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OBR News

The Making of Chipping Norton book will be launched on 7 September. Everyone is invited. See article in this OR for more details.

Membership leaflet. The recruitment leaflet advertising OBR's aims and activities has been updated. If you want copies, or know of a suitable distribution site, please let David Clark know (secretary@obr.org.uk)

Strategic stone study - a building stone atlas of Oxfordshire. This atlas, published in 2011 by English Heritage, is now at least partly incorporated into a Historic England / British Geological Survey online nationwide GIS database <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/buildingStone/BuildingStone.html>. The original atlas is also downloadable on this site.

OBR AGM

The annual OBR AGM was held on May 13th in Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood.

The meeting:

Full detail of the AGM appears in the draft minutes appended to this edition of OR. In brief, Paul Clark introduced the AGM business, the accounts were submitted, and approved and we had a report from the Secretary, David Clark and the Membership Secretary Paul Clark. Tim Peacock as Webmaster gave an update of the work he has been doing to improve the OBR webpage, mainly making it able to be seen on smart phones. Officers and Committee members were elected, with a plea for an Events Secretary.

The briefing:

The meeting was over by lunch, when Simon Townley introduced events for the afternoon; with talks by Dr Simon Draper, and Heather Horner about the history and buildings of Ascott-under-Wychwood, followed by a guided walk around the village.

Simon Draper gave a short history of the village. Simon has just finished the draft history of Ascott for the Oxfordshire XIX VCH volume which can be seen on the VCH website:

https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/sites/default/files/ascott_-_intro_web_0.pdf

(A draft history of the Wychwood Forest and Cornbury Park, by Simon Townley is also available on the site.)

Ascott-under-Wychwood, and its larger neighbour Shipston-under-Wychwood are rural parishes lying along the Evenlode Valley. The villages were much influenced by the large royal Wychwood Forest that dominated the landscape until the 19th century.

Ascott means east, i.e. it is east of Shipston-under-Wychwood. There are three quarries in the Ascott parish, one to the north with good quality freestone – a good building stone and the others to the south of poorer stone producing roofing stone etc.

The Domesday Book details two manors in Ascott-under-Wychwood, Ascott Earl to the east and Ascott D'Oyley to the west. There are two (possibly three) motte and bailey castles belonging to these two manors, in the village. These were probably built to protect the river crossings in the village. The castles date from early to mid-12th century. The castle at Ascott D'Oyley is well recorded as is its Chapel. The mound of the motte can still be seen and it was excavated in the 1950s exposing the foundation of a tower. The site of the Chapel is not certain. The castle was torn down in 1180 and a Manor House built in the 13th century; the site is now Manor Farm. Part of the new 13th century reorganisation shows that peasants were moved away from the Manor site to the High Street in planned rows; a 1770 map shows how plots were subdivided for more tenants.

Not much is known about the castle at Ascott Earl. But by the 13th century Ascott Earl Manor barely existed, so there was some incursion of Ascott D'Oyley tenants into Ascott Earl. In the late medieval period many Ascott Earl tenants acquired freehold status with bigger plots and an 18th century map of the village shows distinct differences in the settlement plan of the two manors.

Ascott-under-Wychwood has two long-distance east west roads, the Chipping Norton to Burford road (turnpiked in 1770) and the Charlbury to Burford road (turnpiked in 1800). A north south road in the heart of the village that connects these two roads and connects them to the forest probably marks the divide between the two manors and is presumably earlier.

At the heart of the village is a green where the church sits. Ascott was a chapelry of Shipton, so any Church responsibilities belonged to the Shipton prebendary. A chapel was built in Ascott in 1200 and this later became Holy Trinity Church. There is a rare surviving village pound (a walled animal enclosure) by the church yard. A Church House was built (before 1591 but since demolished) on the edge of the green and established as the Parish poor house, later it became the village Work House. A charity was established in the village c. 1478 - The Poor's Estate Charity, which still exists today for 'the relief of poverty in the village and to provide financial assistance to its young people towards their education'. It built houses for paupers, 1 up 1 down, and some of these survive today - they were sold in 1934. Today the charity supports the village shop, educational activities and social events in the village.

In 1853 the Oxford, Worcester & Wolverhampton railway arrived in Ascott-under-Wychwood, on the Cotswold line.

By 1857 the forest was largely cut down, it was no longer a royal estate, and seasonal grazing came to an end. Newly created commons around the edge of the forest were allotted to surrounding parishes in lieu of lost grazing rights.

Recent personalities of note are two Oxford academics, Reginald Tiddy and Harry Sanderson Furniss who both lived in the village. Reginald Tiddy had interests in folk and morris dancing and with Harry Furniss helped to revive the village community. Furniss started branches of the Workers' Educational Association and held a children's health clinic. Tiddy Hall began as a wooden reading room with a sprung floor built by Tiddy especially for dancing. It was increasingly used for other activities and became Ascott's village hall, as Tiddy Hall.

Further Reading:

Oxoniensia vol 69, 2004: The 1298/1300 Perambulations of Wychwood Forest – and After by Beryl Schumer.

<https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/oxfordshire/work-in-progress/wychwood-forest-and-cornbury-park>

Heather Horner then gave a talk about four buildings in the village; Crown Farm, Priory Cottage, Yew Tree Farm and Manor Farm, photographs of which appeared in OR69.

- 1) Crown Farm opposite the Church has a large yard, and the site in general has been much improved. The front door, in part of the farm house that was once a barn, has a distinctive canopy porch (similar porches were seen in the village). The house is 2½ storeys and was originally thatched. The house originally had a lobby entrance, with a stack behind and a spiral stair beyond. The windows have distinctive drip moulds and stone ovolu mullions.

The interior has some interesting features, including a moulded bressummer, 17th century panel walnut doors, and 17th century window fittings. An inscription was found in an upper chamber. The farmyard was extensive and had an indoor dressage yard, stables for heavy horses, a 19th century corrugated iron Dutch barn, as well as an 18th/19th century threshing barn with two threshing floors and an inserted granary.

- 2) Priory Cottage in the High St is an 18th century house again with a canopy porch. It has a central stair, which separates the kitchen from the parlour. The 18th century frontage conceals an earlier building. A wheelwrights shop at the back on the building has a long fireplace and bread oven.
- 3) Yew Tree Farm has a long 17th century range parallel to the road. It has a date stone 1698 with the initials H and R I. This range is 2½ storeys, has a lobby entrance and a stair tower out back, which is opposite the stack. At the rear of the building are various service buildings such as a wash/cook house, and bake house which look older, and may well have belonged to an older house.
- 4) Manor Farm is on the Ascott D'Oyley Castle site. It is listed as 16th/17th century, but has some earlier material. There is a suspicion that the footprint is possibly 13th century. The entrance is through a passage with a 17th century porch. It has two spiral stair towers, both are behind two stacks. Many walls are battered (thicker at the bottom than the top) which implies an earlier date. There is evidence of an early gothic window at the east end. There are many windows inserted in the 17th century. Inside features include a 12th century cupboard, early 17th century fireplaces, vase door jamb stops, and two plank, plank and batten doors (likely to be pre 17th century) and possibly early king posts in the roof. An early 17th century extension was added, and in the 18th and 19th centuries home and farm were improved including; coal grates, the external stair turrets, additional farm buildings and the granary.

Heather queried the position of the Chapel that was part of the motte and bailey castle to the east of the farm. The masonry of the outhouses at this end have substantial stone quoins and ventilation holes and have different stone dressings to other stone on the site. This could imply an earlier date. Regarding the plan of the house - questions are outstanding as to whether the gothic window denoted the high end, with a detached kitchen at the other end.

Heather noticed that many houses have distinctive canopy porches, these are somewhat out of character with the local vernacular. She suspected they were an attempted co-ordinated gentrification of the estate.



Door hood at Corner House



Door hood at Crown Farm

Donna Thynne

The walkabout:

Armed with this preliminary information, we were led by Simon Draper on a tour of the village, our first stop on leaving Tiddy Hall being to see the earthworks of Ascott Earl castle to the north of Shipton road. The castle once guarded the Evenlode river crossing. Along the south side of the road, land that was once open pasture has gradually been covered by 20th century development.

Crossing back to the north side we came to Meadowbank House (formerly College Farm) where the datestone inscribed 1641C is thought to record Earl Craven's ownership of the manor of Ascott Earl in the 17th century. The building itself, said to have smoke-blackened windbraces, is probably earlier.



The Grange



Orthostats in the Pound

We walked along to The Grange, recorded in 1543 as owned by Brasenose College and known as College Farm. In the 1850s its land was transferred to Meadowbank Farm which was renamed College Farm. In the 1860s The Grange was built on the site as a gentleman's residence for the village squire and all trace of the original College Farm buildings was lost. We crossed to the south side of the road to the village pound at the northern end of the Green. This no longer contains animals but instead the orthostats from the Coldwell brook Neolithic long barrow.

Back to the north side of the road and to the present Swan Inn (the village has had three Swan Inns) which had been a farmhouse and bakery towards the end of the 18th century. Behind the inn and at right angles is the Baptist chapel. It cost £200 to build in 1816 and was on the Chipping Norton circuit until 1994.



The Swan Inn



The Baptist Chapel

In 1853 the railway arrived; the signal box built thirty years later is the only survivor of the associated Victorian buildings. We crossed the railway line and headed towards Manor Farm and the earthworks of the medieval settlement of Ascott D'Oyley.



Signal box



Ascott D'Oyley motte

The remains of the Manor House and the later Manor Farm buildings stand near the 12th century motte which was originally topped by a stone tower. The castle, like its Ascott Earl

counterpart, guarded a river crossing. It is recorded that a chaplain from St Frideswide's Priory in Oxford was sent to the manor when the Lord was in residence. We wondered where the chapel might have been and we discussed the age of the stonework near the motte, particularly the large quoins.



Ascott D'Oyley farm buildings and granary

Back across the railway line to Sunset House in London Lane. This was originally the Churchill Arms Hotel built by Lord Churchill in the 1850s to benefit from the railway and passing trade. Then we turned left into High Street into which the Ascott D'Oyley peasants were moved when they were cleared from the manor site.



Corner House Roof Truss



Corner House Stair Tower

Corner House (1 High Street) with its vaulted cellar was The Swan in 1759 but was renamed the Churchill Arms in the early 19th century in honour of the first Baron Churchill. The pub closed when the railway came and a new Churchill Arms was built near the station. The building later became a grocer's shop. Despite its 18th century listing, the roof and stair tower appear to be 17th century.

The Old Farmhouse along the High Street is inscribed with the initials LWM (possibly William and Mary Lardner) and the date 1711. Across the road is the village tap that once provided water to the High Street piped from a pond near the vicarage. On the corner of Priory Lane are Priory Cottages built on land given by the D'Oyley family in the 12th century in return for the services of the chaplain to the Manor. We crossed back again to

Yew Tree Farm with its 1698 datestone: despite this the service buildings at the rear look earlier.



Priory Cottages



Yew Tree Farm

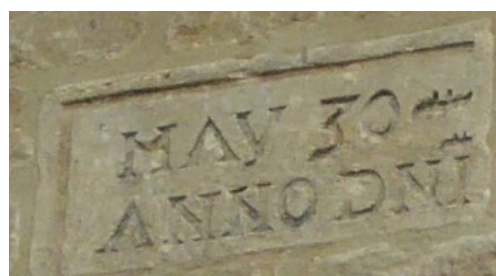


Bread oven

Back to the top end of High Street where nos. 4 and 6 have beautifully carved wooden lintels and a rather curious datestone without a year.



Carved lintel



Curious datestone

We walked up the south side of the Green pausing outside the village school (now a private prep school) built by Clapton Rolfe in 1872 on Crown land. The two cottages next door cover the site of Lord Churchill's sawpits used for timber from Wychwood Forest: timber auctions were held in the pubs. Forge Garage across the road was originally on common land and in 1703 was the original Swan Inn. In the 1750s the smithy was added by John Salmon, publican and blacksmith.



Holy Trinity Church

We passed the church, set neatly in its square churchyard, carved from the common in 1180.

Then to Crown Farm which, until 2016, was the main farm on the Crown Estate. In the 19th century it became the centre of a national controversy when a couple of labourers were sacked for joining the union, and non-union labour was called in. The village women joined the protests and were imprisoned, the situation escalated and was finally resolved only after a successful appeal to Queen Victoria. The 'Ascott Martyrs' each received from the Queen a red flannel petticoat and 5s.

Charity housing (known as Rags Row) was built facing the west end of the church and churchyard c.1700. The cottages were rebuilt c.1820. In 1934 they were sold and the money invested into what became the Ascott village charity. The road is now called Church View.



Crown Farm



Church View

We walked back along Shipton Road to Tiddy Hall where cups of tea and homemade cake awaited. A delicious end to an excellent afternoon.

All photographs © Donna Thynne and Sue Spurr

Sue Spurr

Writing up the Chipping Norton project

Finally its finished, in so far as writing history is ever finished. The book of the project, priced at £16.99, will be launched at Jaffe & Neale, the independent bookshop in Chipping Norton, on Thursday, 7 September. *All OBR members will be welcome.*

So what did it feel like to manage the project. Vicky Hubbard writes:

“I can only describe it as a whirlwind, but very exciting and highly rewarding. There have been more highs than lows, which range from accessing so many properties and enthusing the owners and residents, to the discovery of at least three previously unknown medieval buildings. Not to mention the joy of rummaging in attics with Dr Martin Bridge whilst he talked me through the fascinating process of dendrochronology. On reflection the moment that will stay with me is when David Clark and I squeezed ourselves through the timber

members of a fully-framed truss to discover smoke-blackening. I am sure this is a regular occurrence for David, but for me it was the first time I had seen this. The joy of seeing the fair-face still covered in the undeniable black film of soot was exhilarating. I came away from that attic covered in cobwebs, dust, droppings of some description and a hint of fibreglass, but I have never been happier! I would like to thank Paul, David and the team for giving me this amazing opportunity. I have loved every minute and sincerely hope that Jan, John and myself can continue this work long after Historic England has forgotten us."

Jan Cliffe adds:

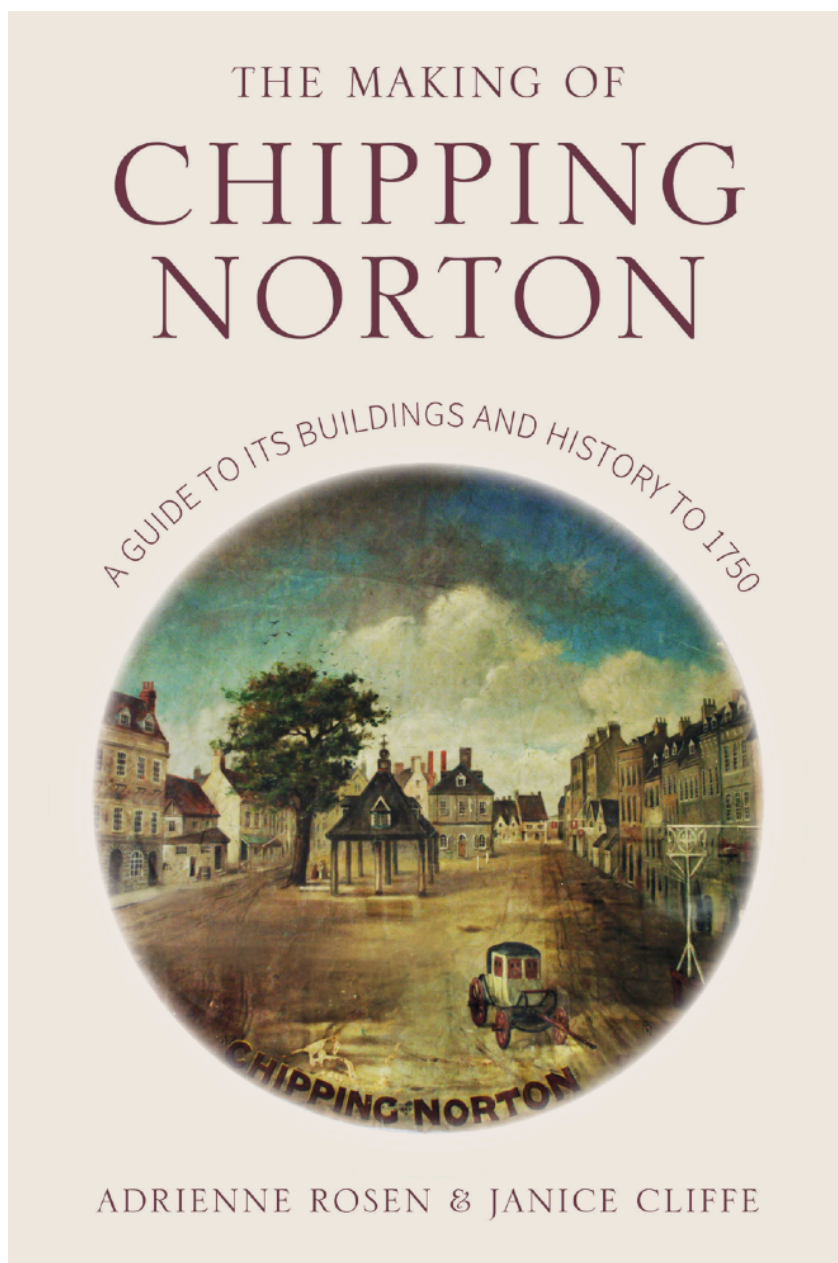
"As another member of the recording team, I can also say that undertaking this project has been a fantastic experience. Over a two-year period we have scrambled around buildings from attics to cellars and made exciting

discoveries by uncovering many long-forgotten remnants buried away deep within the present fabric. That there is still more to be discovered is certain but unfortunately we ran out of time. However, deeds and information from Chipping Norton Museum and Oxfordshire History Centre together with other new research has enabled us to add so much more to the known history of Chipping Norton. The book detailing all our finds has taken a year to put together and this will be available in September 2017 with a launch at the local bookshop of Jaffe & Neale."

Dates in Brick

Stimulated by a query from an American architectural historian who is working on dated brickwork in West New Jersey, I set out for him some aspects of dated brickwork in Oxfordshire.

There seem to be four main ways in which dates are incorporated into brick buildings:



a. specially made bricks or stones with the date within a frame (Fig.1)



Figure 1 Tomkins' Malthouse, East St Helen Street, Abingdon

b. bricks where the date has been carved into the 'green' (damp) brick (Fig.2)



Figure 2 RE 1834 at Childrey House

c. where the date has been scratched on to the hard brick - probably when *in situ*. (Fig.3)



Figure 3 ED 1824(?) Childrey House

d. where the date is made out of whole bricks (Figs.4 and 5)



Figure 4 1698 in Abbey Close, Abingdon



Figure 5 July 1876 in Chalgrove

The problem with (a) is that they can be moved around - as I suspect this one was, although the initials are those of the owner of the building, adjacent to his malthouse, and may have come from an earlier building. (b) examples are the best as they must have been made when the brick was made, and should give a good date for the building – or, in this case, a refacing of the medieval house in later brickwork. (c) examples could have been done at any time after the brick was laid - but they could even be falsely old.

(d) types are rarer, and the one in the chimney in a house in Abingdon dates the stack, which may have been rebuilt after the house itself was built. Chalgrove has at least three examples like that in Fig.5, suggesting the signature of a local bricklayer (who no doubt charged his clients extra for the work).

The interesting American aspect of this is that type (d) dates are rare in most of the country, but there are over 100 examples of this type in West New Jersey. My correspondent is hoping to answer the question as to why this is so. The earliest American example is dated 1718, and so the late seventeenth-century English examples suggest that the fashion started this side of the Atlantic.

Brickwork bibliography

Nathaniel Lloyd, *A History of English Brickwork* (1915)

Jane Wight, *Brick Building in England from the Middle Ages to 1550* (1972)

R W Brunskill, *Brick Building in Britain* (1990/1997)

David Clark.

Anthill Floors

“ANTHILLS MAKE AN EXCELLENT FLOOR”

The above quote appeared in the Western Mail of Australia on July 18 1928.

Russ Cottage, fig 1, in Dongara Western Australia, approximately 200 miles north of Perth, was built by Titus Russ in around 1865 and is reported to have an “anthill” floor in the kitchen. Needless to say this was worthy of a detour to investigate during our visit.



Fig 1, Russ Cottage, Dongara, Western Australia Fig 2, Plan of Russ Cottage, Dongara

Dongara district was first visited by Europeans in 1839 and opened by the Colony to graziers in 1851 when The Cattle Company took up leases. In 1852 tillage leases were awarded and the town site of Dongara was surveyed. Titus Russ, aged 12, arrived in Australia with his parents in 1853. He moved to Dongara in 1860 to work for the Cattle Company. After his marriage in 1863 he squatted on land at the edge of the new township and built his cottage. He lived there with his wife and 4 children until his death in 1874. Three generations of the Russ family lived in the cottage until around 1960, giving testament to the durability of the anthill floor.



Fig 3, Limestone wall, Russ Cottage

The cottage is typical of the area with a 4 room plan of single story; a living room and bedroom either side of the central front door and a kitchen and a children's bedroom to the rear. The low pitched roof extends well beyond the house core to create a veranda around the cottage which gives shade from the intense summer heat. The walls are of rough hewn limestone, fig 3, quarried locally, and the roof covered with sheoak shingles (an Australian native tree not related to the European Oak). The two front rooms have sheoak timber floors, whilst the two rear rooms have earthen floors. The only source of heat for cooking and warmth (it can be cold during winter months) was the wood burning stone fireplace in the kitchen. Due to the risk of fire from the burning wood the kitchen floor had to be non combustible, made in this case from anthills.

Whilst we could not enter the building we could see the anthill floor through the window. The flooring was made from compacted crushed termite (white ant) mound.

It is worth quoting from the Western Mail article of 1928 on the making and durability of anthill flooring. "The best way to make a hard floor is to dig up the soil for a few inches, break it into a fine powder, moisten it thoroughly, allow to dry a little and when it is in a suitable condition ram it well with a flat rammer. It should then be left until it dries. When quite dry it may be treated with machine oil. Anthill clay makes an excellent floor; in fact, it is about the best bush material that can be used. The anthill should be carted to the place where the floor is to be laid and crushed to powder. It should be spread evenly and carefully levelled off. After this it should be wetted thoroughly and rammed as above. When it has set it will be almost as hard as concrete".

Whilst there are no anthill floors in Oxfordshire, no doubt the process of making and maintaining earthen floors, as reported by the Western Mail, was the same as practiced here in the many cottages that would originally have had earth floors.

All photos © D. Hughes

David Hughes

More on Salisbury Cathedral

The article in OR69 'Sourcing timber in the middle ages - the case of Salisbury Cathedral' contained pictures of wooden fixtures and fittings with no further commentary. *[The editor blames his Apple software; as yet his software cannot answer back, although Apple is probably training Siri to do so as he writes.]* The missing commentary is as follows:

'Many of the wooden fixtures and fittings in the Cathedral also date from the 13th century, this includes the lattice frame doors (fig 3), a large and impressive cope chest c.1243 (fig 4), and a 13th century Irish oak cupboard with its original ironwork (studied by Jane Geddes) in the muniments room (fig 5).'



Figure 3) Pair of 13th century lattice frame doors



Figure 4) The cope chest



Figure 5) Medieval armoire in the muniments room

All photos © Tim Tatton-Brown

More generally, the most striking characteristic of the cathedral is that it nearly all belongs to the Early English period of architecture, with the exception of the spire which was added 1330-1370 and at 404ft is the highest in Britain. If you get a chance to visit, features to look out for are: the chapter house; the early tombs especially that of William Longespée who with his wife, laid foundation stones of the new cathedral in 1220; the choir scissor arches; the 15th century leine vault (beneath the spire); and a very rare 14th century clock. The 13th century roof timbers are over the St Peter and St Stephen chapels.

Donna Thynne

Forthcoming Events

OBR Recording day

Recording a barn at Appleton: date for your diary - 25 July. The Secretary writes: "The opportunity has arisen to record a large timber-framed barn in Appleton, just to the west of Oxford in the Vale of White Horse. We shall need a ground plan and some elevations and sections, as well as a close look at the timbers. We are also hoping to use this as a test as to whether a camera mounted on a drone can be of any use in recording otherwise inaccessible parts of the roof. We have not finalised this part of the day, but do please let us know if you have any relevant experience or expertise in this technology. For this and for expressions of interest for the day please contact the secretary (secretary@obr.org.uk)."

OBR Presentation day

Fixed for Saturday, 18th November, at Appleton. More details later, but put it in your diary now.

Oxfordshire Architectural and History Society summer excursion programme

Still running - see http://www.oahs.org.uk/new_program.php

From the Cotswolds to the Chilterns: The historic Landscapes of Oxfordshire

Joint full day conference hosted by the Society of Landscape Studies and Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society on Saturday 21 October at St. Annes College, Oxford. Cost £35 (members £30) including buffet lunch and refreshments. Program details and booking information appended to this edition of OR.

Cruck buildings: origins, distribution, significance and derivatives

Weekend course at Rewley House, Oxford from Friday 29 September to 1 October. For programme details and booking information see

<https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses/cruck-buildings-origins-distribution-significance-and-derivatives?code=O17P100HCR>

David Clark writes: "The origins and development of crucks is very relevant to the study of Oxfordshire buildings, as we are firmly within that enigmatic area where this roof form is found to the west of a sharp line along the Chilterns. We have fully framed cruck houses (and some of the so-called base crucks) in the Vale, and raised crucks (or are they long-kneed principals?) in West Oxfordshire - with a number of variations in Burford. This weekend promises to be immensely stimulating, and will feature a talk by OBR member Dan Miles, dendrochronologist and carpenter, whose own house (of 1334) is of course cruck framed. There is bound to be a heavy demand for places, so don't delay in signing up."

OBR Contact details

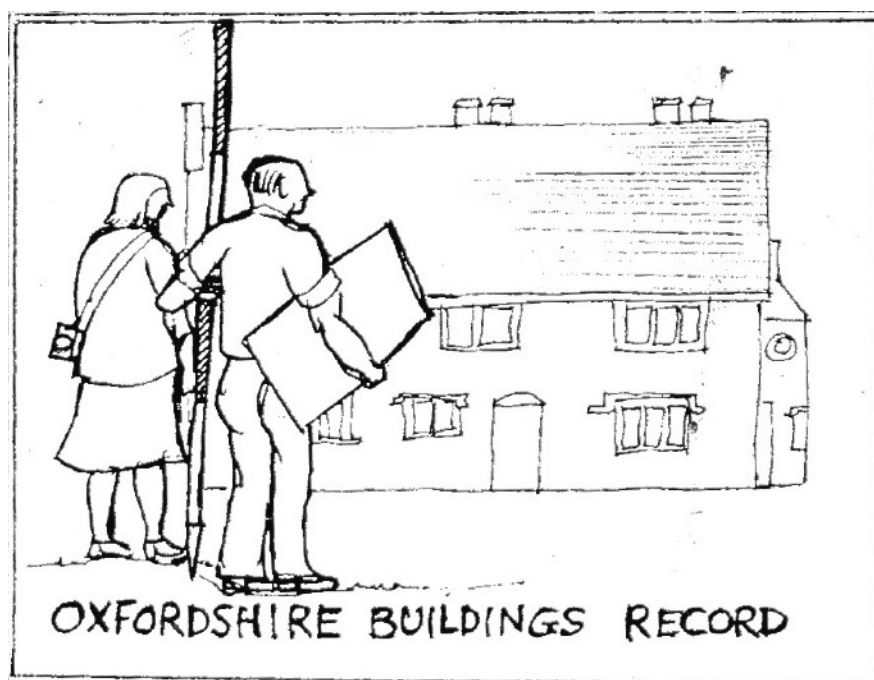
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The Oxon Recorder is the newsletter of Oxfordshire Buildings Record and is published four times a year. OBR aims to advance education and promote research on the buildings of Oxfordshire by encouraging the recording of buildings and to create and manage a publicly accessible repository of records relating to such buildings. The Oxon Recorder is also available in the members' section of our website: www.obr.org.uk

Next copy date for contributions is 1 September. Please send any contributions or comments to Richard Farrant at newsletter@obr.org.uk

OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Oxfordshire Buildings Record held on Saturday 13 May 2017 in Tiddy Hall, Ascott-under-Wychwood, at 11.30 am.

The Chairman, Paul Clark was in the chair. 28 members were present.

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Malcolm Airs, Louise Armstrong, Jean Bailey, Kathy Davies, Richard Faircliffe, Richard Farrant, Ruth Gibson, Catherine Hitchens, Chris Howlett, Ken Hume, Paul Jacques, Rachel Jacques, Emily Karau, Mary Lale, John Marshall, Michael Saunders and Ann Spokes Symons.

2. Minutes of the sixteenth AGM on 15 May 2016.

No amendments were proposed and adoption was proposed by D Hughes, seconded by S Townley; they were approved *nem con* and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Matters arising. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for 2016

The Treasurer, Tim Peacock, introducing the accounts said that the 'restricted funds' reflected OBR's role in managing Historic England's funding for the *Early Fabric in Historic Towns* project at Chipping Norton. There was no income on this account in 2016 and the balance of £750 was expected to cover publication costs.

The main account showed a surplus of £1159, partly due to two years' worth of Gift Aid receipts. Membership fees and donations were slightly less than in 2015, but this was to some extent due to the timing of cash receipts. Web costs included a biennial hosting fee, which fell in 2016. Finally, he pointed out that at the year end, because of the technical problems with the facilities, we were negotiating with the Presentation Day venue over the bill of £231. Any payment will fall in 2017.

D Fielding proposed that the accounts be adopted, H Horner seconded and a motion to adopt them was carried *nem con*.

5. Secretary's Report

The Secretary, David Clark, reported that recording work in 2016 had continued in support of the Early Fabric in Historic Towns project in Chipping Norton, with Victoria Hubbard in the lead. Jan Cliffe and Adrienne Rosen had now written their history of the town, and this would be published in September. Work on the architectural history was in hand. We continued to support the Victoria County History and some individual buildings have been studied for their forthcoming volume on the Wychwoods. We had also been helping Martin Bridge who is working on an Historic England project on the potential for tree-ring dating of elm timbers. We had also been supporting a local history project in Chalgrove, where to date 25 houses have been recorded.

Group recording days were held at a few locations. We began the year with work at Hardwick House near Banbury. This multi-phase building was almost certainly on the site of the medieval manor, and contained elements of the Cope house of 1496, consistent with tree-ring dates obtained for some of the timbers. One wing was of considerable interest because of its residual red paint scheme, which dated to the late 16th or early 17th century. Following the 2015 Presentation Day visits we also looked in more detail at some houses in Headington. These days continued to attract a good cross-section of members, and are the main way in which we aimed to develop members' recording skills. The locations also offered opportunities to members living in different parts of the county.

As ever, individual OBR members had also been active on their own initiative in recording interesting local features and buildings at risk, some prior to planning approval for major alterations. Some members also worked professionally on recording projects.

Work started in 2016 to get our building reports into a form suitable for archiving at the Oxfordshire History Centre. This involves a lot of detailed admin to ensure all necessary permissions are in place, and Donna Thynne had done a great job in sorting this out. He also thanked all members who responded to a call for help in downloading maps and ownership details from the 1910 District Valuation website.

He also recorded thanks to Tim Peacock for his work on the website and to Donna who had been active in posting snippets of information on the OBR Facebook page. He invited members to send her material for that, and look at it regularly for our latest news.

As we still did not have an excursions secretary, there were no OBR excursions in 2016. Many members, however, also belonged to OAHS and took advantage of their excellent programme of visits.

Claire Gapper had been the OBR lecturer last year, speaking about Renaissance plasterwork in Oxfordshire, explaining how plaster ceilings are made, how different types of material can be identified, and how fashions in design changed during the 17th century. She used examples from Chastleton, Mapledurham, Hardwick and in town and college contexts in Oxford.

6. Membership Secretary's Report

Paul reported that membership stood at 186, including five corporate members, down on last year's figure, although three new members had joined during the year. Twelve members had failed to renew their subscriptions and had been removed from the list.

He hoped the new membership leaflet would encourage more members. Those present were invited to take a number of the leaflets for their local museum or similar venue.

7. Website and social media

Tim reported that the website now included an interactive map showing buildings recorded and Alan Trinder's catalogue of items in the OBR library. The number of visits to the site per month had risen from 1000 last year to 2500 currently. He had also converted the site to be fully operational on mobile devices, and invited members to let him know what other improvements they would like.

8. Newsletter Editor's Report

The Chairman thanked Richard Farrant for his attractive electronic newsletters. Members were invited to continue to send in contributions.

9. Election of Officers and Committee for 2016/17

Nominations had been received for the posts of Chairman (Paul Clark), Secretary (David Clark) and Treasurer (Tim Peacock). There being no further nominations, D Hughes proposed and J Casson seconded a motion that they all be elected. This was carried *nem con* and the Chairman declared them duly elected.

Offering themselves for election to the committee were:

Kathy Davies, Richard Farrant (Newsletter Editor), Heather Horner, David Hughes, Donna Thynne (Archivist) and Simon Townley.

S Richards proposed and P Mothersole seconded a motion that they be elected en bloc, and this was passed *nem con*.

John Steane has been a co-opted member and the Chairman hoped he would continue to act in this role

10. Election of Examiner

Malcolm Lucas was proposed as examiner by S Townley, seconded by R Weston. There being no other nomination, he was declared duly elected.

11. Any other business.

The Chairman thanked the VCH team for putting in place the arrangements for the day, and the volunteers who had managed the catering arrangements.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 12.00 noon.

David Clark, Secretary, 14 May 2017.

FROM THE COTSWOLDS TO THE CHILTERN: THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPES OF OXFORDSHIRE

A joint conference hosted by the Society for Landscape Studies and Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society, to be held on:

Saturday 21st October 2017 at St. Annes College, Oxford from 0930 to 1700.

Programme:

0930 Registration

1000 Introductions

1010 Helena Hamerow (Oxford University):

'Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire: Dorchester-on-Thames and the origins of Wessex'

1045 Coffee

1115 Stephen Miles (Oxford University/VCH Oxfordshire):

'The South Oxfordshire Project: perceptions of landscape, settlement and society, c. 500-1650'

1150 Simon Townley and Simon Draper (VCH Oxfordshire):

'The Victoria County History in and around Wychwood Forest'

1250 Questions

1300 Buffet Lunch and Society for Landscape Studies AGM

1400 David Clark (Oxfordshire Buildings Record):

'Period, People and Place: houses in the Oxfordshire Landscape'

1430 Heather Horner (Oxfordshire Buildings Record):

'Clues to Landscape Use: evidence from Oxfordshire farm buildings'

1500 Questions

1510 Tea

1545 Stephen Wass (Oxford University/Polyolbion Archaeology):

'The Enstone Marvels and other Oxfordshire Wonders of the Seventeenth Century'

1615 Trevor Rowley (Oxford University):

'Twentieth-Century Oxfordshire Landscapes'

1645 Questions and Round-up

1700 Close

Course Fee.

Basic Fee: **£35**. For **full time** students and members of Society for Landscape Studies or Oxfordshire Architectural and History Society the fee is **£30**.

The fee includes a buffet lunch and light refreshments in the morning and afternoon breaks.

Please complete booking form below or email Brian Ric
brianrich457@btinternet.com for more information.

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BOOKING FORM

Name.....

Postal Address.....

.....

Post Code.....

Home Telephone Number.....

Email address.....

I wish to book.....place/places for the conference and I enclose a cheque for

Your cheque should be made payable to “Society for Landscape Studies” and posted with the whole of this form to :

Brian Rich 11 Adams Grove Leek ST13 8NX.

If you are booking for more than one person on this form please give the names of all the other persons.....

You will be sent an email to confirm receipt of your cheque and booking form.

Please email Brian Rich: brianrich457@btinternet.com if you have any further queries.