

BICESTER LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER No.2 (April 2011)

Welcome to the Bicester Local History Society Newsletter. It is our aim that we publish a short quarterly edition of the Newsletter to enable members without internet access to be kept informed of forthcoming meetings, events and projects that the Society will be undertaking. We would welcome any contributions that you might like to send to us.

Forthcoming Meetings:



We celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Bicester Local History Society in 2011. The talks we have selected for our monthly meetings reflect local themes in the Bicester Area. Talks take place at St Edburg's Church Hall, Old Place Yard, Bicester at 7.30 p.m. on the third Monday of the month. Details are available on our website www.blhs.org.uk. The forthcoming programme includes:

'A round-up of Local Archaeology' – Paul Smith (18th April)

'St Edburg's Parish Church' – David Buxton (16th May)

'The English Civil War in Oxfordshire' – Martin Greenwood (20th June)

Bicester Local History Society 25th Anniversary History & Heritage Exhibition:

The highlight of the 25th Anniversary celebrations will be a 'Bicester History Exhibition' at the Methodist Church Hall, Sheep Street at 10.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. on Saturday 21st May 2011. Planning has now reached an advanced stage. We propose to display the newly refurbished town fire engine, Anglo Saxon skeletons from the dig at the Catholic Church, rarely seen Alchester Roman artefacts and unveil the Cherwell District Council's 'Bicester Town Centre Conservation Plan' at the Exhibition. There will be performances by the Kirtlington Morris Dancers, the Bletchington Silver Band, Home Guard re-enactors, children's country dancing and a host of local societies, organisations and individuals exhibiting at the event. ***What's more it's all FREE!!!!*** Look out on our website and in the local press for further details. We would welcome offers to assist us organising the event. Please talk to any of the Committee members or contact Pete (01869 600109) if you are able to help us with the event.



Oral History:



'Do you Remember When' oral history sessions have regularly taken place at 'The Pop-In' Centre over the last two years. They have provided a unique and valuable insight into the history of the town that is unavailable from other sources. After a short break, to give us time to collate the material that we have collected, recording sessions will return to the Pop-In venue taking place on the first Monday of the month. We have recently purchased new recording equipment that will enable us to visit people at home to record their reminiscences.

We are keen to collect any photographs of the town, events that took place here or pictures of local people to illustrate our forthcoming DVD and book. If you can help and would be willing to allow us to scan photographs that you may have in your possession then please contact us. Many thanks.

Ancestral remains?

Between April and November 2010 archaeologists working on the site of the new parish rooms at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Bicester, discovered clues of the town's Anglo-Saxon origins. Some of the more complete skeletons that were found, were put on display in the church for the press and for members of BLHS to view. Originally thought to date from around 750 – 800 AD, recent results from carbon dating indicate a much earlier date of around 650 AD. More news of this important find will be reported on in due course.



Other News:

- A programme of Village Walks is planned for the summer. ***These walks are restricted to BLHS members only*** and take place at 2.30 p.m. on Sunday afternoons on 26th June (Fritwell), 17th July (Kirtlington), 14th August (Launton) and 18th September (Steeple Aston).
- ***Would you like to become more involved with BLHS activities?*** We are looking for additional committee members or volunteers to help with projects that we are undertaking at present. Please contact us for further details if you think that you could help.
- Bob Hessian will be leading a series of **Town Walks** this summer. These are open to members and non-members alike and all take place on a Sunday afternoon. The walks start at The Library, Old Place Yard at 2.30pm
 - Sunday, 22nd May – Bicester for Beginners – An introduction to the history of Bicester
 - Sunday, 12th June – Lost & Found – discover the history behind some of Bicester's "lost" buildings
 - Sunday, 11th September – Odds & Sods – Market Square, The Garth and the Old Priory.



Help required:

The picture below was taken by local photographer, Harris Morgan in March 1941 and shows a number of uniformed people lining the path outside St Edburg's Church. There was a National Day of Prayer on the 23rd March of that year and it may have been that. Do you recognise anybody?



If you know please contact Bob Hessian – 01869 350662, or via the website – www.blhs.org.uk