

A photograph of several large, pink peony flowers in full bloom, surrounded by lush green foliage. The flowers are set in a garden bed with a wooden fence and a stone path visible in the background. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

May 2020

**AMERSHAM SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

Map of EXTENSION LINES into METRO-LAND

English Miles

Metropolitan Railway
In Course of Construction
Other Roadways
Roads



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Report from the Chair

The year began well for the Amersham Society. Winter weather was relatively mild with no snow. We had planned an interesting programme of talks for the year and an outing. In January over 100 members and friends came to hear Barney Tyrwhitt-Drake's fascinating talk in St Mary's Church about the **Drakes of Amersham** (see *Peter Borrow's report on page 4*). And then in February we had an excellent talk from Mike Payne about **Pinewood Studios**, which brought back many memories of familiar cinema stars and well loved films both from post war days and also those produced more recently (see *John Suckling's article on page 17*). This too was a well attended and enjoyable evening.

However, everything was about to change. As grim reports on how Covid-19 was spreading through mainland Europe and in Britain, it became clear that the familiar day to day life had to change. The message to residents has been stay at home, stay safe and save the National Health Service. And citizens have become more aware than ever of the bravery and dedication of so many of our public servants and private individuals trying to keep us all safe.

No-one knows when or how life can return to something like "normal" or when social isolation and lockdown will end. So the committee have been considering how we can best keep in touch with members apart from with the occasional e-alert and the Newsletter.

Although we are a small committee, only seven at present, I am extremely fortunate that among the committee members there is a huge amount of understanding of how modern technology works, plus plenty of ideas, talent and enthusiastic commitment. We decided to hold our March committee meeting by Zoom. This was a completely new experience for me. I am often amazed at where the Amersham Society has led me and was very grateful for the clear guidance on how to join the meeting. It is of course great to have Lena Morgan's considerable expertise, as well as Peter Borrows' and Edward Copisarow's confidence with technology and patience with those like me who do not possess this knowledge!

As part of our annual programme of lectures we had arranged for Julian Hunt, President of the Buckinghamshire Archaeological society, historian and author to speak to our members about **Metroland**. Julian's talks are always extremely popular and we were really disappointed that we had to cancel or postpone this one. But I am so pleased that Julian agreed so readily to go ahead with his talk using the wonders of technology. Thank you very much Julian for a wonderful evening (see *Edward's report on page 12*).

The Society's first talk by Zoom was judged to be very successful. Our members regardless of age were shown to be well up to the challenge of using this technology, even thoroughly enjoying it. We are therefore planning to have our next scheduled talk by Zoom. This will be **Black Propaganda Radio** by Mike Kushner on 27th May. This is about how a fake British radio show helped defeat the Nazis in World War 2. We shall issue an e-alert about this during the week beginning 18th May, giving details about how to join the meeting.

While the lockdown continues it is good that we are living in such a lovely part of the country. The spring as always is so beautiful at present with all the plants opening up and the birds singing. We might even spot the occasional hedgehog as press reports tell us that because the volume of traffic has reduced so much, fewer of these iconic creatures have been killed on the roads.

The Amersham Society committee will do our best to keep in touch with you. In the meantime keep well and safe and don't forget to watch out for the next e-alert and consult the Amersham Society Website.

Dorothy Symes

The Drakes of Amersham

Their impact on local, national and international history

Commemorating 400 years since the Drake family moved to Amersham, Barney Tyrwhitt-Drake, from a junior branch of the family, had an audience approaching 150 for his talk in St Mary's Church. Although the family was quite imaginative in their choice of surnames (*Drake, Tyrwhitt-Drake, Drake-Tyrwhitt-Drake, Tyrwhitt-Drake and did I hear Tyrwhitt-Drake-Tyrwhitt?*), mainly for reasons of inheritance, they were much less so for first names. For clarity, I will include dates, eg it was William (1723-1796) who rebuilt Shardeloes.

Barney's starting point was his 10 x great-grandfather, Richard Drake of Ashe in Devon (1535-1603), who never lived in Amersham. Richard was handsome (see Fig 1) and said to be a good dancer and as such had been welcomed at the court of Queen Elizabeth, where he met Sir Francis Drake. Despite all the myths there is no evidence that the Drakes of Ashe were related to Sir Francis, although the latter became Godfather to Richard's son, also a



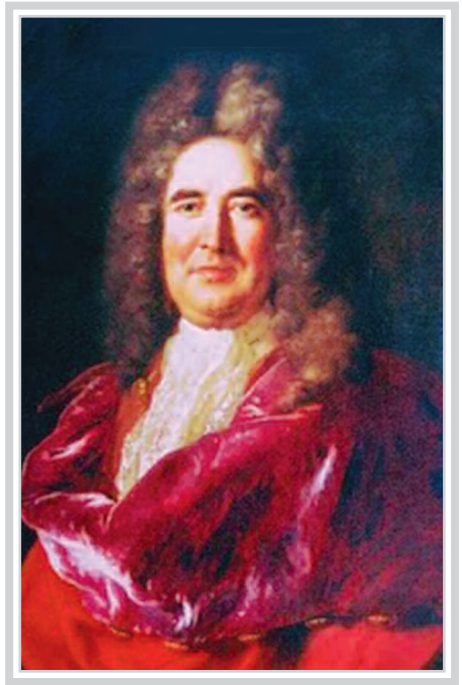
Richard Drake of Ashe in Devon.

Painted by George Gower.

Copyright the National Maritime Museum.

Francis, and in his will left him a Manor in Devon. During the Armada, Don Pedro de Valdes surrendered to Sir Francis who asked Richard to guard the captives until they could be ransomed. Richard held them at Bishop Waynflete's palace in Esher. He complained that his

Fig 2
Montague Garrard Drake.
(1692-1728)



allowance of four guineas per prisoner per week was insufficient to feed the Spaniards, they in turn complained that they were being starved.

Richard's son Francis married Joan Tothill, co-heir of William Tothill who had bought the manor of Shardeloes in 1595, but it was their son William (1606-1669) who was the first Drake to live there. He was a judge in Chancery and MP for Amersham but as a Royalist decided it was prudent to escape via the Netherlands to Italy during the Civil War. There he indulged in his interest in the work of Machiavelli, while his stewards looked after his estates. He built the alms houses in the High Street in 1657, but never married, allegedly because he could never find a woman on his intellectual level. As a result, on his death, Shardeloes passed to the second son, William (1651-1690), of his brother Francis.

William (1651-1690), like many of his ancestors and descendants, married a rich woman, Elizabeth Montague,

daughter of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1682, he built the Market Hall. His son, Montague (1673-1698), inherited the estates and married another heiress, Jane Garrard. Montague's sister Mary married Sir John Tyrwhitt which became relevant a couple of generations later. Montague died in a riding accident and was succeeded by his son Montague Garrard Drake (1692-1728) (see Fig 2). This Lord of the Manor so disliked the common people that he moved the main Amersham to Wendover Road (*now the A413*) from the south side of the River Misbourne to the north side. These days the old road forms the popular footpath alongside the lake.



Montague Garrard's son William (1723-1796), MP for Amersham for 50 years, replaced the old Jacobean Shardeloes by the current building, with its Robert Adam portico, at a cost of £19,000. He could afford it, as his wife, Elizabeth Raworth, was the daughter of the Director of the South Sea Company. They had eight children, of whom six survived. (see Fig 3). This large, and rather smug, painting is still in the possession of the Lord of the Manor (*also a William*), although he now lives in East Meon. The eldest son, William (1747-1795), in the blue coat, died before his father, so the estate passed to the second son Thomas (1749-1810), in the green coat. Thomas had been eligible to inherit the Tyrwhitt fortune (*remember Mary Drake who had married Sir John Tyrwhitt?*) but only on condition he

preserved the Tyrwhitt name, which he did by becoming Thomas Drake-Tyrwhitt. However, in order to inherit the Shardeloes estate when his elder brother and his father (*both William*) died, Thomas had to become a Drake again, hence Thomas Drake-Tyrwhitt-Drake. Our speaker, Barney, is directly descended from Thomas.

Thomas's second son, William (1785-1848), served in the Royal Horse Guards in the Peninsular Wars and later at Waterloo, where he was regarded as a hero because, unlike most of his fellow cavalry officers, he actually obeyed Wellington's orders. After charging and repelling the French infantry he led his men back up the slope, to be in reserve in the event of further attacks. He was given a battlefield promotion and was the senior



Fig 5

Charles Francis Tyrwhitt-Drake.
(1846-1874)

surviving officer in his regiment. After the battle, Napoleon left behind two Imperial coaches. These were looted by the Prussians and one was then passed to Wellington who asked William to take it back to London for him.

William found two gold candlesticks inside (see Fig 4), and these are still in the Tyrwhitt-Drake family.



More about William's career, campaign chest, uniform and portrait were published in the Amersham Society Newsletter, September 2019. William's elder brother, Thomas Tyrwhitt-Drake (1783-1852) became the next Lord of the Manor. Note that a triple-barrelled surname had become rather pretentious, even for this family. He became Chairman of the Amersham Union of Parishes which led to the construction of the

Gilbert Scott workhouse in Whielden Street.

Towards the end, our speaker pointed out that only one Tyrwhitt-Drake appears in the Dictionary of National Biography – Charles Francis Tyrwhitt-Drake (1846-1874) (see Fig 5). He was an explorer and surveyor, involved in mapping Palestine but died of malaria in Jerusalem. The family does have some notable descendants: Michael Hordern, the actor, was a descendant of the William (1723-1796), Winston Churchill was descended from the Drakes of Ashe and David Cameron from Montague Garrard Drake (1692-1728). At the end, Barney then invited the audience to view the memorials to his ancestors in the Drake Chapel, which they did with enthusiasm.

Dr Peter Borrows

Lost footpaths

a Covid-19 success story

In 1949, Parliament passed the pioneering *National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act*. Amongst other things, this required local councils to draw up a definitive map of all footpaths, bridleways and by-ways. These are now shown on Ordnance Survey maps as our rights of way. Some councils did this very thoroughly but some did not and inevitably mistakes were made. Temporary war time orders, eg stopping people from crossing an air field, were not reversed until long after the war and so not recorded. In some cases, landowners illegally blocked a path. One friend of mine, who was brought up in a very rural part of Worcestershire, told me that his grandfather and other villagers refused to tell the local council where some of the lesser known footpaths were, including one path at the back of where he lived. This was because once it was formally mapped there would be no way to stop anyone using it, whereas at the time it

was only used by the people who needed to know. My friend checked recently and found that indeed it is not marked on the definitive map whereas all the main ones he used as a child are shown. So it wasn't just incompetence on the part of councils but the net effect is that many paths were omitted. This did not matter too much, as omissions could be rectified. There was an automatic right to register paths for which there was evidence of public use before 1949, for example evidence from old maps. However, under the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* that right will cease on 1st January 2026. So ancient paths not on the definitive map by that date could be lost. These are not necessarily long-forgotten tracks blocked by brambles, nettles and mud. Some are still in common everyday use, paths that just happen not to have been registered. Possibly the first part of the path is registered but not its continuation across a parish boundary. If

it's not on the definitive map, there is nothing to stop somebody from blocking it or building over it in future, with no right of appeal.

Around here, it has been the responsibility of Buckinghamshire County Council - and now its unitary successor, The Buckinghamshire Council - to maintain the definitive map. It can be consulted on the Council web site at <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/public-rights-way/>. If a path is shown on this map it is a public right of way. If a path is not shown currently it may still be a public right of way and the Council has a duty under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* to keep the map up to date and investigate any requests to add (or delete) rights of way. Anyone can apply to the Council to change the definitive map by making a Definitive Map Modification Order. It will be no surprise that in the last ten years of austerity the Council has not devoted much of its resources to investigating these applications. However, this does not matter because as long as an Order is **submitted** before 1st January 2026 it does not have to be processed by then. Strictly, all of this applies only to England and Wales; Scotland has more enlightened and much less restricted access rights.

Using Heritage lottery money, the Ramblers Association set up a web site

<https://dontloseyourway.ramblers.org.uk/find-lost-ways> which divided the country into about 150 000 1 km squares in which the current definitive map was shown overlaid next to an historic map. The public was invited to spot mis-matches and report them. Each square was checked independently by two visitors to the site, and by a third if a missing path was found. Incredibly, that task was completed in about 6 weeks, thanks to Covid-19. So some good has come out of the pandemic but that is not the end of the story. For a successful application, more evidence needs to be gathered than from just one map. In some areas earlier maps constructed for other purposes, such as tithe maps, enclosure maps, estate maps may give additional evidence as may aerial photographs. A forgotten path in Suffolk was spotted in the Tate Britain Gallery on a Gainsborough painting of 1747! My friend's anecdote about his grandfather would be equally supportive evidence. Probably about half the 1 km squares contained missing paths but some of these were trivial. The Ramblers Association is currently analysing the data, will then prioritise which ones to work on to find additional evidence and go back to the public to ask for further help. Keep watching the website – this pandemic could still be keeping us at home for some time.



What about local paths? I personally checked squares further away than the Old Town so cannot be sure what was found here but this is an extract from the Ordnance Survey published in 1882 from a survey carried out in 1876 (not the map used in the project).

Behind Tesco, a path rises up Ruckles Field diagonally north-eastwards, from the cemetery towards the Martyrs Memorial. This *is* shown both on the

definitive map and on the 1882 map (I have marked it in green) but the path is sometimes impassable because it has been ploughed up or is blocked by growing crops. Farmers are entitled to plough and sow but are supposed to re-instate the path within two weeks. This rarely happens here and problems reported on the Council web site are not followed up. This is a pity because this is a very historic route. It probably started

as a prehistoric trackway and follows the line of the old Roman road from Reading through Henley, Marlow, down Whielden Street, then close to Chenies and on to St Albans and Hatfield. It became less important as a route when Station Road was constructed. Five hundred years ago, it was the route followed by the Bishop of Lincoln after he left the Great North Road at Hatfield on his way to his palace at Wooburn (near High Wycombe). It would have taken him very close to the site where the Lollard Martyrs were burnt. After watching the spectacle and preaching on the evils of reading the Bible in English he could ride off into the sunset.

brewing dynasty, was involved in 1896 with providing a footpath through Rectory Wood to the new station but it is not clear what his role was because a path is clearly shown on the 1882 map – but, of course, not the railway line nor the station which did not open until 1892. The photograph of wood anemones saluting the sun was taken on a covid-compatible walk at the end of March through Rectory Wood.

Interestingly, two linked local footpaths which are in daily use, are not marked either on historic maps or on the definitive map. I have shown them in orange on the 1882 map. Except for the part of the path towards Rectory Wood,



Another popular local route rises steeply from the western side of the cemetery, parallel to Rectory Hill through what I call Rectory Wood but maps persist in calling Parsonage Wood, marked in red on the 1882 map. This is used by hundreds of people every day. The Museum website says that George Weller (1844 – 1929), one of the Amersham

they follow the field boundaries, forming the two sides of a right-angled triangle of which the Bishop's road forms the hypotenuse. At some point, we will need to make an application for a Definitive Map Modification Order but that is less urgent than rescuing the lost paths.

Dr Peter Borrows

Metroland

a talk by Julian Hunt

There was a palpable sense of lockdown-busting anticipation as Society members clicked on the link from their eAlert to arrive in the Zoom *“meeting room”* for the recently uncanceled Amersham Society talk on *“Metroland”* by our most popular regular speaker, Julian Hunt.

Following the Government announcement that all must stay at home, the Amersham Society Committee had taken the reluctant decision to cancel the March, April and May talks. But necessity is the mother of invention and as we all found new ways to keep in touch and break the isolation, Zoom had become a popular way to meet up with others online. Julian very generously agreed to be our guinea pig and so an eAlert went out to all members with email addresses to invite them to a dry-run exactly one week before at 8pm on 22nd April. 34 joined the fray and technical issues were quickly resolved under the expert hand of our Web Manager, Lena Morgan. Anyone who had struggled to get online was invited to get in touch in good time so that they could be sorted out ready for the big day. Come the day itself, only our erstwhile Membership Secretary was still trying to work out how to get an

image of herself onscreen, but perseverance from several willing helpers over the phone and the loan of a webcam from a neighbour had her up and running with ten hours to spare.

We had no idea how big an audience to expect: as the “room” opened, 15 minutes before kick-off, a dozen were already logged in and ready to come in. The chit chat and hubbub over the next ten minutes was just like being at the King’s Chapel, with friendliest greetings between those who hadn’t seen each other for weeks. Some joined the meeting as singles but many couples joined in from a single device and as the number of logins reached 63 there must have been between 90 and 100 people altogether – a bigger crowd than we could have accommodated if we had met in person!

At 8pm Lena put everyone’s microphones on mute and I briefly explained the etiquette of Zoom meetings before our Chairman welcomed everyone to our first ever virtual meeting. Peter Borrow was invited to make an announcement about the revised plans for the VE day 75th Anniversary celebrations to be held on the Bank Holiday Friday, 8th May. Amersham Museum had been

planning to hold a garden party but under the present conditions everybody was being asked instead to make bunting with which to decorate the front of their house. For those in any doubt as to what they needed to do Peter then showed a sample that Marian had prepared earlier. Dorothy then introduced Julian, a familiar face to many present, distinguished local historian and now President of the Bucks Archaeological Society.

We then switched from *“Gallery View”* (where all present could see each other on screen like a tiled wall of little televisions) to *“speaker view”*, Julian pressed to share his screen and we were transported to his slide show screen whilst hearing his voice. The talk was delivered in nothing less than his very best, inimitable style of infectious enthusiasm, gentle humour and understated scholarship: no mean feat when you can’t see or hear your audience.



Gallery View
where all present
could see each
other on screen.





Baker Street Station, opened in 1863.

We started in 1863 with the opening of the first stretch of the Metropolitan Railway from Baker Street to Farringdon Road, a technological marvel attended by the great and the good and lavishly depicted in the Illustrated London News whose reporter seemed oblivious to the filthy smoke and steam which defined the early days of underground rail travel.

Rather than focus on the extension to Hammersmith, Julian took us North from Baker Street on the branch line to St John's Wood, Marlborough Road and Swiss Cottage Stations and on to Wembley Park where we alighted to explore a little local history. This was to have been the site of Britain's rival to the Eiffel Tower but the venture failed and instead

the Metropolitan Railway Company used the land to build new homes for commuters, the earliest of which showed the half-timbered, arts and crafts styling that we nowadays associate so closely with Metroland. Onwards we steamed to Harrow on the Hill and Rickmansworth as the line was extended in the 1880s and eventually to Chesham with won-



Rickmansworth Station, opened in 1887.

derful images impeccably selected to show us the trains and the people as we went. It wasn't until 1892 that the extension was opened from what we now call Chalfont and Latimer Station through Amersham, Great Missenden and on to Aylesbury where it would meet the mainline trains running from London via High Wycombe. The extension beyond Aylesbury to join up with the LNER line at Verney Junction was explored, as was the Duke of Buckingham's private branch line at Brill, built by his own estate staff to serve his seat at Wotton Underwood. As images of the rolling stock appeared before us we should not have been surprised if Julian produced a picture of the Titfield Thunderbolt!



But the Junction at Quainton was too far from London to be developed for housing and the Metropolitan Railway Company focussed itself on the creation of new housing estates closer to the capital.





Julian then treated us to a phenomenal selection of pictures of estate agent's particulars for new build homes in the area dubbed by the Railway Company as **"Metroland"**. Several architects were mentioned but the outstanding contributor was undoubtedly J H Kennard. Kennard's distinctive style incorporated half timbering, dominant gables and vast staircase windows giving a feel of substance and style without any reference to Georgian proportion. Many of these buildings have been listed but amongst those still standing is the shop at Oakfield Corner on Sycamore Road. Now occupied by Cancer Research UK, it was originally a Chemist's shop, run by Kennard's brother and where many of



the photos of early Amersham on the Hill would have been taken to be developed.

As Julian concluded his most excellent talk, Lena switched back on the micro-phones of those in the audience and Julian took questions from members about the Wellers and Drakes of Amersham and how they profited by the development opportunity the railway brought plus further comments from those with happy childhood memories of the steam trains which ran on the line from Amersham until the 1960s. Julian was treated to a huge round of applause and everyone was invited to return on 27th May to hear Mike Kushner's talk on, **"Black Propaganda radio"**.

Edward Copisarow

The History of Pinewood Studios

A talk by Mike Payne to the Amersham Society

Despite a change of date some 50 people braved the cold biting wind to hear Mike Payne present the History of Pinewood Studios.

Pinewood Studios was created on a Victorian country estate known as Heatherden Hall.

Little is known about the estate until it was purchased by the Canadian financier Grant Morden who was also the MP for Brentford and Chiswick. The estate's proximity to London and its seclusion made it an ideal place for discreet meetings for politicians and diplomats. In 1921, the Anglo Irish Treaty which led to the creation of the Irish Free State was signed at Heatherden Hall. One of the signatories was Winston Churchill

In 1934, ownership of Heatherden Hall and its 158 acres changed when it was purchased by Charles Boot. He was passionate about film production and started the construction of what was to become Pinewood Studios. However, money was tight and Charles Boot enlisted the help of J Arthur Rank with whom he formed a partnership in 1935. Boot is credited with creating the name Pinewood allegedly from the pines on the estate and wanting to emulate the US centre of film making Hollywood.



The first film to be made using the new studios was **"London Melody"** directed by Herbert Wilcox and starring **Anna Neagle** released in 1937. In the first year of operation the studios' output was 14 different films.

As the thirties ended Pinewood studios took on a different role. Requisitioned by the Government as part of the war effort, its seclusion, proximity to London and its large stages made it an ideal place for storing essential food commodities such as flour and sugar. It also became the home of the Crown Film Unit, No.5 Army Film and Photographic Unit and the Royal Airforce Film Production unit. Two other UK icons were also moved to Pinewood for the duration of the war, The Royal Mint and Lloyds of London, where both organisations operated from the studio's sound stages.



Alistair Sim



Norman Wisdom

As the war came to an end Pinewood's output reverted to non-war film production and the first film after the war, released in March 1947, was "**Green for Danger**" starring **Alistair Sim**. This period also saw the creation of the Rank School of Acting, which became known as the Charm School and which subsequently resulted in a number of successful film careers.

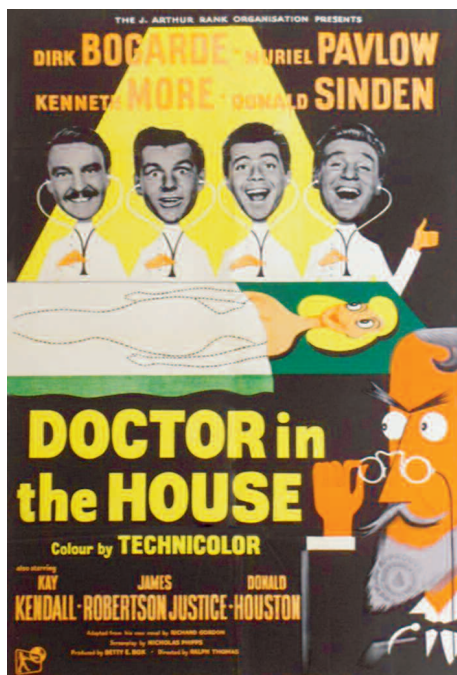
One consistent factor in the history of Pinewood Studios has been money. It has been suggested that the only time Pinewood was not short of money was when the Royal Mint was there during the 2nd World War. By 1948 The Rank Organisation was short of money and the studios were on the brink of closing when John Davis (*later Sir John Davis*) an accountant was appointed as Managing Director who imposed strict financial controls on film production.

One of the films credited with helping to save Pinewood Studios was "**Genevieve**", but the real saviours were the Doctor film series which began with "**Doctor in the House**" in 1954.

Seven Doctor films were produced in total, the last of which was released in 1970. Comedy films were clearly a box office success which served Pinewood well in the 50's and 60's.

The mid 50's saw the start of the seventeen **Norman Wisdom** comedies filmed at Pinewood, the last of which was released in 1966.

In 1958 a script for a film called "**The Bull Boys**" was under consideration. It was made and released with the new title of "**Carry on Sargent**", the first of the first of the "**Carry On**" films. Produced for Rank by Peter Rogers and directed by Gerald Thomas the eventual total of "**Carry On**" films was 31, the last shot in 1992, all of which were filmed at Pinewood.





The 60's were good years for Pinewood as the studios moved from being just a Rank Organisation film production facility to a production facility available for hire on a film by film basis. 1962 a new franchise started when the film director Terence Young used Pinewood Studios to film "Dr No" and the Bond films have been made at Pinewood ever since, now numbering 26.

As previously mentioned, Pinewood Studios has a chequered boom or bust financial history and in the 70's finances were not great. However, as independent film producers used the facilities at Pinewood Studios they found high levels of expertise which were particularly helpful in making the first "Superman" film, the making of which re-energised the studios.

Whilst the 80's were good the 90's once again found Pinewood, along with the rest of the film industry in the UK in trouble but once again Pinewood

Studios weathered the storm with the production of films in the Batman and Bond franchises.

Since the start of the new millennium Pinewood Studios has expanded to provide not only world class film production facilities but also to include the growing demand of the TV companies for studio space.

From its conception by the passionate Charles Boot, the support of J Arthur Rank, the expertise and vision of its production staff Pinewood Studios has grown from humble beginnings to become a world class entertainment production facility.

As Pinewood Studios state on their web site "For over 80 years, Pinewood Studios have made dreams a reality, enabling storytellers to bring their creations to life on the big and small screen."

Long may it continue.

John Suckling

The World of the Honey Bee



Sadly the Amersham Society had to postpone the scheduled March talk by local bee-keeper **Howard Pool**.

We are very grateful that Howard has written the article below for our Newsletter, which is particularly timely as spring unfolds and many of us enter the world of the honey bee as we spend time in our gardens or on allotments.

There was a mystery virus which devastated the population. No I'm not talking about the corona virus which caused my talk to the Amersham Society to be cancelled, but the Isle of Wight disease which wiped out perhaps 80% of UK bee colonies in the early 20th Century

So at a time when we are dominated by coverage of our own problems, perhaps it's time to spare a thought – and use our enforced free time – to try to help the pollinators which are an essential part of our food chain. Although existing for around 100 million years (fossil remains in Myanma and Argentina) bees have been subject to regular attacks from

viruses, bacteria, fungi, climate change, predators, parasites, insecticides, and the loss of suitable forage. Little we can do practically to support our bees in many of these areas, but in terms of providing suitable forage we can positively help.



Honey Bees foraging for water.



Honey Bee with pollen sacks.

Bees evolved from wasps (carnivores) as flowering trees and plants developed. The “meat” dietary requirement was replaced by plant and tree pollen which provided the necessary protein. Carbohydrate was supplied by plant nectar, the bees evolved a symbiotic relationship with the plant world – and turned veggie.

Which returns me neatly to how we can help ! All pollinating insects require suitable forage. What does suitable mean ? First that our gardens and open spaces have pollen and nectar producing vegetation that is available and accessible to insects, and secondly that the flowering season is spread out over all four seasons.

So at a time when we are facing enforced lock down, perhaps we can spare a thought for our pollinating allies (don't forget no chocolate without the bees !), get into our gardens, hedgerows, fields, verges, window boxes, any open space, and plant insect friendly seeds and plants. Although no gardener myself, interesting that some of the best pollinator friendly plants are dandelions, clover, and ivy – plants so beloved by gardeners !! Lawns (wind pollinated) are a green desert to our insect friends. Let's forget our own problems for the moment and focus on something wholly practical and completely different.

Subscriptions 2020

Article by Dr Peter Borrowes,
Membership Secretary

At the time of writing almost 90% of our members have paid their subscription for 2020, mostly by direct debit (GoCardless) or (for longer-standing members) by standing order. Well done and thank you!

A few of those have paid more than required, usually because they have not changed their standing order when a partner has sadly died or because they forgot to cancel their standing order when they opted to pay by direct debit. Thank you for your generous donation to Society funds!

A few have paid too little, so far, usually because they did not alter their standing order when the subscription was increased three years ago or even eight years ago.

For those who have not paid at all, remember that our Constitution says that forfeiture of membership is automatic if the subscription is unpaid by 30th June. Anyone with a guilty conscience, please make out your cheque (**£11.50** for one member, **£17** for two family members at the same address) to the **Amersham Society** and send it to me at Troye Cottage, 32 Whielden Street, Amersham, HP7 0HU, or contact me at peterborrowes@cantab.net or 01494 728422 to arrange to sign up to pay by direct debit.

If you have not paid, or have paid too little, you should already have had an e-mail or letter from me but if you are not sure whether you are fully paid, please contact me as above.



Newsletter deliveries

We publish the *Amersham Society Newsletters* in January, May and September. Whilst some of our more distant members of necessity receive their copies by post, about 80% are delivered to your door by our team of 15 volunteers, saving the Society about £400 per year.

Because of changed circumstances, one of our volunteers has now had to give up. This particular round covers the area around Station Road, Highland Road, First Avenue and Hundred Acres Lane and roads off them. There are currently about 18 members in this area, which is (to put it mildly) quite hilly - it took me a little over an hour, once I'd reached Station Road. If there

were two volunteers, it would be quite easy to split this into two, more or less equal, rounds or, indeed, if there was one volunteer who was not able to cover the whole area we could split it and post the remainder. I would deliver the bundle to your house – in most cases I can get them through the letter box if you are not at home and I am usually able to e-mail you about a week before I expect to receive them. Delivery is usually not urgent so it's not a problem if you are away for a week or two. If you think you may be able to help please contact me at peterborrows@cantab.net.

Dr Peter Borrows

Membership Secretary

Amersham Museum

Following the guidance from the government, Amersham Museum was closed on Wednesday 18th March, and all events were postponed until further notice. In the meantime, our chairman Gary Gotch and the trustees are trying to find the best way forward for the museum. We have applied for an emergency grant and are looking at any support packages that may be available to help us whilst the museum is closed. Until we are able to open the museum again, we agreed with Emily to furlough her role for the present time.

Volunteers are still working behind the scenes, responding to emails and carrying out research. New articles are being added to the website so do keep checking this out.

Before Emily's furlough she put together some suggestions for ways in which volunteers can help the museum whilst at home and a list of online resources related to museum training. Do please contact us at info@amershammuseum.org if you would like to help in any way. Any online donations to help secure the future of the museum would also be extremely welcome. Details can be found on the museum website amershammuseum.org.

Here is as short piece on some of our latest research but do read the full article on our website:

William Monk (1863 – 1937)

One of England's most famous architectural etchers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, professional artist William Monk, lived in Amersham from 1903 to 1915 just when he was gaining a worldwide reputation. He worked as an etcher, a woodcut engraver and a painter in oils and watercolours. A writer in the Art Journal stated that the artist was one of the finest painter-etchers in Great Britain *"his work contains all the varied qualifications for the successful delineation of architecture – faithful reproduction of line. Appre-*

ciation of colour as well as of form, and the power of seeing and depicting that which to the ordinary observer is not perceptible".

He created slightly over one hundred original etchings during his career: most being views of London, New York, Eton, Oxford, Winchester, and Durham. Well-travelled, some of Monk's best-known etchings are of New York and the Panama Canal. He also worked in Rome and Venice which he often depicted in watercolours.

His drawings and etchings often appeared in the Art Journal, and the museum has some copies in its collection. He is best remembered for his annual *Calendarium Londinense* – The

London Almanack which contained a 12-month calendar with one of Monk's engravings of the capital. It was published annually from 1903 until 2004.

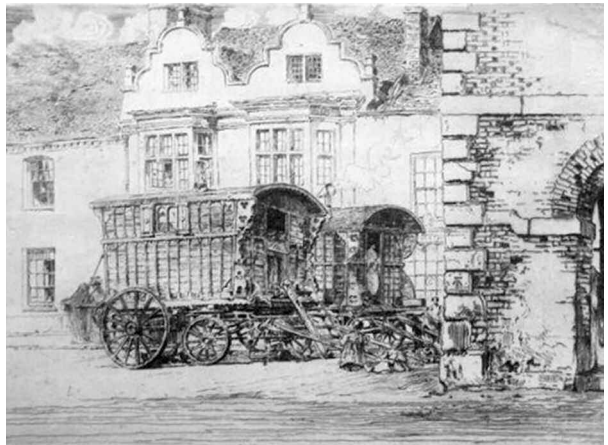
Born in Chester, the son of gun-maker William Henry Monk, he studied art at the Chester School of Art and etching at the Antwerp Academy, Belgium. William Monk moved from Chester to London to work in one of the old Hogarth studios in 1892 and returned to Chester in 1933 to live close to his brother on the banks of the river Dee. In 1897 he took over, with his artist friend, Edward C Clifford, The Berry Art School, St John's Wood but gave up teaching four years later to marry Jenny Agnes Wuidart. Their first son William Wuidart Monk was born in Hampstead in 1902 but in 1903 William Monk brought his family to live at The Gables, High Street, Old Amersham. Their youngest son Jules was born here on 4th December 1903.

The marriage to Jenny brought financial stability and the family's security was further established in 1903 when Monk founded The London Almanack at the same time as the move to Amersham. The 35 illustrations he published (one for each year) served as a historical record of the ever-changing London.

In 1910 William Monk moved his family to a newly built Arts and Crafts

style house, The Dial House, in Amersham-on-the-Hill. This house is still on the corner of Chestnut Lane and Sycamore Road just opposite the Chesham Bois Common. It has a distinctive lychgate and a large garden.

In 1915 tragedy struck the family when 11 year old Jules died, and shortly afterwards, and perhaps because of this, The Dial House was sold and the family returned to London. However the family did not break all ties with Amersham as Jenny's parents, had moved to The



Monk's etching of gypsy caravans outside his home, The Gables, 27 High Street, museum collection.

Grange, Chesham Bois which at that time fronted the Chesham Road to the west of Chesham Bois Common. William and Jenny may have used this as a weekend retreat as the Wuidarts lived here until 1932 just before the Monks retired to Chester where William died in 1937.

**Alison Bailey, Samantha Free
and Martin Pounce**

NOTICEBOARD

Programme of Talks and Events

May to December 2019

Society Meetings are 7.30pm for 8.00pm and take place in the Kings Chapel (as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic some events may be cancelled and some talks may move to Zoom. We shall try to give you as much notice as possible. Please consult our Website).

27 May

Black Propaganda Radio

A talk by Bletchley Park Guide Mike Kushner about a fake British radio show that helped defeat the Nazis during World War 2.

This talk will be by Zoom. The Amersham Society will send members an e-Alert beforehand about this talk giving instructions how to join Zoom.

30 September

A History of the Seaside Postcard

A talk by John Storr.

28 October

Annual General Meeting

Followed by a talk on the **Horse Trust Speen** by Libby Surman.

25 November

With the Ghurkhas on the North East Frontier

A talk by former Chairman of the Amersham Society Martin Brooks about his recent visit to the North East Frontier.

Amersham Society Officers

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Website <https://amershamsociety.org>

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