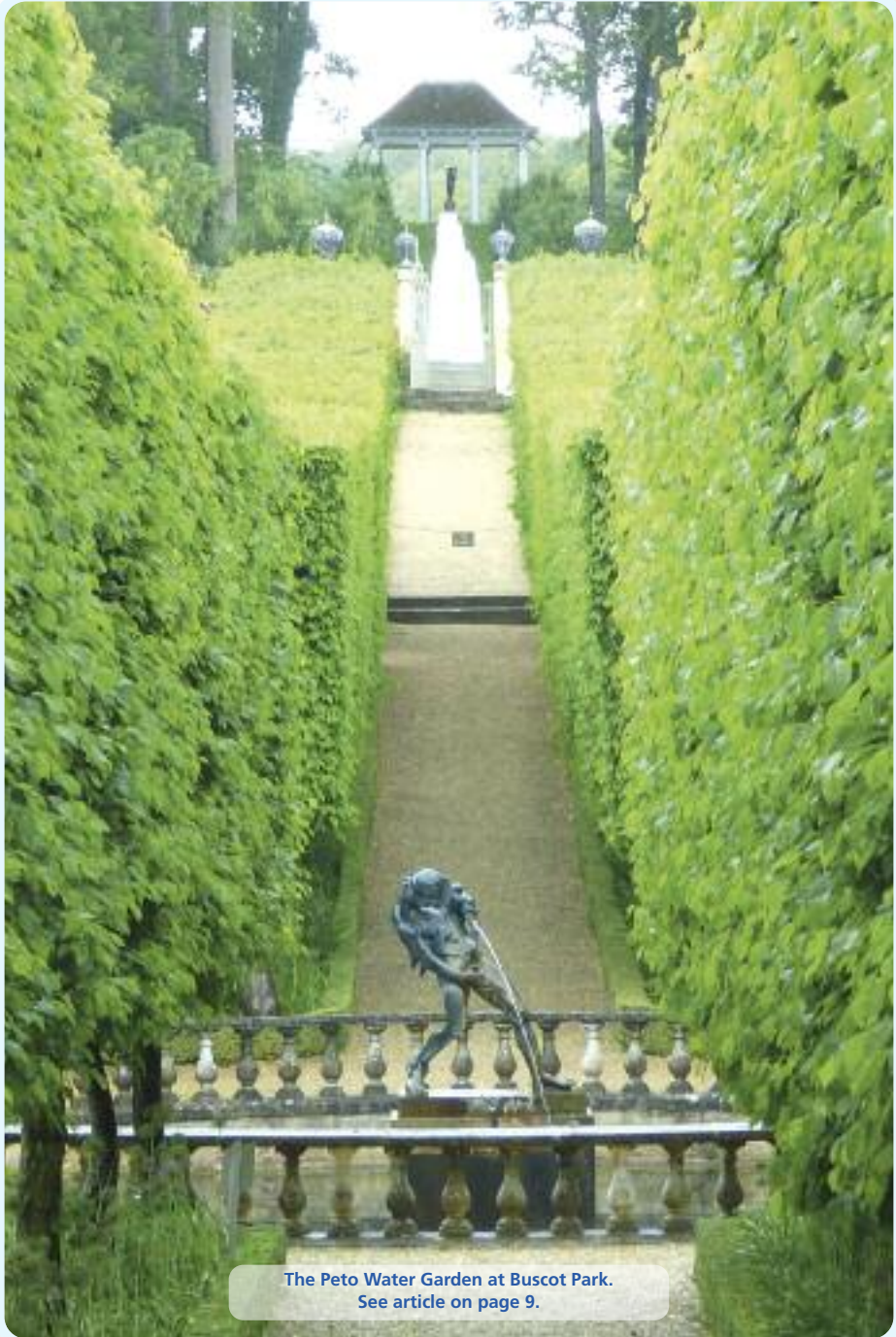


The image shows the interior of a church, likely St. Mary's Church in Amersham. The view is from the back of the nave looking towards the altar. A large, ornate stained glass window is the central focus, featuring a circular medallion at the top. The church has a high, vaulted wooden ceiling with exposed beams. People are seated in wooden pews, some facing the altar. The lighting is warm, highlighting the architectural details and the colors of the stained glass.

**September 2019**

**AMERSHAM SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER**



The Peto Water Garden at Buscot Park.  
See article on page 9.



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Cover and inside cover photograph by John Suckling

# Annual Report from the Chair for the AGM

The September Newsletter and the approach of autumn traditionally give your Committee and Chair an opportunity to review the Society activities over the past year, to consider changes that will or might affect the Old Town and to look at the wider picture in our district and County. It also provides an important opportunity to remind members about the AGM.

## **Annual General Meeting**

The AGM is due to take place on Wednesday 30th October at 7.30pm at the Kings Chapel in Amersham High Street. Doors will open at 7.00pm and the Meeting will start at 7.30pm. A copy of the Agenda is on page 5. We hope that as many members as possible will come to the Meeting. We also hope that among those members attending there will be some of you willing to join the Committee and help share the work. Please do not be overly modest.

Since the AGM last year the five members of the committee elected to stand at that meeting and the additional member who joined us in January this year have continued to run a busy and enjoyable programme, maintaining our core activities while at the same time keeping in touch as much as possible with other local organisations, particularly the Museum, the Town Council, Old Amersham Business Association (OABA) and SERCO. This year we shall again support the OABA Magical Evening which will be on 6th December.

I should like to say a huge thank you to everyone on the Committee and other Members of the Society whose hard work and commitment over the past year, including almost 100% attendance at Committee Meetings, have ensured that the Amersham Society continues to flourish.

## Activities

We have been pleased at the number of Members and Residents who have attended our programme of activities during the past year. This year we have organised two social gatherings with a purpose, the first in July and the second in September.

For our July party, we were very grateful to Su and Quentin Chases first for agreeing that we could hold a summer recruitment party in their wonderful garden during July and then for being so enormously welcoming and tolerant when the kitchen was taken over by our band of helpers, and also for joining in the evening with members and guests with such enthusiasm. The garden, the beautiful summer weather and the evening generally, were much enjoyed by everyone and in addition, we recruited a further 14 new members to the Society. So well done everyone. (see the pictures on page 28 and on also on the website)

Our September Party at the Museum is being jointly organised by The Amersham Society and Friends of the Museum. It is being held to celebrate the Museum's recent publication of *"Women at War"* by Alison Bailey, who will give us a brief insight into the book and the stories it tells. In addition during the evening Dr Peter Borrows will speak briefly about the Amersham Society's current heritage project, which is the conservation of the Vagabond notice on the wall at 60 Broadway.

As always during the past year we have enjoyed having our lectures in the comfort of the Kings Chapel. It has been good to see that the majority of people coming to the talks now tend to arrive soon after 7.30pm. This is admittedly often to enable them to secure a parking place or a front seat. But also the pleasant reception hall, where coffee / tea and biscuits are served, is a popular gathering point for members to mingle with and catch up with each other. We should like to thank the Management of the Kings Arms for letting us meet at the Kings Chapel and also the friendly and helpful staff who are always on hand to ensure that the evening runs smoothly.

Those members who joined us for the outing to Fairford and Buscot Park, both interesting and different places, were kept in suspense about the weather until the moment when we had to step outside at Buscot Park and the good British rain moved away (see John Suckling's Report on page 9)

We have planned our programme of eight lectures for 2020 and think that you will find them interesting and varied. We have not yet, however, planned an outing for next year. This year our coach was not completely full and the date of our outing clashed with one organised by the Arts Society, also of course interesting. There is no difficulty over liaising with the Arts Society to avoid a clash of dates in future and there is time to organise an outing for 2020. But I wonder whether Amersham Society

members would like us to continue to organise an outing or whether there are now too many other exciting trips to choose from. A short email to [www.amershamsociety.org](http://www.amershamsociety.org) simply indicating whether you would like the Amersham Society outings to continue would be helpful, or have a word with me at one of our meetings.

## **LOCAL CONCERNS AND PLANS**

*(please also consult our website)*

### **Local Plan**

The Society is continuing to monitor various planning applications, particularly The Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2036 consultation. Our hard working Secretary hand delivered 400 cards to residents in the Old Town in August giving details of the Local Plan and reminding them that it was important for them to send the Planning Policy Team their comments on proposals to develop two areas of Green Belt in the Old Town. We believe that there should be a public consultation on this.

### **Additional Zebra Crossing in the Broadway**

We have been told by the Council that there is no firm decision on this yet.

### **The Maltings**

Savills (UK) Ltd has been instructed to market the freehold interest in the Maltings. They have just advertised this. Details are on the Savills' website [www-sites.savills.com/themaltings](http://www-sites.savills.com/themaltings). The Amersham Society has no further details at present.

## **The Market Hall**

We are grateful to Annie Hamilton-Pike for representing the Amersham Society and Amersham Museum in discussions with the Council and the Government Department responsible for local authorities about the maintenance of the Market Hall. It is important that essential work is carried out to stop this important building deteriorating further.

## **HS2**

As the Newsletter goes to print we have heard that the Government has announced an independent review, chaired by Douglas Oakervee, into whether and how to proceed on the High Speed 2 project. We shall liaise with HS2 Action Alliance for any information that they are able to obtain.

## **The New Buckinghamshire Council**

Residents and Organisations across the County are being asked to get involved in improving their local area with the new Buckinghamshire Council. They have been asked to give feedback on proposals for Community Boards.

## **Britain in Bloom**

The results of this competition are due to be announced in October. In the meantime we should congratulate the Town Council, *"the Bloomers"* and everyone else involved in putting on such a wonderful display.

**Dorothy Symes**

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held in the King's Chapel on Wednesday 30th October 2019 at 7.30 pm *(to be preceded by a glass of wine from 7.00pm).*

## AGENDA

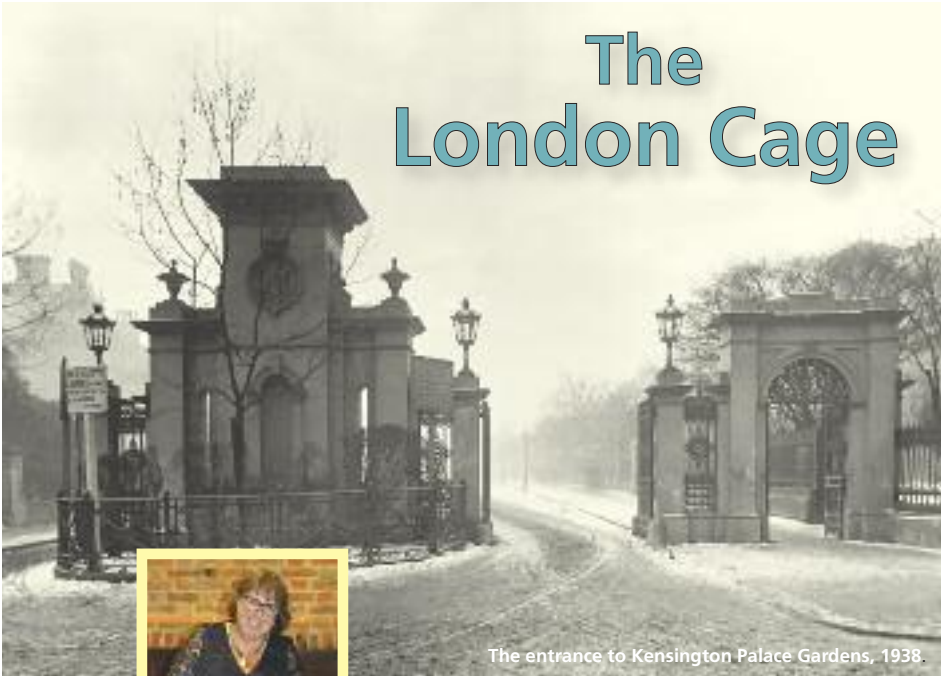
1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting and business arising.
3. Annual Report from the Chair.
4. Honorary Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts.
5. Election of Committee Members and Officers.\*
6. Election of Independent Examiner of the Accounts.
7. Any other business.

The Annual General Meeting will be followed at 8 pm by :-

- TALK: Emergency Rider Volunteers by Kamran Irani who will describe the work of the volunteers who deliver blood and emergency supplies to hospitals.

- \* Election of Committee Members and Officers  
Nominations should be sent by 19th October to the Hon Secretary at  
162 The High Street, Amersham, HP7 0EG.

# The London Cage



The entrance to Kensington Palace Gardens, 1938.

Our last talk before the summer break was on 29th May when we were delighted to welcome historian, author and lecturer, Dr Helen Fry. Dr Fry is the author of more than 20 books, focussing particularly on intelligence, prisoners of war and the social history of the Second World War.

During World War II it was essential for Britain to deal with the challenge of how to obtain information from those prisoners of war who had already demonstrated the *"will to resist"* at other interrogation centres under softer interrogation techniques. Dr Fry gave us a compelling account of how Britain set about meeting this challenge. In 1940 the War Office opened a clandestine

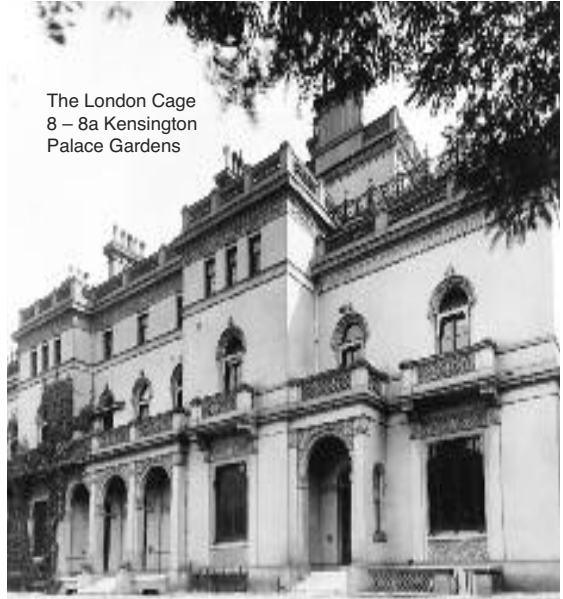
interrogation centre in an exclusive area of central London, 6 – 8 Kensington Palace Gardens, *right in the heart of "millionaires row"*. Although this area had already been bombed several times and another secret interrogation centre had been moved to Trent Park in North London, Kensington Palace Gardens offered the great advantage of seclusion in that area of central London. The premises were originally intended as a transit camp for prisoners. However, as Kensington Palace Gardens were secluded from public view and afforded almost complete privacy, the buildings became the centre where certain German prisoners of war were subjected to *"special intelligence treatment"*.



The Commanding Officer at the centre was Colonel Alex Patterson Scotland, a retired officer of the British Secret Service. Dr Fry explained to us that Colonel Scotland had written his memoirs about the work of the London Cage based on the records he kept during the war. His memoirs were of course extremely sensitive documents, giving as they did insights into the British Military methods of interrogation. MI5 ordered that the memoirs should be suppressed and not published. Colonel Scotland was warned that publication would be a breach of the Official Secrets Act. However, after lengthy discussions and meetings, finally in 1957 Colonel Scotland was allowed to publish his memoirs, which by then had been heavily redacted.

Some of the examples of techniques used at the Cage and described in the book were sleep deprivation, lengthy solitary confinement, prisoners had to remain standing for a long time, there was a lack of pencils and paper. Everything at the Cage was made to be grim. The rooms were unheated in winter. Interrogation was introduced immediately after capture, while a prisoner was still disorientated by the shock of capture.

The interrogators were responsible for trying to gain “hot” information from those German prisoners of war thought to be more likely to yield information under military conditions. There was no formal training for the interrogators to



The London Cage  
8 – 8a Kensington  
Palace Gardens

show them what it took for a prisoner of war to hold out, or what it took for him to break. But it was well understood that the interrogators needed to know as much as possible about the enemy. Colonel Scotland did not want the length of the prisoners’ stay at the Cage to be limited in any way.

The premises in Kensington Palace Gardens were used to interrogate prisoners of war until the end of the war and about 3,000 prisoners passed through the Cage. And thereafter until 1948 War criminals were held for questioning at Kensington Palace Gardens. There were four suicides in the London Cage, but few details were released. The London Cage was also used as a transit camp for high-ranking German officers as they were moved to different locations. Some clever and apparently “softer” methods of deception sometimes proved more effective at

gaining intelligence. There was secret bugging to capture conversations between the prisoners.

Some of the prisoners who spent time at the London Cage were guilty of serious war crimes. Two of these prisoners mentioned by Dr Fry were SS General Sepp Dietrich and SS Lieutenant Colonel Fritz Knöchlein, the latter being one of the most brutal prisoners to be held at and questioned at the Cage.

One of the atrocities investigated by interrogators at the Cage was the massacre of British soldiers at Wormhoudt in France in May 1940 at the time before the evacuation of Dunkirk. Eighty British soldiers and also some French civilians were captured by the Germans at Wormhoudt. They were rounded up and ordered into a barn. Grenades were thrown into the barn killing some. Then the remaining soldiers were ordered to leave the barn in small groups and shot. Dietrich was not present at the shooting but conceded that it might have been carried out by other SS officers. Dietrich was eventually found guilty of war crimes by an American Military Tribunal and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Officers from the Cage also investigated the massacre of nearly one hundred British soldiers at Le Paradis in France. This had also occurred during the retreat to Dunkirk. During the interrogations of a number of prisoners one name emerged as the possible SS Commander at the time of the atrocity, that of Fritz Knöchlein. Soldiers of the Royal Norfolk Regiment and Royal Scots were outnumbered during the fighting as they retreated to Dunkirk. When the

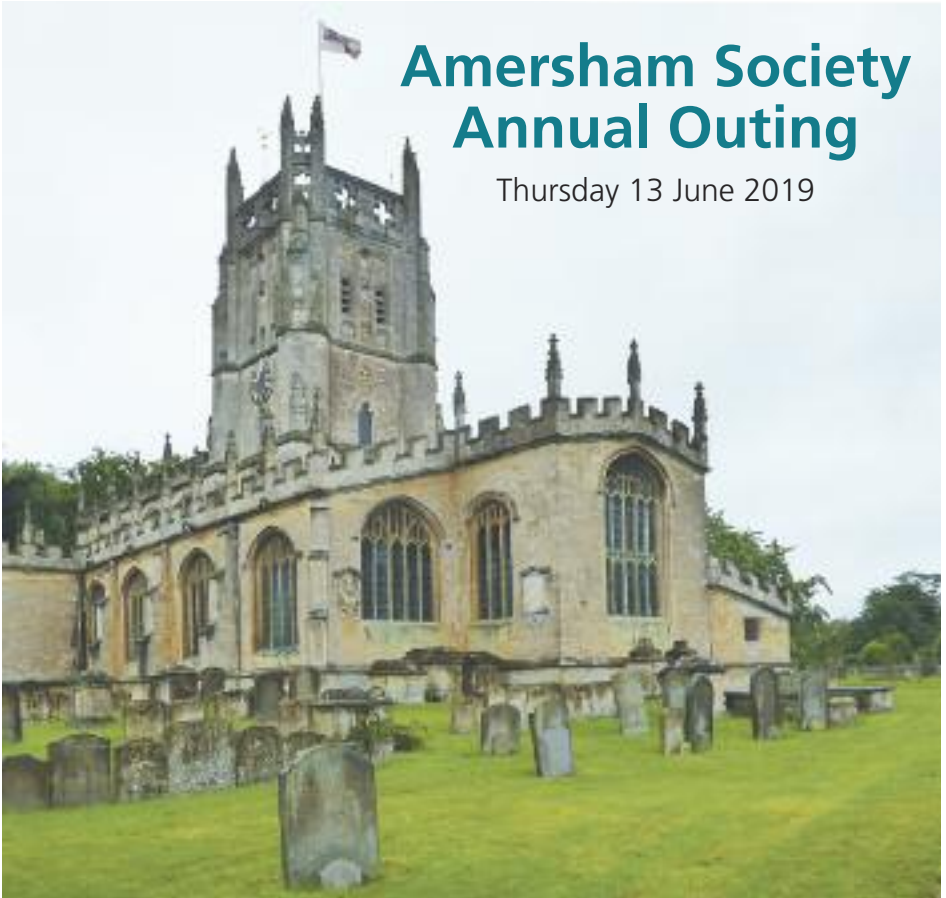
British forces surrendered and came out of the barn where they had taken shelter, they were shot in cold blood on the orders of Knöchlein. There were just two survivors. Knöchlein was questioned at the Cage and eventually transported to Hamburg to stand trial. In August 1948 he was found guilty of the war crimes and hanged in Hamelin prison in January 1949. During his trial Knöchlein had accused Colonel Scotland of torture. Although these charges were firmly refuted and Colonel Scotland cleared of any charges, the rumours and accusations continued for many years.

All civilised countries adhere to the Geneva Convention the rules of which had been updated in 1929 after the Great War. It was updated again after the Second World War in the light of atrocities committed during that conflict. The London Cage existed for eight years and during this time there were unproven allegations that some staff at the London Cage may have wrongly overstepped the Convention boundaries. There was, however, no evidence of water boarding and no report of prisoner ill-treatment was ever filed against the London Cage. The other side of the argument about the unproven allegations was that a soft approach to interrogation during World War II would not have achieved results. The interrogation methods used at the London Cage had an impact on wartime military operations, and after the war helped to bring to justice a number of Nazi War Criminals.

**Dorothy Symes**

# Amersham Society Annual Outing

Thursday 13 June 2019

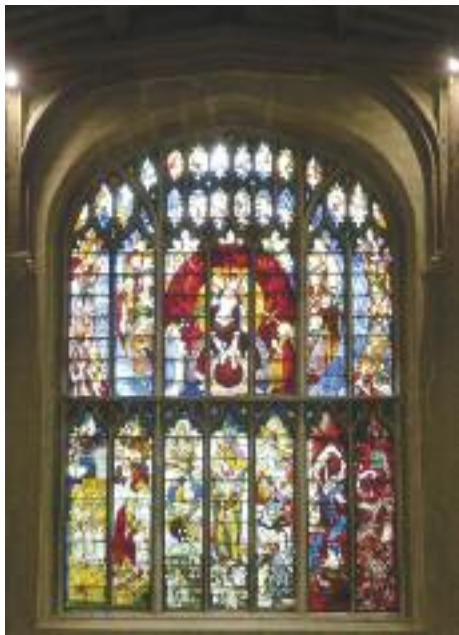


**F**lamming June? Not in 2019. The days leading up to Thursday 13th June had all been wet and the dawn of the 13th was not promising with the air damp with drizzle, however, the weather had not dampened the optimistic spirits as members of the Amersham Society's coach left the old town on route to St Mary's Church, Fairford, Gloucestershire. The group were warmly welcomed by Church volunteers who were ready with coffee or tea and biscuits before a guided tour of St Mary's.

There has been a Church on the site for 1,000 years, with the current building dating from circa 1497. The church was rebuilt in the 1490s by John Tame, and the windows were added under the instructions of his son Edward Tame. The glass was made between 1500 and 1517 and the panes now attributed to Barnard Flower, glazier to King Henry VII.

The unique feature of St Mary's is its stained glass. It is the only Parish Church in the UK with a complete set of late medieval glass. The guided tour of the

Church provided a detailed description of the windows which it is impossible to record in this report but it was clear that the windows were made and installed to a theological plan of what was to be illustrated and what position it should occupy.



*The Great West Window, depicting the Last Judgement and related scenes*

How the windows survived the 16th Century religious upheavals during Edward VI's reign when in other parts of the country there was significant destruction of ideological images, including stained glass. One theory is that the windows were whitewashed and the town's influential people protected them. We will never know the truth of how the windows survived but they did and today the 28 windows,

displaying biblical scenes, reflect the skill of the medieval glaziers who created them.

After lunch, which was taken by some in the Bull Hotel, it was off to Buscot Park. Over the lunch break there had been a deluge but the rain had once again retreated as the coach left Fairford.

Buscot Park is a large country house built in an austere neoclassical style, popular in the mid 18th century. Built between 1780 and 1783 for Edward Loveden Loveden, it stayed in the family until 1859 when it was bought by Robert Tertius Campbell, an Australian. Campbell died in 1887 and the house and its estate were sold in 1889 to Alexander Henderson a financier who in 1916 was made the 1st Lord Faringdon. He enlarged the house and commissioned Harold Petro to design the Italianate water garden. He was also responsible for laying the foundation of the Faringdon Collection having purchased (amongst many other works of art) a portrait of Pieter Six by Rembrandt; Rossetti's portrait of Pandora and Burne-Jones series The Legend of Sleeping Beauty. His grandson Gavin Henderson added to the collection by acquiring furniture designed by Robert Adam and Thomas Hope. As heir to the house and estate Gavin Henderson was responsible for returning the house to its late 18th Century appearance.

The present Lord Faringdon continues to care for the property as well as the

family art collection, which they, together with other trustees, continue to extend.

As photography was prohibited in the House it is impossible to show the extravagant interior and the quality of the art collection.

The six principal rooms contain the works collected by the three Barons Faringdon, from the 1880s to the present day.

The Dutch Room contains (amongst other works) pictures by Van Dyke and Rembrandt. The principal room of the house, the saloon, displays Burne-Jones' *The Legend of the Briar Rose* which was painted over nineteen years from 1871. Acquired by the first Lord Faringdon in 1890. the room was redesigned to accommodate them. However, Burne-Jones, on visiting the House, disliked the sequence, and painted a further four scenes to fill the voids between the original canvases.

Elsewhere in the house are works by Botticelli, Gainsborough, Lord Leighton, Lely, Graham Sutherland amongst many others.

Apart from a short sharp shower on arrival the weather remained predom-

antly dry but blustery during the visit to Buscot Park allowing the more energetic to enjoy the extensive grounds including the Four Seasons Garden and the distant faux waterfall, the creation of the present Lord Faringdon.

The visit to Buscot Park was rounded off by a cream tea (or tea with a large piece of cake) before starting the journey back to Amersham allowing some to recharge their batteries with a brief snooze.



Thanks are due to Dorothy Symes and Geraldine Marshall-Andrew for all their effort in planning and organising a splendid day which could not be spoilt by the inclement weather of June 2019.

**John Suckling**

# An Heirloom Comes Home

**Amersham in the year 1804 was a very frightened place along with much of the south of England. Napoleon Bonaparte had declared himself Emperor of France and was putting together an army to invade England. The British political classes panicked and tried desperately to strengthen both the Royal Navy and the Army. This recruitment drive affected everyone in England. Joining the militia to help defend against a French invasion was popular, but joining the regular Army with the possibility of serving in Europe was less so.**

Against this background, my great great grandfather, William Tyrwhitt Drake (1785 – 1848), the second son of Thomas Drake Tyrwhitt Drake of Shardeloes (1749 – 1810), found himself in something of a quandary. By early 1805 he was two thirds of his way through an undergraduate degree at Christ Church College in the University of Oxford, when patriotic duty made him decide to abandon his studies and join the Army. The Drake family were extremely wealthy at that time, so it must have been little problem for his father to purchase him a commission in a good cavalry regiment. For the

payment of £1600 in 1805, William Tyrwhitt Drake was commissioned as a cornet in the Royal Horse Guards. After his initial training he rose to the rank of Lieutenant in 1807 and found himself posted to join the Duke of Wellington's army in the Peninsular War.

Wellington made little use of his heavy cavalry in the Peninsular War, so life may not have been too dangerous for William Tyrwhitt Drake. Along with most junior officers on campaign in Spain and Portugal, he took a campaign chest with him for holding both essentials and luxuries. His campaign chest was probably made locally for him

in the Chilterns. It was made of oak boards, well dovetailed at the corners, and reinforced with steel corners.

Returning to Amersham after the Peninsular War, William Tyrwhitt Drake and his campaign chest were not finished with their military adventures. After the treaty of Fontainebleau in early 1814, Bonaparte was exiled to Elba, from where he escaped and within 100 days was leading a new French army into the Netherlands with the aim of destroying the British and Prussian armies stationed there to defend them.



*Brass nameplate on the campaign chest*

Panic returned to Amersham and Britain more generally, so William Tyrwhitt Drake and his campaign chest found themselves fighting at the battles of Quatre Bras and Waterloo in June 1815.

William was one of the heroes of Waterloo, leading his troop of the Royal Horse Guards in their legendary charge

that halted the Comte d'Erlon's first Corps as they came close to breaking through Wellington's defensive infantry line at the top of Mont St Jean. William was one of the few cavalry officers who actually obeyed Wellington's orders in that he helped halt the advance of the French infantry and then retired to the reverse slopes of Mont St Jean to be ready to repulse further attacks should they develop. For his bravery and obedience to orders William was awarded a battlefield promotion by Wellington to the rank of Major in his regiment, and was the senior surviving officer in his regiment at the end of that momentous Sunday battle.

William returned home after Waterloo with his campaign chest and settled down to life in Amersham. After his father's death in 1810, he and his elder brother had become the two MPs for the borough of Amersham, positions that they held until the pocket borough of Amersham was abolished in the Great Reform Bill of 1831.

William died aged 63 in London in 1848, whereupon his widow and surviving children moved away from their home at Little Shardeloes in Amersham, to live first in Rugby where their eldest son was at school, and afterwards in Suffolk.



*Portrait of William Tyrwhitt Drake,  
courtesy of the Council of the National Army Museum.*

William's portrait, uniform, sabre, Waterloo medal and campaign chest passed on to his widow and then to his only surviving son, my great grandfather Rev. William Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake (1835 – 1915). He and his wife contributed to the late Victorian population boom by producing nine children, all but one of whom survived

to adulthood. Inevitably William Tyrwhitt Drake's Waterloo and Peninsular war possessions were divided up among his descendants.

Many of the most historically interesting artefacts, including his portrait in oils, ended up in the National Army Museum in the late 20th century, but his campaign chest and spare horse



blanket descended to his youngest grandson, my grandfather, Rev. Barnard Halsey Tyrwhitt Drake (1882 – 1936).

My grandfather died rather suddenly in January 1936 when he was killed by a falling tree in the Rectory garden at Walsoken in Cambridgeshire. Most of his possessions were put up for auction in nearby Wisbech to raise funds for my grandmother.

The campaign chest was sold at auction in Wisbech to a carpenter and undertaker, Robert Crofts. He used it to store funeral shrouds in his work store. Crofts removed the lock and added an iron clasp to keep its contents secure in transit.

If we move forward 200 years from the last time the campaign chest saw action at Waterloo, a charity named Waterloo 200 was set up in 2015 to commemorate all who witnessed or took part in that momentous European battle. Descendants of such witnesses were invited to submit a brief biography of their ancestor to the Waterloo 200 website, so this I did for William Tyrwhitt Drake. As part of the submission process I had to provide an email address and check a checkbox if I was willing to be contacted by anyone else interested in my ancestor. I checked that checkbox.

Email in the 21st century is a mixed blessing. Amid the mountain of spam and junk there are the occasional

oases of delight. To my great surprise I received an email message from the great grandson of Robert Crofts who had purchased the campaign chest at auction in 1936. He was about to auction it again on eBay, and wondered if I might be interested.

The next day found me at his house in Wisbech for a reunion with my great grandfather's campaign chest. We negotiated a mutually agreeable price and it came home with me to Buckinghamshire in the back of my car.

After nearly 80 years in a carpenter's work store, it was not in pristine condition. There were minor losses to woodworm and rot and it was very dirty. All the lacquer coatings on the handles and steel corner braces had rubbed off, the original lock had been removed and a later metal clasp added.

Thanks to some meticulous work by Chess Restorers in Chesham, it has been thoroughly treated for worm and rot, deep cleaned, polished and had its lacquer restored. The 20th century clasp has been retained as that is now part of its history.

This campaign chest lives today in the family room at my house. I will be delighted to show it to any members who are interested in it.

**Barney Tyrwhitt-Drake**

# Mottes, Moats and Castles

Talk by archaeologist Mike Farley on 24th April

Mike had spent his career as the County Archaeologist and, as he explained to us, after retirement he had made a hobby of his work. And during the hour or so that he spoke to us and answered our questions the large group of members, who had come to learn from an expert about a time in the county's early and for many of us rather hazy history, were made fully aware of the depth of Mike's detailed knowledge of the late Saxon period in Buckinghamshire.



The late Saxon period was from about 850 to 1066 AD and Mike's talk covered the period from the tenth century. He explained to us that really nothing much of major archaeological significance had happened in Buckinghamshire during the late Saxon period, there were no major battles and the area was largely rural with a scattered population. Written records were poor.

He spoke of the Viking incursions from the tenth century into Buckinghamshire in the area around Bernwood.

The Viking period was complicated. The seaborne raiders originated mainly from Denmark and Northern Germany. Some of the raiders became settlers and over time replaced many traces of the Roman culture. A number of towns were fortified during the conflicts between the English and the raiders, including Buckingham, and a fort was built on Sashes, an island on the Buckinghamshire / Berkshire border. Mike told us that much of the information that he gave us could be found in the Anglo Saxon Chronicles which record the Scandinavian incursions and also the reign of King Canute from Denmark.

Mike went on to explain with illustrations what a "motte and bailey" were. Wallingford was one of the best surviving examples of where a motte and bailey had been constructed. The motte was an earthen mound, usually with wooden steps, and the bailey was an open area of land alongside it. The motte served as a lookout point and later these were built of stone.

Buckinghamshire had six castles, only one of which has been identified as a royal castle. The only surviving castle in the county is Boarstall, near Aylesbury, which is at present owned by the National Trust.

There were many areas in Buckinghamshire, where earthworks had been examined and provided evidence of

Moated site near Aston Clinton



having been, or probably having been, mottes. Mike gave examples such as Weston Turville, Brill (although the cricket club had levelled this mound before the earthworks became protected), Wing, Hawridge / Cholesbury, Aston Clinton, Desborough, West Wycombe, an area near Great Missenden. The town of Whitworth has a Saxon church and nearby is an earthwork bank. Some of these settlements were known to have come under siege.

During the Civil War Boarstall became a garrison town in 1450. Cannon were placed in the area. There is also a fortification plan for Newport Pagnall. The motte and bailey, as a defence system, ended around this time with the introduction of the cannon.

At the end of his talk and with reference to the third type of construction mentioned in the title, Mike spoke briefly about the various moats scattered through the county. There are 170 moats

recorded in Buckinghamshire and 200 recorded in Hertfordshire. There are traces of a moated site at Bradwell, near Aston Clinton and a ditched feature in Dorney parish. The majority of these moated sites are thought to have originally housed manor houses.

It was clear from Mike's talk and his detailed illustrations that, although nothing spectacular may have happened in Buckinghamshire during the Late Saxon period, there had nevertheless been a lot of preparation work and small defences built throughout the county. These are to be seen today in the various earthen mounds in what are still quite sparsely populated areas. And so as we go on our walks through the countryside, the many humps and bumps that we may see along the route, could well be the remains of Saxon mottes and baileys

**Dorothy Symes**

# The Cottage that Richard Shepherd Built

I am sometimes asked when my house, Troye Cottage, 32 Whielden Street, was built, and, although it is a Listed Building, that's not a straightforward question to answer. In 1702, in the reign of Queen Anne, Richard Shepherd bought a plot of land in Whielden Street from John Daveney (of Penn) and Mary his wife for £20. The land, and an adjacent property (now no. 34), were occupied at the time by Edward Child. The house to the north-east (now 30A) was occupied by William Brown. The land had stables and other outbuildings

on it and ran from 'Wheleden Streete' (where it was 18 feet 3 inches wide) down to 'the orchard of the now dwelling house of John Wingfield' (where it was 26 feet 2 inches). Those dimensions are within 2 inches of what I got, when I measured them.

By 1703, Richard was living in the house, with his wife Anne. The house seems to have been built as a result of what we might now call a pre-nuptial agreement because a covenant (see Figure 1) signed in August 1703 reads

*'Richard ... for and in consideration of the true love and naturall affection he hath beareth unto said Anne, now his wife, settling of a messuage, tenement ... to the uses, intents, purposes ... and agreement made between him, and the said Anne for that purpose before their intermarriage ... '.*

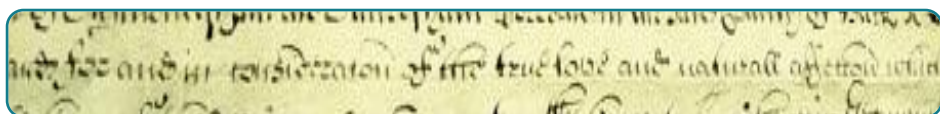


Figure 1



Figure 2

He built the house as an infill, borrowing the walls of the houses on either side and simply adding walls at the back and front, floors and a roof. So the listing, which describes the house as 'Early C18 refronting to earlier timber framed building ...' is not really accurate. Although numbers 30A and 34 are certainly pre-18th century and timber-framed (and their frames can be seen in several places internally in number 32, (see Figure 2 and 3) there is no evidence of a timber frame in the front and rear walls of number 32.



Figure 3

The in-fill character explains a number of curious features of the house. There is an inglenook fireplace, see Figure 4, but it is set across a corner of the room. In addition, the house appears to have two front doors, see Figure 5, causing immense confusion to various delivery services. The left hand one (as viewed from the street) was the original entrance but is now closed off. The right hand one leads to a passage to the rear. This now gives access to the house, but originally gave access to yards or gardens of 32, 34 and probably 36 where there was a well. As an in-fill the house is quite narrow. Building it may not have been popular with the neighbours and access to the rear seems to have been a source of contention because several indentures from the 18th century refer to *'free liberty of ingress, egress, and regress, way and passage from time to time and at all time hereafter with his, her or their tenants and assigns and his, her or their servants and workmen with their horses to go and come to and from Wheledon Street aforesaid unto and from the Backside...'*. Even without the door, it would now be



Figure 4

quite difficult to get a horse down this passage! The house seems to have had a state-of-the-art fitted kitchen because there are several 18th century references to '... a bacon rack, a dresser, a safe, a cupboard [and] one leaden cistern ...'.

Richard was a currier - someone who took leather from the tanner, coloured and softened it and prepared it for the cordwainer (shoe-maker) or saddler. He had at least two apprentices. One was John Kempton, for whom a premium of £10 had been paid in 1731. The other was his wife's nephew, Richard Norwood, whose father, James Norwood, had paid £10 to Richard Sheppard for a 7-year indenture. This was good value because Richard Shepherd left the entire business to his former apprentice who set up in what is now Norwood's Court, on The Broadway.

Richard, as a free-holder paying 'scot



Figure 5

& lot' was one of 130 men in Amersham entitled to vote and he exercised this right in elections held in Aylesbury on the 2nd / 3rd September 1713 and the



Figure 6

4th / 5th April 1722. There was no secret ballot until 1872 and we know in both cases Richard voted for losing candidates (a tradition we continue to this day!). On 4th November 1722, he was assessed for the Parish Poor Relief at 4d. Richard died in 1732 (and was buried in wool at St Mary's Church) but in his will left the property to his wife who remained there until her death in 1745. She, too, was buried in wool at St Mary's Church. The house of 'Widow Sheppard' is marked (no. 168 on 'Wilding Street') on the 1742 *Map of Agmondesham*, see Figure 6. The map had been drawn up on the instruction of the Tyrwhitt-Drake family in order to identify which houses they needed to buy in order to be certain of a majority for their candidates in parliamentary elections. They did not acquire Troye Cottage until 1803.

An inventory taken at the time of Richard's death valued his business, including skins and oils, some at premises in Beaconsfield and Wycombe, at more than £1700. More interesting, perhaps, is the inventory of the house contents which gives considerable insight into how the rooms were used in

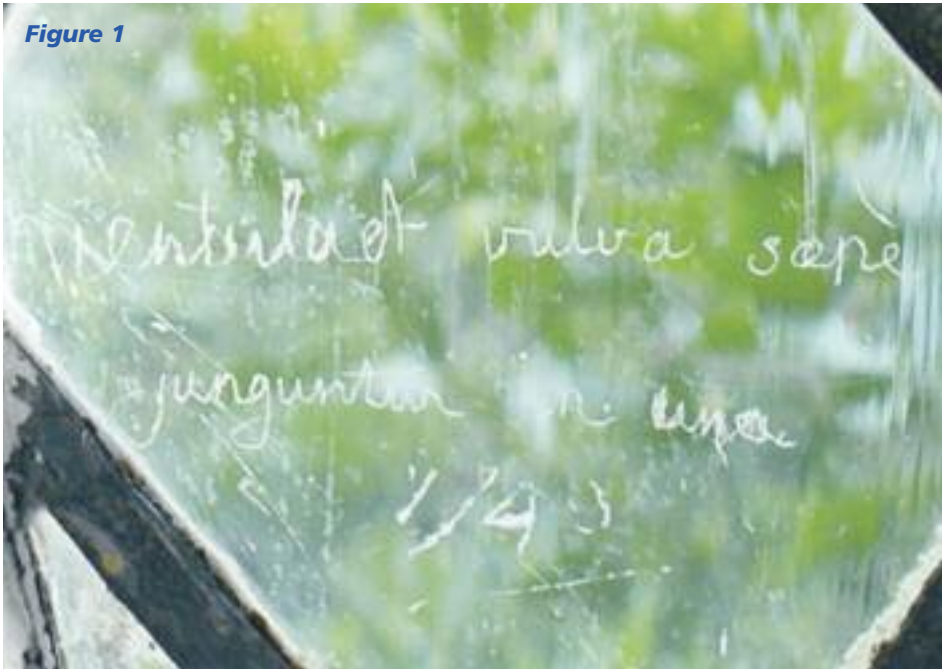
the 18th century. In the kitchen (we now use it as the main sitting room) amongst other things were an oval table, six plain and two arm chairs and three joint stools. There were sixteen pewter dishes, two dozen plates, two cheese plates, one pair of brass candlesticks and snuffers and four iron candlesticks. There was also a pair of bellows, a pair of roasting dogs, three spits, a dripping pan and a mortar and pestle. In the parlour (the front room, where Richard probably met his business clients) were a clock, five plain and one armchair, a pier glass (mirror), an oval and a square table and various fire irons. In the cellar was a kilderkin and two firkins, the former holding 17 gallons (79 litres), each of the latter held half that amount. In the Best Chamber (now our main bedroom) was a bedstead with feather mattress, a bolster, two pillows and a quilt. There were also three plain and two arm chairs, a dressing table with drawers and mirror. There were also various curtains and fire irons.

**Dr Peter Borrows**

*This article has been adapted from a much longer article on the Amersham History website, <https://amershammuseum.org/history/research/other-articles/house-history-detective/>, which also includes the later history of the house. The history is also covered in a talk sometimes given by Peter and Marian Borrows to local history societies.*

# More Graffiti in Old Amersham

**Figure 1**



In the September 2018 issue of the Amersham Society Newsletter (page 19), I reported on several examples of graffiti found in the Old Town, especially signatures on a window in the Market Hall. Following that article, a resident of the Old Town approached me to say that one of her windows had an inscription – in Latin (See Figure 1).

The inscription appears to read:

***Mentila et vulva saepe  
junguntur in una – 1748***

When I went to have a look at it I realised that there was a second, much cruder, inscription on the diamond pane immediately below the Latin one. It also became apparent that although the second inscription had been written from the inside of the building, the Latin inscription was on the outside (although of course the pane may have been reversed over the last 270 years).



Because the inscription is on private land we are not specifying its exact location and because it is rather vulgar we are not publishing a translation – that may, of course, provide an incentive for your teenage children or grandchildren to do their Latin homework.

The other inscription is rather less intriguing. Although undated, the writing is in an obviously much more modern style. Census and similar records show a number of people with the surname Slade in the area in the 20th

century. The inscription has been identified as being by Barry Slade, who was born in the Old Town and has lived and worked his entire life here.

When leaded windows were repaired it was apparently often the custom for the craftsman concerned to inscribe her / his initials or signature on one of the panes, much as an artist might sign her / his work- unlike the Latin inscription this is certainly not graffiti!

**Dr Peter Borrows**



**Figure 2**



# Museum News

It's been a wonderfully busy and enjoyable spring and summer in the museum. Despite the mixed weather our visitor numbers have been very good and we're hoping to at least match our record-breaking year of 2018. Detailed below are some of the highlights from our recent work.



## Women at War

We are now close to finishing our Women at War project, which has included extensive research into the lives of local women and their role in the campaign for suffrage and in WWI. We have drawn the research together into a book, 'Women at War' written by Alison Bailey, which was published in July. The book has sold extremely well and we're now working on some resources for secondary school aged children, enabling local teachers to include the stories of local women in the national story of women's suffrage.

This project has been supported by the Heritage Fund. You order copies of the book online or buy a copy from the museum's shop.

*Amersham's Women at War - an image of the pamphlet written by local resident A M Wright.*

## HOW I BECAME A SUFFRAGETTE

By

A. M. WRIGHT

In 1906 a friend asked me to go with her to a Meeting for Votes for Women in the Albert Hall, at which Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel were to speak. I had always believed firmly in the need for Women's Suffrage but of course could not approve of all the things done by these women to call attention to their political demand. I had not yet gained to remember that men who persistently denied a vote had burnt the Munition House, thrown prisons, forty-two private dwellings and warehouses in Bristol and half the city, causing the death of numerous people, whereas these women were under a pledge to sacrifice themselves rather than endanger the lives of their opponents. The Hall was packed and the audience most enthusiastic. At the end we were asked to make contributions to the CAUSE either by cheque, cash, or promise cards. It amazed me to see from the seating based on the platform the generosity of the women, who for the most part were workers, professional or otherwise, and fifty years ago women's remuneration was low in the extreme. In that women's labour was the only cheap labour in Britain, whereas in America and the Empire, as it was then, there were usually cheap colored workers.

Mrs. Pankhurst, whom I had not hitherto seen, by her nobility of bearing, obvious unselfish devotion to the Cause, and inspiring speech, completely carried me away and the Votes for Women Movement became a religion to me. I was working very hard at the time, visiting schools in London and the suburbs, coaching students for College and examinations and my work by me for Women's Suffrage had to be done in my spare time.

I well remember my last experience as a paper seller. It was a Saturday during the mid-day rush and I was ordered to stand outside Bond Street Tube Station in Oxford Street; I received my enormous batch of the weekly journal Votes for Women together



*Arts & Crafts architecture in Amersham - Fulbeck: 'Fulbeck, The Avenue, Amersham-on-the-Hill. Kennard's drawings for Alfred Ellis's house were published in the Building News in 1906'*

## Housing Projects

This year we've been researching local, 20th century housing. Over the summer we produced a small exhibition about the history of social housing and this autumn we will display an exhibition of images of local Arts and Crafts buildings, particularly the work of J H Kennard. If you have a story or information about your home please do get in touch with us.

The exhibition opens on 18th September and runs until the end of November. Alison Bailey will be giving a talk about Arts and Crafts Amersham on Wednesday 23rd October. See website for further details.

## Age Friendly Project

Since the beginning of January we have been running a second strand of our Age Friendly programme. During 2017 / 2018 we were able to extend our work with older people which was a combination of work at the museum

and outreach work in care homes and with community groups through creative and reminiscence work. Following this we wanted to expand and extend our work to include those who were living at home but who might be isolated.

Through the new project we're running sessions, led by an artist, to make memory boxes in three local care homes in the local area. Our project coordinator and the artist run the sessions and for each home (and set of participants) there are around four sessions. Participants chose to make a box or frame about their lives or part of their lives; the feedback from participants and those who support them has been overwhelmingly positive.

We've also set up a Reminiscence at Home project, where we're recruiting and training volunteers to visit people at home and talk to them about their lives (over six to eight sessions). The volunteer then writes their life stories into memory books. We're aiming to work with 20 older people between now and June 2020; we have almost reached our target but we're still looking for people who might be interested in being involved.

The project has been supported by the Paradigm Foundation, Chiltern District Council, the Shanly Foundation, W G Edwards Charitable Foundation, Waitrose and Barnett Waddingham.

For more information email [Jane@amershammuseum.org](mailto:Jane@amershammuseum.org)



*The Mobile Museum*

## Mobile Museum

Earlier this year we launched Anthony, a mobile museum. He is named Anthony after the museum's former chairman, Anthony del Tufo, who helped set up the museum.

The Mobile Museum is a mobile exhibition, housed in a retro-style vehicle, which tells the story of Amersham in the 20th century. The Mobile Museum showcases a range of mixed media work, including oral history, film, photographs, documents and objects. The design and fit-out were created with the help of local people.

This summer we have been travelling to schools, care homes, fetes and festivals with Anthony. We have received lots of positive comments; people love the vehicle and they're interested to find out about the project and our work. It is proving to be a great way of reaching out to people who don't know about the museum or haven't visited before.

Support for the Mobile Museum has come from the National Lottery's Heritage Fund, the HS2 Community and Environment Fund, Amersham Local Area Forum through Amersham Decides, Chiltern District

Council, Amersham Action Group and the Friends of Amersham Museum.

## Understanding the Chilterns

We're delighted to be part of a new project, Chalk, Cherries and Chairs, an exciting new partnership scheme led by the Chilterns Conservation Board. The five-year scheme has been awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £2.4m and will deliver a suite of projects across three key themes: wildlife and landscape, heritage and landscape and people, communities and landscape.

Further supported by a wide range of partners and funders, Chalk, Cherries and Chairs is the most ambitious landscape scale scheme in the Chilterns to date. The scheme aims to leave a lasting legacy of improved conservation and land management, partnership working and community engagement.

As part of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project the museum, in partnership with Wycombe Museum, is delivering an education programme for Key Stage 2 aged children at schools

in the project area. It will teach children how the Chiltern's natural resources have supported local industry and communities and impacted on the location, type and development of settlements. The project's primary purpose is to inspire the next generation of local children to feel a connection with the special qualities of the Central Chilterns landscape. It is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Ernest Cook Trust. We're currently recruiting an experienced education consultant to develop and deliver the project, which will run for five years from 2019 until 2024.



*VE Day (the image is of Winchmore Hill)*

## VE Day Memories

8th May 2020 will be the 75th anniversary of VE Day. To celebrate this we're planning a special month of activities in May next year. We've begun by asking people old enough to remember VE Day about their memories of the event. It could be local to Amersham or it could relate to where they were living at the time. If you have a VE Day memory, please send it in to us at [emily@amershammuseum.org](mailto:emily@amershammuseum.org)

## Coming up

There is lots going on in the museum this autumn including:

- October walks around Amer-sham-on-the-Hill (9th October) and Chesham Bois (16th October), focusing on the Arts and Crafts architecture of J H Kennard, part of the Chilterns Walking Festival.
  - Amersham Top to Bottom walks on 10th and 12th October as part of the Chiltern Walking Festival
  - A special talk on Arts and Crafts architecture in Amersham, by Alison Bailey on Wednesday 23rd October.
  - Arts and Crafts Amersham exhibition, which runs from 18th September until the end of November.
  - Halloween themed activities in October half-term. We're also running more workshops for families to help restore our doll's houses.
  - Our new Mini Museum sessions for children aged under five will run fortnightly from Friday 2th September.
  - Our popular Christmas Fair returns on 30th November and 1st December.
  - Wreath making workshop on Wednesday 11th December.
- For the details of all these events and how to book (where relevant) please go to our website:  
[www.amershammuseum.org](http://www.amershammuseum.org)

# Amersham Society Summer Garden Party



We are very grateful to Su and Quentin Chases for letting the Amersham Society hold the party in their beautiful garden (see also Chair's Report for the AGM page

2) We should also like to thank both our team of helpers, who looked after everyone so well and our members and their guests for joining us on the evening.





Party photographs by Lena Morgan.



# NOTICEBOARD

## Programme of Talks and Events

Society meetings are 7.30pm for 8.pm and take place in the Kings Chapel

- 19 – 20 September **Amersham Charter Fair**
- 25 September **Summiting the Science of Everest**  
Lecture by Physicist Dr Melanie Windridge
- 30 October **Annual General Meeting**  
The Meeting will start at 7.30pm and be followed at 8 pm 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 River Thames  
A talk by naturalist John Tyler
- 6 December  
6 pm till late **Old Amersham Business Association**  
Supported by the Amersham Society presents A Magical Christmas Evening

### 2020

- 29 January **The Drakes of Amersham**  
A talk by Barnaby Tyrwhitt-Drake  
*(This will be in St Marys Church)*
- 26 February **The History of Pinewood Studios**  
A talk by Mike Payne
- 25 March **The World of the Honey Bee**  
A talk by Howard Pool

### Amersham Society Officers

Chair	Dorothy Symes	01494 434858
Vice –Chair	Edward Copisarow	07932 152522
Secretary	Geraldine Marshall-Andrew	01494 433735
Treasurer	David Atkinson	01494 434830

Website <https://amershamsociety.org>

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