

Henley Archaeological & Historical Group

NEWS-
LETTER
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2020

Chairman's Report

Dear Members

Our winter/spring season of talks has got off to a good start with full houses at both the January/February talks. One downside to these talks has been poor audio deliverance especially to the left of the speaker. To improve this we have invested in a small PA system which with "speaker education" should improve audience reception. Receipts of subscriptions are going well with 90% of all dues received for which many thanks.

We are planning three Group Outings this summer; the dates are 10th June, 8th July and 17th September. For details see below P 4.

The issue of Henley Bridge lights has re-emerged after Mr. Clive Hemsley's attempt last year was thwarted. He has now proposed a different type of light (a tube of many different colours) with a different method of attachment. A Listed Building application for this has just been submitted to SODC and Wokingham Borough Council. Your Committee will send our comments expressing concerns, and keep a watching brief.

David Feary, our website guru, is working his way through the three websites which make up our site to produce more user-friendly options to improve everyone's appreciation of the site (see P 7).

The Committee would welcome suggestions for an **alternative logo** to our current Henley Bridge option, perhaps a circular or oval design about the size of a postage stamp for use on stationery, website and press releases.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting at the Kings Arms Barn.

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

Lecture Programme from April to June 2020

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)

About our next three speakers

Edward Peveler Beacons of the Past: Citizen Science and LiDAR shedding light on the history of the Chilterns landscape

The results of the UK's largest ever archaeological LiDAR survey have recently been made publicly available for citizen science analysis. The 1400 km² survey, covering the Chilterns AONB and its surroundings, records the topography of the landscape in great detail. Any archaeological sites surviving as earthworks, even just a few centimetres high, will be detected, giving us evidence of people living and working in the region from the Neolithic to the 20th Century. The technique is particularly powerful in wooded landscapes, able to show up sites beneath the tree canopy where archaeological survey has traditionally been very difficult; with more than 20 % tree coverage, the Chilterns AONB has many secrets to reveal. In this talk Dr Ed Peveler will be introducing this National Lottery-funded project, explaining more about the survey, letting us know how we can access the data to do our own archaeological exploring, and showing us some of the exciting results that are already emerging.

Dr Ed Peveler is the Landscape Heritage Officer at the Chilterns Conservation Board, responsible for the technical elements of the Beacons of the Past project, and for the development and delivery of volunteering opportunities such as skills workshops. Prior to joining CCB, Ed completed his AHRC-funded DPhil at the University of Oxford, investigating the process of construction and building materials in Roman Oxfordshire. He also worked as Assistant Director of the University of Oxford excavations at the Roman small town of Dorchester on Thames between 2014 and 2017, and has excavated at sites in Britain, Italy, Albania, Tunisia, and India.

Jill Eyers Chilterns at Work

The Chilterns landscape is justly famous but this beautiful area reflects centuries of people working the land, including the woodland, and exploiting resources in an imaginative way. Jill will describe the rich mixture of work in the Chilterns that has developed through the years from farming and agriculture, woodland industries and furniture making, food processing, mineral extraction, to wartime industries and modern day industries based around recreation and leisure, plus many others.

Jill was a professional geologist who undertook research projects within the UK (Bucks, Berks, Oxfordshire, Cumbria, Norfolk) as well as abroad (Brazil, Northern Spain, Turkey and the Grenadines). More recently (from 2006) she works as an archaeologist (Director of Chiltern Archaeology). Archaeology projects include the Roman villas at Hambleden in Bucks, Bisham Abbey, Iron Age sites, and Saxons and others at Monks Risborough. Dr Eyers has been a lecturer for the Open University since 1987 and regularly lectures for other universities, as well as being a publisher of geological guides in the *Rocks Afoot* series and archaeological books.

Michael Redley The construction of Victorian and Edwardian Henley

Outline Following on from his earlier talks for the Group on the effect on the town of the Boer War of 1899-1902, and the unprecedented victory of the Liberals in the Henley constituency at General Election in 1906, Michael will look in detail at the fabric of the Victorian and Edwardian town. How and why did Henley grow in late Victorian and Edwardian times? Attention will be given to its public buildings, to the creation of the infrastructure which shaped its development, and to the influences of local government and other local pressure groups on the process.

In particular Michael will consider the builders who extended Henley southwards, with the New Town, St Andrew's and St Mark's Roads developments. They were the work of a close-knit group of families; the Owthwaites, Clements', Hamiltons and Wilsons. The heads of these families were remarkable men, often local and from artisan backgrounds, who speculated in land, organised and managed the large construction projects, and became significant property owners, not just in Henley but also in neighbouring towns. Michael's talk will explore the way the builders were also key figures in the governance and civic life, shaping not just Henley's physical structure but also its social and political life in the years up to the First World War.

Biography

Michael Redley lives in Norman Avenue in Henley. His doctoral work in history was on East Africa in colonial times. He made a career in central government and in statutory agencies concerned with broadcasting and at the University of Oxford. More recently he has returned to his roots in history. He has published on various topics, and teaches courses at the Department for Continuing Education in Oxford on twentieth century British history and politics.

Lectures after the Summer Break

6th October – Paul Lacey (Early bus services)

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

1st December – Time Healey (A 17th century Christmas)

Outings programme for 2020

Wednesday, 10th June Bodleian Library, Oxford. Conducted Tour

Drive to Redbridge Park and Ride for 10.45, take bus to Oxford centre. Or take Henley to Oxford Bus. Meet at the Bodleian ticket office at the gateway in Catte Street for our tour at 11.30.

Conducted tour of Bodleian Library's historic rooms, Divinity School, Duke Humfrey's Medieval Library, Ratcliff Camera and modern Link Tunnel. Some stairs involved.

Cost for Bodleian tour £10.00 per head if we get sufficient numbers (13 max per group; or split into two groups if enough interest)

Extras: parking at Redbridge, lunch and entrance to Oxford Castle

Optional p.m.: A short walk will take us to **Oxford Castle** for lunch and p.m. visit to the Castle Museum and tour of Norman Mound, Saxon St. George's Tower and Romanesque Undercroft, some historic prison cells.
Oxford Castle Museum £ 12.95.

Booking with John Whiting

Wednesday, 8th July visit to Calleva Roman baths excavations. Meeting in the Wall Lane car park at 10.45 to walk to the dig and meet Prof. Fulford at 11 a.m.

A final visit to Roman Calleva to see the latest excavations. Limited to 16 persons, car sharing. £3 donations on the day.

Booking with Ruth Gibson

Thursday, 17th September Coach trip to R.N. Dockyard, Portsmouth

Leave Sacred Heart Church at 9.15 en route for Portsmouth

Arrive at R.N. dockyard and convene at Boathouse No 4 for comfort/coffee break and observe small boat restorations.

Move as a group to the **Mary Rose Museum** for a tour.

Adjourn for lunch and then choose to visit one more vessel, either **Victory, Warrior** or **M H 22**.

Re-join the coach for departure at 4 o'clock.

Cost £ 49.50 Extras: Coffee, Lunch, Souvenirs

Booking with John Whiting

There will be Lists of the Outings displayed at our monthly lecture meetings, for you to put your names down.

There will be more details about the various Outings nearer the time.

Write-up of 'Henley Market Place Mews' Lecture on 7th January 2020

Leslie Capon, assisted by Catherine Edwards, of AOC Archaeology gave us a presentation on their recent excavations in advance of Murphy's development in the Market Place in Henley.

This excavation covered burgage plots (tenanted town land) behind buildings in the Market Place and Bell Street. About 80% of this area proved to be of archaeological interest. The plots – originally open and possibly shared dated from the 12th or 13th centuries and were used for growing food and for domestic animals; later, as the

population became more prosperous, they became more enclosed, private, and used for leisure purposes.

Particular features included walls separating the plots, wells, cess pits, floors and working areas – some with hammer scale, showing smithing activity. Most of the small finds were ceramics – including clay tobacco pipes (which can be dated by their shape), and an attractive (but broken) 16th to 17th century charger (food serving dish – see photograph) as well as broken glass phials; may be from the dispensary connected with the surgery at No. 20 of the Brooks, son and father, during most of the C19th?

Excavation is now complete, although analysis of the findings is still ongoing. A particular objective is to trace the development of individual plots through their history. The completion of the report is planned for later in 2020 – it should make interesting reading

Tony Lynch



INTERESTING SMALL HISTORICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

A request from HA&HG member Elizabeth Henderson

The British Wildlife Trust's SSSI Reserve near Bix is 5 miles NW of Henley.
(OS grid reference: [SU720879](#))

I have been a BBOWT volunteer there for seven years. In that time I have discovered that the area around it has much well documented historical information. I am not an historian but feel sure that someone in the Henley Arch. & Hist. Group would find the resources I have collected together very interesting, i.e. **Tithe maps, photos, entries in the VCH Vol XVI, Warden's records, press cuttings and much more.**

The Reserve was acquired for the Wild-Life Trust by Vera Paul, an enterprising teacher from Gillotts School in 1968.

If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in writing a short paper about Warburg Reserve's history, please contact me; ek.henderson@btinternet.com

Looking forward to hearing from the person interested in this project.

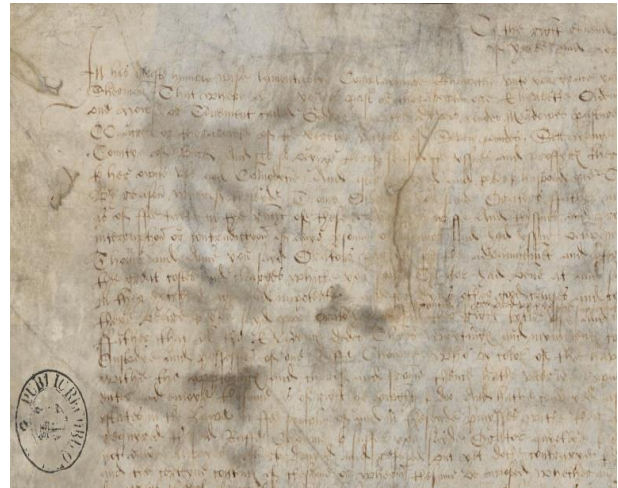
Liz Henderson

Would you like to own a beautifully produced and professionally researched history of your home? Or do you need some help with your family or local history research?

Dr Stephen Miles, an experienced historian who has published extensively on the Henley area for the Victoria County History, is now offering commissioned 'house histories'. For those wishing to uncover the history of their home, Stephen is able to

N.B. On the right is part of the document and it illustrates the difficulty in transcribing the original hand writing; as deciphered by Dr. Miles.

... one house or tenement called Goddard with divers lands, meadows, pastures, woods, and underwoods with the appurtenances thereunto belonging containing 200 acres or thereabouts of the yearly value of £7.....



carry out detailed original documentary research to produce a full and richly illustrated report. Each report supplies information about when a house was built, indicates the development of the building and its neighbourhood, and from censuses and other sources gives fascinating insights into its past owners and occupants. A house report

makes for a wonderful talking point or gift, and is likely to be of interest to discerning potential house buyers. Stephen is also able to assist individuals in their own research, particularly when they come up against early texts in Latin or in a difficult hand. Having worked as an editor for Cambridge University's *Inquisitions Post Mortem* project at TNA, Stephen



can readily transcribe difficult documents – even faded and damaged examples such as the one from The National Archives shown here – and can also carry out original research and copywriting. For further details contact: stephen.miles@history.ox.ac.uk

Trail of historic churches

A few years ago I put together a Church trail on behalf of 'Churches Together' in Henley. It is rather like the historic trail round Henley, and is basically a walk visiting each of the churches/places of worship.

Contact details: mikehails@btinternet.com

address: 42 Blandy Road Henley RG9 1QB tel. 01491 572194

Mike Hails

News about Our Web Site

I have recently been working on the design for the website before making any more changes. It needs to be easy for everyone to find the date of the next meeting; to download a report on any building we have surveyed; and for everything else. I will try to keep it simple and clear. I also want anyone to be able to keep it up to date without my assistance.

Please log on to hahg.org.uk from time to time. You will find that all the details of the meetings for 2020 are available and proposed visits will soon also be available.

Any feedback you give me will be very welcome and helpful to me.

David Feary

News from Greys Court

Success at Greys Court. The replacement benches for the enjoyment of the view over the upper Hearn Valley have been promised for the spring, and the actual removal of the fence preventing a leisurely stroll between the HaHa and the walled garden has gone !

I had planned to take a picture of the now open path but it never stopped raining to do so! But the primroses and snowdrops are enjoying it !

Ruth Gibson



HA&HG

President: Ann Cottingham

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Please visit our web site: for more information on our activities on
hahg.org.uk

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