



Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society

www.AAAHS.org.uk

NEWSLETTER - AUTUMN 2016



In this Issue:

**Bob Evans on Causeways, the AAAHS outings of 2016,
the programme for 2016-7, and much else**



AAAHS Newsletter—Autumn 2016

In this Issue – click to go there!

Dates for the coming season

Bob Evans discourses on Causeways

Reports from the **Secretary**, **Treasurer**, and **Membership Secretary**

What's new on the **AAAHS Website** and on the **Abingdon Buildings & People Web site?**

How's your visual memory? Can you identify these images from the AAAHS picture collection?

John Foreman reports on the **Local History Group**

Hester Hand on this year's **Heritage Open Days**

Reports on this year's **Outings**—**Michael Bloom** on **the Ashmolean**, **John Foreman** on **Lower Radley**, **Penny Cookson** on **Brasenose College**

Book review: **Mary Haynes** reviews **Bob Frampton** on **Abingdon Cinemas**

Talks programmes for other societies.

The Committee, and how to contact them

Membership and **Standing Order** forms (print off and send in)

Dates for the AAAHS 2016-2017 season

All talks are at the Northcourt Centre, Northcourt Road, and start at 7.45 pm

Members are advised to check the website www.aaahs.org.uk for updates and in case of last-minute changes.

Non-members are welcome but will be invited to make a donation.

(Some lecture titles are still provisional)

15 September 2016: AGM followed by “Tales from God's Acre. Some Sunningwell Lives”, Bob Evans.

20 October 2016: “Above The Dreaming Spires—Oxfordshire's Great War Aviation Story”, Air Vice Marshal Peter Dye.

17 November 2016: “Wallingford in the Civil War”, Judy Dewey.

15 December 2016: Something festive

19 January 2017: “Gatehampton Farm and the Thames Valley at the end of the last Ice Age”, Professor Nick Barton.

16 February 2017: “Old Images of Abingdon”, Members discuss their favourites.

16 March 2017: “Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon Discoveries at Bridge Farm, Sutton Courtenay”, Ken Welsh.

20 April 2017: The Lambrick Lecture. “The Long Gallery at Abingdon Abbey in the context of communal living in the Middle Ages”, David Clark.

18 May 2017: “Lawrence of Arabia as a young archaeologist, and what recent archaeology has shown us about his war exploits”, Phil Neale.

15 June 2017: Open Evening

21 September 2017: AGM. Lecture to be advised

Front page pictures: Brasenose College, front quad with Radcliffe Camera behind; Jeff Wallis lecturing to members at the Ashmolean; The chapel ceiling at Brasenose; Richard Dudding leading a group at Lower Radley.

Thanks to Elizabeth Drury, Michael Bloom and Penny Cookson who have provided these photographs and others throughout this Newsletter.



Report from the Chair



Not a Report this time, but a historical Note. I've been thinking about causeways. I find them puzzling and mysterious. The Abingdon Area is rich in them. So I'd like to share a few of those thoughts with other AAAHS members. Causeways are embankments built to carry people dry-shod over areas of wetland, or at least terrain liable to flooding. The word, 'causey' in its older form and cognate with French *chaussée* (as in the famous highways department set up in the era of Louis XIV and XV, the Ponts et Chaussées), ultimately seems to come from the Latin 'calx', a heel or a hoof, since the path needed to be trodden down by humans or animals.

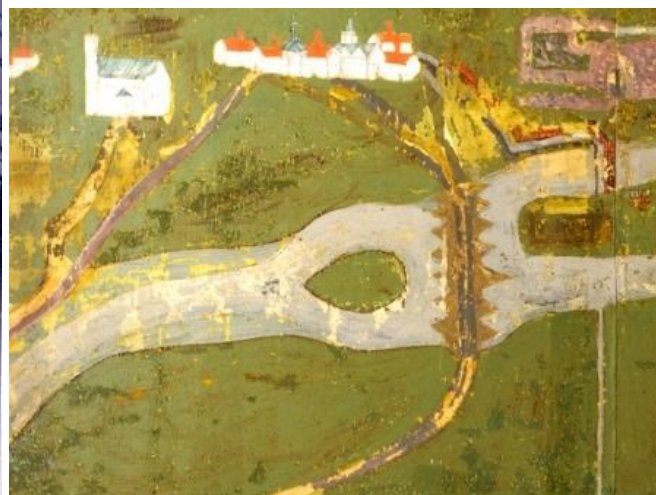


The Grandpont Causeway in Oxford, ca 1560
Brasenose College Archives

Some causeways are really ancient, like the Sweet Track to Glastonbury (a charming name, though actually called after an archaeologist called Sweet). Most commonly they were associated with other prehistoric earthworks, in the form of causewayed enclosures: series of concentric ditches crossed by at least one causeway. Evidence for one of these, you may have read, was lately identified in ongoing excavations on the edge of Thame. As members well know, we have our own causewayed enclosure remains at Abbey Fishponds – the 'bank' in Daisy Bank. There seems to be no clear professional view what purposes were served by these and other examples across the country (about eighty in all are now recorded). In particular, if their main – cultic? – significance lay in the way they enclosed open space, what was the point of the causeways?



The Causeway across Andersey Island, 1909
Photo from the AAAHS Collection



The Abingdon Bridge and Causeway ca 1550
Detail from the Monks' Map — Abingdon Museum

Roman and medieval England accorded a prominent and more obviously practical role to the causeway as an aid to transport across the then unregulated river systems of the plains. On our Society's recent visit to Brasenose, we were shown a map, still held in the archives there, of the college's sixteenth-century land holding around Grandpont, the main Thames crossing at Oxford. It is dated to c 1560, but looks older. In fact the depiction is quite primitive for the most part; however, where it delineates South (nowadays Folly) Bridge



and its long causewayed continuation it becomes far more graphic and precise. Older structures still underlie Oxford's present Abingdon road, a succession of culverts visible at several points.

There is something similar, of course, on the south side of Abingdon too. A causeway stretches for nearly a mile from the end of Abingdon Bridge – the so-called Maud Hales portion, named after the rich widow who funded it – across Andersey Island. There it connects with Old Culham Bridge. Presumably it was constructed at the same time as the two bridges, in 1416 or shortly after. The townward section of the causeway is shown on the 'Monks' Map' – which itself appears to be roughly contemporary with the Brasenose one.

Most striking of all Abingdon Area causeways, however, is that at Steventon. It extends almost a mile across the whole face of the village, from south-west to north-east, as a prominent embankment several feet above ground level throughout. Moreover, it is paved ('pitched') with a broad cobble surface along its entire length.



The Steventon Causeway

Photo Steve Daniels, via Wikimedia Commons

So this causeway strikes the eye, and the feet; but it's also perplexing, and that's what has given rise to this Note. In a recent splendid initiative, a number of activists in the Vale Ramblers organization have set up a Vale Way (cf <http://www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thevaleway/valeway.htm>), a continuous trail along existing footpaths over the total distance – just over a marathon's length – from Abingdon to Faringdon via Wantage. Steventon causeway lies squarely on the route; indeed it constitutes quite the most historic stretch of the thoroughfare.

When I was asked to lead a history-themed walk along precisely this segment of the new Vale Way, I therefore thought I ought to inform myself better

about the causeway, at least from readily available sources. The hunt proved surprisingly inconclusive. All we seem to know for sure is that the causeway is really old – older than the picturesque houses alongside it, many of which are late-medieval. It was presumably created by and for the local priory, founded in the twelfth century. Maybe it helped support the cloth industry, which flourished briefly at Steventon in the fourteenth century. It could have been part of a line of commercial exchange as far as Abingdon. The pitchings are reckoned to be an ancient feature too, though the present stones may date mainly from the decades after 1800.

None of this, however, appears well established. Even the 'two sisters' who, according to a wall tablet of c 1620 in the church, 'by ancient report' gave lands to sustain the causeway through a charity that survives to this day, remain nameless and nebulous. Nothing is visible at Steventon to rival the fame over in Wiltshire of Maud Heath – not to be confused with Maud Hales, though she too was a wealthy widow and they are near-contemporaries – who, having made her fortune carrying eggs to market in Chippenham, left money for perhaps the most extraordinary of all surviving English causeways over the marshes which had regularly given her a soaking. But it would be a valuable project to set all the Abingdon Area causeways in their proper historical context.

Bob Evans



From the Secretary's Notebook

It seems like a long time since the last newsletter. We have had some very successful lecture meetings. On the negative side, we had a stand at the Clubs and Societies Day held in the freezing cold of an April day in the Long Gallery, and this event was ill-attended and definitely not a success. A letter has gone to the town council with suggestions for the future, but we have not so far received a reply. It's more pleasant to record that the prestigious Oxpast conference held in June in the Northcourt Centre showed our society in a favourable light. Our own Bob Frampton was among the presenters, and many of our members took part in organising the event and keeping attendees supplied with refreshments. We were officially complimented for our contribution and even made a small financial profit.

But talk of finance brings me to the next AGM which is due on 15 September. There will be urgent matters to discuss. Look below at the reports from Rachel Everett, the treasurer, and from Hubert Zawadzki, the membership secretary. Membership numbers have been trending downwards over many years. Fifteen years ago, we had about two and a half times as many members as we have today. We were a big society as such societies go, and are now a small one. Inevitably, this impacts on our financial resources. Can we still afford to do all the things we do? Do we need, however reluctantly, to consider increasing subs? Are there additional activities we should involve ourselves in that will bring in new members?

Another problem with declining membership is it takes just about as much work to run a small society as a large one, so the committee needs to be a higher proportion of the total membership. This year, like every year, some committee members will be coming to the end of their three or six year stints. So let me put out an appeal. If you value your society and want it to continue functioning, be prepared to join the committee for a few years. Contact any present member, or put your name forward at the AGM itself. Yes, it does mean attending meetings and doing things. But, I assure you, it's fun.

Manfred Brod
Secretary

Editor's Notes

Thanks to all members for their contributions and feedback – all gratefully received. The Newsletter is published in March and September each year. Contributions from members on any subject related to the society's activities or to the history and archaeology of Abingdon and its region are most welcome.

The editor is open-minded on the type or format of contributions—formal, personal or humorous, text or pictures—but they should not exceed a maximum of about a thousand words. They may be edited for content, but views and opinions in published articles are those of the contributors rather than the Society itself.

The Newsletter is sent online to members at the time of publication when it is also posted on the website. It is not available in print for cost reasons, but members are free to print it off privately. Contact the editor if you are desperate!

Copy deadline for the next issue is end-January 2017.

Manfred Brod



Treasurer's Report July 2016

After a year looking after our finances, I'm afraid that my report is going to be rather less upbeat than the article I wrote last time. Considering this year's recurrent income and expenditure we have to face the uncomfortable fact that our society is not bringing in enough money to meet running costs. At the time of writing (July 2016) we are barely breaking even with an operating loss of -£49.67. We have £419.34 in our current account and £3029.50 in the reserve account.

Running costs are rising. We currently hire both the Northcourt Centre for our monthly lectures and the Pendarvis Room at 35 Ock Street three times a year for the Local History group meetings. Our insurance costs include Public Liability cover for events including excavation and although we have reduced the cost by £189.50 by changing our insurance provider this still represents a hefty investment on our part. Paying for speakers for the lecture programme is also increasingly expensive with £50 now the normal fee, considerably more for the Christmas special events. Then there is the cost of administration, for example printing posters and supplying refreshments for meetings and the two yearly socials. We have however, saved £212.56 on administration, mainly by switching to digital publication of the newsletters.

A major expenditure has been the rehabilitation of the portacabin, which now has its electricity supply reconnected. This cost £310.

In terms of income, memberships, which should cover basic running costs, brought in £160.70 less than

last year and now provide only 39% of our income. There are two reasons for this; firstly membership has declined steadily over the years and secondly 41% of members are now only paying the concessionary rate.

Secondly we have relied on sales of Judy White's excellent "Abingdon in Camera" to provide income during many years. Sales still brought in £200.24 this year but I believe we need to consider further ways to raise steady income.

We need a discussion about the way forward and I would encourage you to consider this before the next AGM. For example, we could raise subs to make them more in line with those charged by other societies. We could abolish the concessionary rate for new members. We could reduce costs by no longer digging. We could stop holding Local History Group meetings in 35 Ock Street and use members' houses. Perhaps we should charge guests more at our meetings. We could even write a new book to provide future income, particularly as there is demand for a popular introduction to Abingdon history. We should certainly think about more effective ways to encourage new members to join.

The audited accounts will be given at the AGM in September.

Rachel Everett
Treasurer

Membership Secretary's Report

As readers of the Treasurer's Report will have gathered, the Society's membership numbers have continued to decline. At the end of the summer season the numbers were as follows:

Family: 22 (ie. eleven families)
Individual: 17
Concessionary: 30

Complimentary: 6

It was sad to note that twenty-eight former members (from 2014-15) had not renewed their memberships. We welcomed eleven new members this year and we very much hope that they will continue to enjoy the Society's activities, but clearly this number does not go far enough to compensate our losses.



We very much hope that all members will re-join for the year 2016-17. Some have already done so, while those nineteen who have signed Standing Order arrangements will of course have their membership automatically continued. Perhaps members might like to encourage some of their friends to join.

Subscriptions, due in September, can either be posted to me at the address shown on the form or brought to the AGM. Forms can be printed off from pages 17 and 18 of this newsletter or from the AAAHS website. If anyone is unable to print out a form, there will be spare copies at the AGM.

Hubert Zawadzki

The AAAHS Website

I never thought being the society's webmaster would prove so exciting!

But before I go into that, let me announce to all members that Mary Haynes, who courageously volunteered to help with updating and maintenance, is now fully engaged and devoting a heroic amount of time and effort to the job. Things are happening on a time scale that would have been quite impossible for me alone.

But to the excitement. Our valiant designer, Mark Holland, was looking into a minor problem we had had with uploading the last newsletter and that had finally risen to the top of his to-do list. The first I knew about it was an email from a lady in Canada who had been trying to get at the Archives section of the site and found she couldn't. I couldn't either, and nor could Mark or anyone else. Mark puzzled over it for a week or so and then gave up and made some basic changes to the system. I won't go into the details of what he did, but it adds up to a great improvement. We can now reach any archive article or old newsletter in a single click from the index. Or in many cases find it by a keyword search on the site's own search box. We owe thanks to Mark, who doesn't get paid for this level of service, and especially to Mary who did the unexciting job of updating the index pages to take advantage of the new possibilities.

We are now going on to reorganise the menus of the archive section which are still – how to put it? – a little bit puzzling. This may even have been done by the time you read this article. I have great hopes for these digital archives. They are growing, if slowly, and form a kind of repository of last resort for material that can't be published anywhere else—odd bits of research, sets of notes, and especially personal reminiscences and family stories. Go to <http://www.aaahs.org.uk/archive> and start from there, and you'll see what I mean.

Do check the website from time to time. It does change and get updated as a well-managed site ought. And if you have any problems with it, or, better, if you have any ideas for improvement, please let me know. Webmaster@aaahs.org.uk will find me.

Manfred Brod
Webmaster



What's new at <http://www.abingdon.gov.uk/partners/history>

This time last year we were celebrating having 100 topics on the Abingdon Buildings & People section of the town's website. Have you looked at the website since then? The total is now 115 topics. Almost all the new articles are about people, with a special focus on Abingdon MPs. Details are below.

John Alder (died 1780)	The lucky cooper who won first prize in a State Lottery.
Thomas Duffield (1782 – 1854)	MP for Abingdon 1832-1844. His elopement with Emily Elwes in 1810 was a sensation at the time.
Simon Harcourt (1661? – 1727)	A lawyer and MP for Abingdon who became one of Queen Anne's principal ministers and the first Viscount Harcourt.
Gabrielle Lambrick (1913 – 1968)	A noted local historian with a special interest in medieval Abingdon and its Abbey.
John Maberley (1770 – 1839)	MP for Abingdon 1818-1832 and an entrepreneur and businessman.
Thomas Medlycott (1628 - 1716)	Recorder of and later MP for Abingdon. Host of William of Orange during the latter's brief stay in Abingdon and supported his acceptance as King William III.
Benjamin Morland (1768 – 1833)	An Abingdon solicitor instrumental in the building of the Old Gaol.
J T Norris (1809 – 1870)	MP for Abingdon 1857-65 and a businessman. Successful in delaying the closure of the Old Gaol.
John Richardson (died 1663)	Author of an amateurish poem that put the case for music in worship and for retaining the market cross, opposing the Puritan views dominant at the time.
Thomas Richardson (1801 – 1874)	A prominent Abingdon townsman who built up a successful grocery business, and a leading local Methodist who was instrumental in the building of the first Wesleyan chapel in 1846.
Oliver Sansom (1636 – 1710)	Leader of the Quakers in the Vale of White Horse.
Thomas Trapham (died 1683)	Personal surgeon to Oliver Cromwell and a leading Abingdon citizen.
W W Waite (1778 – 1856)	An Abingdon artist with a national reputation.
John Wellesbourne (1498 – 1548)	A Gentleman of Henry VIII's Privy Chamber who was appointed steward of the Abbey site following the dissolution.
The Morland Brewery	The story of Morland's over its 288 years as a brewery.
The Old Gaol	A revision of the original article, much extended.

Coming soon: Airey Neave, an outstanding constituency MP and a political heavyweight, who died by assassination; Mary Verney, the last and perhaps the most interesting of the Blacknall dynasty; and Geoffrey Trease, prolific author especially of children's books. They may be up by the time you read this – do take a look!

And, yes, there are still lots more articles being written and going through the editorial pipeline.

If you would like to join the ABP group, whether to write, research, edit, or help with the administration, we'd be glad to hear from you. Catch me at a meeting, or email to abp@aaahs.org.uk.

Jessica Brod



The Photograph Collection

I wrote in the last issue about the AAAHS photograph collection. This is now entirely digitised, and has an index in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. I'll send the index to any member who wants it, and any member can also get the whole collection on a DVD. Email to Newsletter@aaahs.org.uk.

The photographs have come to us from a number of sources over many years, and many of the images are inadequately labelled or completely unidentified. So there is a selection below in the hope that some members will be able to recognise them. Answers to Newsletter@aaahs.org.uk. No prizes offered, but you may get your name in the next issue.

Manfred Brod
Newsletter Editor



1204-003. It's a Society outing in 1986. What are they looking at?



P3_3-13. This is labelled 'c.1988-9'. Where is it?



P3_3-32 Labelled '14 August 1990'. Where is it?



P3_31-18 . The signboard says 'John (?) Parker, Plant and machinery dealers'. Anyone recognise it?



The Local History Group

Bob Frampton was the main performer at the meeting of the Local History Group on 31 May. The Oxpast conference would be held a few days later, and Bob took the opportunity of a run-through of the paper he was planning to give. This was on the history of Abingdon's cinemas. There were more cinemas in pre-war Abingdon than most of us knew about – and now they are all gone. Bob's excellent little book (reviewed on page 15 of this newsletter) documents them and the people that operated and used them.

Manfred Brod demonstrated the now-digitised AAAHS picture collection and its ingenious indexing system, some of which actually worked. We now need some of our members to get together to improve the captioning and identification of the scenes, which is sketchy at best. Some examples are given on page 9 for members to try their skill on.

John Foreman sparked an interesting discussion when he asked whether what we know as St Helen's Bridge over the Ock had ever also been called the Hospital Bridge. Members were very knowledgeable on the history of property ownership in that part of town, but there was never a clear answer to his question.

The next meeting is planned for 18 October and will be, as usual, at 35 Ock Street, starting at 7.45 pm. All AAAHS members are welcome to attend, and we especially want to attract those with a particular interest in local history who would like to be present at, and perhaps (but not necessarily) contribute to discussions on historical subjects.

John Foreman



Hester Hand writes:

This year's Abingdon Heritage Open Days are on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 September. Preliminary information is on the website at [Heritage Open Days - Abingdon](#)

This year's theme will be medieval - in particular celebrating 600 years since the building of Abingdon Bridge. Once again we are combining with the Museum to put on an exciting programme in the Market Place aimed at attracting a wide audience. The full programme will be published in August.

Building on the success of the last two years, Elizabeth Drury is putting together another exhibition in the Community FreeSpace: because we don't have many photos relevant to 1416 the theme for this will be Abingdon 60 years ago, i.e. in the 1950s. So she would welcome any contributions people can make of photos, pictures, maps etc - or other memorabilia - of local life at that time. Please contact Elizabeth if you have anything you can offer.

However, in order to make all of this a success, we need some help from AAAHS members:

- we hope once again to run some heritage walks on the Sunday - probably using the "Lost Abbey" and "Heart of Abingdon" Trails, but other options are possible. However our usual stalwart leaders are unavailable so we need some more volunteers. It is not onerous - the materials are all readily available - so if you would be willing to help please get in touch with me asap
- we will also be looking once again for people to help man the exhibition during the period 3-10 September: it is always really interesting doing this, quite sociable and most of us find we learn a lot from the visitors! Again, please contact me or Elizabeth if you would like to help.



Outings 2016

Outing to the Ashmolean

At 11 am. on Wednesday May 11th a small group of 7 members including the leader, Jeff Wallis, assembled outside the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Jeff took us first to see the Chinese T'ang dynasty ceramic camel that was smuggled out of Nazi Germany and had been discussed in a recent society lecture by Katherina Ulmschneider. The remainder of the tour was devoted to locally found items and to examples of ancient metal and jewellery work from various parts of the world, this being the leader's special field of interest.

We then viewed a well-flaked, flat-backed 350,000 year-old hand axe from



The Wolvercote hand axe

Wolvercote gravel terraces. Jeff commented on the quality of its craftsmanship. Following a quick look at the so-called Alfred Jewel we then saw the Abingdon Sword from 875 AD, a good example of Saxon pattern welding. It was found in the river so could well have been a votive offering. The Milton Brooch came next, dating from 5-600 AD with filigree bands and studded with garnets, also of high-quality workmanship. This was followed by a sword and scabbard from Little Wittenham dating to 100 BC.

Our first trip abroad was to Minoan Crete with a cup collected by Arthur Evans, after which came some Iranian pots from around 4,000 BC and a carnelian necklace from Mesopotamia dating back to 25,000 BC. A 3000 year-old garnet pendant from Cyprus followed, after which we saw some Greek and Etruscan jewellery. Being a jeweller and silversmith by profession, Jeff gave us some very interesting descriptions of how techniques such as filigree and granulation were carried out in ancient times, and commented that the same processes were used today with very little fundamental change.

The last foreign item was a jadeite axe from France, after which we returned to the local area and a Beaker grave from Radley from between 2,400 and 2,100 BC and saw (naturally) some beakers, and also excellent examples of early gold work. After an excellent 90-minute tour we thanked Jeff very much for his time and for passing on his expertise during an excellent and fascinating museum tour.



"The camel that escaped the Nazis"



Jeff passing on his knowledge

Michael Bloom



Exploring Lower Radley



A potentially wet evening walk



"Cruck buildings are now desirable residences"



A "most unimpressive" village green



A sympathetic restoration

On the 7th of June 13 members of AAAHS and friends met at Richard Dudding's house in Lower Radley. Radley being a close neighbour to Abingdon shares much of the same history and many local families have associations with both places. Richard was going to take us on a circular walk around lower Radley and explore with us the changes in fortune reflected through the many local buildings, particularly the cruck houses. A cruck or crook is a curved timber that was partnered with three others and a ridge beam to form the basis of a building. They usually date from the 1500s and Richard's house is the second oldest in the village. Many of us have heard Richard speak and he is one of the history experts with particular knowledge of Radley. Our tour was based on his book, *Early Modern Radley: People, Land and Buildings 1547 – 1768*.

Equipped with umbrellas in case of expected rain, we set out in an anti clockwise direction round what I had always assumed was a large village green. Richard put me right in that it was just a large central field that was once divided into plots. Richard explained that the cruck buildings were once the main building of small individual farms. Later these farms were combined and the farmer either extended an existing cruck building or built a conventional brick farmhouse. The surplus cruck buildings were used as labourer's cottages or left to ruin.

The cruck buildings are now desirable residences and most are listed. The local land now only needs one man working on it, and though he lives in the village, he does not live in a cruck building.

On our tour we passed the village green, a most unimpressive site smaller than my back garden, and that is small. Richard told us of planned private bridges over the Thames and stories of cottages built with no windows overlooking the road so the inhabitants would not show their grubby faces to the passing aristocracy. The latter story, local legend and probably untrue.

We finished our tour, without getting wet, back at Richard's house, where we were shown round. After a glass of wine most went to the Bowyer Arms where we had a meal before going our separate ways. A big "thank you" to Richard and his wife for their hospitality, and most interesting evening.

John Foreman

A visit to Brasenose College



Bob welcoming the group to Brasenose College

On the 13th July, just before 7pm, a group of 12 members of the AAAHS met Bob Evans just inside Brasenose College to start our guided tour.

Bob explained that he started his academic career as a Research Fellow at Brasenose College in 1968 and remained there until 1997, having been appointed Professor of European History in 1992.

The College originated as Brasenose Hall, one of the mediaeval Oxford lodging houses which gradually became more formal places of study, and which was situated

on the site of the College's entrance tower in Old Quad. There is mention of a 'house called Brasennose' in Oxford University records dated 1279 after it had been bought by the University. The Hall is mentioned infrequently in the ensuing centuries. The kitchen wing, which we visited later in the tour, is thought to be the oldest building on the College site, dating perhaps from the 15th century. Its foundation as a College came in 1509 with a Royal Charter, dated 1512, establishing a college to be called 'The King's Hall and College of Brasenose' for the study of 'sophistry, logic, philosophy and, above all, theology', traditional learning in theology and philosophy rather than the new 'humanism'. The royal Charter permitted the founders, Sir Richard Sutton, a lawyer, and William Smyth, Bishop of Lincoln, both of whom had studied at Brasenose Hall, to make statutes for the College and undergraduates were accepted in the 1500s.



A college estate map of ca.1600



The college archivist, Georgina Edwards, shows some of her treasures

The College founders left property and estates which would provide income for the college. These were in Oxford and Oxfordshire but also as far afield as Leicestershire, Essex and London. In the centuries which followed, further endowments of money and property were made and these are recorded in the College archives in the form of manorial maps and related documents including books of accounts. We were well rewarded for negotiating the steep and winding stairs to the upper floor to see some of these. On the lower level, the student memora-



bilia and photo albums from the time of the outbreak of World War 1 were particularly poignant as many individual students in the photos have not yet been identified so it is not known which of them returned. We were fortunate in having the archivist, Georgina Edwards, on hand to explain everything and answer our numerous questions and we extend our grateful thanks to her.

As we walked round, we learnt that, between 1509 and 1650, Brasenose consisted of a series of buildings, known as Old Quad where a small number of undergraduates had lectures on theology, logic, philosophy, geometry, Greek and grammar in what was, above all, a religious institution. A hundred years later their number had

risen to over 80 necessitating additional storeys to be constructed on 'Old Quad'. The present library and chapel were built in the 17th century on the area now known as the Deer Park. Both of these have beautiful ceilings. In the chapel the College was able to use materials from another of their Oxford properties, the Chapel of the former Augustinian College of St. Mary, now Frewin Hall. The open hammerbeam structure was moved to Brasenose in 1656 and three years later it was covered over by the plaster fan vault ceiling. It surprised us that such work could have been carried out during the interregnum when the university was under strict puritanical rule. The ceiling was painted in the 1890s and refurbished in the 20th century.



The college chapel: organ and painted fan-vaulted ceiling

There was even a Brasenose brew house from 1695 to 1889 when rebuilding work meant it had to be removed. There are still Ale Verses recited by the students on Shrove Tuesday!

In the eighteenth century the College was considered one of the wealthiest in Oxford and had become the college of the country gentry, where it was perceived that the sons of gentlemen got a modicum of education and did a great deal of horse racing and fox hunting. The most famous of these was Squire Osbaldeston, whose exploits in the hunting field, on the racetrack and in miscellaneous other gentlemanly sports made him 'a folk-hero of the hunting classes'. There were also numerous undergraduate dining clubs, their records still in existence.

The High Street Tower and a new Principal's house were in use by 1880 when work on the 'New Quad' began, but this was a period of financial constraint and was not completed until the 400th anniversary celebrations in 1909-11.

Life at Brasenose was severely affected by the World Wars. 673 Brasenose men served in WWI, of whom 114 were killed. During the war College life virtually ceased and soldiers were billeted in the buildings. WWII saw service cadets undertaking short courses in the College. Gradually, though, important changes took place during the 20th century. Women were admitted to full membership of Oxford University in 1920 and Brasenose was one of the first male colleges to admit women, this taking place in 1974.

We finished our tour by seeing the Brasenose door knocker which hangs in the College's Hall and hearing about its significance. There are various interpretations of the name of the College, the most likely being that



Is this the original brazen nose?

it referred to a 'brazen' (brass or bronze) door knocker in the shape of a nose. It is said that in 1333, a group of rebellious students attempted to migrate from Oxford to Stamford in Lincolnshire, and it is believed that one of them took with him the door knocker which had hung on the door of Brasenose Hall. The rebellion was suppressed and the students returned to Oxford. Centuries later, in 1890, a house in Stamford named 'Brasenose House' was put up for sale which had an ancient door knocker, thought to date from the 12th century. The college historians at the time were convinced that this was the same door knocker which had been taken to Stamford, so the house was bought and the door knocker returned to Brasenose College where it now has pride of place hanging on the wall over high table. Whether or not it this was actually the case, it still remains a fascinating story.

We are very grateful to Bob for bringing the history of Brasenose College to life and for providing a most interesting tour which we all thoroughly enjoyed.

Penny de Bernhardt Cookson

Book Review

Bob Frampton: *The cinemas of Abingdon (1912-2015)*. Available from bookshops or from the author, Price £7.00.

Initially I wondered whether there was enough material for a book on this subject, but if you research it thoroughly and pay attention to detail, as Bob Frampton has done, there certainly is.

Abingdon's first cinema opened in Stert Street in 1912 and films were also shown in the Corn Exchange. At times Abingdon had two competing cinemas – unimaginable today. Its latest cinema the Regal opened in 1935, closing in 1989, and lively comments from those who worked in or remembered going to the cinema are included.

This book covers the period through silent films to the role of the cinema during and after the two world wars and its fall in popularity with the coming of television in the 1950s. The history of the cinema in Abingdon is a reflection of cinema history in the surrounding towns and in the UK as a whole. This book is particularly valuable when it considers the broader picture. On the whole it may have been more readable with less detail and more of Bob Frampton: in places it tends to read as somewhat disconnected notes.

The rise and fall and rise of these cinemas is a fascinating subject; from their origin as Dream Palaces, to their use as Bingo Halls, to their sadly lamented disappearance and their rise again in the local ABCD Film Society and the Home Cinema. As Bob Frampton shows us cinemas will never die out because the pleasure of seeing a film on a large screen with other people and being totally absorbed, laughing or in tears, horrified or terrified never fails.

Mary Haynes



Dates for Your Diary

Abingdon Museum Friends

St Helen's Church Centre, 7 for 7.30 pm

1 Sept: Mark Davies, *James Sadler: Oxford pastry cook & first British aeronaut*

6 Oct: Dr Hubert Zawadzki, *The Reluctant Exiles: Polish Resettlement Camps in Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds, 1946-1970*

3 Nov: Silvia Joinson, *'Heckling and Fisticuffs': 19th century parliamentary elections in Abingdon*

8 Dec: Marjory Szurko, *Edible Evening—food for the 4th Earl of Abingdon*

2 Feb: Roger Thomas, *The past transformed—25 years of archaeological discoveries*

6 Apr: AGM and Richard Smith, *Oxford Eccentricity*

Radley History Club

Radley CE Primary School, 7 for 7.30 pm

12 Sept: AGM; Bryan Brown, *John Henry Brookes, the man who inspired a university*

1-2 Oct: At Radley Church, Sat 1030-1700, Sun 1330-1630, **BOOK LAUNCH** *St James the Great Radley: The Story of a Village Church*

10 Oct: Richard Dudding, *The Civil War and Radley Church*

14 Nov: Julie Thorne, *A Berkshire village; its history and antiquities*

12 Dec: *Christmas Party*

13 Jan: Colin Carritt, *Oxfordshire's volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*

13 Feb: Timothy Walker, *The University of Oxford Botanic Garden: the first 393 years*

13 March: Members' interests

10 April: Rachel Everett, *What's beneath your feet: the archaeology of*

Radley

8 May: Mark Davies, *Daniel Harris: Oxford Castle gaoler extraordinaire*

12 June: Liz Wooley, *The Victorian and Edwardian development of east Oxford*

10 July: Stephen Barker, *The Oxfordshire Home Front 1914-1918*

Sutton Courtenay Local History Society

Village Hall, 7.30 pm

27 Sept: Timothy Walker, *The Oxford Botanic Gardens: the last 393 years*

22 Nov: Tim Healey, *Drove Roads of Oxfordshire and beyond*

24 Jan: Brigadier Robert Draper, *Redcoats to Riflemen; the County Regiment's story from 1741*

21 Mar: Lawrence Walters, *The history of local railways and their impact on the area*

Hanney History Group

Hanney War Memorial Hall at 8.00 p.m.

27 Sept: Mark Davies, *James Sadler of Oxford*

25 Oct: AGM and Members' talks

22 Nov: Manfred Brod, *The Abingdon "Monks' Map"*

Dec (TBA): Christmas Social/quiz

24 Jan: David Day, *The Creation and History of the Architecture of the Pendon Landscape*

28 Feb: Tony Hadland, *The papists at the manor – the Yates and Throckmortons of Buckland and Lyford in the Vale of the White Horse*

25 April: Ben Ford, *The Westgate Excavations*

The Committee for 2015-6 — who does what?

Chairman/town planning: [Bob Evans](#)

Secretary/Newsletter/Website: [Manfred Brod](#)

Treasurer: [Rachel Everett](#)

Membership: [Hubert Zawadzki](#)

Local History: [John Foreman](#)

Digging: [Jeff Wallis](#)

Lectures: [Jeff Wallis](#) and [John Foreman](#)

Outings: [Rachel Everett](#)

Publicity: [John Foreman](#)

Posters: Wendy Robbins

Archives: [Jackie Smith](#)

Members without portfolio: Penny Cookson, Bob Frampton

Note that Committee members normally serve either three or six years. New Committee members will be elected at the AGM on 15 September. Nominations will be welcome.



**Abingdon Area
Archaeological and Historical Society**

Membership Form 2016-7

Membership type (please tick)

Individual	£12
Family	£18
Concessionary - retired/unwaged/student	£8.50
Distant	£4

Please indicate method of payment

Cheque (payable to the AAAHS)

Cash

Standing Order (completed Standing Order Form to be attached)

Full name and address

Telephone number(s)

Email address

Payment can be made at one of the monthly talks or by post to the AAAHS Membership Secretary, Glympton, Faringdon Road, Abingdon on Thames, OX14 1BQ. Cheques should be payable to the AAAHS. If paying by Standing Order please send this form together with a completed Standing Order form to the Membership Secretary, address as above. Standing Order forms are available upon request from the Membership Secretary or can be downloaded from www.aaahs.org.uk.



Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society

Standing Order Form

Please pay immediately, and on the 1st September annually thereafter until further notice, to

NatWest Bank Abingdon Branch,
11 Market Place Abingdon OX14 3HH, Sort Code: 60 01 01 , Account Number: 40525724, for the credit of the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society being my annual subscription to the Society.

To

Bank Name

Bank Address

Post Code

From

Account Name:

Sort Code:

Account Number:

Amount: Individual £12 / Family £18 / Concessionary £8.50 / Distant £4

Reference (leave blank)

Full Name:

Signature

Date:

I may cancel this declaration in respect of future subscriptions at any time.

Please sign and return this form, together with a completed Membership Form, to
The AAAHS Membership Secretary,
Glympton, Faringdon Road,
Abingdon on Thames, Oxon, OX14 1BQ