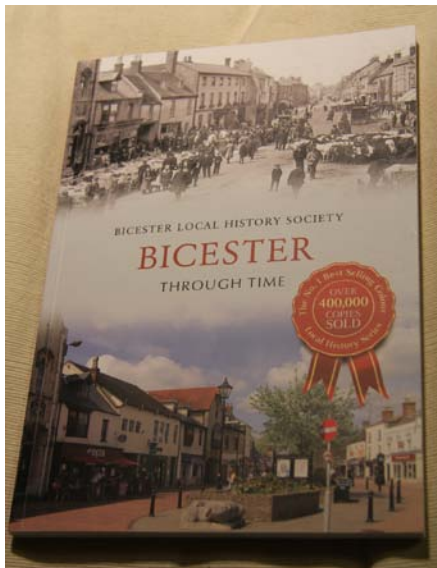


## December 2013

It's Christmas (in case you'd not noticed) and BLHS have gone to the vast expense of producing and sending a two paged Newsletter AND a Christmas card! No wonder the BLHS subscription has gone up! I joke – this has cost nothing to produce (don't ask how we do it!) but this will probably be the cheapest present you get this Christmas 😊

**Bicester Through Time** – The book, a combination of “then & now” photographs of Bicester with descriptive text, was launched in August and has proved to be a big seller. A number of us celebrated by holding an “launch evening” in the Littlebury.

The publishers are very pleased with the response – their best seller in the Through Time series. Such is its popularity



that we have had to re-order more copies twice now and expect to sell more during the run up to Christmas. If you need a copy remember you can purchase a copy through the Society - just contact the Treasurer, Sally, who always has some spare copies with her on our “Meeting” night at the Clifton Centre.



Similarly the **DVD – Bygone Bicester** is selling well – along with the book they make an excellent Christmas present for anyone associated with Bicester.

**History Exhibition** – we had a very successful day at the Bicester History & Archaeology Exhibition in September. Space was limited for our display but the information on Bicester Railways proved popular and stimulated a lot of interest. A selection of “Then & Now” photographs triggered long forgotten memories and stories which the Society will follow up. And of course it was invaluable for networking with other societies and groups. A long day but well worth the effort – a big thank you to all those involved!



**Annual Expedition!** – for our “day out” this year, we couldn’t get sufficient people to fill a coach so Bob volunteered to drive eighteen members in a mini-bus to the Milestones Museum, in Basingstoke. This is Hampshire’s “Living History Museum” with collections of industrial and



everyday life. Members were pleasantly surprised at the variety of exhibits and themes – and all undercover with excellent facilities as well. A very enjoyable day out! Thanks to Bob for organising the visit.

Note: one member tried her luck on the Fortune-Telling slot machine in the Penny Arcade. She was concerned when the card issued warned her to avoid men with beards – her seat on the mini-bus was next to the driver – Bob!

**Changing Faces of Bicester – Index:** for those of you who are familiar with the series of books on Bicester – “The Changing Faces of Bicester” - will be aware that none of them have an index. This can be quite frustrating when using the books to research a topic on Bicester. Help is now at hand because **two** of our members have diligently gone through all five books and produced a combined index based on people’s names, places, occupations, clubs and societies, etc. If you want a hard copy we can print one for you (50p), otherwise you will find it on the website - look on the Publications page.

PS. Having said that, I note that our own book (Bicester Through Time) doesn’t have an index – missed a trick there!

### **Christmas Tree Festival - St Edburg’s Church.**

Following the very successful first Christmas Tree Festival in December 2012, we thought that the Society ought to get involved this year and decorate a tree. The official opening ceremony was performed by the Mayor of Bicester, Cllr Melanie Magee on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December, We chose a historic Bicester theme – loosely! – by using natural materials wherever possible. The link to Bicester was by small cardboard boxes onto which we placed old photographs of Bicester. I did try and persuade Melanie that the Mayoral Chain would make a nice decoration for the tree ..... !



**WWI Commemoration** – we are supporting the Royal British Legion in having the current war memorial refurbished in time for the 2014 Centenary events. A series of articles for the local press are scheduled, and we intend to publish a small booklet on the subject of Bicester and World War I.

In the New Year and onwards we intend to run a “Guided Walk” centred on WWI and Bicester – pointing out buildings and places where recruitment took place for example, Red Cross hospital, homes of local families involved in the war, etc.

In conjunction with this and also the role of Bicester in World War II, the intention is to produce our next DVD on the subject of “Bicester at War”. If you have any special WWI and WWII memories or stories related to family members or friends, or photographs, please contact Bob.



**Gavray Drive Meadows** – the campaign to save these historic meadows from destruction (more housing!) goes from strength to strength. The BLHS Committee (and I know many of our members) support the “Save Gavray Meadows Campaign”. I know they have collected over 1000 signatures supporting their efforts. If you want to get involved or offer support, please contact Pam Roberts: [jnandpm.roberts@virgin.net](mailto:jnandpm.roberts@virgin.net) , 01869-245313

**HELP!** – the Society has a number of projects either in progress or in the pipeline. These don’t happen by themselves and we rely on the voluntary help of members and others to make them happen. Similarly, the running of the Society doesn’t happen by magic (although at times I might think it does!), so we do need people willing to help whether it’s joining the refreshments rota at our meetings, helping setting up the Clifton Centre for our talks, writing up reports of our meetings for our website, contacting the Press, helping with projects, etc. You don’t need to be a Committee Member – but we do have room for one or two more on the Committee – but please make yourself known to any of the Committee Members (listed below) if you would like to help in any way.

**Committee:** Bob Hessian (Chairman), Sally James (Treasurer), John Roberts, Gill King, Sally Dexter, Matthew Hathaway.

**Dates of next meetings:**

**16<sup>th</sup> December 2013 (Christmas meeting)**

**Bicester Hunt – Pete Chivers**

**2014**

20th Jan	Sex, Drink & Death in 17th Century Oxon - <i>Tim Healey</i>
17th Feb	Oxfordshire Almshouses - <i>Pete Chivers</i>
17th Mar	Victorian Oxfordshire - <i>Malcolm Graham</i>
28th Apr	The Nonconformists of Banburyshire 1662-2012 - <i>Martin Greenwood</i>
19th May	Emigration from 19th Century Oxfordshire - <i>Shaun Morley</i>
16th June	Strange Aspects of Oxford's History - <i>Brian Lowe</i>
21st July	The History of Witney Blanket Making - <i>Keith Crawford</i>

All meetings at the Clifton Centre, starting at 7.30pm

**Finally** – Last month we received an email from a member who had moved to Bicester towards the end of 1983 and had read Sid Hedges – “Bicester Wuz a Little Town” - to learn some of the history of the town. This still left some major gaps but recently he has purchased the new BLHS book and the DVD. His comments were as follows: “The excellent work by the BLHS to fill that missing info has proved really useful and I would like to congratulate all those involved in the work. Well done.”

Thank you – we really do appreciate such comments!