

Henley Archaeological & Historical Group

NEWS-
LETTER
NO. 147

November
2019

Chairman's Report

Christmas is approaching apace: time to sweep the chimney, and reassure the turkeys all is well.

Our next meeting on 3 December will be our AGM and will feature several short talks by our members. If you wish to submit items for this part of the AGM Agenda please inform Ruth Gibson or Elisabeth Wood as soon as possible.

The Committee has been instrumental in thwarting a proposal to permanently fix lighting on Henley Bridge. And another success has been an acknowledgement by the National Trust to replace two missing benches at Greys Court by this coming Spring.

Your Committee continues to work on several projects designed to give a better appreciation of our local history - stay tuned.

However, we would very much appreciate one or two new committee members, to refresh the ideas for future projects, outings and speakers and share the work load. If you feel you can contribute to the running of the Ha&Hg please call or E-mail me (details on the last page of this Newsletter) before the AGM elections on 3rd December, so that your name can be put forward.

Looking forward to hearing from you eager historians and archaeologists.

John Whiting

**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 £ 4

Tuesday 3rd December AGM

After the business of the AGM there will be an interval for refreshments; followed by several short, but no doubt interesting presentations from members.

Next Year's Lectures: January to November 2020

7th January – Catherine Edwards (Market Place Mews: archaeological excavations)

4th February – John Painter (Reading Abbey)

3rd March – Graham Twemlow (Recording Britain)

7th April – Edward Peveler (Beacons of the Past and LiDAR: shining new light on the Iron Age landscapes of the Chilterns)

5th May – Jill Eyers (Chilterns at Work)

2nd June – Michael Redley (Victorian and Edwardian building in Henley)

Summer Break

6th October – Paul Lacey (Early bus services)

3rd November – Prof M. Fulford (Calleva - Silchester excavations)

About our first three speakers of 2020

Catherine Edwards (January)

Bio: Catherine has been a member of staff at AOC Archaeology since 2003, where she is now a Project Manager. She has directed both small and large-scale field projects such as the Fremlin Walk development in Maidstone, two Roman Cemeteries in Southwark, a medieval and early post-medieval site at Hall Place, Bexley and an archaeological investigation of the Harbour in Jamestown, St Helena.

Talk: Archaeology works in the Market Place, Henley, started back in October 2018 and the extensive dig has uncovered many items including the remains of a 13th Century well and Spanish and German pottery from the 16th-17th Century. Closer to the buildings on Market Place, the presence of an 18th or early 19th Century apothecary has been uncovered with items such as pestles, medicine jars, glass phials and tooth brushes found showing the strong influence of London on the people living in Henley.

John Painter (February)

Bio: John Painter retired from local government following 28 years working for Reading Borough Council. He has been actively involved in the Friends of Reading Abbey since 2011, supporting the council's efforts to consolidate the Abbey Ruins and get them re-opened to the public, which happened in 2018. He is co-author, with Peter Durrant, of the illustrated guide to Reading Abbey and the Abbey Quarter, published by Two Rivers Press in 2018.

Talk: A review of the impact of Reading Abbey on the town of Reading, both in its heyday as a royal Abbey and one of the 10 leading monasteries in the country, through the dissolution and its subsequent use as a royal palace, to the destruction of the Civil War and the subsequent re-development of the

Abbey Quarter and preservation of the Abbey Ruins up to the present day. The talk will show what is still left of the monastic foundation, and the rich architectural heritage of Victorian and C20th developments in the Abbey Quarter.

Graham Twemlow (March)

Bio: Locally based, Dr Graham Twemlow writes and lectures on design history and decorative arts subjects. An experienced speaker, he has given talks at venues such as the Royal Society of Arts, London, the Grolier Club, New York, Christie's South Kensington, the River & Rowing Museum, Henley on Thames, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and numerous other venues in the U.K.

Talk: At the outbreak of the WW2 an ambitious scheme was set up to employ artists on the home front. The result was a large collection of watercolours and drawings that make up a fascinating record of British lives and landscapes at a time of imminent change. Graham's talk will tell the story of this enterprising scheme and highlight the works that featured Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire landscapes and landmarks recorded by artists such as John Piper, Walter Bayes, Barbara Jones, Stanley Anderson and William Fairclough. Many local scenes were recorded, including views of Henley, Stonor, Fingest, and Hurley.

HA&HG Websites

Earlier this year I agreed to do what I could to maintain the Group's websites. I have now had chance to look in detail at the main group website and the two sites for Census data and Probate data.

I would like to pay tribute to the professionalism that Graham Jones brought to the task of both collecting and organizing the data and in creating the websites. He will have spent many hours on them. I am in regular touch with Graham, who now lives in Bournemouth, and is very supportive.

My first concern was to secure the website assets, the website registrations and the data, and this is now complete. My second objective is to bring the main site up to date and to reflect necessary changes. I would also like to make the site adaptive to the small screens of smartphones and tablets that many people now prefer to use.

I have created a new gateway website which allows you to go directly to any of the existing three websites directly. The more people who access the website, the more Google and other search engines will take notice and direct people to us.

So, everyone can help by taking a minute or two to go on line at <http://hahg.org.uk> and exploring a little. Please do so. I will be really pleased to receive any comments or ideas at: HenArchAndHistGrp@gmail.com.

David Feary

Our visit to Bourton House Garden and Sezincote on 25th September 2019

We set off for the Cotswolds under cloudy skies, but were able to explore the beautiful gardens at Bourton House, near Bourton-on-the Hill, without putting up our umbrellas. Tea and coffee in the Grade I listed tithe barn, built in ashlar limestone with a limestone slate roof, gave us a chance to enjoy its magnificent interior, with original roof timbers. A dedication stone in the barn carries a date of 1570 and the house itself, not open to the public, originally had a brew house, coach house and stables, when it was first built in the 16th century. It was rebuilt in the Jacobean style in 1598 and again in the Georgian style, at the beginning of the 18th century, retaining some its earlier features.



Our focus was the award-winning three-acre garden that surrounds the Manor House. Years of dedicated work by an expert team employed by recent owners have produced a design that includes topiary, a knot garden, walks, terraces, an 18th century walkway with vistas of the landscape beyond, spring-fed water features, a shade house, a white garden, and wide herbaceous borders, with many rare and exotic plants. These provide swathes of colour in the late summer and autumn, before being protected inside during the winter months.

After a brief lunch stop at Batsford Arboretum nearby, the coach took us up a long, winding drive, through classic English parkland, leaving us at the gates of Sezincote. As we crossed a stone bridge, decorated with sculptures of Brahmin bulls, past a fountain caught in the coils of a bronze serpent, we saw an impressive vista – a country house in the Indian Mogul style, but built in local stone, nestling in the Cotswold countryside. The exterior combines Hindu and Islamic details characteristic of the reign of Mogul emperor Akbar (1556–1605). Islamic features include a central copper dome, small minarets with slender columns, a ‘chajja’ (cornice with deep brackets), peacock tail arches and a tall central arch. The pillars and horizontal beam over the front door, and the lotus designs, are Hindu in origin. To the left is an elegant orangery. The home farm buildings, also forming part of the Mogul scheme, are no longer in active use.

The estate was purchased in 1795 by John Cockerell, made wealthy by his career as a colonel in the army of the East India Company. In 1798, it passed to his youngest brother, Charles, and the commission to build a house in the Indian style was given to another brother, the architect Samuel Pepys Cockerell. The accomplished artist, Thomas Daniell, provided the inspiration for the creation of the house, which was

begun in 1805. He drew on ten years of experience travelling in India, making numerous aquatints, watercolours and oil paintings of Indian architecture and landscapes, using a camera obscura. Charles Cockerell's nostalgia for his time in India was also reflected the design for his bedroom in an octagonal room, decorated to resemble a tent with wooden spears supporting a canopy.



The house is constructed in warm local stone and has a green weathered copper dome. The curved orangery terminates in an octagonal pavilion. However, the indianizing of the house did not extend to the interior, which is neo-classical in style.

In the company of our guide, we explored the inside of the house and were introduced to some of Daniell's works, including a painting of the Prince Regent's visit in 1807. This impressed him to such an extent that he changed his plans for the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, designed by Thomas Nash. From the Stair Hall, an impressive iron staircase separates into two flights to sweep up to the upper floor, where we visited the rooms open to the public. These, including the Saloon, Master and Oriental Bedrooms, have been remodelled over the years since the house was bought 1944 and gradually restored by the Kleinwort banking family. In the Oriental Bedroom, the poles from Charles Cockerell's original 'tent' been incorporated into an elaborate bed, topped by a green dome. In the 1950s, the designer John Fowler was responsible for the exceptionally high quality of redecoration in the major rooms. The Dining Room's elegant wall paintings, capturing the spirit of Thomas Daniell's work, were painted by George Oakes in 1982 and include a trompe l'oeil, which conceals a secret door.

As we left Sezincote, we regretted not paying an earlier visit to the temple of Surya, the sun god, to ask for better weather to explore the gardens. The temple and the Indian stone bridge were part of a design scheme by Daniell, but Humphrey Repton may have played a part in layout out the grounds at Sezincote. Unfortunately, the skies opened, sending us all scurrying back to the coach, leaving more to discover on a future visit.

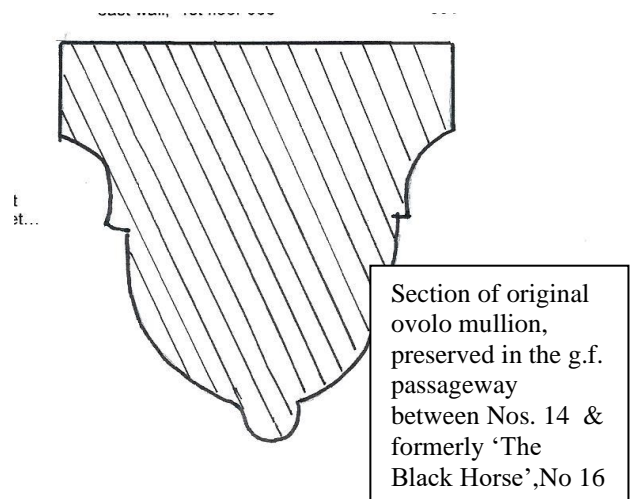
Jackie Fortey

A house built during Elizabeth I reign Dendro dated to 1590



This is **No 14 Friday Street**, once a much larger house extending over what is now Queen Street, on the right. It has a fine raised gable of closely studded timbers, a jetty of moulded beams projecting over the street and a row of original first floor windows; sadly the two small ones on either side of the large central one having been blocked. It was clearly built to impress and dendrochronologist Dr. Dan Miles, seen hard at work here taking cores from the original oak post, has given us a felling date of 1590. Since oak was worked when green the house would have been built very soon afterwards during the latter years of Queen Elizabeth I reign.

Of particular interest are some of the innovative features of its time, such as the row of upper chamber windows, one large one framed by small side windows (now blocked) as well as their framing in the form of elegant ovolo mullions.



Section of original ovolo mullion, preserved in the g.f. passageway between Nos. 14 & formerly 'The Black Horse', No 16

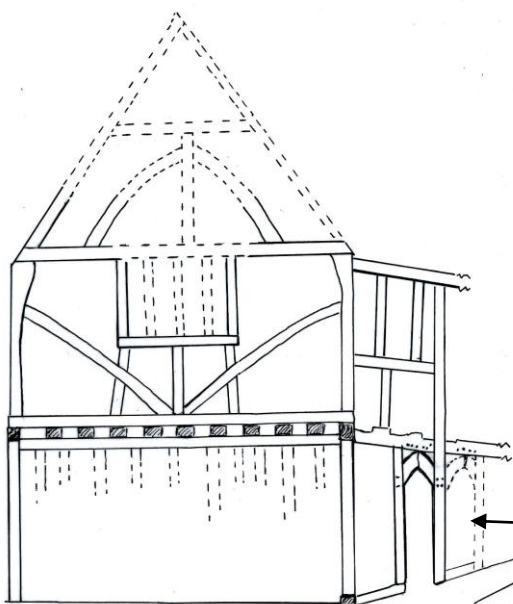
The picture above shows an ovolo mullion window in the east wall. On the right is a section drawing of it. These were a great advance in window design and size. Used here together with the quality of the framing and the moulded jetty beams, show the owner's standing. This was probably a member of the Benwell family, which are later documented as owners of the house.

A medieval Hall House

Dendro dated to 1353/54



The left hand part of **No 47 Market Square**, formerly the Old Broad Gates Inn, is the wing of a medieval hall house, built during the long reign of Edward III; the time of the 100 years war against France and only shortly after the Black Death had arrived on English shores and brought such devastation to the population. Despite all these calamities we have the evidence of an established timber framing tradition worked by craftsmen with great skills as well as access to plenty of high quality oak, resulting in a jettied building with a crown post roof and beautiful



Gothic doorways for access from the former through passage. This was later modified to become the 'broad gateway' entrance, once the 18th century coaching age had arrived. The left hand drawing is a reconstruction of what the front elevation would have looked like before the large window was inserted and most of the crown post in the gable was lost. Also lost was a second door, giving access to the two former service rooms.

Ruth Gibson

Membership Fees

Membership secretary Elisabeth Wood reminds members, especially those of long-standing, that a decision was approved at the 2017 AGM to alter the Group's financial year to end of 31st December. Annual subscriptions are therefore due on 1st January each year. (Single £12, Two at same address £20; by bank transfer: NatWest 60-10-35, account 13153692, ref. your surname; cheques Henley Archaeological Group; post to 4 Orchard Close, St Andrews Road, Henley on Thames RG9 1HR; or deliver at a meeting/lecture.)

H.A. & H.G.

President Ann Cottingham

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

Edited by Ruth Gibson