

70TH
ANNIVERSARY

AMERSHAM SOCIETY



Sharncliffe

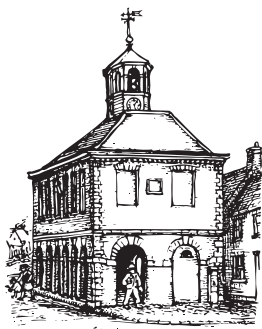


JANUARY 2026



LOCAL
STORIES
AT
THE
AMERSHAM
MUSEUM





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Images of Shardeloes:
Top: as it is today, Centre: c 1955
and bottom: c1950

Photograph opposite:

Amersham museum celebrates its 35th Anniversary this year. The glass entrance, which replaced a brick one, was built in 2017.

In this Issue

- 4 **Editorial**
John Catton
- 6 **Subscriptions 2026**
A message from our Membership Secretary, Peter Borrows
- 7 **That was the decade that was...**
John Catton looks back to the 1950s when our Society was founded. How much do you remember?
- 9 **Some thoughts on the Amersham Tithes maps**
Peter Borrows reveals just what these old maps shows us.
- 14 **The Gerrards Cross Cowboy**
Our September talk: John Suckling relates the extraordinary life of a long forgotten best selling Victorian author.
- 17 **Destination Amersham**
Museum Director Briony Hudson and Vice Chair of Trustees, Alison Bailey, explore the long history of people choosing to make their homes in the area.
- 21 **Helen & Douglas House**
Our October talk: Dorothy Symes writes about the work of the first ever children's hospice.
- 24 **The Kennedys: Saints or Sinners**
Our November talk: A seemingly doomed, yet successful American dynasty. Christine Standing explains who is who and what happened to each of them.
- 28 **Visit to Knole House, Sevenoaks, Kent – Society outing on 24th June**
Details and application form.
- 30 **Where we meet each month**
A short history of the King's chapel.
- 31 **The Arts Society Amersham**
One of Amersham's thriving societies. Nicholas Dee, its Publicity and Heritage Officer writes about its appeal.
- 35 **That was the decade that was... Answers**
Plus a few interesting facts.
- 38 **The sorry saga of Council Mismanagement**
Just how did Bucks County Council get it so wrong over the sale of their redundant offices on King George V Road?
- 40 **Noticeboard**
Our programme of talks and activities planned for 2026

Editorial

A Happy and Healthy New Year to you all and welcome to the 70th anniversary year of the Society's founding in 1956. It's always gratifying to see so many of you at the Kings Chapel (see page 30) at our monthly meetings, supporting the Society whose main objective to preserve the character of the Old Town.

Life was so different back then. Like many of you I was just a child then, and again like some of you, not living in Amersham, so perhaps some of our memories actually came from seeing images in books such as *The Book of Amersham* (Elgar Pike & Clive Birch, 1976) or Jean Archer's *Amersham* (published in 1995) or a visit to our wonderful museum. It would be lovely if any members who were living in the Old Town in the 1950s could share with us any memories they may have. There are two more issues of the newsletter in this anniversary year in which to print them, so please do write to me (richard.catton1@ntlworld.com). And to start your thought process, see how you fare with the quiz on page 7.

In the 1950s, an average of one stately home was being demolished each week and Shardeloes was earmarked for demolition in 1957. Developers had planned to re-use the bricks to build many new homes on the site. This was the catalyst for the Society's founding. On hearing of a threat to demolish Shardeloes, John Camp (an author of books on Buckinghamshire who lived in Whielden Street) called a public meeting in May 1956, where he met other like-minded local

inhabitants with an interest in local history. Together they decided to found a Society to preserve the amenities and traditions of Amersham. The newly formed Amersham Society campaigned to save the house, and succeeded in having it Grade I listed. By 1961 it and the nearby outbuildings had been converted into apartments.

From 1971 members received a duplicated typewritten news-sheet updating them on the Society's activities. The first newsletter as we would recognise it today was printed in 1981. Full versions of the newsletters in pdf format dating back to 2019 are available on our website.

In this issue you'll see what you expect, but whilst the headlines may be unchanged the contents of each contribution will be refreshingly new. There is, for instance, a summary of our September, October and November talks. October's talk, about Helen & Douglas House, which followed our short AGM, was particularly well received. Indeed it resonated with our members to such an extent that collectively we donated £533.80 towards the work of the Hospice.

As always the Town Council excelled themselves in the run up to Christmas with twinkling light displays ensuring Old Amersham and Amersham-on-the-Hill exuded the festive spirit. They also organised two fundraising markets and here Steve Catanach, our Town Clerk, takes over with a dispiriting story but one with a positive ending:

“As with any outdoor event, particularly at Christmas, success is very dependent on the weather. Unfortunately, after several years of fine conditions, both events faced some particularly challenging weather, with wind and rain making a strong appearance.

Following a rain-soaked morning, the festive event in Amersham-on-the-Hill once again proved to be a wonderful community occasion. Charities and stallholders still enjoyed a successful day, despite the conditions. As organisers of the event, in partnership with the Amersham Action Group, we were delighted to donate £1,000 each to the three chosen charities: Chiltern Toy Bank, Dementia Café 23, and Dementia Carers Respite. Less than a week later, the event in Old Amersham suffered a similar fate, with rain and wind continuing throughout the evening. However, in true community spirit, residents turned out in great numbers to support the event and witness the official switching-on of the Christmas lights. The ceremony was carried out by Sarah Green MP, the Town Mayor, Cllr Simon Woodhead, his Deputy, and the Town Crier, Joseph Noaman”.

In October, after our September newsletter was issued, the Town Council was able to announce:

“Amersham Blooms with a Gold Award” following the *RHS Thames & Chilterns in Bloom Regional Awards Ceremony*. Amersham received: Gold in the town category, Best town in the region, Gold Award for the Memorial Gardens and the RHS National Certificate of Distinction – the highest regional award for a park. When asked for a comment, Steve Catanach replied “Yes, we are all very chuffed with latest bloom accolade,” and so he should be!

Also, after our September newsletter went to print, I came across a *The Times Saturday Quiz*. Question 15 was: “Completed in 1931 High & Over is a modernist house in which Buckinghamshire market town?”

Finally a big thank you to our small events team, Yvonne Suckling, Geraldine Marshall-Andrew and Barbara Turner, who have drawn up an interesting and varied programme for the year (see NOTICEBOARD on the back cover). As well as monthly lectures we organise an annual outing. This year it is to Knole in Kent, (see page 28 for details). And if you didn't remember, our first outing, a trip to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, took place in 1964 at a cost of 10/6 per member!

John Catton

Amersham Society Subscriptions 2026

This note is to remind you that your Annual Subscription to the Amersham Society became due on 1st January 2026. The amount is the same as last year at £16.50 for an individual member, or £25 for two family members living at the same address. By the time you read this, almost certainly you will have already paid your subscription on or about the 2nd of January.

Over half our members now pay by direct debit via our agent GoCardless. Although it claims that payments for this subscription will appear on your bank statement as GoCardless, ref: AMERSHAMSOCI-[XXXXXX], some banks just say GoCardless. If you have several direct debits paid via GoCardless, the easiest way to recognise the Amersham Society subscription is by the amount (£16.50 or £25 annually) or check Direct Debit reference number online. If you recently changed from standing order to direct debit, did you remember to cancel the standing order?

If you pay by standing order (no longer available to new members), all but a handful of our members have now corrected them to reflect the increases in subscription in 2025, but if you have not, in the next few weeks you will receive an e-mail or a letter from me asking for the balance. We cannot change your standing order – you have to do that by going in to your bank or changing it online. A gentle reminder that failing to pay the correct subscription could jeopardise your membership of the Society. If you would like to pay in future by direct debit, rather than standing order, please e-mail me at peterborrows@cantab.net

and I can arrange for that to be set up, taking future annual subscriptions as well as the shortfall for this year.

If, sadly, your partner or spouse died during the year, did you tell us and did you remember to change the subscription? Of course, we are happy to accept the excess as a small donation.

If you are one of the handful of people who pay by cash or cheque, unless you have already done so, please send the money to me at Troye Cottage, 32 Whielden Street, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 OHU. Please do it now, before you forget! Alternatively, if you would like to pay in future by direct debit, please e-mail me at peterborrows@cantab.net and I can arrange for both the 2026 and subsequent payments to be taken by direct debit (as long as you have an e-mail address).

If you are not sure how you pay, or for any other problems, please e-mail me at peterborrows@cantab.net or phone 01494 728422.

Finally, do you receive the E-alerts which we send out about twice a month? These give you reminders of forthcoming events and sometimes include new information not published in the Newsletters, eg social events. If you are not receiving this, it's probably because we don't have your e-mail address – please e-mail me at peterborrows@cantab.net. If you are two family members living at the same address, it can be helpful if we have both addresses on our database. Again, just e-mail me with the information.

**Dr Peter Borrows Amersham
Society Membership Secretary**



That was the decade that was...

The Amersham Society was founded in 1956....how different life was back then.

Although WWII had come to an end in 1945, the Cold War dominated world politics and here at home austerity was still prevalent despite a show of optimism with the Festival of Britain in 1951 and the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Rationing ended for canned and dried fruit, chocolate biscuits, treacle, syrup, jellies, mincemeat and petrol in May 1950 to be followed by soap in September. Imagine, soap had been rationed since February 1942! Then, after 14 years, all food rationing came to an end in July 1954. The world's first jet-powered passenger service took off from London Heathrow in 1952, a BOAC Comet aircraft. In 1954 Bill Haley & His Comets released "Rock Around the Clock", becoming an instant hit and the defining anthem of the rock 'n' roll era. In 1955 Ruth Ellis was the last woman to be

hanged (this will be the subject of the Society's talk in November) and our wartime leader, Winston Churchill, resigned from his second term as Prime Minister. Anthony Eden was humiliated over the Suez Crises in 1956 and in the following year Harold Macmillan proclaimed that "most of our people have never had it so good." In 1958 CND was founded – the same year the Notting Hill riots took place. To end this brief reminder of the decade, 1959 saw the opening of the M1 Motorway connecting the South with the hitherto largely unknown areas north of Watford and, if you had £496 to spend, you could travel along this super highway driving the revolutionary Mini.

But what was also affecting us on a local level in Amersham when our Society was founded? Here is a quiz to see how much you remember or indeed knew. Answers with any explanatory notes can be found on pages 35-37.

01

The Society was founded to save Shardeloes House from demolition. When was the building we see today constructed?

02

Who was the MP for Amersham when the Society was founded in 1956?

03

Simon Woodhead is our current Mayor, but who was the Mayor of Amersham in 1956?

04

Amersham-on-the-Hill is the archetypical Metro-land commuter town. What did the Met line fare from Amersham to Baker Street cost in the mid 1950s?

05

Which school in Amersham, opened on 14th January 1957 as the first true 'rationalised traditional' prototype by the Ministry of Education, is now a Grade II listed building?

06

Name two films from the 1950s with locations in Amersham.

07

Market Square is now Seasons Café. What was there in the 1950s?

08

What was on the site of Tesco supermarket in the 1950s?

09

A secondary aim, when the Society was founded in 1956, was the creation of a museum. When was this achieved?

10

You could enjoy a visit to the cinema in Amersham-on-the-Hill during the 1950s. What was it called and where was it located?



Some thoughts on the Amersham Tithe Map

Figure 1

This is an intriguing article by Peter Borrows which almost throws up more questions than it answers. But in it we learn the origins of some local place names looking through the detail our ancestors went into.

In order to make research on the Amersham Tithe Map of 1838 easier, I have recently been transcribing the entries in the apportionment onto a spreadsheet. Tithe maps were created as a result of the *Tithe Commutation Act 1836*, which aimed to convert traditional tithe payments (a tenth of agricultural produce) into monetary rent charges. These maps, along with the apportionments (which are detailed schedules), were produced to survey and assess the land within a parish for tithe purposes.

Tithe maps were produced locally, often using existing maps as a base, and had to be approved by the Tithe Commissioners. While the goal was high-quality mapping, the expense involved led to some variations in accuracy and detail across different parishes. The Surveyor for the Amersham map was James Stratford. In the 1841 census he was living with his family in the High Street in Amersham, although I haven't yet worked out in which house. Interestingly, his father, Richard Stratford had been the Surveyor for the Amersham Inclosure (*sic!*) Map of 1815.

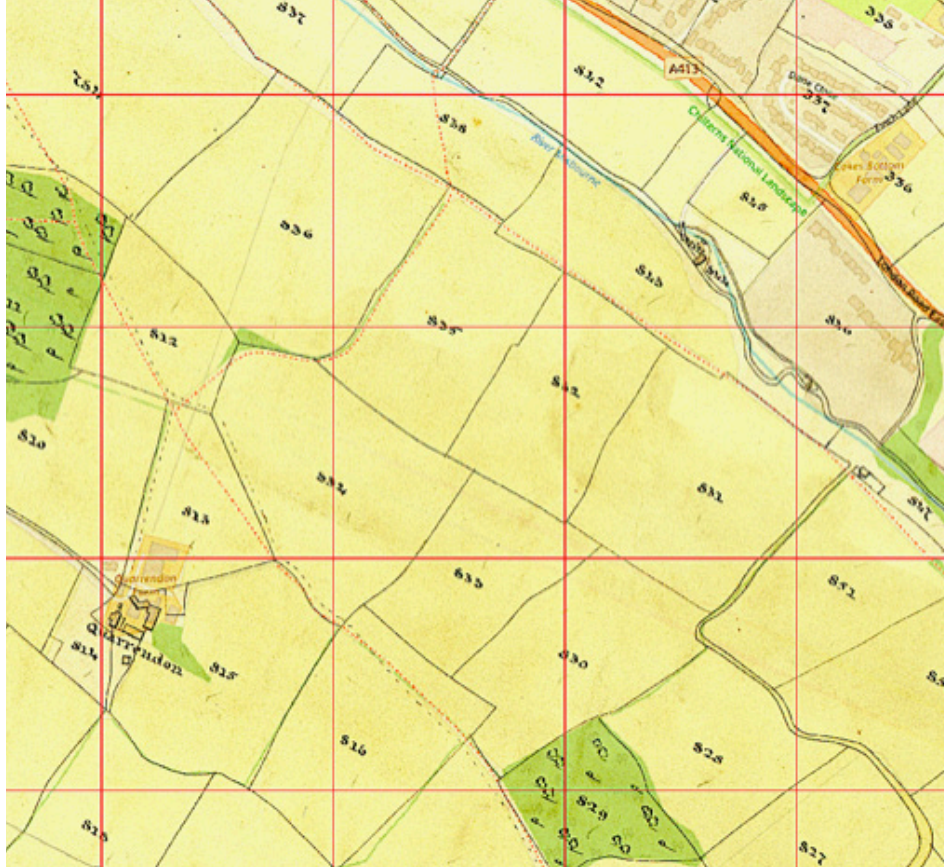


Figure 2

James's two sons (James and Richard) both seem to have joined the family business as surveyors and auctioneers.

On the map, every plot of land is numbered. To find the name and other details about the field, etc you then need to look at the apportionment. Although there are a number of versions of the Amersham tithe map available, I used the diocesan copy of the map which is held at the Buckinghamshire Archives, currently in Aylesbury, but soon to move to High Wycombe.

The apportionment lists just over 1200 fields, woods or plots on which there are buildings. For each one, it gives the name of the landowner, the occupier, the name of the farm where relevant, whether the land is arable, grass or woodland, the area (in perches, roods and acres¹), the tithe (in pounds, shillings and pence²) and the name of the field. The spreadsheet allows you to see how wealthy particular landowners were, which fields were parts of which farm, or to sort the data in any other useful way.

1. 40 perches = 1 rood, 4 roods = 1 acre; 1 acre ≈ 4 000 square metres

2. 12 pence = 1 shilling, 20 shillings = 1 pound; 1 old penny ≈ 0.4 (new) pence

It can be very difficult to identify the location of a particular field so I used freely available geographical mapping software (QGIS, <https://qgis.org/>) to identify the coordinates (using Ordnance Survey eastings and northings) of each field (although doubtless I made some mistakes). The software also enabled me to superimpose a semi-transparent version of the tithe map onto Streetmap (<https://www.streetmap.co.uk/>), so that I could see where each field was located in relation to current roads, etc.

There is a variety of names used for the fields. Some are quite mundane, like Middle Field (386) or Nine Acres (924) but others are more intriguing. What is the story behind Great Pains Field (713)? You would have sympathy for the woman (yes, woman) who farmed Stoney Rocks (949). You might guess a previous (or current?) use of Potkilm Meadow (993), Burying Ground (222), Burying Orchard (324), neither of the latter corresponding with cemeteries associated with churches, chapels, or the Quakers. And how or why did field 361 get the same Isle of Wight? Could it be something to do with the imprisonment of Charles I in Carisbrooke Castle?

There are five fields with windmill in the name. Four of these, Little Windmill Field (71), Great Windmill Field (72), Hither Windmill Field (80) and Windmill Field (81) are in the area now largely occupied by Hervines Park and the sports fields of Dr Challoner's Grammar School. Ironically, the area



Figure 3

we now call Windmill Wood is just to the west of these, mostly in Baldwin's Field (69). Anyway, surely you wouldn't build a windmill in a wood, because it would be partly sheltered from wind?

But what about the fifth field on the tithe map, also called Windmill Field (835)? That's about 3 km south-east of the others, between Quarrendon Mill and Quarrendon Farm. That's very odd because Quarrendon Mill is (or was until it fell out of use in the early years of the 20th century) a watermill built by William Holding on land leased from William Drake in 1766. Indeed, it is shown as such on the tithe map as Mill Meadow (844). So was the watermill preceded by a windmill further up the hillside? Watermills are usually considered technically easier than windmills, so if you've got a reasonable supply of water, why build a windmill? Admittedly, William Holding did have to construct a mill leet (channel) to get the water to where he needed it, away from the valley bottom, and that caused all sorts of flooding problems, only solved recently by work carried out by Affinity Water. Some support for the idea of a windmill is given by the place



Figure 4

name Quarrendon which is believed to derive from the Old English words *cweorn*, meaning mill (related to modern English *quern* and possibly corn) and *dūn*, which means hill, so perhaps there was once a mill on a hill here. I had always assumed that the name came from the village of Quarrendon some 30 km away, north of Aylesbury, perhaps because the farm was once owned by somebody from that village, but perhaps there really was a windmill there. Does anyone have any other evidence?

The tithe map also gives some clues as to how Hervines Park got its name. The Park is pretty much coincident with Great Windmill Field, plot

number 72 (see Figure 1), one of more than 40 fields comprising Heroynes Farm. The land was owned by Thomas Tyrwhitt-Drake and farmed by James Williams. The farmhouse was on plot 117, on what is now Hyron's Barn on Woodside Road (Figure 4). I find Heroynes quite difficult to pronounce, so it is not surprising that it turned into both Hyron's and Hervines over the years. The Enumerators of the Census seem to have encountered similar problems because on the 1841 Census it is called Herron's Farm and in 1851 and 1871 Heron's Farm but in 1911 it is Hyson's Farm and 1921 Hyson's Farm! However, in the emergency register drawn up at the start of the war in 1939 there was both Hyron's Lodge and Hyron's Old Barn.

When the Amersham Museum cautiously resumed its guided Tudor Walks after the Covid-19 lockdown (remember? 6 people meeting outdoors, so 1 guide and no more than 5 visitors) we were keen to make them relevant and topical. So, in the section on health in Tudor times,



Figure 5



Figure 6

we referred to various plagues and pointed out that self-isolation was nothing new. Amersham had its Pest House, with its own plague pit. It was established in 1622 at Gore Hill House (Figure 5, from the Amersham Museum) on the road to Beaconsfield. Parish Accounts show a payment of £2 16s 11d “for the relief of such

as were suspected dangerous to the parish in time of infection.” The tithe map overlaying the modern Street Map (Figure 6) shows exactly where it was (plot 756) – and why it had to be demolished when the country lane up Gore Hill was straightened and widened in 1964.

Peter Borrows

The Gerrards Cross Cowboy

The story of Thomas Mayne Reid

The 2025-26 season of the Amersham Society talks opened with the unusual story of the long forgotten adventurer and best-selling Victorian author Thomas Mayne Reid. Our speaker was well known local author Denise Beddows.

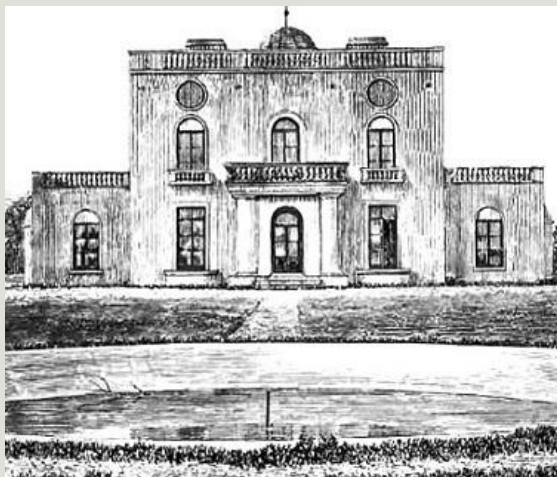
Thomas Mayne Reid was born in Northern Ireland in 1818. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister and was expected to follow his father into the ministry; but despite spending four years training to be a minister he didn't complete his studies. Instead he sought adventure beyond Northern Ireland and in December 1839, aged 21, he boarded the Dumfriesshire, to make the Atlantic crossing to New Orleans where he found work as a clerk for a corn merchant.

During the next six years, he had numerous jobs, working variously as a slave overseer (an experience that later led him to speak out against slavery) schoolmaster, journalist, cowhand and buffalo hunter. He travelled widely spending time in Louisiana, Tennessee, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and New York. He joined forces with the naturalist James Audubon and learnt about the flora and fauna of North America. Whilst in Philadelphia he met the writer Edgar Allan Poe, who admired Maine Reid's inventive storytelling, and the two became good drinking companions. It was during this period he began to pen boys' adventure stories, set against a backdrop of the Wild West.

In 1846, the Mexican-American war broke out, and, recognising the potential for a greater adventure, Mayne Reid joined the 1st New York Volunteer Infantry as a 2nd Lieutenant. During the Battle of Chapultepec in 1847 he was severely wounded in the hip, an injury which would trouble him for the rest of his life. His bravery earned him promotion to First Lieutenant. He subsequently inflated this and styled himself Captain - a "rank" he



Thomas Mayne Reid



Sketch of 'The Rancho

would incorporate into his by-line. While recuperating he covered the war for *Spirit of the Times*, a New York newspaper, and penned the novel *The Adventures of a Light Infantry Officer*.

1849 was a year which saw many revolutions break out around the world and buoyed by his involvement in the Mexican-American war Mayne Reid sailed for Liverpool, intending to fight in the Bavarian revolution. However the revolution was short lived and had ended before he had even set foot back in Europe. So, after his arrival in Liverpool from the USA instead of heading for Bavaria he set off for London having been invited to stay at the home of G.W. Hyde, who had agreed to publish his novels.

It was whilst staying with his publisher that Mayne Reid became captivated by Hyde's daughter Elizabeth, 20 years his junior, and sought her hand in marriage. Shocked by this suggestion but not wanting to deter an author he felt would become a best-seller,

Hyde suggested he return in a few years' time.

Captain Mayne Reid's reputation as an international best-seller of adventure stories became well established. His 75 novels were translated into many languages and sold millions of copies worldwide. He outsold other established children's writers of the day, including Captain Marryat, R.M. Ballantyne and James Fenimore Cooper.

His books would inspire other budding authors, including Robert Louis Stevenson and Rider Haggard, and his many juvenile fans included the young Arthur Conan Doyle, Vladimir Nabokov, Anton Chekov, D.H. Lawrence and Theodore Roosevelt.

So it was in 1853, as an established author with a growing reputation and income to match, the 35 year old Mayne Reid married Elizabeth Hyde then a girl of 15. They moved from London to Gerrards Cross having purchased a plot of land on which to build a mansion. The mansion to be

built was designed by him and was an elaborate reproduction of a Mexican hacienda that he called “The Rancho”.

Like his contemporary Charles Dickens, Mayne Reid undertook regular lucrative tours of America giving readings to his avid fans. But his young bride had no wish to accompany him on these travels, nor did she enjoy spending months on end at home alone, so he gave in to her wishes and reluctantly gave up the lucrative tours, devoting himself to his writing and supervising the local brick makers and artisans who were still constructing his home.

However the mansion, with its huge ornate fountain and twin gate-houses, was a crippling drain on his financial resources. Without the income from his USA book tours, he soon found himself bankrupt.

Forced to abandon “The Rancho”, and increasingly troubled by the pain from his war wound, Mayne Reid bought a much cheaper property, a small farm in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. He was now an ageing and semi-invalid author, using a board set across his armchair as his desk. For a time, he earned a little money as editor of the Boys’ Illustrated News but was latterly reduced to living off his US war pension.

His health continued to decline and he died at the age of 65 in October 1883. Elizabeth arranged for him to be buried in Kensal Green cemetery in London

where his memorial headstone can still be found.

Mayne Reid was very well connected and after his death there were many eulogies, in particular from his good friend and fellow writer Edgar Allan Poe, who said “he was a colossal liar but a most picturesque one!” By which he meant that nothing in his books was true but inventive storytelling. Mayne Reid wrote about almost anything that he experienced in his adventurous life, and about quite a few other things that he probably did not encounter first hand, save in his vivid imagination, for instance his use of the prefix “Captain”.

During his lifetime Mayne Reid was one of the most read authors in the country. His novels were serialised in popular magazines, translated and printed in their thousands, yet today he is all but unknown.

Although his novels have become almost forgotten in the English speaking world, they have remained popular in Eastern Europe, particularly in Russia.

The house was never finished, it was simply abandoned and today there is no visual evidence of its existence.

Mayne Reid’s legacy is that, through his novels, he influenced many young men to go overseas to the African colonies and the Empire - a fitting tribute to the power of his written word.

John Suckling



Destination Amersham

Wladzia Tanska with her children

During 2026, Amersham Museum will be exploring the long history of people making their homes in the area, with an exhibition and programme of events titled “Destination Amersham”. Here, Museum Director Briony Hudson and Vice Chair of Trustees, Alison Bailey, give us a preview.

From the famous settlers such as Dame Steve Shirley, the pioneering businesswoman and philanthropist who lived in Bois Lane, having arrived in Britain on the Kindertransport as a 5-year-old refugee from Nazi Germany, to the unknown Romans who made their home at Mantles Green farm, the local population has always been diverse with a fascinating range of stories behind their arrival here.

Aliens in Amersham

The late middle ages did not have any of the large-scale migrations of the Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman times. Yet migration continued on a small scale, for reasons including opportunities for work and trade, and natural disasters such as the Black Death or the St Elizabeth Day Flood in Holland and Zeeland in 1421.

In a poor economic situation, and with England’s fortunes in the Hundred Years War with France worsening, tensions grew between the native population and ‘foreigners’ living and trading in the country.

In 1440 Parliament agreed to levy a new tax on all non-native-born men residing in England over twelve years of age. There were two rates, one for non-householders, such as servants or labourers, and a higher rate for artisans or tradesmen. The levy was payable every six months, and surviving records provide us with details of the ‘alien’ males counted.

In total, 15 men were counted in Amersham, a small market town of around 800 people. If we estimate that 10 of those 15 men had wives with them and those couples had 4 children each, the true alien population could have numbered around 65 – around 8% of Amersham’s total population.

Peter Bartholomew and Henry Beryng were labourers, John van Berg was recorded earlier in 1436 because he swore an oath of fealty – or loyalty, a form of British citizenship. He is recorded as a Brabanter, from the area we now call Belgium.

Nicholas Derham was a higher-paying householder, and a chaplain. There are also ‘John Dutchman’ and ‘John Frenchman’, obviously not actual names, non-householders and probably labourers. There is one servant in the list, ‘John’, who worked for a Bartholomew Halley, and the remainder of the list are ‘husbandmen’ or farmers with land.

Parishioners

Amersham’s parish registers have always provided an insight into the local population. On 5 June 1575, a woman called “Ruthe of Meritania”

was baptised. It seems likely that she came from West Africa (Mauritania), but we know nothing else about her. In the 1590s, we have Robert Hunter of Leicester, William Smith and William Starke, both Londoners, and Lucas Frithe “a stranger.” In 1623, they record the burial of Robert Hall ‘a Niger’. We don’t know whether the rector used that word because of the man’s skin colour or whether he was from somewhere along the Niger river. Unfortunately, with relatively common first and family names, it has not been possible to link him definitively with other events in the parish registers such as baptism, marriage or birth of children. Consequently, we don’t know whether he was a resident in Amersham or a visitor passing through.

Twentieth century conflicts

The First World War prompted mass movements of people. In August 1914 Germany invaded Belgium and one and a half million Belgians fled the country. Around 250,000 took up the offer from the British Government of hospitality to Belgian victims of war. In September 1914, the Bucks County Relief Committee was formed in Aylesbury with similar committees established in Amersham, Chesham and Chesham Bois. In Amersham the relief effort was co-ordinated by Henrietta Busk, the first woman elected to Amersham Rural District Council.

The local Catholic population approximately doubled owing to the influx of Belgians. With the nearest Catholic Church in Eskdale Avenue, Chesham, a new Catholic Church, Our

Virginia Jean	Wemyss Villa Wood Rd
Clement Virginia	Long Park
Clement Hortense	"
George Leonard George	Cowley, Bois Lane
Robert Lawrence William	"
Harwood Arthur	Newnarth Cottage Long Park
Sims Francis	Bois Bois Rd
Sims Stanley	"
Requet Jules	"
Dohmey Theodore	Saxtons

1	14	11	03	Albert	St. Edmund's Chesham	8
2	23	10	06		Belgian Refugees	20
3	6	2	08		"	"
4	29	11	06		St. Nicholas, Bryden	29
5	17	8	07		"	29
6	21	3	09	Arthur	"	17
7	17	11	09	Thomas	Colby Lane	6
8	2	9	06		"	6
9	17	11	11	Frederick	"	14
10	30	12	02		Belgian Refugee	5

NO	SCHOLAR'S NAME IN FULL	ADDRESS OF PARENT or GUARDIAN	Whether any other child in the family
	Dohmey Auguste	Saxtons	
6	Burton Mabel	Shamrock Chesham Rd	
	Julia Mabel	Old Cot.	
	Belgia Clement	Long Park	
	Ada Clement	"	
	Mulken Bertha	Wemyss Villa Wood Rd	

NO	DATE OF BIRTH			NAME OF PARENT or GUARDIAN	LAST SCHOOL THE CHILD ATTENDED	DA
	Day	Mo	Year			
1	14	11	03		Belgian Refugee	8
2	4	8	09	Robert	Belgian Refugee	19
3	5	2	02		Belgian Refugee	28
4	1	7	02		"	23
5	1	4	02		"	23
6	9	10	00	Eddie	St. Edmund's Chesham	23

Entries for Belgian refugees in the Admission Registers of Chesham Bois Church of England School in Bois Lane, January and February 1915. They include Virginie and Hortense Clement, 9 and 7, living in Long Park, and Theodore and Auguste Dohmey, 15 and 12, living at Saxtons Bois Lane.

Lady of Perpetual Succour, was built in Chesham Bois in 1915. This is one of the only reminders that Belgian refugees ever lived in the area as most returned home after the war.

Margery Abrahams was born into a wealthy Jewish family and moved out to Amersham as a child in the early 1900s. She went to Oxford and became a pioneering dietician after studying in America and Canada. She became active in the move to establish the Kindertransport from Nazi Germany, using the financial backing of her extensive North American network. She herself adopted children in need during the war including Dorothea Bach from Czechoslovakia who lived in Amersham for the rest of her life.

Margery's uncle, John Simmons, a painter and founder of the Bucks Art Society, established the Chesham, Amersham and District Refugee fund in the 1930s. By June 1939 the committee were already supporting 12 Austrians in 2 rented houses at Ashley

Green and Orchard Leigh and were expecting more refugees in the near future from Czechoslovakia.

After war was declared Amersham Hospital became an Emergency Services Hospital led by St Mary's Paddington and new nurses were recruited. Sister Katy Krone was one of the many German Jewish refugees who found sanctuary here. Having a nursing qualification or being prepared to work as a servant were the only ways for adult Jewish women to get British entrance visas. Together with the British-born Jewish evacuees, a handful of Jewish families who'd been in the area for generations and the many domestic servants and a handful of nurses living locally, formed a vibrant community. They even established their own synagogue in Woodside Road, one of only two new synagogues built in the UK during the war; an incredible achievement when synagogues were being destroyed all over Europe and their congregations murdered.

The woods surrounding Amersham were filled with soldiers' camps which gradually emptied out as soldiers were demobbed and returned home. The exception was the Polish soldiers who did not have a home to go back to as this was now occupied by the Soviet Union. Eventually Hodgemoor camp on Gore Hill was designated a Polish resettlement camp. It provided a safe home to over 150 Polish families after the war in temporary buildings, barracks and Nissen huts. Conditions were basic but it was a proper community, a Polish village with a church, with its own priest, an infant school, a post office, a shop and an entertainment hall used for meetings, plays and celebrations.

One resident was Wladzia Tanska née Pogoda. When the war ended in 1945, 16-year-old Wladzia had not yet arrived in Amersham. She was in a temporary refugee camp in the Middle East, probably in Lebanon, and had suffered unimaginable hardship. Wladzia was a homeless refugee for 8 years before arriving in Liverpool on 12 September 1948. She was offered a temporary home at Hodgemoor Woods and stayed for 10 years, marrying a young soldier, Jan Tanski, and bringing up 3 children here.

Recent stories

Our work to co-host events to mark national Refugee Week over the last three years, has enabled us to collect and share more recent stories. Our Refugee Week work was prompted by

Sejal Sachdev, Chesham Bois resident for over 25 years. On 23 October 1972, she landed at Stansted Airport from Uganda with her three brothers and her parents as refugees. President Idi Amin had given Ugandan Asians, who had lived in the country for three generations, just 90 days' notice to leave. Sejal's father had to make 18 visits to the British High Commission in Kampala, a dangerous journey of 130 miles crossing hostile checkpoints to obtain exit visas. After delays from the British Government and rising panic in Uganda, only a UN airlift ensured that all were got out on time. Like the majority of the 28,000 Ugandan Asians that fled here in 1972, Sejal had a British passport, so under international law were admitted into the country, in spite of an outcry from sections of the British press and the public.

The family's home for the next few months was Maresfield Army Camp in East Sussex, one of 16 such camps run mainly by voluntary groups. Sejal remembered their kindness but also the terrible food, sugary cereals and how difficult it was to get vegetarian meals. In 1973 Sejal's father, who had worked as a bank manager in Uganda, secured a loan and purchased a post office and off-licence in Hertfordshire.

The Museum continues to gather stories including the accounts of refugees from Bosnia, Syria and Ukraine amongst others.

Briony Hudson and Alison Bailey




Helen & Douglas House
your local children's hospice

Many residents and visitors to Amersham are familiar with and often visit the Helen & Douglas House shop in Amersham with its bright and inviting window displays. After the Amersham Society AGM on 20th October 2025 we were delighted to welcome Alison Hooker, the Community Fundraising Manager from Helen & Douglas House, to tell us about this wonderful and inspiring charity, which is based in Oxfordshire and also has links in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Middlesex. Alison has worked for the charity for 16 years.



The Charity was founded in 1982 by Sister Frances Dominica who worked as a nurse based in Oxford. At that time there were no hospices for children only (Helen & Douglas was the first children's hospice worldwide). Sister Frances understood so well from her work how desperately important it was for parents caring for a terminally ill child to have a much-needed respite break, which would allow them to spend time with that child and also to have family time with other children that they had. The small hospice for children that Sister Frances established was aimed at providing this respite and to give parents support from when their child's illness is first diagnosed.

Children who come to stay at the Hospice, usually for two or three days at a time, have a range of conditions including severe life-limiting genetic disorders and cancer. They are looked after by skilled nurses and doctors who do everything for them during their respite stay and who also work closely with medical staff at the various hospitals treating the children. The Hospice provides care in a warm and loving environment, which places families at the heart of everything that is offered. There is a flat at the House, where parents can stay if they wish.

As Alison spoke to us about the work of Helen & Douglas House, she illustrated her talk with memorable pictures of some of the children who had stayed at the Hospice over the years and had been given end of life care in the especially supportive and safe environment, which was there to help families to manage their child's condition.

Helen & Douglas House staff also make community outreach visits further away from Oxford, where they can help to advise on joined up care for the children. It is important that during these desperately sad and difficult times families have private space to spend time with their children and also it is during this time that families often form close and lasting friendships with others who are also spending respite time at Helen and Douglas House.

Families are given bereavement support and the Hospice arranges memory events. The care given to the children who stay at Helen & Douglas House is outstanding and aims to help the young patients to live their best possible lives. During their stay the children are encouraged to enjoy music sessions and different crafts. There are carousels in the car park, hydrotherapy, a “squishy” water bed, and various seasonal activities during the year

to celebrate special events such as Christmas, Hallowe’en, also Harry Potter Days.

Alison told us how difficult it often was for the siblings of the children who had the life limiting conditions and who needed the support of Helen & Douglas House. These siblings too needed support and it was helpful for them to spend time with other children who understood the problems that they had to face. Many of these siblings were given one to one counselling.

Alison’s illustrated talk and her deep inside knowledge of the work of the hospice really helped us to understand how the Hospice, a peaceful place that provides outstanding warm and loving care was able to support families and children trying to cope with heart breaking and life-limiting conditions.

Dorothy Symes

The Kennedys: Saints or Sinners



Joseph P. Kennedy (Joe Snr.) and his wife Rose Kennedy pose with their nine children for this picture in 1938 at Bronxville, N.Y.

Seated from left: Eunice, Jean, Edward (on lap of his father), Patricia (Pat), and Kathleen. Standing from the left: Rosemary, Robert, John, their mother and Joseph (Joe Jr.)

No doubt attracted by the intriguing title, there was an exceptional attendance at our November meeting to hear Peter Hague's talk about the ill-feted or cursed Kennedy family.

The head of this illustrious family, and the dominant force for many years, was Joseph P. Kennedy, known as Joe Snr. He was the son of Patrick Kennedy, an Irish catholic immigrant who had left his homeland in 1849, when the family suffered as a result of the potato famine. The dubious foundations of Joe Snr. fortunes came during prohibition, supplying liquor with the mobsters and by what we now call 'insider dealing'. He turned his attention to politics, but found he was much discriminated against by the democrats on account of his catholic faith.

In 1914 he married Rose Fitzgerald and moved west to Hollywood, continuing to make money from evading prohibition laws. It was there he bought the famous family home at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, to house his large family of 9 children - 5 girls and 4 boys. He was a substantial influence in the democratic party and before the outbreak of the second world war, was appointed by president Roosevelt as United States ambassador to Britain. He wasn't popular over here either due to his anti-Semitic views and objection to the United States entering the war in Europe. All this quashed any ambition to run for the presidency. When war broke out, he had to remain in England but sent the family back to America for safety.

His first daughter Rose Marie (1918 – 2005), known as Rosemary, had a



Patrick Kennedy (1823 – 1858), father of Joseph P. Kennedy - known as Joe Snr.

difficult birth which hindered her development. This was concealed by the family until, unknown even to his wife or other family members, Joe Snr. sent her to a clinic where, aged 23, she had a prefrontal lobotomy. It was not successful and left her unable to speak or walk. Then, again unbeknown to the rest of the family, he took the decision to send her to another clinic, in Wisconsin, telling everyone that she had gone to be a journalist. Her sisters only found out her whereabouts after Joe Snr. had a stroke in 1961, eight years before he died.

His second daughter, Kathleen (1920 – 1948), known as "Kick", was a vivacious tomboy who had made many friends among the British



JFK and Jackie at Hyannis Port in 1960

aristocracy and certainly did not want to be sent back to the United States, but her father, as ever, overruled her wishes. But she joined the American Red Cross meaning she could serve in England. Back here she met and married Billy Cavendish, Lord Hartington, the heir to Chatsworth. Sadly he was killed on active service in Belgium shortly afterwards. In 1948 she married her second husband, Earl Fitzwilliam in secret. Prior to breaking the news to her father, who was in Paris at the time, they chose to take a short holiday in the south of France. Tragically en-route the private plane they were flying in crashed and both she and her new partner died. Joe Snr. went to their funeral, but his wife, Rose, made the pretext of a hospital visit for tests to avoid the journey.

There were three further daughters in the family. Eunice Kennedy Shriver (1921 - 2009), a philanthropist and

supporter of people with intellectual disabilities, for which she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom 1984, Pat Kennedy (1924 – 2006) who moved to California and married Peter Lawford. They settled in California where she moved in film star circles, sadly both suffered from alcoholism which resulted in divorce. Finally Jean Kennedy (b. 1928), the youngest daughter, who was appointed Irish Ambassador by Bill Clinton. She worked on the Peace Process and, in 1998, was conferred with honorary Irish citizenship by Mary McAleese, the Irish president. She was the last and longest-lived child of Joe Snr. and Rose when she died in 2020.

We are well acquainted with three of the Kennedy sons, but we must also mention the eldest son, Joseph Patrick or “Joe Jr.” (1915 – 1944), who, so far as Joe Snr. was concerned, was going to become president one day. Sadly whilst serving as a lieutenant in the US navy,



The grave of Kathleen Agnes Cavendish, (nee Kennedy) Marchioness of Hartington, sits in the churchyard of St Peter's Church, Edensor in Chatsworth, England

the 29-year-old and his co-pilot were killed in 1944, when explosives they were carrying detonated prematurely while on a bombing run that was part of Operation Aphrodite.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917 – 1963) is, of course, better known to us as JFK from his time as President of the United States. He served in the United States Navy from 1941 to 1945. During this time his bravery brought him to public attention. The torpedo patrol boat he was commanding in 1944 was spotted by the Japanese, struck and sliced in half. Being a strong swimmer he managed to rescue several crew members, an act of bravery that led to him being awarded a Purple Heart. He was rightly regarded as a war hero, much enhancing his image in the presidential campaign of 1961. As 35th President of the United States, he was on the world stage for many events, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and meeting Nikita Khrushchev and Martin Luther King. His assassination in Dallas, Texas in 1963 is a tragic landmark in all our lives.

Joe Sr. and Rose's third son was Robert Francis Kennedy (1925 - 1968), known as Bobby, also sought to run for the presidency. His life was to end prematurely too, he was shot in 1968 at the Ambassador Hotel in San Francisco and died in hospital in an attempt to remove the bullets. He was survived by his wife and their eleven children.

The youngest son, Edward Moore Kennedy (1932 - 2009), known as Ted, was a gifted law student, later winning an election to senator enabling him to follow his brother John when he became President. He suffered severe back pain after surviving a plane crash flying from Washington to Massachusetts in 1964, but it was the incident in Chappaquiddick for which he is widely remembered. Leaving a celebration party for campaign staff early, he lost control of his car on a bridge and although he escaped, his passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, did not and she drowned. His failure to report the event to the authorities until the following day was a lasting stain on his reputation.

Peter then touched briefly on the many wives involved in the Kennedy clan, which showed the continuing influence of the clan's head, Joe Sr.; Jackie Kennedy, always cultured and stylish even had her wedding dress and guest list selected by Joe Sr.! This was followed by an array of famous names alleged to have had affairs with the Kennedy brothers – and their father. I am sure that Marilyn Monroe must have tickled the taste buds of them all!!

We left with differing opinions on which Kennedys were the Saints and which the Sinners, but the astonishing list of unnatural deaths could demonstrate retribution for some.

Christine Standing

AMERSHAM SOCIETY OUTING,
WEDNESDAY 24TH JUNE 2026

Knole House, Sevenoaks, Kent

“Knole was built to impress” and has done so ever since. So said Thomas Sackville in 1605 (It wasn't until much later that they changed their name to Sackville West).

Knole house dates from middle of the 15th Century and is now one of Britain's most important and complete historic homes with a colourful past as an Archbishop's palace, the former hunting ground of Henry VIII, the home of the Sackville family for 400 years and a source of literary inspiration for Virginia Woolf.

The house has sumptuous showrooms containing fine Royal Stuart furniture,

tapestries and above all, the well known Rembrandt collection and a very impressive silver collection.

Stairs lead from the Great Hall to the first floor apartments with long galleries hung with fine paintings and lined with elegant Royal furniture.

We will be able to view the Orangery and gardens (highly recommended), which will be open to the public the day we will be there, by kind permission from Lord Sackville West.

We do hope you can join us on what should prove to be a wonderful, inspiring and interesting visit.



Itinerary

There will be two points for collection in the morning and dropping off in the evening.

9.30am: Amersham Station (Carrols).

9.40am: The Swan, High Street Old Amersham.

11.30am: (approx) Arrival at Knole.

The self-service café is open all day for coffees, lunches and afternoon teas, at members own cost.

There is no conducted tour but plenty of stewards around to help, advise and give directions.

4.00pm: The group will board the coach for our return to Amersham.

The journey will take about 2 hours depending on traffic. We expect to drop passengers off first at the Swan in the High Street, Old Amersham and then at Amersham Station.



BOOKING FORM

For National Trust members the cost of the outing will be £32 per person which includes a tour of Lord Sackville's private gardens. (Non National Trust members will have to pay an extra charge of £17.10). Closing date for applications is 30th April 2026.

Please reserve _____ places for me on the outing on 24th June.

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

I/We shall join the coach at Amersham Station (Carrols) at 9.30 am. Yes / No

I/We shall join the coach at The Swan, Old Amersham at 9.40 am. Yes / No

I /We are / are not members of the National Trust Yes / No

Name(s) _____

Address _____

E-mail _____ Telephone No _____

Please return your completed application form to: Geraldine Marshall-Andrew, 162 High Street, Old Amersham, HP7 OEG (01494 433735).

Notes on booking and cancellation. We often have to make financial commitments upfront when organising a trip. For this reason we ask you to pay at the time of booking. If you have to cancel your booking before the outing, and we understand that last minute cancellations can occur, it may be possible to refund the cost if there is a waiting list. We shall try to be flexible.

The Kings Chapel

Each month we meet for our talks in this lovely old building which dates back to the 18th century. Have you ever wondered about its history?

In 1676, land was bought between the High Street and The Platt as a burial ground. A Baptist meeting house was built the following year on the site of what is now Chapel House, a private residence on The Platt.

One hundred years later, in 1776, Richard Morris was ordained as a Baptist minister and began preaching in his home behind the High Street. The house was registered as a meeting house for the Particular Baptists*. As his following grew, the congregation commissioned a purpose-built chapel and in 1784 a new building, now known as the Kings Chapel, was opened. Contemporary accounts emphasise the modest cost of £256. Over the following years a number of extensions were built, with a baptistry in 1811 and in 1842 two rooms were added where a school was established by the British Schools Committee. Richard Morris died in 1817.



Kings Chapel, built in 1784

The name “Kings Chapel” is not a reference to monarchy, but likely as a symbolic gesture affirming Christ’s sovereignty over the church, a common theme among nonconformist denominations.

One of the Kings Chapel’s most remarkable features is its near-circular interior. Georgian nonconformist chapels were usually rectangular meeting houses. The main hall is dominated by a domed ceiling and a central focus on the pulpit and gallery. These features reflect a practical theology: nonconformist worship of the era placed preaching and the spoken word at the heart of the service, and the architectural arrangement (galleries and clear sight lines) was built to ensure that the congregation could see and hear the minister clearly.

The interior was refitted in 1980, but by the beginning of the 21st century there was a need for more space and in 2013 the congregation moved into the purpose built King’s Church in Raans Road, Amersham-on-the-Hill. The Chapel was sold to the adjacent Kings Arms/Crown Hotels and is used by them as a function room...where we meet.

* In the 1720s, the Baptist movement had split into two factions, the ‘General’ and the ‘Particular’. The General Baptists believed that all could be redeemed, whilst the Particular Baptists believed that redemption was only available for the select few. The two factions united in 1891 as the Baptist Union.



If you ask one of the search engines how many Societies there are in Amersham, the consensus seems to be 21, split under interest groupings. The first one listed under “Arts and Culture” is The Arts Society Amersham. Its Publicity and Heritage Officer, Nicholas Dee, tells us about its activities.

What do we do?

Our main activity is a programme of 10 talks a year. These are held on the first Thursday of each month, except August and January, in the King’s Church on Raans Road.

We also have a programme of outings – some 7 or 8 a year.

For instance, during 2025 we visited the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, Chiswick House and Hogarth House in West London, Wilton House in Salisbury and had a tour of the Festival Theatre and Cathedral in Chichester. At the time of writing we are looking forward to seeing the Christmas lights at Kew Gardens in December.

Our members can also take part in the society’s annual holidays when we absorb the architecture, art and culture of different cities in the UK. Last September we went to York, and as well as enjoying the sights of the city visited



Keddleston Hall

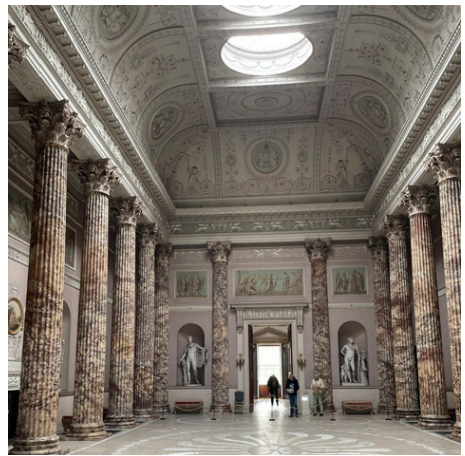
Hardwick Hall and Castle Howard. A highlight was a behind the scenes tour at Tennants Auctioneers, a novel experience.

Some history

The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) was founded in 1965 with its inaugural meeting at Chenies Manor. Just before Covid it was re-branded as The Arts Society and its remit widened to encompass all the creative arts. That is when ‘The Arts Society Amersham’ or TASA became our new name. There are over 400 affiliated local societies like ours, mainly in the UK but with a number in Europe, particularly Spain, and even several in New Zealand.

More on our talks

One of the reasons we have so many TASA members (250 and growing) is that The Arts Society is known for the exceptional quality of its lecturers.



Castle Howard

They are leaders in their field and often household names, known through their writing or media presence. After each talk we solicit feedback from our members about the quality of the talk and the slides used.

Members of the committee choose our lecturers by the equivalent of online



Christopher Marlowe

speed dating. Each lecturer had two minutes to parade their wares or detail a specific talk. This works surprisingly well, though it must be a little nerve racking for them. We have an eclectic approach when it comes to subject selection and ask our members for their suggestions for future talks.

Our talks in 2025 covered a variety of topics including: Christopher Marlowe, Poet and Spy: would he have accomplished even greater things had he not died (probably murdered) after an all day drinking session with “friends,” aged only 29? The lecturer delivered a theatrical performance complete with mini movies to illustrate the differences between Marlowe and Shakespeare.

Other titles included: Opium: Seduction, Greed and Art and the Art

of Norse Mythology. The lecturer in the latter was a banker and solicitor by training. He was so fascinated by Viking culture when running his employer’s Nordic operations in Scandinavia that he subsequently took a degree in Scandinavian culture and history. His roll call of Norse Gods in the talk sounded like the cast list for Wagner’s Ring Cycle! He explained why we hear so little of Viking culture – there was no written tradition.

We aim to have a seasonal topic each December. In 2025 it was “A Very Ceremonial Christmas”. And to add a festive flavour we start each December meeting with mince pies.

This year we are to have subjects as diverse as a history of British Studio Pottery, The Unknown Churchill (Winston Churchill and Blenheim Palace) and Celebrating the Centenary of Winnie the Pooh. So it’s not all high art topics!

Young Arts

We are very proud of the work we do within the community, especially for local young people with our Young Arts programme. We aim to bring them an enjoyment and understanding of the creative arts by awarding grants for projects.

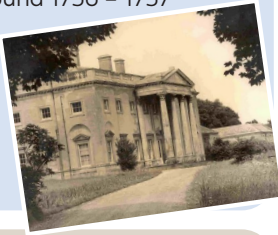
In 2024 to celebrate St Mary’s School’s 150th birthday we funded a workshop on willow weaving so that the children could make a symbolic tree for their garden. We also provided funds towards each pupil at Dr Challoner’s Grammar School making a ceramic fish to create a large sculpture illustrating

That was the decade that was...

ANSWER 01

1758

The original house had been demolished around 1756 – 1757 (see May 2025 Newsletter)



ANSWER 02



Sir Ronald Bell QC (1914 - 1982)

Sir Ronald Bell QC (Conservative) – he, in effect, took over being Amersham’s MP from Sir Spencer Summers (Conservative) in 1950, when parliamentary boundaries were redrawn. He

represented the new constituency of South Buckinghamshire which included Amersham, until it too was dissolved in 1974.

For those of you who are Pub quiz fanatics: the new, current, constituency is “Chesham and Amersham” and our MP’s who followed Sir Ronald were, Ian Gilmour, Conservative (1974 – 1992), Cheryl Gillan, Conservative (1992 – 2021) and Sarah Green, Liberal Democrat (2021 - present)

ANSWER 03

A bit of a trick question as there was not one as such. Back then Amersham was a Parish Council and its Chair was Councillor H.A.Morris, who held the post from 1939 to 1961. The first “Mayor” of Amersham, brought about by the changes in local government (Act of 1972) on April 1, 1974, was Mr E Powell (he had been Chairman of the Parish Council since 1971). Jean Archer, one of the founding members and a former chair of the Amersham Society, was the first female Mayor from 1984 – 1987.



1958: Councillor H. A. Morris (second from the left) Chairman of Amersham Parish Council hands over Amersham’s Coat of Arms to Hermen Molendijk, Burgomaster of Amersfoort on occasion of 700th anniversary of Amersfoort’s Charter

ANSWER 04

TfL very kindly did some research and their 1955 fares book shows the costs of travel between Amersham and Baker Street: **A standard single ticket was 3s 10d (3 shillings and 10 pence) and 7s 7d (7 shillings and 7 pence) for a return ticket.** The other columns show the fares for a Day Return ticket (DR) and Early Morning Return (EMR). It seems amazing that the EMR at just 3s 7d is cheaper than a single, how today's commuters would love that!

METROPOLITAN LINE WITH HARROW				
BETWEEN	Baker Street			
	S.	R.	D.R.	E.M.R.
North Harrow	1 7	3 2	2 1	2 1
Pinner	1 9	3 6	3 4	2 3
Northwood Hills	2 1	4 2	3 8	2 5
Northwood	2 3	4 4	3 10	2 6
Moor Park	2 5	4 9	4 4	2 9
Croxley	2 8	4 11	4 10	3 0
Waxford	2 8	4 11	3 1	3 1
Rickmansworth	2 8	5 3	4 10	3 0
Chorley Wood	3 0	5 11	5 4	3 2
Chalfont & Latimer	3 5	6 8	5 10	3 5
Chesham	4 0	7 11	6 10	3 8
Amersham	3 10	7 7	6 4	3 7
Great Missenden	4 7	9 2	7 8	3 8
Wendover	5 4	10 6	8 10	4 0
Stoke Mandeville	5 8	11 4	9 4	4 0
Aylesbury	6 0	12 0	9 10	4 1

from TfL Fair Chart: Amersham to Baker Street 1955 © TfL

ANSWER 05

Woodside Junior School in Mitchell Walk. The school was designed by the world-famous partnership of David and Mary Medd and given Grade II listed building status in 1993.



Woodside Junior School 1957

ANSWER 06

Here are 4:

Treasure Hunt (1952)

Make Me an Offer (1955)

The Duke Wore Jeans (1958)

Carve Her Name with Pride (1958)



ANSWER 07

King's, (Amersham) Ltd, the chemists and stationers, (see picture taken in 1952).



ANSWER 09

The museum as we now know it was officially opened by the Earl and Countess Howe in 1991. In 1957 the first annual exhibition of local exhibits was held in the Market Hall, then in 1979 a temporary home was found, the Royal British Legion Hall in Whielden Street. In 1984 No.49 High Street (reputedly dating from the mid-15th century and possibly the oldest house surviving in the town) was purchased and the Society set up the Amersham Historic Buildings Trust as a registered charity to run the museum. Restoration work began in 1986 and work to create the garden started in 1988.



1979: The site of the first museum in the British Legion Hall, Whielden St

ANSWER 08

G. Brazil & Company's factory:

In 1903 George Brazil began making sausages and pies in a small shop in the High Street. G Brazil & Co Ltd prospered and built the factory on the site at the bottom of Station Road in the 1930s. It was sold to Bowyers in 1970 who ceased production in 1986. Tesco purchased the site and opened its supermarket in 1991.

ANSWER 10

It was the Regent in Sycamore Road.

The 700 seater cinema, complete with an orchestra pit, a 30 deep stage for live theatrical productions as well as films, opened in December 1928 with the film "Huntingtower". After WWII the cinema faced dwindling audiences: factors included the rise of television, competition from a newer cinema in Chesham (The Embassy) and the lease on the building expiring in 1961. A petition to save the building and convert it into a live theatre (led by theatre director Basil Ashmore) was unsuccessful. The final film shown was "Breakfast at Tiffany's" in March 1962.



Regent cinema, Sycamore Road – date unknown

The sorry saga of Council Mismanagement

...or how Buckinghamshire Council ended up allowing the Even Group to sell land in Amersham-on-the-Hill onto Lidl instead of building houses, despite earlier statements that the site would be redeveloped for homes:

1. Council Sold the Site Without Long-Term Restrictions

The land in question is the site of the former King George V House offices and car park.

King George V House was opened in 1986 as headquarters of Chiltern District Council. Since the creation of the unitary Buckinghamshire Council in 2020, it had been used as the Amersham local area office. After the pandemic, in December 2023, the building became officially surplus to requirements as being only at 16% capacity. It was closed and put on the market.

In February 2025, Buckinghamshire Council announced that the site had been sold for £8m to the property developers, Even Group, to build new homes, including affordable housing.

However, according to questions raised by councillors at a council meeting later in the year, the sale contract did not include restrictive covenants or binding conditions to ensure housing development, nor overage provisions

that would give the council a share in increased land value if the buyer sold on the site.

After the sale was completed, the Even Group sold the land to Lidl without the council's knowledge, meaning Buckinghamshire Council had transferred ownership without conditions, so the Even Group was free to dispose of the land as they wished, with no legal requirement to build the homes it had initially indicated it would!

2. Council's Approach to Surplus Land Sales

The site was declared surplus to requirements and the council sold it following standard disposal procedures for surplus property.

However the sale particulars stated that the council "in its absolute discretion, does not undertake to accept the highest or any offer received". Neither did it embed planning restrictions or affordable housing obligations at the point of sale.

So, without *restrictive covenants* or *planning conditions* in the sale contract, the council had minimal control, if any, once ownership changed hands.



King George V House offices, unused since December 2023 and now boarded up

3. Criticism and Local Frustration

Local councillors and residents have expressed opposition to the outcome because:

- The council, when disposing of the site, publicly emphasised how the site would be developed for homes, including affordable housing. This was a plan which was generally acceptable so residents were staggered to receive Lidl's invitation to a public consultation last August.....to what will be the sixth supermarket in a town with a population smaller than some football stadiums!
- A higher offer than Even's was reportedly made during the sale process, albeit after the closing date, but was rejected by the council. That has raised questions about whether better terms (including conditions) could have been secured.

4. Why Lidl Can Now Apply for Planning Permission to Build a Store

As the land is privately owned by Lidl, it becomes a normal planning application matter and Buckinghamshire Council will consider the planning application under standard planning policies, which of course are separate from the earlier sale agreement context!

Noticeboard

Programme of Talks and Events for 2026

Talks are held in the King's Chapel, 30 High Street, Old Amersham.
(Note: The May talk will be in Lifestyle Centre, Amersham-on-the-Hill)
Coffee, tea and biscuits served from 7:30pm, with talks starting at 8:00pm.

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| Monday 26th January | Walking the Beat to Nirvana
<i>A talk by Mervyn Edwards</i> |
| Monday 23rd February | Butterflies of the Chilterns
<i>A talk by David Dennis</i> |
| Monday 30th March | The Berlin Airlift
<i>A talk by Roger Mason</i> |
| Thursday 7th May | The Exile of King Louis XVIII in Hartwell House
<i>A talk by Neil Rees. To be held in Drake Hall, Lifestyle Centre, Amersham-on-the-Hill</i> |
| Wednesday 24th June | Society Outing
<i>To Knole, Sevenoaks in Kent, the home of the Sackville West's. See page xx for details</i> |
| Monday 28th September | Life & death in a Roman Villa
<i>A talk by Jill Eyers</i> |
| Monday 26th October | AGM and talk
<i>We will be joined by a speaker from the charity 'Wycombe Homeless Connection'</i> |
| Monday 16th November | A reading from the autobiography of the 18th century rector of Amersham Benjamin Robertshaw by Andrew Piper
<i>This is an additional event to our original calendar and will be held in St. Mary's church.
Full details in May's newsletter</i> |
| Monday 30th November | Ruth Ellis.....The Last Lady
<i>A talk by Jeff Rozelaar</i> |

Website: www.amershamsociety.org

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