



## Henley Archaeological & Historical Group

NEWS-  
LETTER  
NO. 134  
July 2015

**Chairman's Report.** It is now six months since I became Chairman and I am amazed at the amount of work done by your Committee. Tony Lynch took over as Lecture Organizer and the lectures have been superb. People read the write-ups in the Henley Standard, the Henley Herald and on our Web Site and this is one of the reasons why our membership is steadily growing. Our thanks to Tony and to Martin, who is always there for advice, and to the Town Hall for the extra chairs. However, we urgently need new committee members and in particular a new secretary and others with ideas and to help organizing visits, lectures, producing the newsletters, the journal and helping Graham with the Web Site. **Unless you come forward the GROUP will not be able to continue to function.**

Behind the scenes there have been many achievements, one of our members contacted Ruth when she saw 19A Hart Street being stripped out and its historic framing damaged and Ruth was able to intervene in our name. Number 25 Market Place has now been given a new List Description recognizing fully its very special Historical Interest. The cost of dendro dating it to 1471 came out of your subscriptions so you have all played your part in preserving the History of Henley.

Thanks to Viv Greenwood for the research and organizing of the Gainsborough plaque that is now in place and how excellent it looks. On the same theme the history of the Catherine Wheel is now beautifully framed in the entrance hall thanks to the work of Hilary, Ruth and John Whiting.

In addition there are the Conferences attended, Building Reports written up and published in our Journal, Census documents transcribed, Walks organized, pub lunches and dinners enjoyed. Coming up shortly on August 3<sup>rd</sup> is the visit to the House of Commons. I certainly hope it is still standing when we get there!! **Those of you coming, please remember the coach will arrive at 8.20 am and we leave promptly at 8.30.**

**Please do not forget our Website where you can find up to date information on the Group.** Our thanks to Graham for his work; any volunteers to help would be appreciated.

I look forward to seeing you in October and hope you have a safe and enjoyable summer.

**Pam**

## **Our next two Lectures, followed by the AGM**

**6<sup>th</sup> October 2015**    **Shaun Morley**    ‘Drunk and Riotous – Oxford’s Friendly Societies’

**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015** **Gary Lock**        ‘Excavations at Marcham, Oxon – a big  
Roman and Iron Age Site’

**1<sup>st</sup> December 2015** **AGM**    AGM: Refreshments and brief Members’ Contributions

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 two lecturers**

#### **Shaun Morley**

Shaun Morely holds a DPhil from Oxford University in English Local History and is part time tutor there, specializing in social history with much of his research and interest in locally organized welfare in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. - The Friendly Society was the foremost associational form of 19<sup>th</sup> century life. Providing insurance against sickness and death, friendly societies contributed much more in giving a sense of identity and self-regulation culminating in the annual club day. The talk will be adapted to include details of friendly societies of interest to the local audience.

#### **Gary Lock**

Gary Lock is Emeritus Professor of Archaeology at the University of Oxford. He specialises in the Iron Age period and has excavated at several hillforts on the Ridgeway and Marcham in the Vale of the White Horse. He teaches archaeology at Oxford’s Continuing Education Dept. Gary is currently excavating a hillfort in North Wales.

Becoming a Roman in Oxfordshire: The archaeological site at Marcham has seen extensive excavations and is of national importance. There is a range of Iron Age evidence overlain by a large Roman temple complex. The site raises a series of interesting questions about religious practices in both of these periods and how they could be linked over long periods of time.

### **Subscription Renewals**

All membership subscriptions will be due for renewal at the start of the new 2015-2016 season in October. They remain the same as last year, namely £12 for a single member and £20 for a family living at the same address. Please try to bring your subscription to the 6th October meeting or, if you are unable to attend, send it after that date to Hilary Fisher, 50 Queen Street, Henley. Please make cheques payable to **Henley Archaeological Group, not HA&HG.**

## The Humphrey Gainsborough Plaque



Henley Arch.& Historic Group's Roger Kendal (left), Viv Greenwood with Henley mayor (centre) and Pam Syrett, our Chair (right) and guests at the official unveiling at the entrance to the Estate

**Ruth Gibson**

At long last the plaque celebrating Humphrey Gainsborough's life and achievements was unveiled on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2015 at the entrance to the Estate, named after the 19<sup>th</sup> inventor and minister of the Independent Chapel in Reading Road. It is thanks to the sheer persistence of HA&HG's Viv Greenwood in putting this all together and the detailed research carried out by Roger Kendal on Humphrey, his life and times, for the exhibition on *'Henley in the Age of Enlightenment'* held in the River and Rowing Museum in 2002, that this attractive and very informative plaque now stands proudly at the entrance to an estate built in the post war years. Apparently no reason was given at the time for using the Gainsborough name or who thought of it !

## Journal - Your Memories of WW2

I am aware that not all members are of an age to remember World War 2 but those of you who are, I hope you are sitting in your sun loungers and stirring up those memories and more importantly writing them down ready for October. I admit that I am thinking but haven't got to writing yet, confident that I have 3 months to do it.... I will start tomorrow

It is very important and special. We have 3 already and they are so different and fascinating. We might also have some professional help and advice on this as a result of a casual meeting near the handsets in Waitrose!!!!

If you can include a photograph that would be great and don't make it too long, one side of A4 would be enough. Many thanks. **Pam**

## Henley/Falaise collaboration on WW2 memories

The Secretary of the Henley/Falaise Twinning Association has contacted me with a request from his opposite number in Falaise to see if Henley citizens could offer stories relating to their own WW2 time.

The Falaisians are commemorating their ordeals at that time in WW2 with a memorial called *Memorial des Civils* which will be affiliated to the larger *Memorial des Caen*. Falaise is asking Henley to forward diaries, memories, artifacts or whatever source material relating to the experiences of Henley people. Many people, although not active militarily, were engaged in cottage industry supply chains and no doubt displaced people from the London Blitz were re-housed in the area.

If you think you have anything relevant please forward details to me and I'll liaise with Falaise.

In our forthcoming journal this Autumn we're hoping to feature WW2 memories, so any stories or pictures you may have would be of interest, even if not specific to Henley.

Contact info: **John Whiting 07775 943 112 email [johnwhiting75@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:johnwhiting75@yahoo.co.uk)**

## The Catherine Wheel - Spinning Since 1499

The Catharine Wheel Hotel in Henley recently unveiled three large panels showing the history of the inn over a span of five hundred years. These panels were produced with the C.W. manageress Tamarisk Grummitt and the research and design team of HA&HG comprising Ruth Gibson, Hilary Fisher and John Whiting.

The three panels show the evolution of the inn from a single building to gradually absorbing three of its near neighbours on the east side. Also they show the internal architectural features such a timber framing and modifications not readily discernable at first glance. The unveiling featured in the Henley Standard & Wetherspoon Journal.



**John Whiting**



## The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens Celebrate Magna Carta

June 15<sup>th</sup> 2015 found Ruth and I on a beautiful day walking through very grand and elaborate stone arches to be welcomed by Friends of Caversham Court Gardens.

A lovely peaceful place of magnificent old trees, flower beds and green lawns sweeping down to the Thames and the view of Reading's river meadows. A lovely peaceful place of magnificent old trees, flower beds and green lawns sweeping down to the Thames and the view of Reading's river meadows.

We were there to join the Friends in their celebrations of the life of William Marshal, who lived and died in his Caversham manor and importantly was one of the knights who 'persuaded' King John to put his seal on Magna Carta, which was to limit royal power. Caversham Court itself was demolished in the 1930's but the plan of the mansion is marked out and further along the park is the restored seventeenth century gazebo, which had served as a summerhouse. Here was a display of the life of William Marshal.



This gazebo overlooking the river has an exhibition on the 13<sup>th</sup> knight William Marshall. This image Pam Syrett is admiring is based on the effigy of his tomb in London's Temple Church.

Children from two local schools who had been studying Magna Carta and the part played by William Marshall came carrying colourful shields made by themselves. After a short talk they had great fun tying the shields to the branches of an amazing yew tree that is said to have been growing way back in 1215.

We were told that these gardens are Reading's best-kept secret and there are many historic features in them to discover before enjoying a cup of tea from the small cafeteria behind the entrance gate. We recommend a visit to this magical place and congratulations to the Friends taking care of the gardens and for encouraging the children to learn about and be proud of this famous medieval resident of their town. **Pam Syrett**



## HA&HG Wallingford Town Walk on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015

A group of fourteen members assembled at five o'clock in Wallingford centre and were met and led on a fascinating guided tour of the town by Judy Dewey, the very knowledgeable curator of Wallingford Museum. Starting in the Square she told us how the town had evolved since Saxon times and had been recognised as a strategic crossing point of the Thames along with Windsor and London. The town was extensively fortified in Norman times with an impressive castle.

The Square is the early market centre of the town servicing the needs of the castle's inhabitants and those of the inhabitants. The Town Hall was erected after the English Civil war; it is timber framed, but with a grand stucco exterior and a colonnaded ground floor.

We were led on a fascinating tour of the ancient streets and eventually emerged on a large open area called the Kine Croft, bounded by Anglo Saxon ramparts surrounded by a naturally fed moat.

After the Civil War the Parliamentarians razed the castle to the ground because of its strategic value at the river crossing and the town fell into a long period of stagnation. Judy explained that as a consequence there had been very little by way of archaeological finds over a considerable period when the population fell from c. 2500 to around 500.

We proceeded partly on top of the tall ramparts, partly alongside of them, still mostly in a good condition considering the passage of time since their construction around 900 AD.



We ended our walk near the bridge from where it was only a few steps to the BOAT HOUSE hostelry, where the party partook of drinks and vittles in the evening sun on the pub's terraces adjoining the splendid stone bridge (the central section was rebuilt c. 1800, whilst the long causeway section across the flood plain is mostly medieval). A lovely end to a very interesting and rewarding evening. Judy says she will do a Wallingford tour sometime soon.

**John Whiting**

## **The visit to Dorney Court, 23rd April 2015**

The morning began with a grey sky and chilly wind but by the time we had driven the half hour journey to Dorney the sun was shining in a beautiful blue sky and it turned out to be a very special day. We left the bustle of the M4 and in minutes we found ourselves in a quiet medieval village, an oasis amongst the bustle of modern life.

We lunched at the 'Palmer Arms' who were ready for 29 of us with 3 large tables and delicious food, which was served quickly and efficiently. Then it was on to Dorney Court, a beautiful medieval manor that has been occupied by the Palmer family for 470 years.

The first glimpse is of large wrought iron gates in front of a gravel drive, green lawns and yew trees surrounding a timber framed and red brick, many gabled, fairy tale house with the Tudor tower of the 12c church of St James the Less behind. Looking at the outside of the house we could see and our guide explained, how different generations had extended the building and the original front was actually on the side, not where we see it now. They still have the first front door and although there was an attempt to 'upgrade' with a Georgian facade, fortunately that was removed and what remains is a family home which has existed without being significantly altered since it was first built.

Once inside we soon regretted leaving coats behind because it was very cold, and dark and mysterious. The Great Tudor Hall with portraits of generations of the Palmer Family including the portrait of Barbara Palmer, Lady Castlemaine, and one of Peregrine Palmer the father of the present owner. In this room the Manor Court was once held and the intricate linen panelling came originally from Faversham Abbey at the time of the Reformation. The Parlour is in the oldest part of the house, with its Tudor panelling, stained glass and tapestry given to Thomas Palmer on his marriage in 1624. The Dining Room has a colourful painted floor to show the present family's association with India. We saw deep dark brown Tudor panelling, vaulted ceilings and roofs held up by sturdy oaks felled in medieval and Tudor times but importantly, this is a home not a museum and the present owners have commissioned furniture made from trees blown down on the estate and again in memory of India, a delightful elephant fountain.

Finally we made our way to the church and were surprised at the sight of a magnificent Tudor mortuary tomb, box pews and a porch built in 1661 to celebrate the birth of Lady Anne Palmer.

There were many stories about needlework, pineapples, leopards, Crusades and Turks but we were finally ready for a cup of tea and rest in the delightful Garden Centre, formerly the walled kitchen garden of Dorney Court.

The house is open in August to members of the public and is well worth a visit.

**Pam Syrett**

## H.A. & H.G.

President Ann Cottingham 01189 403276

### Officers and Committee members

Chairman	Pam Syrett 01491 574983 <a href="mailto:pamsyrett@gmail.com">pamsyrett@gmail.com</a>
Secretary & Buildings Recording Newsletter Editor	Ruth Gibson 01491 572271 <a href="mailto:ruthgibson@hotmail.com">ruthgibson@hotmail.com</a>
Peter Anderson	01491 412531
Web master/Journal Editor	Graham Jones 01491 576102 <a href="mailto:jgtjones@btinternet.com">jgtjones@btinternet.com</a>
Archaeology Liaison	Viv Greenwood 01491 413544 <a href="mailto:vivgreenwood@gmail.com">vivgreenwood@gmail.com</a>
Outings Secretary	Pam Syrett 01491 574983 <a href="mailto:pamsyrett@gmail.com">pamsyrett@gmail.com</a>
Lecture Secretary	Tony Lynch 01491 574093 <a href="mailto:tony@greatown.freemove.co.uk">tony@greatown.freemove.co.uk</a>
Probate Group Leader	Cynthia Robinson <a href="mailto:mrscar@sky.com">mrscar@sky.com</a> 01491 572445
Information Leaflet/Journal Co-editor	John Whiting 01491 410963 <a href="mailto:Johnwhiting75@yahoo.co.uk">Johnwhiting75@yahoo.co.uk</a>

---

Membership Secretary & Documentary Research	Hilary Fisher 01491 575216 <a href="mailto:kpfisher@compuserve.com">kpfisher@compuserve.com</a>
--	--

Please visit our web site: for more information on our activities on  
<http://www.henley-on-thamesarchaeologicalandhistoricalgroup.org.uk/index.php>