

Thatcham Historical Society

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 1

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Annual General Meeting 2010

By Nick Young

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A packed room gathered for the Annual General Meeting of the Thatcham Historical Society on Monday (25th January). Sue Broughton thanked the members for the continued support of the society and fellow committee members for their hard work in promoting and organising events over the past year. Sue reviewed the events of 2009 and noted that for various reasons one of our trips had to be cancelled.

A programme of speaker meetings for 2010 was circulated and discussed. Sue also talked about other projects the society is continuing to undertake including our journal, a re-print of the book "*Thatcham Over 2000 Years*", recording of monuments at Midgham Church, updating of St. Mary's Churchyard monumental inscriptions and the oral histories project. Sue passed on our thoughts to the families of several members who passed away in 2009. They will all be missed.

Joyce Hoile stepped down from the committee and sadly our treasurer, Mervyn King, passed away in 2009. The officers for 2010 were elected as:

- Chair: Dr Nick Young
- Treasurer: Sue Broughton
- Secretary: Alf Wheeler

Additional members of the committee were (re)elected as, Dr Ray Asher, Val Bray, Kathryn Brock, Barry Franklin, Tony Higgott (Librarian), Ray Hopgood and Peter Lavarack.

Nick highlighted the trips planned for 2010 to Hampton Court Palace and the Natural History Museum and said "we are changing the way we approach some of our events, such as trips, to encourage a wider audience to participate and we are currently working with several individuals and other organisations to lay on a special event later in the year." The evening wrapped up with a raffle organised by Joan Birch.

News and Reviews

Historic Environment of Thatcham

By Nick Young

Sarah Orr from West Berkshires Archaeology Service who is the Historic Environment Record Officer (HERO) gave a talk on her job and the archaeology in the area. Sarah works in a small team of just two people, the other being Duncan Coe, and are responsible for the recording of archaeology within West Berkshire. The department has only existed within West Berkshire Council since 2000, before which the archaeology unit/service was an independent body.

Sarah noted that the service was to record, understand, preserve and promote archaeology and history, both below and above ground. As such, when a planning application is made the can request that the developer undertakes an archaeological excavation prior to building or consent being given. Sarah gave two local examples of this. The first being Wyatt's the butchers where an excavation was undertaken which revealed an 18th century floor and an earlier mediaeval floor. Also was another local building which has indications of a moat.

The work has collected and provides many resources including; finds from excavations, aerial photography, buildings details and much more. The resources are usually free unless for commercial use. Sarah showed some examples of these including a map of Berkshire which showed where archaeological finds had been made.

A vote of thanks was given by Nick Young (chair) and refreshments followed.

Journal of Thatcham Historical Society

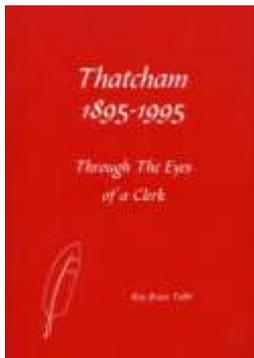
We hope to publish the second issue of our very own Journal later this year. We have articles from Gordon Webb, Sue Broughton, Dr Ray Asher and Dr Nick Young.

We are still happy to receive any submissions of articles for inclusion. In to this issue or the next issue. Submissions can digital or handwritten, we are more than happy to scan images, negatives, slides, etc. For further information, please speak to committee member Nick Young.

*"Historic Environment
Record Officer (HERO)"*



Sarah Orr with one of her historic environment maps.



"Thatcham 1895 – 1995: Through the Eyes of a Clerk", just one of the many books in our library



Nick Young with Mary West on the BBC Bus in May 2009.

*Peter Allen
Memorial Lectures*

The Peter Allen Memorial Lectures logo.

"increase awareness of local history, promote history in general to the local community and encourage all members of the community to participate"

The Historical Association
March 2010

Library

We would like to remind all member that our library has a wide range of books, including:

- Berkshire old and new;
- Fires of Windsor Castle;
- Tales of Oxford;
- Thatcham 1895 – 1995: Through the Eyes of a Clerk.

As you can see, subjects are varied and cover a wide range of areas and topics. There are over 260 items in the library. As a member, you can book these items out and take away with you.

For more information, please speak to our librarian, Tony Higgott.

National History Month: Fact a Day

National local history month, May, will be here shortly. Last year, 2009, was our first involvement with this event. The event involved us giving an historical fact a day about Thatcham to the public. This was provided on our website as text and audio, some in the local press including the Newbury Weekly News and KickFM, now Newbury Sound and also printed copies were amde available at the end of the month.

However, our biggest coverage was provided by the BBC. Henry Kelly presented each fact at about 11am each day on his show. This was rounded off at the end of the month with exposure on the BBC Bus with presenter Mary West. We will be repeating the fact a day again this year and hope the coverage will be just as good.

National History Month: Peter Allen Memorial Lectures

The Peter Allen Memorial Lectures are being organised to coincide with the national local history month, but also in memory of the late Peter Allen who passed away in May 2009. Hence the series of lectures is to be called "The Peter Allen Memorial Lectures."

We have organised a series of short talks to be given each Saturday in May. The talks are approximately 2 hours long, with a short break. The first part of the talk is are historical topics, for example the "History of Thatcham", whereas the second part will highlight how to get started in that topic. In other words, information on how to get started in local history.

Tickets will be required to some of the events. Donations will be asked for at each event and all money raised will be donated to the British Heart Foundation. Please see the website, www.paml.info, for more information or pick up a leaflet.

Regulars

This section contains information and articles, which will be published every issue. If anyone has any suggestions, events, and publication details or would like to provide some input for an article, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

Upcoming Events

Events for April & May 2010

9th April, **The Story of Town Criers**, Brian Sylvester
Newbury District Field Club, 2.30pm in the Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall

26th April, **Place names of West Berkshire**, Dr David Peacock
Thatcham Historical Society, 7.30pm (see back page for location details, NOTE: NEW LOCATION – SIXTH FORM BLOCK).

27th April, **Pound Street Cemetery**, Sharon Clough
Newbury District Field Club, 7:30pm in St John's Parish Room

28th April (1pm – 2pm), **Conserving the past for the future**
Museum of English Rural Life, Redlands Road, Reading
For more information visit www.merl.org.uk, call 0118 378 8660 or email merlevents@reading.ac.uk.

28th April, **John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford**, Fred Bailey
Hungerford Historical Association. Meetings 8.00pm in The Corn Exchange, Hungerford. For more information visit www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk.

24th May, **Industrial Developments and the Spitalfields Weavers**, Will Farrell
Thatcham Historical Society, 7.30pm (see back page for location details, NOTE: NEW LOCATION – SIXTH FORM BLOCK).

25th May, **An Introduction to Old Buildings**, Trevor Ottelewski
Newbury District Field Club, 7:30pm in St John's Parish Room

26th May, **The Major Family, Surgeons, Apothecaries and Doctors in Hungerford**, Jerry Green
Hungerford Historical Association. Meetings 8.00pm in The Corn Exchange, Hungerford. For more information visit www.hungerfordhistorical.org.uk.

1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th & 31st May, Peter Allen Memorial Lectures. For details please see www.paml.info, leaflets or Dr Nick Young.

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Readers Enquiries

The society continually receives enquiries through various channels. This section is intended to help the society members who get such enquiries to provide more detailed replies. The enquirers contact details are kept private, unless permission has been given to make them public. All feedback will be passed back to the enquirer, acknowledging your input. Some success stories will be included in future newsletters. If you can possibly provide any help in responding to any of these enquiries, please contact Nick Young via email at nick@thatchamhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

Ames Crosta Pump

You may remember my sending you the photo of the wind powered sludge pump at Thatcham. I now know that Ames Crosta was the engineering company that erected the pump, almost certainly on the north side of the Kennet & Avon Canal, close to Colthrop Paper Mills.

A large quantity of Ames Crosta's records survive in the Local Studies Centre in Rochdale. They were very big in building sewage works all over the world. From what survives, the pump in the photo was built in 1922-3 for W.C. Easdale at Thatcham. Does this name mean anything to you?

A year later they were building a plant for Colthrop Board & Paper Mills. I wondered whether this could have been the derelict plant which still survives on the south side of the canal, fed by overhead pipes. This includes a structure which looks remarkably like a wind engine - but not the type I am researching. Do you know anything about this plant?

As you will realise, I recently had a pleasant walk along the canal from the Brimpton Road as far as the lock about a mile towards Thatcham Station.

Regards,
Tim Booth

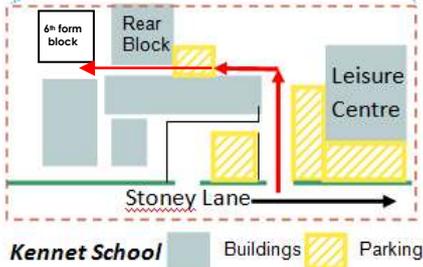
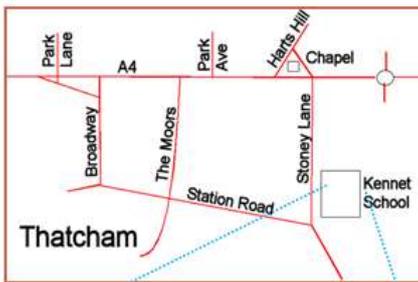
Midgham Green

I am hoping someone may be able to assist me with the following:

An illegal 'hovel' was built on Midgham Green c1770 by Stephen Tegg. In 1841c a gt.grandson William Tegg was living in a cottage on Midgham Green. Shortly afterwards he moved away. William was one of only two 'ordinary' householders to pay tax around this time the other being Mr. Goswell.

A cottage on Midgham Green survives from around this time and I have a current map showing its position. I would like to confirm, if possible, if the illegal hovel is the thatched cob cottage presently known as "Toad Hall" on the Green or not. I do not know what happened to William Tegg's home after he moved or even if his home was in fact the same one built by Stephen. If anyone can throw any light on this for me, (however dim!), I would be very grateful.

Thank you, Jane



About the Thatcham Historical Society

The Society was formed in 1967, with the aim of promoting an interest in the local history of Thatcham and surrounding areas. In addition, more general historical matters are of interest to the society and its members. Members have differing levels of involvement with some carrying out research into topics with the intention of publishing their results and others just being content to enjoy the monthly speakers and activities. The meetings are held at the Kennet Secondary school:

Sixth Form Block
Kennet School, Thatcham

What we do

Our society exists to promote an interest, not only in the local history of Thatcham and district, but also in historical matters in general. One way we aim to do this is by arranging a regular series of talks by invited speakers throughout the year. We try to ensure that we have a wide range of subject matter in the talks by interpreting "historical" relevance very freely. Past talks have covered reports of visits to the ancient civilisations of the Middle East and South America, aspects of industrial, transport and agricultural history, as well as aspects of the local history of Thatcham and District. The latter, where possible, are given by speakers who are involved in local research. Most talks are illustrated by slides and some have given members a chance to identify (or guess at!) the purpose of certain historical artefacts from local collections.

We organise a day trip each summer to a place, which not only has strong historical associations, but also more general interest, since we invite member's friends and relations to join us. For instance Rochester, Bristol and Southampton have been visited in recent years. An afternoon guided tour of a local town or place of interest is often organised in the autumn.

Projects

Another way in which we follow our aim is by initiating and encouraging research into the history of Thatcham and its surroundings. Currently we have a group working on the production of an index of maps covering Thatcham from the earliest available, indicating where they may be seen. Another group has recorded the inscriptions on Thatcham gravestones and is finishing recording those at Cold Ash. A further group has produced and published "*Thatcham over 2000 Years*", a chronology of events in Thatcham from the earliest times to the year 2000. Copies of this book are still available. Any member wishing to help in a project is always welcome, as are any suggestions for future research. Such involvement is of course entirely voluntary.

Becoming a member

The annual subscription fee is currently £7. This allows you to attend all of the series of talks we arrange each year and includes refreshments at the meetings. It also includes the refreshments at our AGM and social evening. The costs of any excursions or visits would be extra. Visitors can also come along to any of our meetings at a cost of £1.50 per person per meeting. This also includes refreshments. If you are interested please come along to one of our meetings, you will be very welcome. You can join at any meeting, or just pay as a visitor.



Members and friends of Thatcham Historical Society arriving at Penrhyn Castle, 2006. Photo by Ann Allen.