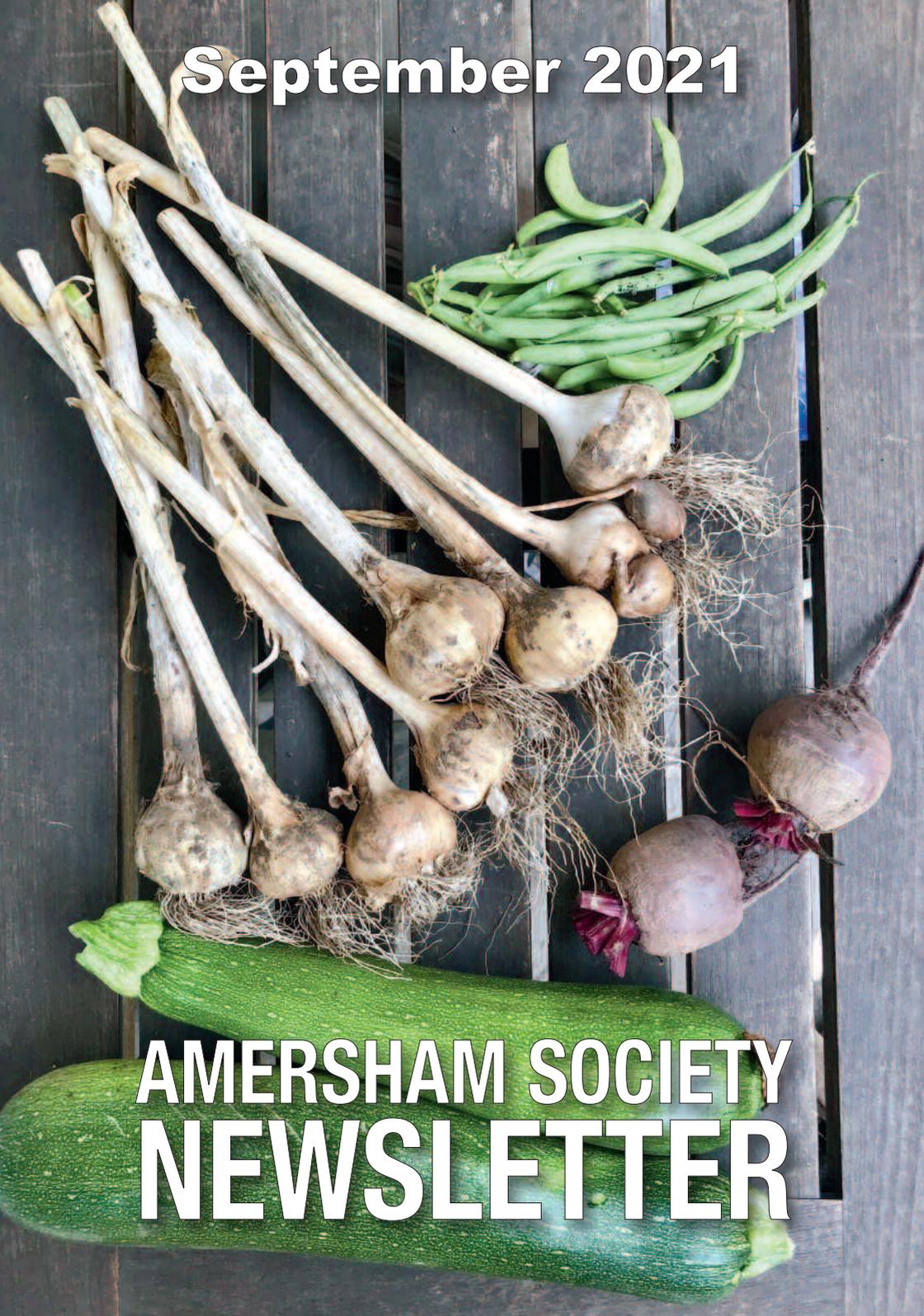


September 2021



**AMERSHAM SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**



CONTENTS

- 02 **Report from the Chair**
- 05 **Annual General Meeting**
Agenda.
- 06 **A Scientist Walks Around the Old Town**
Article by Dr Peter Borrows.
- 09 **Amersham as a Plastic Free Town^o**
Article by Nikki Magrath.
- 12 **Rural Workwear of the 19th Century**
A talk by Will Phillips from
Buckinghamshire County Museum.
Report on the talk by Christine Standing.
- 16 **A Musical Evening with Iain Ledingham**
Director of Amersham Festival of Music.
Report on the talk by David Godwin.
- 20 **River Misbourne Survey**
Report by Tim and Lesley Harmer.
- 22 **Rectory Meadow Surgery Patients Group**
Article by GPG from Rectory Meadow.
- 24 **Amersham Museum News**
Emily Toettcher.
- 28 **Amersham Museum 30th Anniversary**
Report by Edward Copisarow.
- 29 **Amersham Museum Oral History Project**
Report by Edward Copisarow.

Cover photograph by Elena Morgan –
Vegetables grown on an old Amersham allotment.

Annual Report from the Chair

It has been another extraordinary year as the pandemic continues to cause so many problems throughout the country and, in order to help prevent the spread of the virus, we have all had to get used to so many changes in our and day to day routines. Social distancing, face masks and hand sanitising have become the norm and continue to apply to many activities where people gather or travel together. In March last year we took the decision to cancel our meetings and talks at the Kings Chapel and change to Zoom. And all our committee meetings since then have been on Zoom. We also had to cancel the outing planned for June 2020. Now with the approach of the AGM next month we need to review how the Society has fared during the past year and to consider a programme for the coming year.

We are thankful that there have been and continue to be many ways in which we have been encouraged and supported during the pandemic. Among these were of course the good news about the development of vaccines to be used against Covid and the efficient way in which the vaccination programme was launched this year, also the timely information about and the organisation of vaccination appointments by our local Health Centres. In addition in this area we enjoy a friendly and helpful community and the beautiful Chilterns, which offer so many opportunities for walks and interesting places to visit.

THE COMMITTEE

We are a small committee with only six members. I should like to thank everyone for working so hard to hold everything together during the past twelve months and for bringing such a splendid selection of talents and expertise to our Society. The way in which committee members just get on with their tasks and produce their reports and articles has been great, always completing them on time.

THE WEBSITE

In line with our object of fostering community spirit, the Amersham Society informs members and residents about events and changes in the area, thus giving them the opportunity to take part, whether it be commenting on a planning application or a change in a particular service provided by the Council, or attendance at a band concert or street market. The Amersham Society Website, managed so well by Elena Morgan, is regularly updated and is user friendly. It is now for many residents their prime source of information about the Old Town and some Council activities.

PLANNING

George Allison is the committee member responsible for checking local planning applications and summarising them for other members of the committee. When we think it necessary, we lodge objections with the Council and

also try to make sure that residents are aware of any large or unusual development in our area especially in the AONB or on Green Belt land.

OTHER HELP

It has been disappointing that we have not managed to recruit any new committee members during this time of Covid, but I should like to thank those members, who while not wanting to join the committee have supported the Society in other important ways.

As I reported in our January Newsletter our Hon Treasurer, David Atkinson, stood down last November after many years of service. We were enormously pleased and relieved when John Morgan agreed to take over as Acting Treasurer. Following John's time consuming and painstaking contacts with the Bank additional signatories have now been registered and the Society has been able to continue to pay bills and pay in receipts. Thank you John.

We should like to thank Tim and Lesley Harmer for their regular reports on the River Misbourne and the accompanying photographs. We are also grateful to the distributors of the Newsletter who do the door to door deliveries, springing into action as soon as they receive their bundle of copies.

PROGRAMME

All our talks have been on Zoom in the past twelve months and we have

been really pleased that so many of our members have joined us for these meetings. It is always good to see familiar faces on the screen and to have an opportunity, albeit short, to talk with members. We have had some excellent speakers and talks and also the Twelfth Night Revels in January, which provided welcome entertainment. We are also happy at the way in which during the year members have been unable to resist Edward's requests for volunteers in the audience to write up a report on the talk for publication in our Newsletter. Thank you for that. We have all benefitted from good articles written in different styles. I hope that our volunteer scribes have also enjoyed the experience. It is always most reassuring for everyone, especially our speakers, to know that these virtual meetings will happen so smoothly under Lena's professional guidance.

In addition to the talks we have during the past year kept in touch with members through the E-alerts, the Website, the Newsletter and even the occasional telephone call. Most of our members are able to join Zoom without much difficulty now, although many of us do rely on the more technically expert to set up and host the meetings for us. It has been really encouraging that our membership numbers have remained steady.

At the time of going to print people

have once again felt able to visit family and friends, also go to cafes and restaurants. As a small step towards normality the Society's Events Team decided to organise an outing for members this month to Winchester and the Gurkha Museum. There will be a smaller group than usual to allow for social distancing on the coach. We were not able to give as much notice as usual for an outing, but despite this there still seems to be enthusiasm for an Amersham Society outing.

The Events team will meet in September to plan the Programme of Talks and an Outing for 2022. If a member has recently heard a good speaker and talk that members might also enjoy, do please let us have details.

There will be three more talks this year: Bulstrode Park, Scannappeal and Changing Wildlife in the Chilterns. Details of these are in the Programme Leaflet and on the back cover of this Newsletter. As Covid is still with us we have decided to continue the talks on Zoom for the rest of this year at least.

I hope that as many of you as possible will join us for the AGM and for the talk. We usually invite a speaker from a charity to give us the talk after the AGM. This year one of the Directors of Scannappeal, Lisa Trivett, will speak about this local charity. We look forward to seeing you then.

Dorothy Symes

Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on
Wednesday 27th October 2021 at 8.00 pm. On Zoom.

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting and business arising.
- 3 Chairman's Annual Report.
- 4 Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts.
- 5 Election of Committee Members and Officers. **
- 6 Proposed change to the constitution. The committee asks the membership to approve the following change to the constitution. It is proposed to amend item 10 paragraph 2 to read:

An Annual General Meeting, of which at least 14 days notice shall be given to all members, shall be held in October to receive the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, for the election of Officers and Committee and, if required by law and/or the Charity Commission, an Independent Examiner of the Accounts, and for any other business at the discretion of the Chairman.

The current constitution can be viewed at:

<https://www.amershamsociety.org/constitution>

- 7 Election of Independent Examiner of the Accounts.
- 8 Any other business.

** Election of committee Members and Officers

Nominations should be sent by 20th October to the Hon Secretary at 162 High Street, Amersham, HP7 0EG.

The Annual General Meeting will be followed at 8.30pm by a talk.

Scannappeal

The talk will be given by Lisa Trivett who is a director of Scannappeal. Scannappeal is a local charity that raises money for the state of the art life saving equipment for Wycombe, Stoke Mandeville, Amersham and community hospitals in Buckinghamshire. Since it was established in 1987 it has raised over £15 million.

A Scientist Walks Around the Old Town

As a result of the covid-19 lockdown I found myself walking around the Old Town much more than usual. We are very lucky to live in such a beautiful and historic environment but I found myself looking much more carefully than usual. Whilst I have learnt a great deal of history in the twenty years we have lived in Amersham, underneath it all I am still a scientist and I started looking with a scientist's eye.

Doctors and nurses have had a rigorous scientific training. The development of vaccines against covid-19, treatments for those suffering from the disease, making testing kits or the chemicals to put in the kits: it is scientists who are doing all this work.

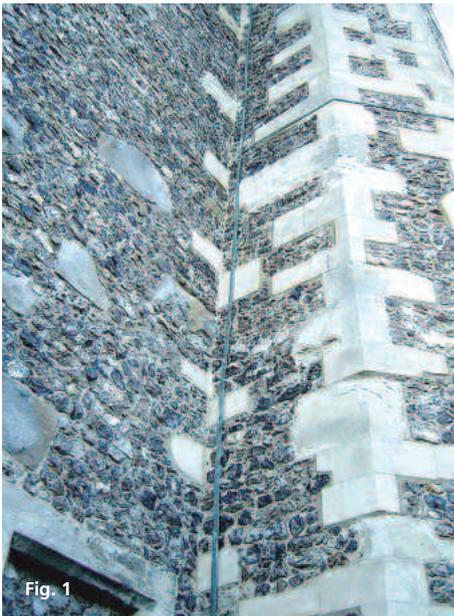
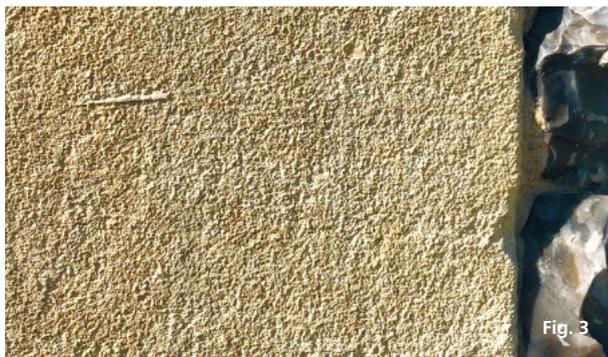


Fig. 1

St Mary's Church is a rich source of science to observe. Notice the lightning conductor snaking down the south side of the tower (*Fig. 1*). Thunderstorms can generate huge electric currents – typically 150 000 ampères; your ring main at home can cope with 13 ampères so you can imagine how much damage might be caused by lightning if it were allowed to run free. The lightning conductor provides a low resistance route for the current to run to earth, greatly reducing the risk of damage. Copper is chosen because it is a very good conductor of electricity, although sometimes its alloys, which are mixtures with other metals such as tin (bronze), may be used instead. Gold would be even better,



but is not chosen for obvious reasons. Sodium would also be better but for anyone who saw sodium dropped into water at school the reason will be equally obvious. We all know copper – a beautiful, shiny brown-coloured metal, copper-coloured in fact, and the lightning conductor doesn't look a bit like that. It's pale green. The surface, but only the surface, of the copper slowly combines with oxygen in the air. The copper oxide so formed then slowly combines with acids in the air. The main acid round here now is carbon dioxide (or carbonic acid when it dissolves in water), although in past coal fires would have produced sulfuric or sulfurous acids and in central London internal combustion engines give rise to nitric acid. So the green colour is actually copper carbonate (strictly, hydrated copper carbonate) but it's only a thin layer on the surface of the copper and does not impair the conductivity.

Whilst we are at the church, look at the gargoyles (*Fig. 2*). These gargoyles are carved from sandstone, a sedimentary rock laid down millions of years ago. The rock comprises grains of sand, glued together with limestone, calcium car-

bonate. Carbonates tend to dissolve in acids. The great show caves in Cheddar or Derbyshire were formed when limestone slowly dissolved in carbonic acid. Over the years, exposed to carbonic acid in the rain water, the same has happened to the

gargoyle, making it even more ugly than the original carver had intended. In time, it will dissolve completely.

Look at the right-hand side of the wall of the porch (*Fig. 3*). The buff-coloured stone is mostly flat but the rough surface has a few smoother pieces sticking slightly proud of the surface. The basic material is limestone, but the little pieces are fossils, the remains of shells. You can see a definite cone-shape shell at about head height. They are sticking out because the matrix in which they are embedded is dissolving slightly faster than the shells. The density of calcium carbonate in the shell is a little greater than in the matrix, because the latter is mixed with sand.





Fig. 4

From the church, walk into the Memorial Gardens. In April the borders were magnificent with deep purple tulips. I picked up one tulip petal (Fig. 4). (It had already fallen to the ground – no living plants were harmed in writing this article.) When we got home, I put it in a saucer and then added a few drops of water (no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon) and used the teaspoon to mash the petal into the water, really breaking up the petal and squeezing the juice out. I ended up with a few drops of a blue-purple liquid (Fig. 5). I then poured half of the coloured liquid into another saucer. To one of the saucers, I added one drop of vinegar (Fig. 6, left), to the other a tiny speck of soap (Fig. 6, right). The former went

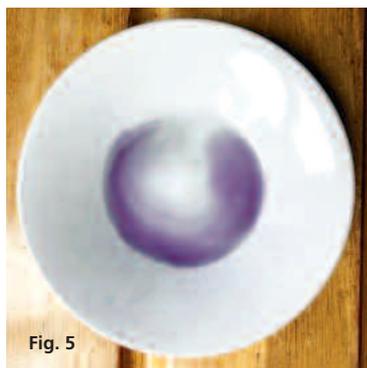


Fig. 5

bright red, the latter a greeny blue. The pigment in the tulip petal, an anthocyanin, is an indicator (do you remember litmus, at school?). It goes red in the presence of vinegar, a weak acid. It goes greeny blue in the presence of soap, because that is an alkali. If you visit the Memorial Gardens at a different time of year there may not be any tulips but the same thing happens with most other red, blue or purple petals and fruits such as elder-berries, although you may get different colour changes.



Fig. 6

In this article I have talked about various sciences – physics (electrical conductivity), geology (rocks) and chemistry (dissolving gargoyles and tulip petals). Near the entrance to the church yard is a wooden bench in memory of the parents of the donors. Unusually for Amersham it is partly inscribed in Chinese characters, which reminded me that the Chinese for chemistry (Fig. 7) literally means 'change study'. I hope from this article you can see why that is a good name. The characters in Fig. 7 were written for me by a former student. He became a doctor.

Peter Borrows



Fig. 7

Madelyn Postman from Sustainable Amersham and Sarah Green MP attend the Plastic Free Amersham stand.



Amersham as a Plastic Free Town

We live in a world where the ‘go-to’ packaging material is plastic. It is flexible, lightweight, cheap, convenient, can be extruded and stretched – and it’s **EVERYWHERE**. We have become so used to its presence that we forget to question why everything needs to be wrapped in the first place. Single use plastic dominates the market and until it is vetoed by the masses it will continue to be produced.

A factor that is often overlooked is that plastic is made from crude oil and its manufacture is thereby a significant market for the fossil fuel industry. The burning of fossil fuels is central to the scale and pace of climate change – responsible for 86% of all man-made emissions. Indeed the latest IPCC report details the worrying environmental effects that we are set to experience if we do not bring this under control right now.



It is easy to think we are helpless in this race against time but when it comes to plastic waste we can all make a difference and it could be a game changer. This is why Sustainable Amersham has pledged to make Amersham a single-use plastic free town by 2025. There are some easy swaps that help to reduce our plastic consumption and it's really about changing daily habits one step at a time.

Step one:

Go through your cupboards, room by room and note just how many products are in plastic containers or are made from single use plastic. For example in the bathroom, 264 million toothbrushes and 2 billion plastic razors, are discarded every year and the average family uses up to 216 bottles of hair products and 24 tubes of toothpaste. Some of these products also contain microplastics in the form of microbeads and silicone which end up polluting our rivers and oceans, damaging natural habitats and wildlife and ultimately enter into the food chain.

Step two:

Use up all your products and recycle the containers responsibly wherever possible. Check the plastic type against the council Waste Wizard (www.buckscc.gov.uk) to see whether it can be recycled or look for a Terracycle collection point locally (www.medictomedic.org.uk). This organisation works with manufacturers to return packaging that is difficult to recycle in household collections.

Step three:

Reduce the amount of plastic you buy. Re-use and refill containers as many times as you can and even re-purpose them before you finally discard or recycle them. Before you buy new, question whether there is a plastic free alternative. This is often obvious when it comes to fruit, veg and bakery items as these can be found unwrapped but is more challenging with liquids and other household items. There are however still plastic free options you can choose – if you look for them, (*Glass milk bottles, jars, cans, paper wrapped products, etc.*). Even personal care products like shampoo and soap can be found in bars not plastic bottles toothpaste tablets can replace toothpaste tubes and laundry detergent comes in plastic free sheets or cubes.



Step four:

Make plastic free shopping a priority and a habit for the future. Take re-usable shopping bags with you and say “NO” to disposable coffee / teacups. Instead take your own re-usable cup when you are out and about or better still, pause a while and enjoy a hot drink from a china cup inside the venue. We dispose of 2.5 billion coffee cups in the UK each year and less than 1% are ever recycled. Use a refillable water bottle to stay hydrated on the go and take advantage of the many cafes in our town that will **ALL** refill your bottle with water for free. Even some shops and hairdressers offer refills. This will help reduce the staggering 38.5 million plastic water bottles sold each year of which under half are recycled with the rest going for incineration or to landfill.

We have sadly become a throw-away society with little regard for the consequences of our actions. Collectively we create 27 thousand tonnes of waste in the UK every year and this could be radically reduced if

we take positive action now. The recent pandemic has certainly increased the amount of packaging in the system and somewhat surprisingly PPE only accounted for 2.5% of unbranded plastic pollution.

In a recent audit organised by Surfers Against Sewage (www.sas.org.uk) as part of their “Million Mile Beach Clean” it showed that 65% of all branded packaging can be traced back to just 12 companies. There is an urgent need to make companies more accountable, to enforce the use of more sustainable packaging and for the UK to introduce ‘deposit return schemes’ for all drinks containers.



Sustainable Amersham are working with Buckinghamshire Council, Amersham Town Council, businesses and local organisations to raise awareness of the plastic problem and show how we can ultimately declare our town single-use “Plastic Free”.

For more information on how you can help visit www.sustainableamersham.org.

Nikki Magrath

Rural Workwear of the 19th Century



The Amersham Society were treated to a fascinating talk by **Will Phillips**, curator of Social History at the Bucks County Museum on the topic of Rural Working clothing of the 19th century. He pointed out that these clothes were rare in collections as people wanted to keep safe, and later donate, the more elaborate clothing such as 'posh frocks', colourful silks and embroidered dresses! Clothes worn for hard work were more likely worn threadbare and the material made into other useful items or rag rugs rather than preserved for museums.

From his first illustration, Will pointed out that this man's dress was far from the archetypal country smocks! The labourer pictured wore a Billycock hat, a plain loose overshirt tied at the waist, knee length britches, low boots, gaiters and stockings. Working men were reluctant to change, preferring clothes which

gave freedom of movement and the protection given by gaiters. For ploughing and harrowing and broadcasting seed in rough and muddy fields, labourers were well prepared for their work and could remove their gaiters when returning home. It was not until 1850 that long trousers were more common with expanding construction work and



Labourer in Billycock hat and loose overshirt

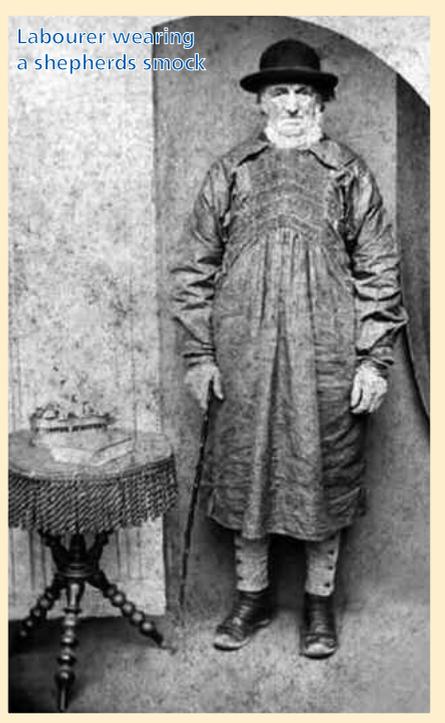


collection show signs of wear, as a man would have two smocks – one for work (which probably was worn out or handed down) and one for best which was more elaborate and might be made of white linen. They were only worn if it made the task easier, not getting in the way of a scythe or threshing. The museum has a shepherd's smock, stained but warm when out on a hillside. One example in the collection has never been worn and washed and still shows the pencil design under the embroidery. This might well be a smock which was given as a prize, for example at the Queen's coronation event which gave smocks as prizes for races and events.

mechanisation; however the WWII Land Army corduroy knee-length britches were closer to the earlier labourers' clothing. From pictures of harvesting and canal construction we see the use of Yarks, straps below the knees to give more freedom of movement (and perhaps prevent mice running up trouser legs).

Although smocks were held up as archetypal country wear, few are to be found in the museum. They are based on rectangles of cloth, shaped often with smocking and decoration and worn more generally not just as workwear, often over other clothing. The smock was reversible and opened out down the full length. In some areas of the country, the colour of the cloth was traditional in the locality – such as brown or black, and in the Midlands, blue. Few examples in the

Labourer wearing a shepherd's smock





Women wearing bonnet and apron in a farmyard, Princes Risborough

For women, daily wear consisted of a long skirt with underskirt, a blouse, a hat or bonnet and always an apron. The bonnets were either plaited straw poke bonnets or more often practical cotton sunbonnets with a flap to protect the neck, sometimes with piped trimming. They wore clogs, with a wooden sole, leather upper and reinforced with metal rim with hob nails; not only were these durable but protected the feet from mud

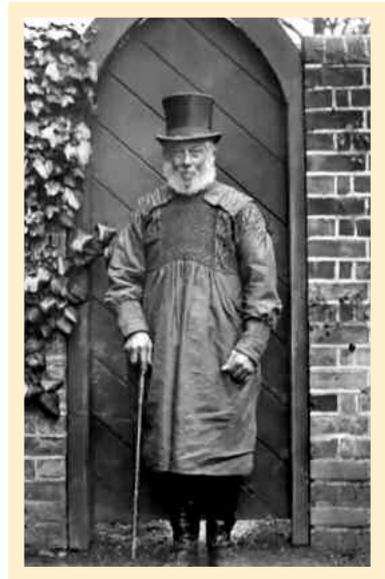
and wet in the yard. Overshoes with straps and high fabric legs for protection were also used, but more common were pattens, unchanged over many years, a wooden sole with a top strap on top of a metal ring; many of the rings survive long after the wood and leather have rotted. For men in the fields, hob nail boots were functional and hard wearing and if made individually and shaped to the foot, could be comfortable as well.

Labourer wearing gaiters for ploughing





For specific tasks, we saw the glove and mitt of the hedger, whose important task was to lay new hedges, to maintain and develop stock-proof protection; the mixture of the leather and metal staples however provide a challenge today to conserve effectively. The farrier and the blacksmith continued for many years to need protective clothing to perform their tasks and have special leather aprons, split in the centre to allow them to shoe the horses. The example we saw from the museum clearly showed the shape of the original hide.



Samual Sinfield of Moulsoe in his smock

In the early 1800s smocks were traditional in the countryside, but a hundred years later they remained only as the wear of elderly men. The workmen of the early 1900s wore trousers, collarless shirts, waistcoats and hats, as they built railways, canals and worked the land. Our talk finished with the photograph of two people photographed at Wad-desdon dressed in fancy dress, one as a country bumpkin, wearing a smock, smoking a clay pipe and with the traditional yarks, the knee straps tying up their trousers. The photographer, Albert Cleary's provided a clear picture of a nostalgic rural idyll in 1920.



Christine Standing



A Musical Evening with Iain Ledingham

Director of Amersham Festival of Music.

How lucky we are to live in the Chilterns with such wonderful countryside, ancient buildings, good pubs and restaurants. We are also fortunate to have so many exceptional musicians living in the area. Of these Iain Ledingham, who gave the Amersham Society talk last May, is the one most responsible for putting Amersham and district on the musical map. He founded the Chalfont Music Society in 1981 followed soon after by the Amersham Festival of Music in 1983, of which he remains Musical Director.

In his talk he shared with us some of his favourite music but, before that, he gave a brief resume of his career.

He gained a degree in music at Queens' College Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar. He subsequently studied piano, harpsichord and conducting at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM).

After a post-graduate degree at the RAM he worked at Glyndbourne as a répétiteur. This must have been a most rewarding job - accompanying singers, playing the orchestral parts for

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685 –1750)



Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248 -
Part 3: Herrscher Des Himmels,
Erhore Das Lallen

ARTIST

Lynda Russell, Mark Padmore, Etc.;
Harry Christophers: The Sixteen Choir
& Orchestra

ALBUM

Bach: Christmas Oratorio [Disc 1]

rehearsals, and working with the likes of music director Bernard Haitink, producer Peter Hall and singer Janet Baker.

After that he joined the staff at the RAM. As a vocal coach he considers it especially important to emphasise the relevance of the text as well as the music. One amazing project he undertook was planning and conducting the RAM's 10 year project to perform all J S Bach's surviving cantatas. The great composer wrote 5 cycles of cantatas for each week of the liturgical year. Of these just over 200 still exist along with a number of secular cantatas. It must have been an awesome task. He explained how he studied each score from scratch without having listened to commercial recordings first. No wonder he was awarded the RAM Kohn Bach prize for 2017. Jonathan Freeman-Attwood,

principal of the Royal Academy of Music and co-chair of the prize panel, said: 'There can't be a more fitting winner of this prestigious prize than Iain, who has immersed himself in these wonderful works for the last decade, and trained and inspired hundreds of students.

If you have a computer with good sound here is a link to a YouTube video of an extract from Cantata 51 <https://tinyurl.com/ytek88wm>

Not surprisingly the Music of Bach was featured in his talk. His first two musical examples showed the enormous emotional range of Bach's music. The first, from the 3rd part of the Christmas Oratorio Herrscher des Himmels, erhöre das Lallen with its exciting use of trumpets and timpani, demonstrated the dance-like and joyful character of Bach's music. Next, a very

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756 – 1791)

Piano Concerto #25 In C, K 503 -
1. Allegro Maestoso



ARTIST

Murray Perahia: English Chamber
Orchestra

ALBUM

Mozart: Piano Concertos [Disc 11]

different mood in an extract from the St Matthew Passion concerning Peter's denial of Christ and leading to the wonderful aria *Erbarne Dich*. Finally, an example of the different ways Bach could use the same music for very different effects. The famous passion chorale from the Matthew Passion was contrasted with the bright and joyful one from the end of the Christmas Oratorio. Iain pointed out how they were both derived from the same chorale.

He then moved on to Mozart - his favourite composer. He concentrated on two aspects of Mozart's music which he particularly admires, the piano concertos and operas. His first example was the opening movement of the piano concerto No 25, the grandest of all the concertos and scored for a large orchestra – 'the concerto

equivalent of the Jupiter symphony'. We heard part of the 1st movement played by Murray Perahia, and were encouraged to note the subtle shifts between major and minor keys and the interesting ways in which a march-like tune is transformed.

Iain then moved on to opera and his favourite one - *The Marriage of Figaro*'. He concentrated on the famous sextet "*Riconosci in questo amplesso*" giving us an insight into the wonderful intricacies of the composition.

His final choice of musician was rather different – The multi-talented Dominic Aldiss, a popular guest at the Amersham Festival of music, and a wonderful jazz singer and pianist. The example he chose was of a song by Michel Lagrand – *Where's the Love*.

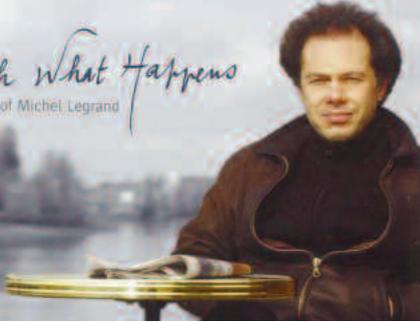
A really upbeat way to end a most interesting evening.

MICHEL JEAN LEGRAND
(1932 – 2019)

Where's The Love

Dominic Alldis

Watch What Happens
The songs of Michel Legrand



ARTIST
Dominic Alldis

ALBUM
Watch What Happens - The Songs Of
Michel Legrand

The recordings used during the talk were :-

Weihnachts Oratorium / Christmas
Oratorio (J.S.Bach)
Harry Christophers (*Coro*).

Matthäus-Passion, BWV 244
Philippe Herreweghe, Collegium Vocale
Gent. (*Harmonia Mundi*).

Concerto No. 25 in C Major
for Piano and Orchestra, K. 503
Murray Perahia; English Chamber
Orchestra. (*Warner*).

Marriage of Figaro
Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish
Chamber Orchestra (*Telarc*).

Watch What Happens: The Songs
of Michel Legrand (*Canzona Music*).

For more information on the
Amersham Festival of Music go to
<https://www.amershamfestival.org/>

David Godwin

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685 – 1750)



St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244 -
Wenn Ich Einmal Soll Scheiden

ARTIST
Sibylla Rubens, Werner Güra, Etc.;
Philippe Herreweghe; Collegium
Vocale Gent & Orchestra

ALBUM
Bach: St. Matthew Passion [Disc 3]

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756 – 1791)



Le Nozze Di Figaro -
Act 3: È Decisa La Lite & Riconosci In
Questo Amplesso

ARTIST
Alastair Miles, Nuccia Focile, Etc.;
Charles Mackerras; Scottish Chamber
Orchestra & Chorus

ALBUM
Mozart: Le Nozze Di Figaro [Disc 2]

River Misbourne Survey Report

Dated 21st August 2021
for the Amersham Society Committee

Started around 10:30.
Weather dry and warm.

Survey carried out by
Tim Harmer and Lesley Harmer.

**Area of survey from the bottom
end of Shardeloes Lake to beyond
the Old Lookers Garage.**

- 1** River running well and the river behind the Cricket Club looks clear and is running well. However there is weed.
- 2** Between Shardeloes Drive and Amersham by-pass bridge and further along to Amersham High Street bridge the river is running well.
- 3** Copas Farm is private land, so unable to undertake survey. However from the High Street bridge the river running well.
- 4** Mill Lane. The river is locked behind gates giving very little visual access.
- 5** The stretch of river immediately downstream from Mill Lane to the corner of Barn Meadow is running well and clear on one side but has thick vegetation on the cottages' side of the river. Riparian owners need to clear back a little.
- 6** The Barn Meadow reach is clear and flowing well.
- 7** We did not have access to the river between the culvert and Pondwick. At Pondwick the river has thick vegetation after the old brewery and up to the Museum. On the Pondwick side across from the Alms houses, the vegetation needs clearing back a bit by the Riparian owners.
- 8** At Badminton Court the river flowing well but vegetation in river.
- 9** Church Mead. River flowing well.
- 10** Car Park area no supermarket trolleys found in the river.
- 11** From the public car park vegetation seen in the river. However, river flowing OK.
- 12** The river behind Tesco car park. The overflow culvert looks OK.
- 13** At Station Road Bridge the river is flowing. There is a large amount of weed growing.
- 14** West Arch of the road bridge to Ambers and river fork at the old Lookers (*Jaguar*) Garage has vegetation but flowing.
- 15** Area from the old Lookers (*Jaguar*) is flowing well.



The New River Route

16 From where the river emerges from the Two Arches under London Road West there are grass cuttings dumped on the river side and these need to be removed.

17 Moving along into Bury Farm field river running very well. However vegetation in places.

18 River inspected to the reworked cleared river track where it is running very well.

Tim Harmer



Grass cuttings by the river from the Garage

Rectory Meadow Patients Group

The Covid pandemic has had a massive impact on the NHS and all aspects of healthcare. The role of local GP practices has been critical.

Rectory Meadow Surgery (RMS) in Old Amersham has continued to provide a service to the local community throughout the pandemic albeit with many changes to comply with Government guidelines. It has also been heavily involved in identifying and contacting patients about their eligibility for vaccination.

The local vaccination programme has been an outstanding success and Rectory Meadow patients have been kept aware of events by the Secretary of the Rectory Meadow Patients Group. The Chair of the Group, Chris Purves has helped organise the teams of volunteers who made the Chesham Town Hall vaccination programme such a stress free experience.

The Patients Group was formed a little over six years ago following a meeting of three patients of Rectory Meadow, Graham Cook, Chris Phillips and Gordon Barratt over refreshments at the Kings Arms. The background to the meeting was an NHS requirement that every GP practice should have a properly constituted body – a Patients Participation Group [PPG] to represent patients' best interests – to be a critical friend. Prior to this there was a 'virtual'

reference group of some 40 patients who were not identifiable even one to another and responded to regular messages from the Surgery with opinions on questionnaires and statistical reports. To convert this to a physical forum required both individual consent and careful data protection measures. So the three instigators publicly announced themselves with contact details and waited with a 'pot of tea' at a given time and date at the Surgery to see who came. Members of the active [since 1980s] fund-raising group of FRIENDS of the Surgery also joined an early session on public engagement for the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The three felt that having enjoyed the benefit of an outstanding GP practice for many years the time had come "*to put something back*" and were joined by like-minded patients Peter Metcalf, Mike Hender and Drene de Silva to form the first committee. Membership was then 14 and it is now 1063

The Patients Group today provides a communication channel between the Patients, Doctors, Nurses and non-clinical staff of Rectory Meadow Surgery. The Patients Group Committee is composed of volunteers with Chris Purves as Chair and Gordon Barratt as Secretary. Providing members with regular updates on news from the practice and other issues which may

affect their wellbeing, this service has proved invaluable during the pandemic emergency measures by broadcasting official bulletins and alerting patients when texts and letters were being sent to specific patient categories; also having to issue warning of scams! It pays to be adaptable.

Through a quarterly Newsletter the PPG provides information about changes in the local and wider NHS. Recently the editorial team found it impossible to keep up with events and suspended issues before publication. From the start the Committee worked with the RMS Practice Manager to re-style both the Newsletter and website to add 'people' images and make reader/user friendly changes wherever possible at minimum cost including voluntary labour. The collaboration worked well.

The PPG holds quarterly General Meetings and special Health Awareness events twice a year. Prior to the pandemic these were held in the Barn Meadow Pavilion in School Lane but more recently on Zoom.

The Health Awareness events, open to all Rectory Meadow patients, has, with the involvement of experts covered a wide range of topics over the past few years including *"Stress-staying fit in mind and body"*, *"Heart Disease"* and *"Living with Parkinson's Disease"*. The Spring 2021 meeting on Zoom dealt with *"Living with Dementia"* and attracted a large audience. The next talk planned for October 25th on Zoom will be devoted to Diabetes. Details of previous talks can be found on the Surgery website [www.rectorymeadowsurgery.co.uk/ppg]

Patients are encouraged to suggest topics for future events and for discussion at one of the quarterly PPG General Meetings.

Like the Amersham Society the Patients Group welcomes more members and seeks volunteers to fill some of the Committee positions.

Anyone requiring further information or wishing to suggest topics for future meetings should contact us at rmspatients@nhs.net

GPG Rectory Meadow



Amersham Museum News



When I last wrote a piece for the newsletter we were just opening up the museum again, after the extended period of closure at the beginning of the year.

Now, in mid-August it feels as though the museum is operating on near full capacity again. This week we've welcomed adults and families to art workshops in the garden, a U3A group for a walk and museum visit, we've put up a new exhibition of photographs from a local photographer and we're delivering two walks this weekend.

Our amazing team of volunteers are working hard, making the museum a wonderful place to be, for both the objects in our collection and the people that visit our space. In this newsletter, it's refreshing to share with you the exciting projects we're working on this autumn; we're looking ahead and feeling positive.



Amersham Before Plastic

This spring we were delighted to receive funding for the Amersham Before Plastic project. The project is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Amersham Community Board. Amersham Before Plastic will research and share how local people grew, shopped and recycled sustainably in the past.

Through oral history interviews, reminiscence sessions and our collections, we will explore how local people shopped and consumed before plastic packaging and pre-packaged food was commonplace. Working in partnership with local community group Sustainable Amersham, we will draw comparisons between historic habits of growing locally, minimising waste, plastic-free packaging and ending with contemporary initiatives today.

We will share our findings in a fun and engaging exhibition in our mobile museum. The exhibition will travel out and about in the local area, popping up at markets and heritage events. It will be launched in time for COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference, which runs from 31st October to 12th November.

We will also distribute challenge packs, asking local people to record their plastic use. With the support of Sustainable Amersham, we will provide suggestions for how plastic use can be reduced and Amersham can work

towards becoming a plastic-free town. We will also deliver sessions to local primary schools, encouraging children to think about plastic and waste reduction. If you have a story to share about what local shopping used to be like before single use plastic, or frugal habits you have/had at home to minimise waste, we would love to hear about them.

Amersham Routes

Over the last 18 months many of us have been walking well-loved routes in our local area, whilst others have discovered their local landscape for the first time. At Amersham Museum we have seen a renewed interest in our programme of heritage walks and have responded with the development of a series of new routes.

Discover the stories of Amersham old town

For many years we have welcomed visitors to Amersham old town on one of our guided walks. They take place weekly from April to October, on Sunday afternoons at 2.30pm. Our walks tell the stories of local people, local industry and notable events. Yet we also highlight small details that provide an insight into how life used to be in the town. This year, with the support of the Rothschild Foundation, we have developed a broader story of the town and created two separate Old Amersham walks. We are now delighted to be offering the 'Early



View across the valley of Latimer and Latimer Park Farm

Development of Amersham Old Town’ and the ‘Expansion of Old Amersham’ walks on alternate weekends for the rest of the year.

Amersham’s 20th century architecture

Our walks programme explores more recent history too. Our programme of architectural walks is focused on Amersham-on-the-Hill, with a particular focus on Arts & Crafts architecture and the work of J H Kennard. This year, with the support of the Rothschild Foundation, we will launch a new walk which showcases Modernist architecture – including contemporary houses which draw on its principles – in the local area.

Walking the drovers routes

One of our volunteers used time at home during lockdown to trace historic walking routes. He has researched long distance drovers’ routes through our local area, where drovers took cattle to the London market and short distance routes where farmers took their cattle to and from the common. The result is a guided walk and a longer self-guided walk which follow these paths.

Be your own guide

The self-guided drovers walk is one of three developed through the support of the Rothschild Foundation this year. We asked our volunteers to share walks they knew or part of their local area that they would like to explore. The

result is three walks, in three self-guided leaflets, that visitors can follow: the Chess Valley; Station to Station from Chalfont & Latimer station to Amersham station; and the drovers routes. The leaflets will be launched this autumn and we have plans for more to follow.

More information about all our walks, including dates, can be found on our website. Pdf versions of the self-guided walks will be available online for download.

We recommend that you book ahead for our guided walks. Tickets are £5 per person and children can attend for free. We welcome group bookings for all walks and they can be arranged at a date and time to suit the group. Group booking fees are £7 per person with a minimum charge of £70. Contact info@amershammuseum.org for more information <https://amershammuseum.org/events/guided-walks>

30 Local Stories

As you probably know by now, 2021 is a special year for the museum; 30 years ago we opened to visitors at 49 High Street for the first time. So much has been achieved over the last 30 years and so many members of the Amersham Society made an important contribution to help make the museum a success.

As well as asking you to share your memories with us, we have developed

a series of arts projects to celebrate the contributions that different groups of local people make to the museum and our collection. Our 30 Local Stories project is working with older people in the local area, to record their stories of being young as well as their memories of the town. 30 stories will be collated into a book and, through working with an artist, a series of tiles, will be created and installed in the museum. We hope that this project will be launched in spring 2022.

Alongside this project, we will be working with Stony Dean School. With the support of the Rothschild Foundation, we will share stories about our garden and the children will create a series of sensory tiles, to be permanently installed in the school's sensory garden and in the museum garden.

Finally, we will shortly be hosting an artistic residency, supported by the Rothschild Foundation, to work with people under the age of 30, to share their stories of the local area.

It's great to feel some optimism and excitement about the future again; we would love to share that with you. We're always looking for people to help as volunteers and support our work. If you have some spare time and would like to help, please get in touch. I wish you an enjoyable summer and hope to see you in the museum this autumn.

Emily Toettcher

Amersham Museum 30th Anniversary

Report by Edward Copisarow

Way back in the mists of time - well, the 1950s actually, the Amersham Society was founded for a number of purposes, one of which was the creation of a museum. Objects were secured by donation and acquisition until, by the mid-1980s a sizeable accumulation of artefacts comprising the collection was housed at the British Legion hall in Whielden Street. The collection was very much in want of a permanent home of its own where the objects could be studied and exhibited to bring to life the history of our remarkable market town. It was a fortuitous alignment of this circumstance with another that led to the museum

finding its present home in the High Street. Bucks County Council had identified 49 High Street as Amersham's most seriously "At Risk" historic building and the newly formed Bucks Historic Buildings Trust was willing to take up the saving of this precious building if only a permanent community use could be assured. The happy solution to the problems facing the Amersham Society and the Bucks Historic Buildings Trust was the creation of a joint venture – the Amersham Historic Buildings Trust, the vehicle through which all the necessary funding was secured and the Museum became independent of the Society.

The British Legion Hall, c1980



Amersham Museum Oral History Project

Report by Edward Copisarow



At Risk, number 49

Emily Toettcher and the Museum team have a number of projects lined up to mark the 30th Anniversary of the Museum moving into 49 High Street including a spoken memory project. The idea is that anyone who was involved or just remembers anything about the work to secure a permanent home for the Museum is invited to volunteer to be interviewed by a Museum volunteer and the sound recordings will form part of the permanent collection at the Museum. Interviews will not need to take place in person unless both

interviewer and interviewee wish it...the pandemic has taught us all that there are plenty of ways of getting together virtually these days. And so I come to the purpose of this short item...to seek readers with memories to share. Many members of the Amersham Society at the time involved themselves in the fundraising effort and no doubt some of those members are still

amongst our 400 or so strong membership. A similar appeal is being made to those who were involved in the Bucks Historic Buildings Trust and the Conservation team at Bucks County Council but this is the appeal to members of the Amersham Society. Whether you were directly involved or just a bystander, Emily would be very pleased indeed to hear from you so that your memories can be preserved for future generations.

Do please get in touch with her direct on **01494 723700** or **emily@amershammuseum.org**.

NOTICEBOARD

Programme of Talks

Society Meetings will continue to be held on Zoom until the end of this year and probably the Talk in January will also be on Zoom. We shall review the arrangements in the New Year. Most people are now familiar with our Zoom Meeting but for those who may have joined the Society recently we have the following arrangements in place. About ten days before the meeting Members will be sent an E-alert inviting them to join the Zoom Meeting and explaining to them how to do so.

The Meetings will open at 7.45pm and the
Talks will start at 8.00pm.

- 29 September **Bulstrode**
Magnificence and Scandal on our doorstep.
A talk by Denise Beddows.
- 27 October **Annual General Meeting**
Followed by a talk on the Work of Scannappeal
given by a Director Lisa Trivett.
- 24 November **Changing Wildlife in the Chilterns**
We travel with naturalist John Tyler from warm
seas, through ice ages, tundra and forest to the
farmland and beechwoods of today.

Amersham Society Officers

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