's Cross & Althorp House, £28 including entrance, tour & coach travel
July 31st	Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) and Stratfield Saye, by cars, cost £ 2.50

More details available at our meetings, in this newsletter & on our website.

All this work seems to be reflected in the increased interest of our members, who are turning up in greater numbers, I am glad to say, and often nowadays we have a full house. This was the case with Dave Oliver's talk in January on "Local Cold War Bunkers", when we heard about the history of Civil Defence during that period. Following on from our visit to Mapledurham last October, there was a good attendance in February for Dan Miles' talk on dendro dating the Mapledurham estate buildings.

The website carries a report on most of our talks and dates of other items of interest may also be found on:
<http://www.henley-on-thamesarchaeologicalandhistoricalgroup.org.uk/links.php>

Further Lectures for 2013

9 th April 2013	Shaun Morley	'Emigration from Oxon in the 19 th Century' <i>NB: this is the second Tuesday of the month !</i>
7 th May 2013	Barbara Allison	'The Bell & the Catherine Wheel - discovering Henley's 17 th Century Inns'
4 th June 2013	Liz Woolley	'Children & War: Children's Experiences of the 2 nd World War in Oxfordshire.'
1 st October 2013	John Creighton	'Silchester. Three Centuries of mapping the Ancient City'
5 th November 2013	Hella Eckardt	'Foreigners in Roman Cities'

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

Shaun Morley is a part-time tutor at the University of Oxford and author of a book on Oxfordshire Friendly Societies. He is very active in the country history scene as secretary of Oxfordshire Record Society and organiser of the annual history event OXPAST (the 2012 one in Henley). He completed his DPhil in English Local History at Oxford in 2012. His talk on Emigration from Oxon will look at several aspects of long-distance migration including transportation, Poor Law sponsored migration, a failed effort to recruit 250.000 agricultural worker to Brazil, and Agric. Labourers Union supported emigration to Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Barbara Allison holds a Diploma in Local History and learned to read original documents through a palaeography course run in Burford, aimed at volunteers to work for the VCH study of the town. After transcribing extensive probate material there, the 'Burford Group' under Barbara's leadership used it's by now well honed skills to working on Henley wills & inventories. They transcribed material from 1500 – 1710. Barbara has used this large body of information on Henley residents to pull together much of interest on 4 of its major inns. These provided the material for an article in Oxoniensia 2011. Barbara will be sharing with us what the documents show about life at the '*Catherine Wheel*' and '*The Bell*'.

Liz Woolley has given several very interesting talks to our Group, the last one in March 2010 on 'Child Labour in 19th Oxfordshire'. Liz lives in Oxford and has a Diploma and an MSc in English Local History. Her particular interest is in the lives of ordinary working people in the county in the 19th and early 20th centuries. She has been helping the 'Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust' with their project to establish a new museum in Woodstock, due to open in 2014. Her talk 'Children & War' is presented on the Trust members' behalf.

PUBLIC INQUIRY RESULT

The request by the developer to stop up a section of Bell Street in front of Nos. 94-102 Bell Street was refused by the Secretary of State on 7th January 2013. - This has been an excellent result for all with an interest in conserving the historic plan form and character of our town.

Inspector J S Nixon's conclusions are that the ancient highway remains a public highway, which cannot be sold and used for private car parking. Whilst the inspector's grave concerns were with the safety of pedestrians and access to the terrace directly abutting the pavement, which would have to be shared with cars backing out of the parking spaces, he also addresses in much detail the very great importance to the street scene of this historic north-western entrance to the town.



The Fawley Ct. Estate map of c1780. This shows the triangular road layout in front of the former Bell Inn and 94-102 Bell Street, where the Marlow road still ran directly in front of the Bell Inn.



SUNDAY 19TH MAY 2013 Abingdon - Start: 10.00 a.m. Travel by individual cars.

We will be able to enjoy a guided walking tour of –

- the Abbey buildings & site,
- St. Helen's church and the adjoining Long Alley Almshouses with the opportunity to see the 460 year old foundation documents of the charity, as this anniversary is being celebrated;
- the medieval East St. Helen Street with access to some of its buildings
- Opportunity to visit the County Hall museum and its newly re-opened roof viewing point

A lunch break to sustain us during this extensive visit has been booked in the historic '*King's Head & Bell*', East St. Helen's Street.

Costs are £ 10.50 to include the guide and a soup & sandwich lunch. Further details are available at the March, and April meetings, but please register early for the visit to book the guide and various locations. Alternatively call Cynthia Robinson on 01491 572445.



View of East St. Helen Street



Abbey Lodging Range, exterior and interior

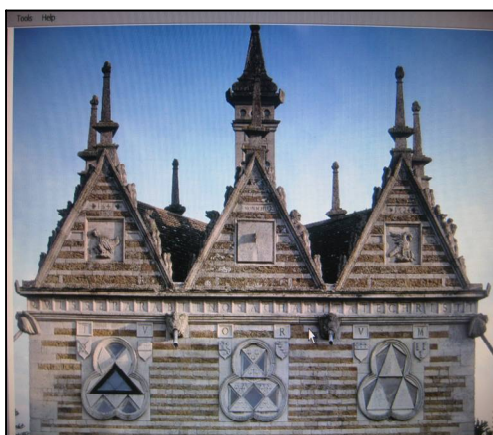


Long Alley Almshouses

Sunday, 14th July Northamptonshire -

**A coach outing to the Triangular Lodge at
Rushden, Geddington & Althorp**

For details please see the flyer attached to this
Newsletter and as circulated to members by E-mail



The late C16th Lodge was built by its recusant owner to both hide and celebrate the Holy Trinity. It uses many architectural features to this end.



Geddington with the C 13th Eleanor Cross, the best preserved of twelve erected for Eleanor of Castille, beloved wife of Edward I, to mark the progress and resting places of her body during the journey to London.

Wednesday 31st July Silchester & visit to Stratfield Saye

Travel by individual cars offering lifts. Cost of tour c. £ 2.50

Amanda Clarke, Field Director of Reading University Archaeology Dept. has agreed to our Group visiting the site where we will be divided into smaller groups and the latest discoveries discussed and shown to us.

Time of arrival at the dig is planned for 11 am, but for those wishing to circumnavigate a section of the Roman walls as part of the experience of this impressive C 3rd Roman structure, meeting in the Church car park at 10 am is suggested.

As Stratfield Saye is near-by we could meet there for lunch and visit the Duke of Wellington's country home. In the stables is an exhibition about the Duke, pictures of his funeral and the huge carriage that conveyed the Iron Duke through London to St. Paul's. In the grounds is the grave of his famous horse 'Copenhagen'.



Individual entry is £ 6. We will give more details nearer the date when we know how many of you are interested. -Please, put your name on the sheet provided at the back of the 'Barn' or contact Pam Syrett (Tel No. and E-mail address at the end of the Newsletter)

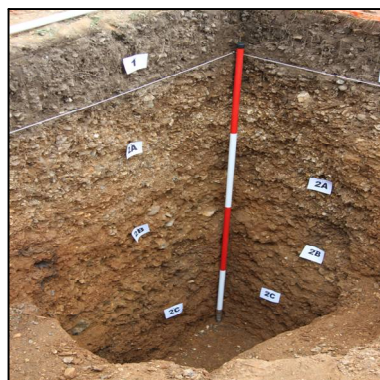
We visited Reading Museum Stores in January

On 25th January seven members of HA&HG went to the Reading Museum store. The visit had been arranged by Ruth Gibson with Jill Greenaway, the museum's curator, for the group to examine the Palaeolithic tools found at Highlands Farm in the late 1950s.

As you know a joint HAHG and SOAG test pit was dug in March of last year at Highlands Lane (see Newsletter 124) with a view to extending the knowledge of the area beyond the original gravel pit which was active in the 1950s. It was from this pit the Reading collection was assembled by the late J.J. Wymer. It contains around 600 tools, which is only a fraction of those found at the site, and we were allowed to handle a representative portion of these. They had been identified by John Wymer and many have his original references on them including the depths at which they had been found.

Some of these depths were the same as in our test pit and after we had seen the Museum tools it was obvious that our methodology of sieving and looking at almost every flint had been the right way. Our finds may prove to have some lower or middle Palaeolithic examples after their examination at Reading University by Dr Rob Hosfield who is a Palaeolithic specialist. We are grateful to Jill who spent much time showing and discussing the tools with us.

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Left: Test pit at Highlands Lane in spring 2012.

Right: Flint tool; found at High-lands Farm, in possession of HA&HG member Val Mundy. {Photograph Derek Toms)



Henley Probate Project – the journey so far!

Since last autumn a small team from the HA&HG has been working to transcribe around 400 C18th Henley wills and uploading the transcripts and the key information on to a newly created website, which once completed will be made publicly available. To date we have transcribed 170 wills comprising over 800 individual bequests and recorded over 900 named individuals (with their occupations or status), comprising both legatees, witnesses to the wills and the probate officials, giving us a window into life in C18th Henley.

Of course, we cannot know the proportion of those people who made wills, but those who did so wanted to provide for their families, also their extended families and friends. Servants were not forgotten nor were the poor. Bequests consisted of money ranging from one shilling to several hundred pounds; land; property; household goods and personal possessions. Money was provided for apprenticeships and on trust to provide income for wives and children. Where legacies were provided to a named married woman, in some cases, instructions were given to an executor that the legacy of money should be handed directly to the woman and not to her husband! In fact, the testator expressly stated that the husband should not be permitted to “intermeddle” in any aspect of the bequest.

There are examples of bequests of beds and bedding - **William Cocke** to his grandson, also William Cocke, in 1711 his “feather bed, bedstead and curtains”; and **Edmund Simmons** who left his nephew Edmund Cook in 1749 a “set of plate buttons for a coat and breeches”. Other items mentioned specifically in wills were as varied as from silver items such as tankards, spoons, gold rings to sheets, tablecloths and oak chests.

The poor were not forgotten either – **John Corderoy** in 1711 left forty shillings (£2 today) to the poor of Henley; **Thomas Cutler** in 1740 who provided in his will for 30 dozen loaves for the poor in Henley and 10 dozen loaves in Remenham. He also remembered “**poor old Carter in the almshouse**” to whom he left one pound.

One bequest can provide a considerable amount of interesting information, – such as this bequest in the will of **Edmund Simmons** in 1749: “to my friends **William Bawtree** Carpenter and **William Bland** Bricklayer both of Henley the cottages.... now in the possession of **Anne Webb, wife of William Webb**, at **Assendon Cross**..” In a few lines, we are provided with the names and occupations of two tradesmen in Henley as well as Mr. and Mrs. Webb in Assendon Cross.

Frustratingly properties at this time were not easily identifiable so we have references to “my five properties by the bridge in Henley, including a wharf” in the will of **Richard Fisher** in 1726. So whilst these wills give us some valuable information they also raise more questions. However, with the information already available in the Parish registers and other documents, some of the gaps may be filled in.

Once this phase of our work has been completed, we will provide details of the website so those who might be interested in the lives of Henley folk in this snapshot of the C18th can take a peek!

H. A. H. G.

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Our website is: <http://www.henley-on-thamesarchaeologicalandhistoricalgroup.org.uk/links.php>