



**January 2019**

**AMERSHAM SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER**



Amersham Memorial Gardens:  
Centenary of the Great War display.



## CONTENTS

- 2 **Report from the Chair**
  - 4 **Sir John Johnson**
  - 5 **The Amersham Band**  
Report by Peter Borrows.
  - 8 **Civilian Internees in World War 1**  
Report by John Suckling.
  - 11 **Society Outing to St Mary's Church, Fairford  
and Buscot Park, Oxfordshire**  
Details and Application form for outing on  
Thursday 13th June 2019.
  - 15 **Subscriptions**  
Dr Peter Borrows.
  - 16 **River Misbourne Survey Report**  
Report by Tim Harmer.
  - 18 **Museum News**  
Report by the curator Emily Toettcher.
  - 22 **New Map for Old Town**  
Report by Edward Copisarow.
  - 24 **Amersham Memorial Gardens**  
Centenary of the Great War.
- Newsboard**

Cover photograph by John Tyler



# Report from the Chair

At the time of writing this Report I have been in this Chair for just five weeks. Three Committee Members had indicated before the AGM that they planned to stand down in October. They were Martin Pounce, Chair, Andrew Stephens, Vice Chair and Tim Harmer who was responsible for river monitoring and coordinating the street cleaning. I am glad to have this opportunity now to thank them all for their contributions to the work of the Society. In particular Martin carried out his role as Chair with great energy and commitment over the past four years and has made sure during this time that the Society contributed to the debates on various local issues, particularly planning. Martin was also part of the Town Map Project group. The Map was installed by the Memorial Gardens and in the car park, where it is viewed by many visitors and residents every day.

*(See also Edward Copisarow's article in this Newsletter).*

Five committee members were elected. They are as follows:

**Dorothy Symes**, Chair will continue to be part of the Events team and is at present Newsletter Editor;

**Edward Copisarow**, Vice Chair with responsibility for liaison with Amersham Museum and coordinating local history projects;

**Geraldine Marshall-Andrew**, will continue as Hon Secretary and coordinator of the Society's response

to planning applications, also as a member of the Events team;

**David Atkinson** Hon. Treasurer has returned to the Committee;

**Peter Borrows** will continue as Membership Secretary and has also agreed to post some news on the web site and to issue e-alerts, until a new Website Manager is appointed.

In addition although Tim Harmer no longer wishes to be on the committee, he has agreed to continue the regular revue and report on the River Misbourne and to liaise with Serco.

As well as the regular programme of talks at the Kings Chapel and the summer outing, the committee together also helped to organise several well attended events. Thanks to the wonderful weather in the summer and the autumn two of our events could be held out of doors.

I have looked at some of the back numbers of the Newsletter and have been struck by how often the same issues have been addressed over the years, traffic parking, street cleaning, the cleanliness of the river Misbourne, the state of the Market Hall and, you guessed it, the need for new committee members to replace those who have retired. During 2019, we expect these issues to continue to be important, and shall monitor particularly carefully the planning applications, any proposals for parking management, plans for the Market Hall and also street cleaning.

## The Committee

The Amersham Society has a long and largely successful history. It was founded in 1956 and the first minutes of a committee meeting were dated 16 October 1956. The first item on the agenda then was the possible demolition of Shardeloes and the committee resolved to do everything in their power to prevent this. You will hear more about this at our first talk of 2019 on 30th January, entitled *“The Destruction of Shardeloes”*.

I hear from friends in different towns in the country that they are finding it more difficult to recruit volunteers for their organisations, whether it is the need for help for a sailing club or for the WI.

As we have already mentioned in the November e-alert, the five committee members elected at the AGM all have experience of the Amersham Society work.

The Society now has over 400 members and I am very pleased that at the moment the committee is able to carry on its core work. But it is essential that we recruit more committee members. Work on the committee need not be unduly onerous. It can also be enjoyable, especially when a group work together on a project. They do not all have to be members of the committee. So please think about it.

As we mentioned in the e-alert of 23 November we particularly want to recruit members to fill vacancies on the committee. Some of the areas of work mentioned were planning, contributing to the Newsletter, planning events and running the web site. We have been speaking with a resident of the old town

who responded to our appeal. She has had years of experience of working as a web developer and we hope that she may become our new Website Manager. We shall report further if this is confirmed.

## Events

The Events Team of Geraldine Marshall-Andrew, Yvonne Suckling and I have planned the programme of talks for 2019 which we hope you will find interesting. All three of us have enjoyed planning the programmes over the years, visiting potential destinations and getting to know the members who regularly attend both the talks and the outings. But it is really time now for a new group to take over.

The Outing this year is to a fifteenth century church in Gloucestershire that is included in Sir Simon Jenkins book *“England’s Thousand Best Churches”* and which the author has given a five star rating. Afterwards we shall visit **Buscot Park**, a National Trust property in Oxfordshire. We have included a break for lunch at the Cotswold Water Park, which is situated conveniently between the two destinations listed above. You will find the details and the application form in the centre of the Newsletter. Do consider joining us on this visit.

## The Kings Arms

As usual we have been enormously grateful to the Kings Arms staff for their friendly and efficient service during the past year. They really do go to great lengths to meet the Amersham Society’s requests and their coffee and freshly baked biscuits are always a hit with members.

# Sir John Johnson

September 1930 to October 2018

Sir John Johnson first came to live in Amersham with his wife, Jean, and family in 1968.

At that time he was a member of HM Diplomatic Service working at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London.

Sir John was born in 1930 in India, where his father was an engineer. He returned to the UK for his education and stayed with his grandmother. The outbreak of the Second World War meant that Sir John was unable to visit his parents in India for some years. After completing his education at Manchester Grammar School, Sir John read Modern Languages at Keble College Oxford and after graduation joined the Colonial Service. His first appointment was to Kenya as a District Commissioner. After Kenyan independence, Sir John returned to Britain where he took and passed the Civil Service Administrative examination and joined Branch A of the Diplomatic Service. He had a distinguished career and became an African specialist. His overseas appointments took him to Algeria, Nigeria and Barbados. Following these postings Sir John was appointed High Commissioner to Zambia and, several years later, he was appointed High Commissioner to Kenya.

Throughout his working life and when time permitted, Sir John had been an enthusiastic mountain climber, also a great walker. And on his retirement from the Diplomatic Service and his return to live in Old Amersham, Sir John continued to explore every part of the Chilterns on foot whenever possible. He became Chairman of the Countryside Commission and also Vice

President of the Chiltern Society and Chairman of the Chiltern Conservation Board. He encouraged people to take up walking and opened a number of walks in England, including the Thames Path.

Sir John became Director of the Foreign Service Programme at Oxford University training diplomats from all over the world and was a visiting fellow of Keble College. He played an important part in training East European diplomats as their countries moved towards democracy following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Sir John was a familiar and very well liked figure in the Old Town. He took part in many of the local activities, and was a member of the Amersham Society, attending the meetings and taking part in the outings. Sir John's wife, Jean, was a member of the Amersham Society Committee for some years helping to organise the programme of lectures and the annual outing. Residents often encountered Sir John as he strode along the High Street heading towards Shardeloes Lake or to other destinations, binoculars at the ready. In his later years Sir John sometimes paused in his walk and sat on a large carved tree trunk near the Lake, that had been named "*John's Seat*" by fellow walkers and bird watchers. Despite having his route carefully planned, Sir John always had time to greet people and to stop for a word, ready to answer residents' questions about birds or other wildlife that they had spotted or simply to admire a view with them. We shall all miss this much respected resident, his great enthusiasm for life, his energy and his friendly smile.

# THE AMERSHAM BAND

Two speakers from the Amersham Band entertained members to a talk (*preceded by a rousing introduction*) at the King's Chapel on 26th September.

**Fred Harrison** (*Chair of the Amersham Band*) told us that there are records (*but not recordings!*) of a band in Amersham from 1843. There are many gaps in the records and the band was re-formed on several occasions but it is thriving now and raising money so that it can build its own band room on Rectory Meadows, adjacent to the Surgery. Many brass bands started around 1830 to 1850, often by local industrialists who feared that their workforce might otherwise spend their

evenings drinking and be unfit for work next day. However, some, including the Amersham Band, were simply local. To the surprise of many, we learnt that trumpets and French horns are orchestral instruments, not to be found in a brass band but one advantage of brass bands is that they can perform even in the rain.

Fred's colleague, **Caroline Perkins** (*Band Manager*) spoke about the history of the band. Records are very patchy and somewhat quirky. The 1843 reference is to a newspaper report of cricket match between the Amersham Band and the Prestwood Band – the former won. The band performed for



Oddfellows' Lodges but there was speculation as to how the members got there, before railways were widespread. The Band supported school outings and also performed at the Amersham Union Workhouse, when the inmates were given a day off – and could also play cricket.



Amersham Sons of Temperance Band. 1890  
George Ward is standing on the left.

The Band seems to have gone into abeyance for a while but there is a Minute Book from the 1890s (held in the Amersham Museum) recording the formation of the Amersham Temperance Band. At a recruitment meeting Jenny Walker spoke for well over an hour and as a result 40 people signed up. However, several minutes imply that some members of the band were having difficulty in complying with the abstinence policy and in 1892 there was a vote to abolish it. It was said that when Mrs Walker heard the news, she fainted and had to be brought round with smelling salts! Presumably, she had been supporting the Band financially and so other sources were needed. These included the Tyrwhitt-Drakes but in order to collect the dues the Band had to perform at Coleshill, Winchmore Hill, Woodrow and Shardeloes on Christmas Eve or Boxing Day – which would be a

pretty fair walk. By 1898 they seem to have been doing well because they were able to purchase new uniforms and in 1899 gave a concert to raise money for the Fire Brigade. Some very familiar names were active in the Band. George Ward was the Band Master – and printed their visiting cards. Competitions became increasingly important, for example winning 1st prize at Princes Risborough and they renamed them-selves the Amersham Prize Band.

The Band continued during the 1st World War and led recruiting parades and other events, including the peace celebrations in 1918. Several members served in the armed forces, some sadly being killed. Their names are read out on Remembrance Day and Caroline pointed out a plaque to one of them on the wall of the King's Chapel. The Band was re-formed in 1926 and, for example, paraded to raise money in



1932 on Hospital Sunday. In those days they were rehearsing at Shardeloes. In 1934 they paid £45 for 25 new uniforms and a year later purchased a 'Portable Band Room' (probably a shed for storing the instruments). The King's Jubilee was celebrated in 1935 by a torchlight parade to Shardeloes.

There are no records from the 2nd World War but the band was re-formed in 1977. They had a long-term loan from Rosehill Instruments in Beaconsfield to buy instruments. In the 1990s a Heritage Lottery grant allowed them to buy new instruments, the old ones then going to their training band. They now have three bands and around 100 members. In 2007 and 2009 they visited Amersham's twin town of Krynica in Poland and have had exchange visits with Bensheim in

Germany for 30 years. The Band is now in the highest section of the National Brass Band Championship and in 2018 came 4th at the Royal Albert Hall. Their current band room is at Winchmore Hill Methodist Church but it is very small and likely to close in the next year or two. The variety of current activities, including working with schools (where support for music has drastically declined in recent years) and young people, running an intermediate community band and about three dozen activities per year for the main band demonstrated clearly the need for larger and more permanent premises. I hope that many readers will support the band's appeal.

<http://amershamband.com/bandroom-appeal/>.

**Peter Borrows**



*The Amersham Band at the 2017 National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain, held in Cheltenham.*

# Civilian Internees in World War 1

Dennise Beddows (aka Author D J Kelly)

For a cold, very wet night in November there was a good audience for a talk on Civilian Internees in WW1. During the 100 year anniversary of WW1 there has been a lot of commentary on the hardships and heroism of the troops involved in the conflict but little on the internees detained by both the UK and Germany. During the course of the evening that lack of knowledge was to be corrected by Dennise Beddows.

In 1914 there were 57,000 German citizens living in the UK. The UK economy was better than that of Germany and many had been attracted by better opportunities. They were involved in a myriad of occupations, such as academia, circus entertainment, butchers of pork, waiters and an amazing 10% were barbers.

With the build up to war prior to its outbreak in 1914 there were many reports of the “*enemy*” in our midst. The invasion fear was a popular theme in the media. Authors of books such as “*Riddle of the Sands*” by Erskine Childers capitalised on this fear. There were riots in Liverpool and

Deptford against businesses believed to be owned, run or staffed by Germans.

In preparation for the management of enemy aliens in the UK two Acts of Parliament were passed. The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act, 1914 and the Aliens Restriction Act 1914. In addition the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) was passed on 8 August 1914, four days after the UK officially entered World War 1.

DORA gave the government wide-ranging powers such as the power to requisition buildings or land needed to help the war effort, and to make regulations identifying criminal offences.

DORA required all aliens and their British wives to register and ushered in internment for 13,600 aliens, and by 1915 the total number interned had risen to 52,000. It was not just Germans who were identified as aliens. Britain was also in conflict with Bulgaria and Turkey but any Bulgarians or Turks were not interned but allowed to return to their home countries.

Only Men were interned, no women. Men were segregated into two classes, gentlemen and others, and housed accordingly. Camps which housed gentlemen usually provided superior accommodation. A US Embassy report from December 1914 wrote of the internees accommodation that: "*Their quarters are comfortably furnished but without luxury.*"

The food rations that the internees received also indicates fair treatment of internees. In 1914 the daily ration per person consisted of the following:

- Bread**, 1lb. 8oz, or **Biscuits**, 1lb.
- Meat**, fresh or frozen, 8 oz., or pressed, 4 oz.
- Tea**, ½ oz. or **Coffee**, 1 oz.
- Salt**, ½ oz.
- Sugar**, 2 oz.
- Condensed Milk**, 1/20th tin (1lb).
- Fresh Vegetables**, 8 oz.
- Pepper**, 1/72 oz.
- 2 oz. **cheese** to be allowed as an alternative for 1g. **butter** or **margarine**.
- 2 oz. of **peas**, **beans** or **lentils**, or **rice**.

The life of internees in Britain between 1914 and 1919 could be described as relatively comfortable, although they were incarcerated, away from family and loved ones. Instances of deliberate mistreatment were rare and the Government was found to have fulfilled its obligations under the Hague Convention.

The United Kingdom was not the only government to create internee camps.

The Germans did the same for British citizens who were in Germany at the start of the war. There were 5,500 UK nationals in Germany at the outbreak of war. Most were professionals, such as teachers, but some were visitors who were in the wrong place at the wrong time and there were also musicians who had been in Germany competing in a Wagner competition!

Ruhleben the civilian internment camp in Germany during WWI was originally a harness racing track. The detainees were housed in 10ft by 10ft horse boxes and they were expected to maintain their accommodation.

They were also allowed (expected?) to administer their own affairs within the camp. This resulted in a number of councils/committees to which internees could seek to be elected. There were councils/committees that governed life within the camp such as a Camp Council, an Arts committee, hut committee and so on.

In 1916, the United States Ambassador in Berlin described conditions in the camp as follows: *"The barracks at Ruhleben are overcrowded. The Imperial authorities, after nearly two years of war, have certainly had ample time to provide accommodation for the prisoners. It is intolerable that people of education should be herded six together in a horse's stall, and in some of the lofts the bunks touch one another. Many things such as soap, usually issued to prisoners, even in jail, I am informed, have never been given to the prisoners at Ruhleben."*

A comparison of the treatment of the way internees were treated shows that the German Government treatment was poor. British internees were forced to work unlike the German internees who if they worked were paid. Comparison of food rations again shows that the way the UK Government treated German internees was infinitely better.

### **Breakfast and supper**

Black bread and half a pint of coffee. The bread ration served out in the morning had to serve for supper as well as breakfast.

### **Dinner**

Soup which could be cabbage, potato or pea soup, occasionally boiled rice and prunes.

There was little or no meat. The black bread supplied to the internees has been described as almost uneatable. It was made of burnt corn, potatoes, sawdust and sand.

As the war progressed the general food situation in Germany deteriorated to a point that the Germans stopped giving food to detainees. The internees at Ruhleben and other camps would as likely have starved if it had not been for the supply of Red Cross parcels sent from the UK.

The evening was an interesting, if occasionally harrowing, insight into a subject area I had not known about. An insight into an aspect of the WWI conflict that does not usually get any attention.

**John Suckling.**

December 2018



## SOCIETY OUTING

### St Mary's Church, Fairford and Buscot Park

THURSDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019

*NB This year our outing will be on a Thursday not the usual Wednesday.*



Our outing in June this year will be to St Mary's Church in Fairford in Gloucestershire and in the afternoon to a National Trust property, Buscot Park, which is in Oxfordshire. *See overleaf.*

#### ITINERARY

The Heyfordian Coach will leave **Amersham Station** (Carrolls) at 9.30am and **The Swan** in Old Amersham at 9.40am. We shall arrive at St Mary's Church in Fairford at about 11.15am.

Shortly after our arrival there will be coffee / tea and biscuits available in the church rooms next to the church. After this at 11.45am we shall have a guided tour of the church.

We shall leave Fairford at about 12.30pm and drive a few miles to the Cotswold Water Park, where there are

several restaurants / cafes for members to have lunch. We shall let you have further details of the possibilities when we receive your application form. If weather is fine you may prefer to bring a picnic. There is no restaurant at Buscot Park, only a tea room, which does not open until 2.00pm.

After lunch at 2.15pm, we shall get on the coach again and head for Buscot Park. On arrival there you will be free to visit the house and park. We plan to have tea together in the tea room at 4.30pm before we leave at 5.15pm for our return to Amersham. We expect to arrive in Amersham at about 7.00pm depending on traffic.

We shall give you the timetable again when we receive your completed application form.

### St Mary's Church, Fairford, Gloucestershire



Our first stop on the outing will be Fairford in Gloucestershire. There is mention of a church on the site dating from the eleventh century and some thirteenth century traces of this building remain in the foundations of St Mary's church.

The church was rebuilt at the end of the fifteenth century by John Tame, a wealthy local wool merchant and consecrated by the Bishop of Worcester in 1497. A consecration cross is painted on the wall beside the vestry door, set there for 20th June 1497. The structure of the church in late perpendicular style has remained virtually unchanged until the present day. Its simple exterior contrasts with the beautiful and costly fittings of the interior of the church.

The interior of the church is dominated by twenty eight stained glass windows displaying biblical scenes. They are the only complete set of medieval narrative glass windows in England and have been

used for over 500 years to teach the Christian faith by pictures. The glass is rare and of high quality and is attributed to the Flemish glazier Barnard Flower. He was glazier to King Henry VII and worked at Westminster Abbey and Kings College, Cambridge. The colours of the glass are strong and the designs are said to be derived from illuminated books. Flemings are the master glaziers of late medieval Europe and other Flemish immigrants are likely to have contributed to the work on the windows.

The tomb of John Tame (1430-1500), the founder, is a Purbeck marble chest with brasses on top and monumental brasses set into the stone. These show John Tame and his wife Alice (nee Twynyho). Alice Tame died in 1471 soon after the birth of their fourth son.

*( We are grateful to one of our members who suggested that we might include this church on one of our outings.)*

## SOCIETY OUTING

### Buscot Park, Oxfordshire



After our lunch break at the Cotswold Water Park we shall drive to The National Trust property at Buscot Park. This is an eighteenth century Palladian style house with park land, water gardens and a walled garden.

This country house was built between 1780 and 1783 for Edward Loveden Townsend. It was constructed of local stone with Portland stone additions. The severity of the facade is broken by a band between the first and second floors, and at the north front two large bows project.

The property remained in the Loveden family until it was sold in 1859 to Robert Campbell, an Australian gold trader. During Robert Campbell's tenure much of the estates woodlands were planted. On his death in 1887 the house and estates were sold to Alexander Henderson, London stockbroker and financier. He was later ennobled as Baron Faringdon.

The first Baron Faringdon made some alterations and additions to the house, but the second Baron later restored the house to its original eighteenth century form. He also considerably enlarged the art collection.

A splendid fine art collection, the Faringdon Trust, collected by the three Barons is displayed in the house. It includes works by Murillo, Rosetti, Burne-Jones and Reynolds.

During the 1940s the Second Lord Faringdon planned to give the house and the estate to the Nation under the auspices of the National Trust, while the Faringdon Collection of fine art forms part of a Henderson family trust. The house and estate were bequeathed to the National Trust in 1956.

The present and third Lord Faringdon and his wife live in the house and are responsible for the day to day management of the property.

## SOCIETY OUTING

# St Mary's Church Fairford and Buscot Park

## BOOKING FORM

Please reserve ..... places for me, at £24 each,  
for the outing on **Thursday, 13th June 2019.**

*(The cost includes the coach journey, coffee / tea at Fairford, Guided Tour of St Mary's Church Fairford and tea at Buscot Park. The cost of lunch is not included.)*

I enclose a cheque for £ ..... made payable to the Amersham Society.

I / We shall join the coach at:         **Amersham Station (Carrols) at 9.30am**   Yes / No  
   **The Swan, Old Amersham at 9.40am**   Yes / No

Name(s).....

Address.....

.....Telephone number.....

Email.....

Are you a member of The National Trust?   Yes / No

*(If not there will be an entry charge for Buscot Park. At the time of this printing the entry charges to the property had not been set by The National Trust but we expect it to be around £10).*

Please return your completed application form and cheque to:

**Dorothy Symes 160b High Street, Amersham, HP7 0EG   01494 434858**

If you supply an email address we can send you an email confirmation of your booking. Otherwise please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for written confirmation of your booking.

### IMPORTANT NOTES ON BOOKING AND CANCELLATION

Day Trips As you will understand we often have to make financial commitments upfront when organising a trip. For this reason we always ask you to pay at the time of booking. Refunds may be given for cancellation up to 5 weeks before the trip unless part of the payment has to be committed in advance e.g. payment for the coach or entrance fees and only the balance will be refunded.

We will be as flexible as possible because we realise that for all sorts of very good reasons last

minute cancellations can occur. Wherever possible we will refund any monies which we have not paid in advance. The element for the coach and any admission fees etc that have to be pre-paid cannot be refunded for cancellations less than five weeks from the trip.

In case of cancellation in the period of less than 5 weeks, and there is a reserve list, we shall try to arrange a refund by putting you in touch with someone on the list.





# Subscriptions 2019

The annual subscription to the Amersham Society remains unchanged from 2017 and 2018, ie £11.50 for one person, or £17 for two family members at the same address.

If you pay by Direct Debit, you don't have to do anything. The money should have been taken from your account early in January. But if you changed from Standing Order to Direct Debit, did you remember to cancel the Standing Order? If you didn't, we'd be happy to accept the extra money as a donation but remember to cancel it for the future.

If you pay by Standing Order, you don't have to do anything. The money should have been taken from your account early in January. But did you remember to change it to the correct amount shown above? Some members promised to make the changes but until we see the bank statements we won't know if they actually remembered to do so.

If you pay by cheque, have you remembered to send it to me, the Membership Secretary, at Troye Cottage, 32 Whielden Street, Amersham, HP7 0HU ?

If you joined in October, November or December 2018 you do not have to pay for both 2018 and 2019. If you paid by cheque towards the end of 2018 another one will not be expected from you until January 2020. If you signed up for Direct Debit, nothing will have been taken until January 2019.

Remember, under our Constitution, you forfeit your membership if the subscription is not paid by the end of June. Any queries please e-mail [peterborrows@cantab.net](mailto:peterborrows@cantab.net) or phone 01494 728422.

**Dr Peter Borrows**

# River Misbourne Survey Report

Dated 4th August 2018

Started 10.00am

Weather: Hot and sunny.

Survey carried out by:

**Tim Harmer** and **Lesley Harmer**

Area of survey from the bottom end of Shardeloes Lake to the footbridge and ford. (Ref track from London Road East.)

1 Grill from lake looks clear. However new barbed wire fence fitted along the public foot path gives no clear access. However small broken gate enabled access to river. Tree branches and a large amount of weed in the river behind the Cricket Club and a tree in the river near club gate.

This needs clearing.



2 Between Shardeloes Drive and Amersham by-pass bridge and further along to Amersham High Street bridge. Significant amounts of twigs

and tree branches in the river which need clearing.

3 Copas Farm is private land, so unable to undertake survey. However from the High Street bridge heavy vegetation was seen in the river on this farm land.

4 To 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.

River running well and clean on one side but has thick vegetation on the cottages side of the river.

Riparian owners need to clear.

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 dead vegetation and up to the council office building. This needs clearing by Town Council and riparian owners.

8 At Badminton Court the river has thick vegetation which needs clearing.

9 Church Mead. There is vegetation in the river but running OK.

10 Car park area has dead branches in river. No supermarket trolleys found in the river.

However I removed one trolley on the river bank and rubbish.

11 Behind Tesco supermarket rubbish in the river.



Church Mead

12 River running behind Tesco car park and overflow culvert all OK. Rubbish needs removing.

13 At Station Road Bridge the River is flowing. However on the Tesco and small farm side there is a large amount of weed growing.

14 West Arch of the road bridge to Ambers and river fork at the Jaguar Garage also weed needs clearing.

15 Area from Lookers (Jaguar) Garage to the footbridge and ford. Generally clean but with a weed growth.

16 From where the river emerges from the Two Arches under London Road West there is weed growth in the river.

17 Moving along into Bury farm field the river has fallen trees and bushes which need clearing by the riparian owners.

18 Moving under the A413 bypass going along the river towards the foot bridge, we found a large number of trees and bushes that had fallen into the river and weed growing. These need removing.

Please note because of the autumn rain and the hot summer weather it was very difficult to see the river condition at a number of points.

19 At the ford and foot bridge. There is a large amount of weed growth. This needs to be removed as it's across the river.

**Tim Harmer Amersham Society**

Foot note :

Also at an Affinity Water meeting I was told to look out for non-native plant species in the river. These are Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam.

*Photos by John Suckling.*

# Museum News

## Curator Emily Toettcher reports ...

We're coming to the end of a record breaking year in the museum! We have welcomed over 9,000 visitors, more than ever before! People of all ages have come to enjoy our refurbished and expanded museum and participate in a wide range of activities. We have been supported by a wonderful team of over 120 volunteers who help in everything that the museum does. Our Friends group has grown to over 270 members who continue to support the museum in a wide range of projects.

LOCAL  
STORIES  
AT  
THE  
MUSEUM  
AMERSHAM



Here are some of the highlights from this autumn:

### Age Friendly Project

Throughout this year we have been delivering our Age Friendly project, working with older people in the local community. This project has included visiting care homes to run reminiscence sessions. We have also been running object handling sessions for people who live with dementia, and a Make Your Own Memory Box session in the museum, working with an artist. The project has been supported by the Santander Foundation, Tesco Bags of Help, Chiltern District Council and Amersham Town Council. The feedback from participants has been really positive and this autumn we have been fundraising to further develop the work. In January we will be starting a new strand of the project, which will include



delivering artist-led memory box sessions in care homes and a Reminiscence at Home project, working with people in their own homes to write their life stories.

If you're interested in helping with this work or know someone who might like to participate, please contact Jane Barnes: [jane@amershammuseum.org](mailto:jane@amershammuseum.org)





## Takeover Day 2018

This autumn we have completed our annual Takeover Day project. This is a national scheme, designed to encourage initiatives between schools and museums, giving children the opportunity to 'take over' a museum space. This is our fourth consecutive year of a successful partnership with St Mary's Church of England Primary School, working with years 1 and 2. This year the children explored a traditional toys topic. They had opportunities to play with optical toys, movement toys and construction toys from our collection, including those from the local toy factory. They also thought about how to make up games when you have no toys. They made toys of their own and they decorated tea towels to take home, so they could play Kim's Game with their families over Christmas. All 90 visited the museum three times, and on the last visit all their families were invited to visit too!





Blacksmith Peter Williamson of Petefire

## People's Story of Amersham Project

Our People's Story of Amersham project aims to share the 20th century stories of our local area with our community. With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, over the last 18 months we have been running a wide range of workshops and activities with schools, families and older people. This autumn we have been really busy working with Stony Dean School, St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Elangeni School to deliver artist-led history workshops, linked to the National Curriculum. Stony Dean looked at local resident Robin Reid and his fossil collection. They worked with an artist to make a mosaic that will be



Mosaic artist Andrew Wynne

displayed in the school grounds. Years 5 and 6 at St Mary's Church of England looked at the story of Victorian Amersham and the arrival of the railway. They then worked with a blacksmith – who brought his portable forge into school – to create a sculpture to be displayed in the school grounds. All the children at Elangeni are working with an illustrator to create a magical story about travelling through time in Amersham, with Robin Reid as their guide. Each year group is writing and illustrating stories, to feature in a book for World Book Day in March.



The People's Story programme will continue until Spring 2019, when we hope to bring together all of our learning and work from the project in a Mobile Museum. We're currently working to source the vehicle that will be transformed into a fantastic museum that travels around the local area. We hope to launch the vehicle in April.

If you would like to find out more or get involved in its production please email [emily@amershammuseum.org](mailto:emily@amershammuseum.org)

## Coming up in 2019

- We have recently been gifted three paintings by Austrian artist **Marie-Louise von Motesiczky** from the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust. With support from the Trust, the paintings are being reframed and hung and will be on display from the beginning of our 2019 season. There will be a programme of talks and workshops to celebrate their arrival.
- We were delighted to receive £7,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for our Amersham's Women at War project. The project involves research into the women who campaigned for suffrage and supported the war effort and will result in the publication of a book, a series of talks, seminars, school visits and an open day to coincide with Women's History Month in March 2019.
- Our exhibitions programme for 2019 includes: exhibits linked to our Women at War programme in the spring; an exhibition about social housing and migration in the summer, and an autumn programme focusing on Arts & Crafts architecture.
- In the new year we will continue our Friday morning Chiltern Club of Arts sessions; free, pre-booked sessions to find out about the work of local craftspeople and then try out their crafts for yourself.
- Throughout the year we will continue to run our after-school art club for 7 – 11 year olds, our Young Curators programme for 14 – 18 year olds, and drop in-workshops and crafts and families. There will also be talks and workshops for adults.

To find out more or get involved as a volunteer go to :

[www.amershammuseum.org](http://www.amershammuseum.org) or email [Emily@amershammuseum.org](mailto:Emily@amershammuseum.org)

# New Map for Old Town

Whilst many old market towns nowadays have a town map posted for visitors and residents better to appreciate the local architecture and history, Peter and Marian Borrows noticed that Amersham had no such thing.

Peter soon persuaded the Committee of the Amersham Society that this omission should be remedied, and he ably took charge of a project that came to full fruition on Heritage Day in September 2018.

It was quickly resolved that Amersham's map would major not so much on personalities or events in the history of the town but on the buildings themselves and a working group of Peter and three helpers set about the task of realising this vision.

Yes, the Tyrwhitt-Drakes and the Lollards would be mentioned but the plan was to show in drawings some of the town's best-loved and most interesting old buildings.



*Peter Borrows addressing visitors at the unveiling ceremony*



One copy of the Map was to be sited at the front of the Memorial Garden and the other in the carpark and together they would enable those exploring the town on foot to discover not only the High Street but also the hidden corners of the old town.

In the first week of September a special Preview evening was held at Amersham Museum to enable members to come and see a proof of the map up close before the real thing was to be unveiled the following weekend. Over 130 members of the Society and Friends of the Museum accepted the invitation and several dozen long-standing residents took the opportunity to join in a pre-prandial guided walk to see their home town through the eyes of Museum volunteer guides, Gary Gotch, Martin Pounce and Stuart Jaggard. It was a

warm evening and Peter Borrows stood on a chair in the Museum Garden to address the assembled throng.

He outlined the story of the map and, emphasising the little known treasures of the town to be discovered, he asked, *“Who, before today had ever heard of Pondwick’s Meadow or visited it just across the Misbourne from the Museum garden?”* He went on to thank Martin Pounce, Geraldine Marshall Andrew and Edward Copisarow for all

their help with deciding the content and writing the copy, Michael Oakenfull, the project’s professional illustrator and designer, and the funders of the initiative, the charitable bequest of Dulcie Denison, represented on the evening by her trustees Ann and Peter Cutcliffe, The Chiltern Society,



represented by their Gernal Secretary David Abbis and his wife and lastly, Amersham Town Council represented by Town Clerk Steve Catanach whose team were installing the maps and stands and Town Mayor Caroline Jones who was set to unveil the finished article, colour printed on aluminium at the Memorial Garden at noon the following Sunday.

**Edward Copisarow**

*Photos by Linda Gould*



**Amersham Memorial Gardens:  
Centenary of the Great War display.**  
Images supplied by  
Keith Hoffmeister, Convenor of the  
Chess Valley U3A Photography Group.







HMS Dreadnought

# NOTICEBOARD

## Programme of Talks and Events in 2019

Society meetings are 7.30 for 8.00 and take place in the Kings Chapel.

- 30 January      The Destruction of Shardeloes**  
Edward Copisarow tells us how Shardeloes narrowly avoided being pulled down in the 1950s.
- 27 February      Desert Island Pictures**  
A talk by Art Lecturer Joan Greening about the eight pictures she would most like to have on a desert island.
- 27 March      Cliveden, Power, Politics and Scandal**  
Historian Peter Hague returns to tell us about scandal in the history of this famous stately home.
- 24 April      Moats, Mottes and Castles**  
Archaeologist Michael Farley will discuss the evidence available for conflict in Buckinghamshire from the Viking period to the Civil War.
- 29 May      The London Cage**  
Historian Helen Fry will talk about the secret history of Britain's World War II interrogation centre.
- 13 June      Society Outing to St Mary's Church,  
Fairford and Buscot Park**  
NB this is on a Thursday not the usual Wednesday
- 25 September      The Ascent of Everest**  
Physicist and Mountaineer Dr. Melanie Windridge, will tell us the story of her summit attempt in 2018.
- 30 October      Annual General Meeting**  
The meeting will start at 7.30 followed at 8.00 by a talk about Emergency Rider Volunteers who deliver blood and emergency supplies to hospitals.
- 27 November      The Forgotten River**  
Discovering the wildlife and history of the tranquil River Thame, an illustrated talk by naturalist John Tyler.

**General Enquiries** : please email [info@amershamsociety.org](mailto:info@amershamsociety.org)