



Newsletter

Summer 2011



Number 4

Hello and welcome to our Summer 2011 newsletter. It's been an exciting year for Highworth Historical Society and we hope that you've enjoyed the various events and lectures. However, we're always open to comments and suggestions so, if you'd like to make a contribution to the Society or have any ideas for us, contact us by e-mail to jo@highworthhistoricalsociety.co.uk or write to us at the address at the end of this newsletter.

Egg Saturday

March saw the very popular event of Egg Saturday. We were offering pancakes and coffee in the Council rooms to grateful shoppers attracted in out of the cold by the lovely aroma of cooking pancakes. As before, we ran a tombola and a sweepstake to see how long Andy Sears of Andrews Butchers could toss a pancake. Stakes were feverishly snapped up but Andy didn't manage to break his record of one minute and 48 seconds from last year – he lasted 21 seconds this time! Betty Mellett was the lucky lady who won a meat voucher as a result of her guess of 20 seconds.



Quiz Night

May saw our first HHS Quiz Night. Eleven teams of four packed into the lounge at The Fox to battle it out. Raffle prizes were kindly donated by members and Dale and Malcolm at The Fox, who also provided a wonderful spread of sandwiches and chips during the half-time break. The quiz was hard-fought but was eventually won by a team from Hayward House so congratulations to them! We hope you'll join us for the next one, which we hope to run in September 2011.



Two trips around Coleshill

Following an unscheduled (but nonetheless extremely interesting) talk about Coleshill by Bryan Lawton, Highworth Historical Society members were invited on two trips around Coleshill, both conducted by the very knowledgeable and enthusiastic Liza Dibble. The first was on a sunny Sunday morning in April and was a general walk around the village with details about the history of Coleshill House and how it was used



HHS on Facebook!

Highworth Historical Society is now on Facebook!
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Highworth-Historical-Society/180110998710140>



If you're on Facebook already, do click on our 'Like' button to receive updates and news from us. If you're not on Facebook, join up and join in! If you're not on Facebook, don't worry, we'll still be producing the usual regular newsletters.



during the Second World War for the training of auxiliaries, directed there, of course, by Highworth's Postmistress, Mabel Stranks. We also had a tour of the model farm and how it operates along with information about Coleshill Organics. The second trip, early one spring evening, was centred around the secret army bunker there and the talk gave us even more detail about the WWII operations, ending with a trip into the secret underground bunker, for those of us physically able and not claustrophobic! Members were fascinated by the information given and commented that we are so lucky to have this important part of our country's history on our doorstep.

Tour of Inigo House



On a very cold and wintry morning on Saturday 27th November, Claire and Peter Burke kindly gave a group of HHS members a guided tour of their home, Inigo House, on the High Street. As some of you may remember, Inigo House used to be the Doctor's Surgery in Highworth and Claire and Peter still have many of the instruments and equipment owned and used by former doctors who lived and worked there. The tour was absolutely fascinating and, if HHS members are invited there again, we can thoroughly recommend it – it's definitely worth a visit.

Committee News

The Committee has had another busy year and my heartfelt thanks for their co-operation and support go out to them all - Gillian Miller and Joanne Cook who organise the interesting programme of talks for us and the trips which have taken place throughout the year; Kay Brown, our secretary, who arranged the marvellous Quiz Night which we all enjoyed so much and who produces the monthly newsletters; Jim Mitchell, our Treasurer, for keeping such a keen eye on our funds and who together with Jacky Clark, Vice Chair, has undertaken the thankless task of applying for Gift Aid; Chris Suter for organising the Egg Saturday event and for undertaking the monthly raffles; Jane Hunt for her invaluable help and advice in putting on displays, and Ann Marie Murphy our archivist who beavers quietly away in the background keeping a watchful eye on all our archives. Jacky Clark took on the task of reviewing the HHS Constitution to see whether the original contained some clauses which had been superseded by events and whether terminology had changed. The end result has been a tidying up, removing unnecessary repetitions whilst still conforming to what we believe are the Charity Commission's requirements. As important though, is the need to have the approval of members of the HHS. To this end your Committee will take this to the next AGM on Monday 26th September 2011 for ratification. In the meantime, a copy of this draft constitution, together with the Standing Orders, can be found on the HHS website (www.highworthhistoricalsociety.org.uk). If any member without access to this electronic source would like a paper copy, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Highworth Historical Society, 6 Copper Beeches, Highworth, Wilts. SN6 7BJ.



In February we were invited to hire a room at the new Highworth

Trip to the Nuclear Bunker at Great Bedwyn

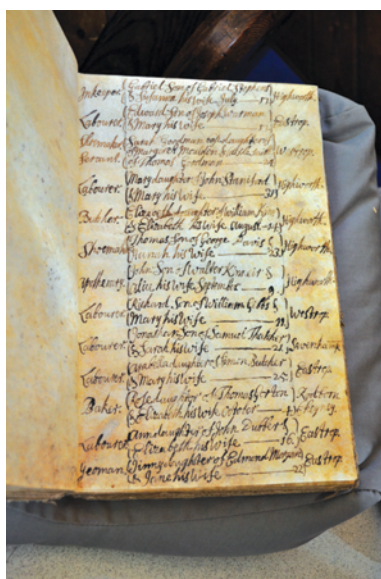


On Sunday 24 October, Highworth Historical Society organised a trip to a 'nuclear bunker' at Great Bedwyn. This was a former Royal Observer Corps Post which was in use until 1991. Members were given details of just what would happen if our country had been under nuclear attack – how the explosions would have been recorded, how the fall out would have been tracked and how contact would have been made and information shared with other observation posts in the local area* and all over the country. We were treated

to a descent into the bunker and shown all the equipment that was used until the bunker was decommissioned. Thankfully, none of it ever had to be used in an actual nuclear attack situation and it was extremely interesting to find out exactly what was going on behind the scenes! (* One used to be located in the Bydemill Gardens area).

Highworth's Educational Records

October also saw the educational records that our President, Claire Skinner, brought up to Highworth from their usual resting place in the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre in Chippenham. From Claire's talk we learnt what resources were available and how lucky we are in having some of the oldest records in the county. It was a wonderful chance to browse through log books, school admission books etc some of which were relatively recent. Some of the information recorded allowed us to see a part of the migration both in and out of Highworth. It was the first time that these valuable documents had been taken out to venues like ours so we were very fortunate. Claire was so pleased with the interest and response that she has offered to bring the church records up to Highworth, so another such session is being planned.



Community Centre for use as a local history room which could also include the storage of our archives and artefacts. Jane Hunt is looking into the feasibility of this, and we will report on our recommendations at the AGM in September. Swindon Web, reporting on the official opening of the Highworth Community Centre, stated that we already had a presence there. This is incorrect, we do not.

Paul Newton-Smith, our indefatigable webmaster, has taken a break from the committee and will be sorely missed. He will however be continuing as our Webmaster, and has assured us that he will be there in the background helping out with things. It's Paul who designs and publishes this Newsletter. Keith Bateman has kindly volunteered to assist Paul with the website. Thank you Keith.



anniversary celebrations we approached the College of Arms to investigate the arms on the font in St Michael's Church. Robert Noel, Lancaster Herald, rose to the challenge, reporting that it is a misunderstood version of the arms of St Osmund – Bishop Osmund of Sarum.

The 4th century 'Highworth Pot' found in the garden of a house in Cricklade Road in 2008, is now in at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre at Chippenham for restoration, and appears to have caused quite a lot of excitement amongst the conservators. It has been stabilised and separate tests on the composition of the staples and the contents of the pot are being carried out. In researching Elizabethan Highworth for the May Day event I



came across a remarkable document, one to dream about – a deposition dated 1582. To my complete surprise I came across reference to one Goodson of Maggot Mill who 'was executed by burnynge for the Relligion which the queens Majestie nowe alloweth'. This took place at Lammas in 1504 somewhere in the area of Glebe Place. Highworth's very own martyr.

Jo Clark, Chair

Archivist Report

This has been a busy year what with collecting together and sorting all the various items and documents which we currently hold in our archives. We are currently in the process of updating our records to ensure everything is catalogued and stored which will provide a more structured and suitable method of preserving the artifacts and ensuring that they are available to members. We have also been able to assist quite a number of members and others with their research by supplying them with copies of photographs and documents. This is a growing and valuable part of the service we can now offer.

As always, we are looking to add items and information to the archives, so if anyone has anything relating to Highworth or the surrounding areas they can donate, loan or simply allow us to copy, please let us know.

Ann Marie Murphy, Archivist

Treasurers Report



As we approach the end of the Society's year I am pleased to report that our finances remain buoyant. Membership subscriptions for 2011/12 will remain at £10.00 per member. We will be visiting your homes to collect subscriptions on the

evening of 24th August. Cheques should be made out to 'Highworth Historical Society'. Please consider using a standing order payment. Forms are available from our website. I am continuing to pursue our claim for gift aid and the society has been recognised as being eligible to do so by HMRC. It is extremely important for audit purposes that those members of the society who are willing and qualify for gift aid complete the relevant documentation when they renew their membership. A form is enclosed with the Newsletter.

Jim Mitchell, Treasurer

DON'T FORGET... NEXT MEETING

Monday 26 September 7.30pm - Council Room
AGM followed by a talk on
The History of the Co-Op

Evening Lectures 2011 / 2012

All meetings to be held in Highworth Council Room except October which is in St. Michaels' Church
Meetings start at 7.30 pm.

September 26th 2011	AGM with a talk on The history of the Co-Op
October 31st 2011	Rex Warneford - our own war hero
November 28th 2011	The Science Museum at Wroughton
December 12th 2011	A Soldiers Life in the Trenches
January 30th 2012	Redlands and the Rampant Cat
February 27th 2012	Fromelles: Australian soldiers in France
March 26th 2012	Kelmscot and the Arts and Crafts Movement.
April 30th 2012	Family History / Vintage Country days

Fleet Air Arm Museum
Bob Townsend
Steve Williams
Chris Suter
Kate Brady &
Helen Webb
Chris Viveash



Website Report

The society website has now been up and running since August 2008 and in that time has had just over 23,000 visits from 41 different countries.

The site traffic has now increased to between 600 and 700 hits per month, which means we must be doing something right! The photographic galleries remain the most popular with our visitors and we would love to add many more images, so if you have any images you would be willing to share with the world please let us have a copy and we will include them in our photographic archives. We will of course look after your originals very carefully and return them to you once they have been scanned.



As we always say in our Summer Newsletters, we want our website to be used by all members of our society and want to ensure that it is something that is informative and fun to use. We would welcome any suggestions as to what you would like to see included and would ask you to email or send your comments and questions to the chair of the society. You will find the contact details opposite.

A busy year..

Finally, a big welcome to Keith Bateman who has volunteered to assist me with keeping the website up to date. I am sure he will bring valuable expertise and enthusiasm to what is an enjoyable role.

Paul Newton-Smith, Webmaster

Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Highworth Historical Society will be held in the Community Room, Highworth Town Council, Gilbert's Lane, Highworth on Monday 26th September, 2011 at 7.30 p.m. All members of the Society are invited to attend the AGM.

CONTACT US

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