

BICESTER LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER (JANUARY 2012)

Welcome to the Bicester Local History Society Newsletter. It is our aim that we publish a 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:



The talks selected for our meetings over the next few months reflect aspects of local history on a broad theme. 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. The programme for the first quarter of 2012 includes:

'Drovers of the South Midlands' – Bruce Smith (16th January)

'Oxfordshire Place Names' - Anthony Poulton-Smith (20th February)

'The Archaeology & Restoration of Stowe Landscape Gardens' - Gary Marshall (19th March)

A Museum/Heritage Centre for Bicester:

We are pleased to report significant progress with the campaign to establish a Museum/Heritage Centre in Bicester. Consultations have taken place between representatives of Bicester Local History Society, Oxfordshire Museum Service, Bicester Town Council and Cherwell District Council regarding the project. Common ground has been agreed during the discussions and further developments are awaited. We hope that some form of Museum/Heritage Centre will be considered for inclusion in the new Civic Centre when it is constructed as part of the town centre redevelopment. Other possible locations might also become available in the coming months.

History Walks:

A series of 'Village History Walks' are planned for next year. Walks take place on Sunday afternoons at 2.30 p.m. and are followed by refreshments. The walks will include *Lower Heyford* (10th June), *Brill* (8th July), *Chesterton* (19th August) and *Islip* (16th September). Further details will be made available to Society members when they are finalised.

Bicester Local History Society will be launching a new venture next year with a programme of 'Countryside History Walks'. These will enable those who wish to pursue their interest of the historic landscape to take their interest that little bit further! The walks are structured to complement the 'Village History Walks' and include countryside circuits around *Lower Heyford* (24th June – 3.5 miles), *Brill* (22nd July – 4.5 miles) and *Islip* (7th October – 5 miles).



Oral History:

The Society has undertaken a programme of *Oral History* sessions over the past few years that have explored aspects of the area's history through the memories of those who were there at the time. Work is currently in progress to produce a DVD, to be released to coincide with the opening of the town centre redevelopment in 2013.

Skeleton and Pottery washing at Beckley:

John Moore Heritage Services have provided the opportunity for members of the Society to experience hands on archaeological work assisting with bone and pottery washing activities at their Beckley offices. Sessions take place on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings from 10.00 a.m. until 12.00 (noon). No previous experience is necessary and washing equipment is provided. If you would like to take part with this activity then please contact Pete Chivers on 01869 600109 or e-mail peter.chivers@ntlworld.com for further information.



Visit to the Houses of Parliament:

A visit to *The Houses of Parliament* is being organised to take place on Tuesday 27th March 2012. This will be a unique opportunity to view parts of the building not usually accessible to the public. Bob Hessian will be circulating details regarding the visit in the near future. The outing will be open to members of the Society as numbers for the visit will be limited for organisational reasons.

Bicester Ghost & Foul Deeds Walks:

‘Bicester Ghost & Foul Deeds Walks’ have proved increasingly popular in recent years. The two walks that took place in November attracted over fifty ‘ghost hunter’s determined to explore the darker side of our sleepy town! As a result of high demand for places for the ghostly experience, three additional walks are scheduled to take place on 16th February, 1st March and 15th March 2012. Many thanks to the members of the Society who have helped organise and run these events. Who knows how many more ghosts might appear on the evening ramble as news gets round the local spirit world that their presence is required?



Increasing Membership:

The number of members joining Bicester Local History Society exceeded one hundred for the first time in 2011. This number was surpassed by the end of this year. We continue to grow as an organisation as local history proves evermore popular and the range of activities that we offer increases.

We welcome the success of the Society but this comes at a cost. The average attendance at our monthly meetings regularly is in excess of eighty members and visitors. The Committee is conscious that there are overcrowding issues at some of our more popular meetings. We are actively seeking ways to resolve these problems. We hope to inform you of our proposals in the not too distant future.

A One Off Event:



Bicester Local History Society celebrated its *Twenty fifth Anniversary* in 2011. Special events such as the Bicester History Exhibition and a programme of Bicester themed talks were amongst the highlights of the year’s festivities. To draw the anniversary to a close, a one off event will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 9th January 2012 at *The John Paul II Catholic Church Centre*. An illustrated talk by Mary Byast entitled ‘*A Taste of Christmas*’ will chart the history



of Christmas food throughout the centuries. The choice of venue at *The John Paul II Centre* will provide Society members with an opportunity to visit this impressive new facility in the town if they have not already done so.

A Mystery Picture:

Could any members of the Society please help to identify where the picture below was taken and who the individuals photographed are? The information would be beneficial for our oral history research. Please contact Pete Chivers if you can help. Many thanks.

