

Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society

AGM Papers and Spring Newsletter 2020

Due to the Coronavirus epidemic, Oxfordshire Past on June 13th has been cancelled. Bookings already received will be refunded.

We will not be able to hold a conventional AGM this year, but all the officers' reports, the accounts, and the minutes of last year's AGM are in this booklet. If you have any questions arising from them please contact the Secretary, Jill Hind, at secretary@oahs.org.uk.

If we do not hear from you by June 13th we will assume that you are content to adopt the accounts and the reports, and that the Examiner for the accounts, all Committee members and officers shall remain in post until 2021.

There are vacancies for general Committee members. If you would like to join the Committee, please contact Jill Hind.

Summer Excursions

This newsletter also brings you details of excursions in August and September, by which time we hope that it will be possible to meet and travel once again.

New OAHS website at www.oahs.org.uk

Stay in touch with OAHS news, forthcoming publications, and updates at our new redesigned website!

Minutes of the OAHS AGM
held at The Corn Exchange, Witney
8 June 2019 at 12.45 pm
(Registered Charity No. 259055)

The President, Geoffrey Tyack, took the chair. 18 members were present.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from 4 members.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the 2018 AGM were accepted and passed without correction.

Proposed: David Clark, seconded: Peter Steere.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Officers' reports

Peter Steere apologised for ongoing problems with the website, including broken PayPal links. Work on the updated site was nearing completion, but dealing with the program language of the old version has made transferring features difficult. A trial version of the new website was running on the OAHS stand for members to see and try.

5. Finance

a) Report of Hon. Treasurer

The shortfall of £3,704.23 for 2018 resulted from two factors: late payments from creditors and the cost of *Oxoniensia*. The journal takes up most of the subscription income, leaving little to fund other activities. Overall the assets remain healthy, at just over £100,000. The accounts show a lower figure because accounting conventions require assets to be recorded at their purchase price.

b) Adoption of accounts and balance sheet.

The accounts were commended to the Society and were adopted.

Proposed: Simon Townley, seconded: Mary Lale.

c) Appointment of Examiners

The Treasurer would like to change the Examiner, as he has found the existing company expensive and not as careful as he expected. He proposes Chapman, Robinson and Moore. The meeting agreed to this change.

Proposed: Roger Ainslie, Seconded: Ivor Spackman

6. Subscription Increase

The President outlined a number of reasons why an increase had been proposed:

- i) the increasing cost of producing *Oxoniensia*, with the funding basis becoming more uncertain;
- ii) the cost of producing and maintaining the new website;
- iii) the aim of improving the quality of the Newsletter;
- iv) new arrangements for the Library. This is currently housed at the Sackler Library but is inaccessible to most members. The Sackler would like it to be removed. A search for a new location is proving difficult, but is ongoing. It may require some funds to provide shelving etc.

It would be possible to put the Newsletter online in the future, but a sizeable proportion of members do not appear to use digital platforms and a hard copy version would still be required. The increased subscription was seen as good value by some present. The means of access to the library would need to be worked out, but this might require proof of OAHS membership and hence membership cards might need to be introduced and paid for. The size of the subscription increase was large, but a series of smaller increases over time is very time consuming, requiring changes in Standing Orders.

The current assets provide an income and reducing them was not seen as viable in the long term.

It was proposed that subscription levels be increased in line with those published in the Agenda:

Proposed: Peter Steere, seconded: Ivor Spackman.

For: 13 Against: 1 Abstentions: 4

The proposal was carried.

7. Election of Officers

All existing Committee members were prepared to stand again.

These officers were approved by the meeting.

8. Any other business

a) Becky Peacock, Oxfordshire Past Organiser, announced that OAHS was seeking a partner society for the 2020 event. Societies are involved in finding venues, identifying a speaker on a local topic, provision of refreshments etc. They share in any profit.

b) Geoffrey Tyack thanked the Committee for their work and support.

The meeting closed at 13.10 pm.

Reports for 2019-20

From the President

One of the most enjoyable tasks of the President of the OAHS is to attend and introduce all of the Society's winter lectures, and I am happy to record that this year's series has kept up their enviably high standards. As always, the lectures have ranged very widely both in chronological coverage and in subject matter. As I look at the poster for the last one of the current series, on 10 March ('The Prehistory of the Upper Thames Valley'), showing mammoths and hunters under cloudy skies in an all-too-familiar watery landscape, I am reminded of the new and exciting archaeological discoveries which have transformed our understanding of our county's prehistory. But we have also been treated to ground-breaking new research into, *inter alia*, the origins of the city of Oxford; the sixteen women 'martyrs' of 19th-century Ascott-under-Wychwood imprisoned in 1873 for founding a branch of an agricultural workers' trades union; and the Kingerlee firm, which built much of what Gerard Manley Hopkins called Oxford's 'bricky skirt'. There have also been stimulating talks on the Victoria County History's treatment of Oxfordshire's historic buildings, and on manorial records as a source of local history, the latter a joint venture with the Oxfordshire Record Society. I am very grateful to all our speakers, and also to the many members who turned out on cold and often dreary winter evenings to hear them.

I am very sorry that this year's 'Oxfordshire Past' has had to be cancelled, together with some of the summer excursions. You can find details of the reduced programme of summer outings, for August and September, elsewhere in this Newsletter and also on our renewed website, which I am delighted to say is now fully operational. I fervently hope that these excursions will be able to go ahead.

The Society keeps a careful eye on developments that could potentially threaten our understanding of the county's history

and its historic environment. With that in mind, I wrote recently to the Director of the Ashmolean Museum expressing our concern at the recent removal of the Museum's valuable 'legacy websites' relating to local history and archaeology. It now seems that these sites will be reinstated, following their removal to a more secure external server, but the Society will continue to monitor the situation.

We are also deeply concerned about current proposals for large-scale sand and gravel extraction between Nuneham Courtenay and Sandford. If approved, this could ruin the view northwards towards Oxford from the largely untouched landscape garden at Nuneham Courtenay: one of the finest planned landscapes of the 18th century, which some of you saw on an OAHS excursion a couple of years ago. I have been in touch with the local group objecting to the plans, which would also have a severe effect upon the archaeology of the area.

This Newsletter contains a plea for payment of the increased subscription that was agreed at last year's Annual General Meeting. If you have not increased your subscription already, I urge you to take the appropriate action. Unfortunately it is not possible for us to introduce a Direct Debit system of payment, so you will need to make a new Standing Order for next year's payment, and also to reimburse the Society for the shortfall in this year's subscription.

As always, I am very grateful to our Committee members for their devoted work over the past year. I would especially like to thank John Hine, who has recently resigned after several successful years as Excursions Secretary, and to welcome as his successor Michael Heaton, whom many of you will be meeting over the summer. I am gratified by your own continuing support of the Society, and will look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at future events when they resume.

Geoffrey Tyack

From the Secretary

Generally it was a routine year and the Secretary has only been required to support the activities of the Society. Symm, the Oxford builders, moved premises and donated to OAHS a number of copies of the book about the firm's history: Brian R. Law, *Building Oxford's Heritage: Symm and Company from 1815* (1998). If anyone would like a copy, please contact me.

The inaugural Thame History Fair which was to have been held in June has been postponed until 25th October. OAHS plans to have a stand at this event promoting the Society and hosting competitions and activities. More details will be available later, but if anyone would be prepared to help on the stand for part of the day I would be very grateful.

Jill Hind

From the Membership Secretary

The new website, www.oahs.org.uk, is now fully functional. I would urge members who have not yet asked for a login and password to do so, as many of the questions I get from members, such as change of address, payment amounts and ways of paying are all dealt with on the members' area of the website under 'My details'. We have a membership of nearly 500 and only about half of them make use of the members' area of the website. It is a valuable resource and now that it has been redesigned it is also attractive, easy to use and informative.

The Society currently has 376 active individual members and 59 family members, giving a nominal total of 494 members. Of these there are 98 members who have not paid any subscription for 2020 and, in addition to that, 114 who have not paid the correct amount for 2020. This means that over 40% of our current membership have either not paid their 2020 subscription or have not paid the correct amount. Please

see the enclosed letter from the President regarding the action you should take to rectify this.

Since the announcement of the necessary increase in subscriptions (2019 AGM) our membership has fallen by about 10% (assuming that those who have not yet paid, or have not paid the correct amount, do eventually pay their subscription). If we cannot recover the unpaid subscriptions then our membership will have fallen more steeply than that.

Peter Steere

From Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum

During the past year we have met 3 times to consider reports on archaeological activity and sites. Please let me know if you would like copies of these. There appear to be fewer consultations for planning-related archaeology than a year ago, but these differ widely, with West Oxfordshire consulting the County Archaeology service on far fewer applications than some other districts.

Eloise Chapman has left the County Museums Store and Anni Byard has left the Portable Antiquities Scheme. They have been replaced by Angie Bolton and Edward Caswell, thanks to Carol Anderson's successful efforts in retaining the posts in difficult times.

Problems are expected with the County Store's proposal not to accept digital archives and to require these to be kept by the Archaeology Data Service. The ADS charges are beyond the resources of many local societies which have material acquired before developer-funded archaeology.

Roger Ainslie

From the Listed Buildings Sub-committee

| Local council | 2019 total (2018 total) |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Cherwell | 1 (0) |
| Oxford City (including the Victorian Group) | 54 (35) |
| South Oxon | 2 (7) |
| Vale | 0 (2) |
| West Oxon | 1 (1) |
| Total | 58 (45) |

In 2019 the sub-committee sent detailed comments to the relevant council planning departments on 58 planning applications, the majority of them in Oxford City. At the time of writing [March 2020], 17% of all applications have been withdrawn by the applicants, 12% have been refused permission, 62% have been granted permission, and the remaining 9% are still waiting a decision. Our comments appear to have been taken into consideration in about 53% of the cases on which a decision has been made (it was 36% in 2018). We are still concerned that many planning applications are being registered despite containing inadequate documentation; in 2019 about 21% of applications (down from 31% last year) fell into this category in our opinion.

Peter Howell of the Victorian Group commented on 21 applications, mainly in North Oxford. Unfortunately his long-term battle to save the wooden display cabinets in the University Museum was not successful. Major developments by Oxford colleges, including University and Brasenose, will be considered in detail in 2020.

The committee finalised its revised constitution and this was adopted by the main OAHS committee in May. Our priorities are (in order of importance): cases involving demolition or

partial demolition of Listed buildings; other Listed building cases; and cases within Conservation Areas. The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) advised that it was changing the way it deals with Listed buildings and that OAHS and other local groups would no longer act as its agents. We continue to work as we did before, however, and will consult the CBA on any cases on which we would like extra support.

We were consulted by the City Council on the proposed extension to the City and University Central Conservation Area, and were pleased that the boundary was extended to include parts of St Thomas's parish and the Science Area, but disappointed that it was not extended to include the Keble Triangle. We noted that in West Oxfordshire consultation by the planning authority has improved, and the quality of historic buildings appraisals being submitted with applications has risen.

We continue to work closely with the Oxford Preservation Trust on cases affecting Oxford City, and to notify national groups such as the Georgian Group, Victorian Society and Twentieth Century Society of cases which we think are worthy of their attention.

The committee was pleased to welcome Abigail Lloyd as a new caseworker in January; her arrival is reflected in the high number of cases dealt with in Oxford city during the year. We are grateful to member Esther Robinson Wild who keeps us abreast of updates to documentation and best practice from Historic England and other national bodies. Committee member Malcolm Airs was awarded a well-deserved OBE for services to heritage in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. We were sad to note the unexpected death in September of Tim Peacock, who had acted as caseworker for South Oxfordshire for a number of years.

We are always keen to hear from OAHS members who would like to join the sub-committee and get involved in the protection of Oxfordshire's architectural heritage. Please

contact lbsecretary@oahs.org.uk for an informal discussion about this interesting role.

Liz Woolley and David Clark

From the Editor of *Oxoniensia*

This year's *Oxoniensia*, due out in early December, will include a stimulating mix of history and archaeology, with several contributions touching on the Wychwood area. The historical articles include two contributions by Professor John Blair, one on Roman roads in Wychwood Forest, the other (co-authored with Catherine Hills) concerning an Anglo-Saxon relic-box found at Ascott-under-Wychwood, an object of a kind associated with women of apparently special religious status. Other articles include a review of the county's Roman pottery types (by Paul Booth), the identification of a possible pre-Conquest deer park at Grove (by Roger Thomas), and an architectural and archaeological analysis of Charlbury church, a building which occupied the site of an Anglo-Saxon minster. Archaeological reports are complemented by the regular round-ups of archaeological excavations in Oxford and Oxfordshire. The reviews section includes the latest volume of the Victoria County History (on Wychwood Forest).

December 2020 will see the publication of *The Archaeology of Oxford in the 21st Century*, edited by Stephen Miles, with contributions by David Radford, Tom Hassall, and Oxford Archaeology. This will be first in a new series of OAHS Occasional Papers. Richly illustrated, the volume focuses on the medieval city and its northern suburb with significant new evidence about life in the Jewish quarter. OAHS members will be able to buy copies at a special discounted rate of £25.50 (full price £30); to reserve your copy, please email me.

Stephen Miles (editor@oahs.org.uk)

From the Treasurer

2019 Accounts (see page 12)

The accounts show a margin of income over expenditure of £5,893. This is an improvement on 2018 when we recorded a loss of £3,704. This change was primarily due to lower costs for producing *Oxoniensia* (£12,746 compared with £16,978 in 2018). The improvement also reflected the claiming of Gift Aid for two years (£1,589), an increase in dividends of £1,659 due to the shift of money from National Savings to equity funds, and reduced expenditure in donations and prizes.

Steps were taken following last year's AGM to strengthen the accounts and these included an increase in membership subscriptions and a re-positioning of some investments. The change in subscriptions occurred at the start of 2020 and does not therefore affect the 2019 accounts. Other measures taken to improve the accounts have shown some success. The assets of the Society increased substantially over the year with a market valuation of £131,708 at the year-end compared with £113,523 at the start of the year. The increase reflected in part the £5,893 positive margin on the income and expenditure account but mainly the increase in fund valuations following the general election. A secure reserve of £20,000 remains in National Savings.

A new examiner for the accounts was appointed in 2019 (Jim Moore of Chapman, Robinson and Moore). The accounts have been examined and approved.

Bob Crabtree

Proposed Committee for 2020/21

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| President | Geoffrey Tyack |
| Secretary | Jill Hind |
| Treasurer | Bob Crabtree |
| Membership Secretary | Peter Steere |
| Lectures Secretary | Adrienne Rosen |
| Excursions Secretary | Michael Heaton |
| Editor, <i>Oxoniensia</i> | Stephen Miles |
| Librarian | Julian Munby |
| Listed Buildings | Liz Woolley/David Clark |
| Website co-ordinator | Meriel Lewis |
| OCCAF | Roger Ainslie |
| Oxfordshire Past organiser | Becky Peacock |
| Committee member | vacant |

Contacts

Membership Secretary

To notify changes of address etc:

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OAHS Secretary

Jill Hind

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Subscriptions

Subscriptions were due on 1 January 2020. Any member failing to pay the annual subscription by 31 May will cease to be a member of the Society. **Members are reminded that there has been an increase in the rates and that Standing Orders need to be amended.**

Excursions 2020

Due to the Coronavirus epidemic, the excursions planned for May, June and July have been cancelled. Bookings already received for these excursions will be refunded in full.

If you are interested in the excursions to Chalgrove in August, and/or Bletchley Park in September, please contact Michael Heaton, Excursions Secretary, 48 High Street, Wheatley, Oxford OX33 1XX
or email: excursions@oahs.org.uk

No bookings will be taken until July 1st.

Our two excursions in late summer are to medieval Chalgrove Manor and Chalgrove church with outstanding wall paintings in August, followed by a coach excursion in September to Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire.

Bookings will be accepted from July 1st if the situation allows us to run these excursions **but please contact Michael Heaton before sending payment**. You can send in the Booking Form at the end of this newsletter, or book via the Society's website at <http://www.oahs.org.uk/> where you can pay by PayPal.

If you miss the closing date, always enquire, as there may be spaces available.

**1. Saturday 8 August 2020:
Chalgrove Manor and Church**

Own transport

Meet at Manor House for 10.30 am start, then Church at 2.30 pm

Cost: £19.00

Maximum number: 20 Booking closing date: 17 July

Lunch is not included in the fee, but can be reserved at either the Red Lion (01865 890625) or the Lamb (01865 890295)

We will have a private tour of Chalgrove Manor, a Grade I Listed early 15th century manor house which stands partly on the site of an earlier building, originally the de Plessis manor and manorial court-house. The great hall has a medieval oak screen, possibly from the 13th century house. A finely detailed arch-braced collar roof shows carpentry of exceptional quality. The north wing contains a medieval annexe and garderobe chute outlet. Extensions at the rear are early 16th century, and the south wing parlour has 17th century painted grained panels.

At 2.30 we will have a talk by Bob Heath-Whyte in the church. Dating from the 13th century, the church is thought to remain substantially as it was in 1500. Around 1320 the chancel was decorated with a series of wall paintings showing the Last Judgement and the medieval legend of the Assumption of Mary, described as 'one of the most complete series in the country'. Limewashed over at the Reformation, the paintings were rediscovered in 1858 during renovation.

(Tea/coffee included)

2. Wednesday 9 September: Bletchley Park

Pick up: St Giles 8.45 am, Water Eaton P & R 9.00 am

Return: Water Eaton about 4.45 pm, St Giles 5.00 pm

Cost: £36.00

Maximum number: 26 Booking closing date: 18 August

Home of the World War 2 Codebreakers, Bletchley Park was once Britain's best kept secret. It is now a vibrant heritage attraction for visitors to learn how the codebreakers' achievements helped to shorten WW2 by up to 2 years. We will arrive at about 10.30 and have a whole day to explore, including a 1 hour guided tour. We will leave at 3.30 pm.

Lunch is not included in the fee. There are a café and a coffee shop on site.

Booking for 2020 Excursions

Bookings will be accepted from July 1st if the situation allows us to run these excursions **but please contact Michael Heaton before sending payment:**

Michael Heaton, Excursions Secretary, 48 High Street, Wheatley, Oxford OX33 1XX

or email: excursions@oahs.org.uk

Please make cheques payable to 'Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society' and send the Booking Form at the end of this newsletter, with your cheque, to Michael Heaton, Excursions Secretary, 48 High Street, Wheatley, Oxford OX33 1XX

Email: excursions@oahs.org.uk

OR make a BACS transfer direct to the OAHS bank account (**sort code 20-65-18 a/c 70712078**) quoting your surname and all excursion numbers booked (essential), and send a scan of the Booking Form by email to Michael Heaton;

OR book on the OAHS website: www.oahs.org.uk and pay by PayPal (you do not need a PayPal account).

Cancellation and Own Transport Policy

Cancellations will be accepted up to the Booking Closing Date, and refunds made, subject to a £5.00 per person administration fee being deducted. No refunds will be made after the Booking Closing Date.

If you wish to use your own transport, the full cost of the excursion will still have to be paid, but please let us know if this is the case as car parking is limited at some venues.

Disability Policy

Members with limited mobility must contact the Excursions Secretary, Michael Heaton (tel: 01865 425909) before booking an excursion to discuss whether special access arrangements can be made to buildings or locations. The Society will do its best to accommodate special needs, but reserves the right to refuse access to its events where, in the judgement of the Committee, the safety of an individual or of other participants is put at risk.

Booking Form

Please give an email address (or phone number) where we can contact you nearer the time of the excursions with updated information (solely for OAHS use):
.....

1. Saturday 8 August. Chalgrove Manor & Church

Cost: £19.00 per person Booking closing date: 17 July

Name of Lead Participant:
.....

Name(s) of Guests:
.....
...

I enclose a payment for (number in party), totalling
£..... Tick if paid by BACS

2. Wednesday 9 September. Bletchley Park

Cost: £36.00 per person Booking closing date: 18 Aug.

Name of Lead Passenger:
.....

Name(s) of Guests:
.....

Pick up Point: St Giles (8.45) Water Eaton P&R (9.00)
(Please circle choice)

I enclose a payment for (number in party) totalling
£..... Tick if paid by BACS

