



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

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OBR News

OBR PRESENTATION DAY

This year's OBR Presentation Day will be in Goring on Saturday 9 November. As usual, there will be a guided walk-about in the morning, followed by a buffet lunch and presentations in the afternoon. For more details and to apply, please see the form appended to this OR.

TIM PEACOCK

Tim, OBR's treasurer, webmaster and committee member, died on 21 September after a short illness, aged only 57. He wore extremely lightly his formidable intelligence, degrees in physics and astronomy and a distinction in David Clark's undergraduate certificate course in vernacular architecture. His off-beat humour could be relied on to restore sense to any over-heavy discussion, and it was a delight to enjoy his company. He brought to the OBR a keen and sceptical power of observation and the sensitivity to carpentry techniques of a carpenter's son. Kind, courteous and unassuming, he is greatly missed.

PRELIMINARY HOUSE VISITS

Progress report from the Secretary. In my e-mail of 30 July to members I noted that we are often approached by householders seeking to learn more about their buildings. Usually, I pay a brief visit and give the owner a short report on the building. Where there are complexities, and if the owner agrees, we arrange a group 'recording day'. These are the main ways in which the more experienced recorders pass on their skills and knowledge to the less experienced. However, we recognise that only a few buildings are suitable for such days, and the committee have therefore agreed to launch a new scheme aimed at those who wish to learn building recording skills in a different way.

The idea is to create a list of 'interested members' who would like to join the initial house visit, along with the committee member who is the point of contact with the householder (usually, but not always, the Secretary). When a request arrives, we would go down the list until we found someone available to join the visit. In order to give everyone on the list a chance, we would aim to choose a different person for the following visit, and so on. These site visits take about half a day or less, and the 'trainee' would help find preparatory

material, and take notes and photographs on the visit. Guidance would be given throughout.

I received an encouraging response. Sixteen members have signed up so far, and we have had three house visits already. Reports on these have been drafted and two out of the three are likely to need some more detailed recording work.

By coincidence, both of these houses have early eighteenth-century facades - five bays with a hipped roof over a main range only one room deep, and access to the upper floors by a staircase in a central tower to the rear (see photos below). But here the similarity ends. Although both have additional structures to the rear, in one case these seem to be contemporary (though the list description suggests otherwise) and in the other they seem to be earlier (though the list description does not mention them). A lot can happen in three hundred years - and where there is money for gentrification, there is often the ability to remove the evidence of earlier phases.

You can volunteer to go on the list at any time - just email secretary@obr.org.uk.



Burn marks in houses and churches: Part 1

One of the delights of being an external examiner for the Master's degree course in building studies at Cambridge is to get to read some excellent dissertations on topics that can be ground-breaking and of national relevance, or reflect experience in other parts of the country that may relate to Oxfordshire studies. I have just finished examining one that does both, entitled, 'Ritual significance of burn marks in the context of plan-form in the parish churches and domestic buildings of south Suffolk in the Early Modern period.' Although we note and record burn marks when we see them in buildings, we have not hitherto been able to say much about them other than that they are largely deliberate creations, and that their purpose was either apotropaic in the general sense of warding off evil spirits, or more specifically to prevent major fires through a 'vaccination' by a token application. But this dissertation, and a companion Doctoral thesis on 'The Profane and The Sacred: Expressions of belief in the domestic buildings of southern Fenland, circa 1500 to 1700AD' (J Duck, University of Leicester, 2015, available online at <http://hdl.handle.net/2381/32208>) have taken the subject to a different level, and bring in the additional dimension of the place of

such marks in churches – something which – despite years of ‘church-crawling’ – I had never previously considered.

For most of us, the main published paper on burn marks is John Dean and Nick Hill’s 2014 article ‘Burn marks on buildings: accidental or deliberate?’ in *Vernacular Architecture* 45. In this, the authors established experimentally that the marks were a deliberate application of a burning taper to a structural timber. They did not, however, offer an explanation for the making of these marks, and it is into this somewhat arcane area that the subject is now moving. Indeed, Heather Horner has recently independently published a note in the VAG newsletter about the possible connection between burn marks and the pre-Reformation rituals associated with Candlemas.

The comparison between domestic and religious buildings is key to this, and in the medieval world-view there does not seem to have been the distinction between these that we have today. The medieval pantry and buttery for bread and wine respectively mirrors the eucharistic transubstantiation, while the parallel between the screens passage with its opposing doors is reflected in the north and south doorways of early churches and – it has to be said – in the opposing doorways of threshing barns. These three contexts are linked by the term ‘threshold’ to refer to the transition between inside and outside, deriving from the practicalities of the agricultural process. The significance of the threshold was of course also important in Western religions as symbolising the passage from this world to the next. What this dissertation did was to develop the possible association between burn marks and Candlemas – placing burn-marks at liminal (ie. boundary) points such as on doors and screens, and that as devout parishioners took their candles home, so they also brought the ritual into their houses perhaps mirroring at a lower status the domestic chapels of the elite. This continued after the Reformation, layered with the early 17th century obsession with witchcraft, in a society where many people continued to follow the old religion, in a generally closet fashion.

The dissertation was focussed on a small area of southern Suffolk, and, like the Norfolk work on church graffiti [Champion, M., *Medieval Graffiti: the lost voices of England’s churches* (London: Ebury Press, 2015)] it seems that symbolic marking of buildings proliferated in East Anglia to an extent I have not encountered in Oxfordshire – one of the astonishing aspects of the fieldwork was the large number of burn-marks found in some houses – 200 in one case – with 60 on the fireplace bressumer alone. And there were also a few hundred in the great church at Lavenham.

OBR often finds burn-marks – usually one or two on bressumers of seventeenth-century fireplaces such as at Appleton Manor (Fig.1). So an obvious question is whether there is the proliferation of the multiple marks seen in Suffolk, and if not, why not?

I have, however, seen a few examples of multiple burn-marks in other contexts, such as those on one of the ground-floor posts of the Long Gallery at Abingdon Abbey (Fig.2) and on a tie-beam in the former Row Barge in Wallingford (Fig.3).



Figure 1 Appleton Manor fireplace



Figure 2 Abingdon Abbey ground floor



Figure 3 Row Barge, Wallingford

These raise different questions, however. The Abingdon post seems in situ, and so dates from the construction of the building in 1455, but it is not possible to tell whether the burn marks were applied then or at a later date. The post satisfies the liminality criterion, as it was part of an arcade between possible stabling or storage rooms and a covered walkway. But it was not a domestic space and so unlikely to relate to the Candlemas idea. Does anyone know of burn-marks in barns?

The Wallingford tie-beam seems to be part of a seventeenth-century timber framed house, and has about 10 burn-marks. But, as can be seen from Fig.3, there is a peg for the stud visible near the lower edge, and so the truss of which it is a part was closed – hence the liminality criterion is not met, and some other explanation is needed.



Figure 4 Screen and burn marks in St Mary's, Beverley (three pictures)

What, then, about burn marks in Oxfordshire churches? After reading the dissertation, I visited a group of four medieval churches around Abingdon (Drayton, Milton, Steventon and Sutton Courtenay) and the only burn mark I found was on the west door at Steventon. Was the sample too small, or had the Victorian restorations removed the evidence? Then off for a week in Yorkshire, almost the same story – except that on the door-jamb of the screen in St Mary the Virgin in Beverley were two or three large burn marks exactly in the sort of position suggested by the dissertation. (Fig.4).

One thing now seems to be clear, and that is that burn marks have a medieval history, perhaps taken up by the witch-finders in the early seventeenth century, but these seem to be a separate phenomenon, with a different origin. I also think that my examples show that, whatever the situation in East Anglia, other places may be different, but in what ways and why are questions that remain to be answered. I have encouraged the student to publish her findings, with a possible recording template, so that others can survey their own areas. With a national database it ought to be possible to draw some conclusions, though the question about why some houses do not have burn marks also needs to be addressed.

I have not mentioned the presence of burn marks on furniture. This aspect may have a different explanation – my student felt they were to protect the contents of chests and cupboards – though they are also found on beds.

Meanwhile, we may be able to do something in Oxfordshire, particularly in churches, and so this note is to encourage you to do this. Please let me know if you are interested, and I'll let you have a simple recording template to use. If anyone is interested in keeping a database of burn-marks, that would also be good.

David Clark (secretary@obr.org.uk)
Photos © David Clark

Burn marks in houses and churches: Part 2

When David showed me a draft of his article, I was reminded of similar conclusions I had reached myself, published originally in the Spring 2019 Newsletter of *Vernacular Architecture Group*, and reproduced below. Before submitting that article for publication, I consulted with the authors of the seminal research article on how burn marks were produced [Dean & Hill, VA45]. These authors did address some of the possible motivations for ritual marking, though that part of their paper frequently gets overlooked. In more recent exchanges with me, they have highlighted examples in both churches and dwellings, many in those liminal¹ places, particularly door frames. Below is a pair from Cogges Manor Farm, West Oxon., either side of a probable (former) doorway into the first floor 'best chamber'. And the pair either side of the fireplace bressumer in the same room are sloping, as the chimney draft drew the taper flame sideways.

¹ Liminal = threshold between spaces with different functions or status, used in a boundary sense.



Fig 1 A pair of burn marks either side of a probable former opening from the stairs. [More detailed observation required here, much more to learn about this building, I invite you to join me]



Fig 2a & 2b The two ends of the fireplace bressumer with sloping burn marks. [Note the niche to right in 2b, evidently a primary feature as it is carpentered into the same beam. I suspect the significance of niches such as this may become a topic for discussion. The likely date for this fireplace is 1554]

As for geographic differences within churches, I noted more graffiti in Cornwall, especially on screens between nave and chancel, than I have observed in Oxfordshire; possibly the active reintroduction of 'gothick' style interiors during the Victorian period removed much of the evidence in our local area.

A Welsh Example

Recently I re-visited Llyn Celyn, near Aberystwyth, Monmouthshire, a 15thC (1420 dendro. date) 3-bay open hall with screens passage, buttery and pantry intact, two-storey solar cross wing intact, even the fixed bench at the high end still in-situ. A chimney, staircase and upper floor had been inserted into the open hall in 1680 (dendro. date), and a kitchen wing added, then no changes to the structure until recent restoration by The Landmark Trust. I had seen the building three years ago in its derelict state, and was critical of a television series recording the process of rescue and modernisation. So when a friend's family hired the newly opened building for a family gathering, I accepted an invitation to visit the site with some trepidation. I must say the standard of workmanship and furnishing with appropriate

period pieces was outstanding, if a little soulless. I had been concerned for the future of the surrounding historic farm buildings, as they were not featured in the television programme; however, though they have been re-purposed for modern community needs, the restoration has extended to the whole farmstead.

This background is relevant because the whole of the interior of the house was peppered with burn marks, dozens if not hundreds. (My visit did not extend to detailed interior perusal of all the farm buildings.) The positions of the burns were almost all liminal, particularly on door posts, some on the door itself, most obviously in the domestic private spaces. But these private spaces had only been created in 1680, by cutting doors into previously closed frames, eg between the hall and solar, and through the upper part of the spere truss² when rooms were created over the pantry and buttery. The implication is that the burn marks must post-date the insertion of the stairs and upper floors. Below are some examples.

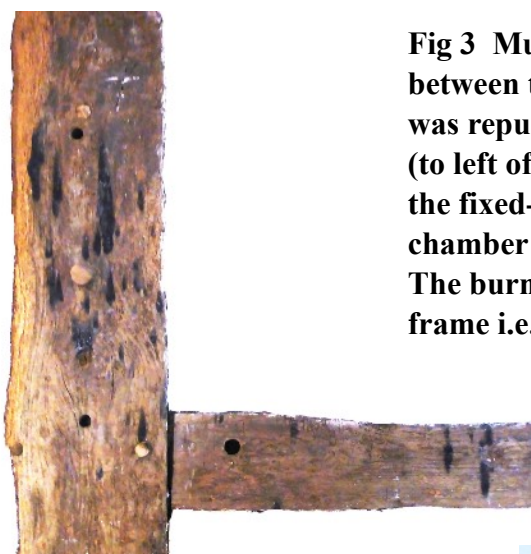


Fig 3 Multiple burns on the primary truss between the solar wing and the hall. The post was repurposed as the doorpost of an opening (to left of post) created at the northern end of the fixed-bench wall, to access an unheated chamber in the lower part of the solar wing. The burn marks are on the 'private' side of the frame i.e. inside the chamber.

Fig 4 Burn marks on door and post of door from stairs (left) into chamber over buttery, opening created after stairs inserted by cutting through primary truss at (inserted) first floor level.



² Spere truss = the frame forming the hall side of the through passage



Fig 5 Door at bottom of inserted stairs (left). [Note repairs in Figs 4 (outer plank of door, right), and Fig 5 bottom of stairs door]



Fig 6 Another post in primary hall/solar truss used as a door post for a new opening. This surface was previously inside the truss, not accessible for burning.

I have more examples from Oxfordshire and further afield, some apparently earlier in the life of the building than those illustrated above. I'm sure you could supply your own, and I hope you will look for clues to where or when or who made the burns, even if we cannot say why.

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[Reprinted from Spring 2019 Newsletter of *Vernacular Architecture Group*]

“Burn marks on buildings – a personal interpretation

We have become used to finding deliberate burn marks in buildings that were standing in 17th and 18th centuries. The positioning of these marks in a building is most usually one of display, on a visible surface, most frequently at standing height, sometimes the perpetrator would have been kneeling. Experimental archaeology has established that the flame was provided by a taper rather than a candle, and would have taken patience, time and care³.

³ Dean, J. & Hill, N. 2014 Burn marks on buildings: accidental or deliberate? *Vernacular Architecture* Vol 45

As examples accumulate, it is evident that many have been re-burnt, perhaps over generations.

Speculation as to motivation for the inherently risky application of burn marks have included 'insurance' (I have controlled the burning so the building is safe) and 'apotropaic' (I have scared the evil away with my protective flame). Without being mutually exclusive, I would like to put forward a further motivation, that of a 'blessing' (I have transferred my blessed flame to my dwelling).

Candlemas is/was celebrated on February 2nd. This ancient festival marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the winter solstice and spring equinox. Like most religious events, it is an accretion of several sets of beliefs. In pre-Christian times this day was known as the "Feast of Lights" or "Imbolc" and celebrated the increasing strength of the life-giving sun as winter gave way to spring. From the Hebrew church it commemorates the tradition of presenting children to the temple, thus the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus. In the dark days of winter, the lighting of candles marked the beginning of the days getting lighter and the rise of spring and the strength of the sun. This association with presentation and lights was convenient as Christ was seen as 'the way and the light' and as candles were such a valuable commodity against the evils of darkness they needed to be blessed. This blessing included all the candles to be used throughout the church's ritual year. Also commemorated at this time is St Brigid/Bride, originally a pagan goddess of fire, sun, smithcraft, healing and bringing fertility to the land, so the Christians adopted her, adding patron saint of midwives to her panoply of attributes. Her symbol is a kind of square spiral with four arms, usually woven from rushes, and still displayed in the home as a protection against evil, fire and hunger.

I can envisage a situation where someone took their special (beeswax?) candle to be blessed at Candlemas, brought it home and used it to light the taper needed to transfer the blessings to their dwelling. Maybe the candle could be further used for blessing personal situations, such as childbirth, that required whatever spiritual help they thought was available.

Without espousing any personal beliefs, and fully acknowledging the impossibility of understanding the mind-set of earlier generations, the scenario suggested above is worth considering. The spiritual backlash of the Reformations of 16th century left a void after the certainty of resurrection was removed, and however one defines religion, superstition was likely to fill any personal vacuum. By the end of 18th century 'The Age of Enlightenment' had put forward rational, even scientific explanations for some of life's unknowns, so the need for magical intervention receded, and the practice of periodic application of fire had practically died out, at least in Europe.

Whilst I recognise several allusions here could be expanded upon at length, I leave the concept of a 'blessing' as an opening for discussion.....

Heather Horner, South Leigh, Oxon. January 2019"

Heather Horner. Photos © Heather Horner

Historic England: Understanding Historic Buildings Training Course 2019

[Editor's note. Abigail Lloyd gained an OBR bursary of £500 towards the cost of Historic England's Understanding Historic Buildings Training course. This is her report. The Committee expects to offer bursaries of up to £500 per year in future for suitable courses, so if you identify a possibly qualifying course for next year, do consider applying for a bursary when the detail of next year's scheme and application form become available in a forthcoming Oxon Recorder and on the website.]

I have just finished the Historic England 'Understanding Historic Buildings Training Course' 2019, held at St Anne's College, Oxford, and am very grateful for the OBR bursary I received towards the cost of the course. The training spanned four full days in September 2019, and was run by Dr Adam Menuge from Cambridge University and the VAG, with Rebecca Lane from Historic England. There was a wide variety of delegates from the UK and further afield: heritage consultants, MOD historic buildings specialists, buildings archaeologists, council conservation officers, diocesan and museum representatives plus academics. To have such a range of people present was excellent in terms of increasing the depth of discussion and background experience. All of the training was provided in groups, small and large, and there was a significant amount of interaction. This was not just a taught, front-led course, by any means.

Day 1: The first day set the scene for the practical exercises to come. There was a substantial amount of teaching covering analysing and recording historic buildings. Selecting appropriate recording levels was touched upon. (The philosophy of the course was that recording and analysis must go hand in hand. The discipline of fully recording a building properly shapes and informs analysis.) All of the teaching was highly illustrated and discursive. We may have been in the classroom but the sessions were structured so that information was given largely through numerous visual case studies. There is no doubt that both Adam and Rebecca have a wealth of years of experience to draw on, and I enjoyed the detail of knowledge handed on. It felt stimulatingly substantive and 'meaty' - something to get the teeth into.

Historic England produce guidance notes for best practice on many subjects, which I often use when working for OAHS's listed building sub-committee. I have seen, in correspondence within the planning process, how authoritative they can be. The course materials for this day included the three Historic England booklets on best practice for (a) good recording (b) interpretive drawing and (c) photographing of historic buildings. I know that these booklets will continue to serve me as a reference guide. One of the things I appreciated most about this course was the knowledge that the standard of training is currently considered to be best practice.

Day 2: The morning of the second day was occupied with a field exercise in the centre of Oxford. I was the only person from Oxford, which perhaps gave some 'home advantage' - knowing the location of the city wall helped! However, I was struck most by how much more can be learned about a building when you start to look at it critically, even if it is a

building you walk past every day. There were four buildings to analyse, the theme being that each of them was more complex than might initially have been apparent, for example from the front facade alone. The four were: 130A High Street (Kemp Hall), 8 New College Lane, 20 - 22 St Michael's Street (Vanbrugh House) and 26 - 27 Cornmarket Street (doubling up as a much needed source of caffeine!).

For some of these properties, I had read papers in the past, and seen previous historic research, VCH or RCHME information. But the emphasis, as it should be, was on the extant building fabric as the starting point. It is all very well being aware of what might have been said about a place in the past. It is far more of a challenge to make sure that you can see what the evidence is, and to try to find out where it is – to see it on or in the building itself. It was excellent to have to make sure of this evidence. Moreover, given that no one else was familiar with the buildings, there was plenty of scope for received wisdom to be challenged. It was stimulating to engage with the buildings from scratch without pre-conceived ideas.

In the afternoon we switched to photography. James Davies from Historic England joined us. He also photographs for Pevsner and is superb at architectural photography. He started with a lecture showing us many examples of the good, not so good and the bad in historic building photography. His message was simple – so much can be improved with a few tips and without the need to have the amazing kit that he operates. In essence, remaining level is key, with no tilt, so that there are no converging untrue verticals. A cheap tripod is a must. It slows you down to consider exactly what you want to record. Gaining height where possible is vital – not always snapping away at head height. James goes nowhere without a ladder rammed in his car. He seems to resort to standing on his car frequently and has a gift of persuading nearby builders to transport him in their cherry pickers! Evenly shed illumination from a single light source is important. Thinking about times of day versus the directions of elevations to be recorded makes all the difference. Indoors, a detachable flash, never used from on-camera, can achieve this even illumination. The benefits of raking light were, also, amply demonstrated. We were let loose in the grounds of St Anne's College, handed a brief for three images recording a full elevation, an architectural detail and two elevations in juxtaposition. Aside from my group being accused of being tourists turning the college into a tourist trap by a mildly irate academic(!), this exercise was practical and helpful. James demonstrated beyond any doubt how much of a difference his tips make and I know I will be looking to improve my photography records along his lines. To end the day, there was a brief session on final refinements that can be made in Photoshop.

Day 3: The whole of the third day was spent at Chalgrove Manor. The owners of this house seem to have tireless patience, opening their house up year after year to would-be trainee recorders. Nevertheless, it is clear why it is such a good location. Not only are the owners so generous with their property, it is a timber framed medieval house which is big enough to absorb a large group of recorders, and has enough complexity not to be exhausted by a whole day's worth of recording. Indeed, we didn't even begin to answer all of the questions we had about the property. Time was spent analysing the whole property before we were assigned in groups to specific parts. The weather was gloriously sunny and warm which aided inspection of the outside and inside.

A significant part of the task was to carry out a full measured survey of our assigned part. Rebecca and Adam had touched on the use of electronic measurement but stressed the value of hand survey. Not only is it possible to carry it out without sizeable expense, it, also, gives a real, tactile, close understanding of the fabric of the building. One is more likely to see nooks and crannies, odd breaks in pattern, irregularities, empty peg and mortise holes and sawn-off tenons.

Allan Adams, author of Historic England's 'Drawing for Understanding', joined us. It was great to pick his brains over the next two days concerning historical architectural illustration, as we tackled rough sketching for the measured survey to conversion into a scale drawing. James was also there. In turn as groups, we joined him in the roof space, a tricky space to photograph well. He showed us what a difference we could make using the lessons he had taught us the previous day. The use of a long shutter speed, self timer and detachable flash which could paint the space with light over numerous flashes during a thirty second interval was particularly dramatic in giving improved results. In a second exercise, carpenters' marks on the roof trusses were brought to life by simple raking light. Chalgrove Manor has a wonderful five bay central hall with screens passage and superb moulded roof beams, extensively using curved braces. Inside the current roof space, there is evidence of the original open-form of the hall, aside from the showy roof mouldings, in terms of smoke blackening and evidence for a former louvre structure. There are two jettied wings to the north and south, the latter being close studded. Much has been modified: ceilings were inserted; oriel windows and possible porch and stair structures removed. Determining phasing from the extant fabric alone (without cheating and consulting the VCH for dendro-dates!) generated endless debate. It would be fair to say that by the end of the day everyone was fairly exhausted with brains that were just a little scrambled.

Day 4: The final day commenced with drawing up the measured survey of our assigned part (in my case the south wing) into a scale drawing. Drawing in a group is not the easiest thing but we managed it, I think. It certainly proved the value of taking numerous diagonals as a control. There was nothing even remotely approaching a right angle in our bit of the house, and whilst we had taken two main diagonals, we probably could have taken a few more to help control all of the numerous projections and recesses as the walls in our rooms wandered in and out! This was the only day when the coffee break was taken without pause, such was the work to be done. Again, Allan was on hand and it was good to continue asking him questions. There followed a final session bringing together thoughts about the house. I found it satisfying to see the evidence assembled for any claim made about the development or subsequent alteration of the property. The name of the game was making sure that there was an evidential basis for any theories proposed. Adam and Rebecca were great at allowing us to ask questions to ensure that we understood exactly what observed features might mean and why.

All in all, I would recommend the course. All that I learnt and discussed is without any doubt applicable to recording buildings with the OBR, and I hope to be able to use it whenever I can. Again, I am very grateful to the OBR for enabling me to go on this course.



Analysing the east elevation of Chalgrove Manor © Abigail Lloyd

Abigail Lloyd

New book launches

VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY - WYCHWOOD VOLUME

The latest volume from VCH Oxfordshire (Volume 19: Wychwood Forest and Environs) is now available, with a time-limited 25% discount offer in place until 31 December.

Until its partial clearance in the 1850s Wychwood was one of the great royal forests of England, comparable with Savernake, Rockingham, or Whittlewood. The new volume (409 pp.) explores the history of the forest itself and of a dozen surrounding villages, of which Shipton-under-Wychwood was the centre of a large Anglo-Saxon royal estate and minster parish stretching across the area. Several villages were shaped by early woodland clearance, and most depended on the forest to varying degrees, supplementing traditional sheep-corn farming and small-scale industries such as pottery-making and quarrying. Neighbouring Cornbury park is well known for its nationally important 17th-century mansion house, and a slightly later country house survives at Bruern near the Gloucestershire border, on the site of a Cistercian abbey founded in 1147. Ascott-under-Wychwood acquired national notoriety in 1873 as home of the so-called 'Ascott Martyrs', reflecting local agrarian difficulties



Building workers from Alfred Groves Ltd. outside the newly completed Wychwood Manor (near Ascott) c. 1914. Courtesy of Wychwoods Local History Society

Discussion of the area's vernacular buildings has benefited greatly from OBR help, particularly in Ramsden and in Ascott-under-Wychwood. There (amongst other buildings) an OBR team helped investigate the part-medieval Manor Farm, occupying the site of a 12th-century castle whose motte still survives. Kingstanding Farm, one of the new farm complexes built by the Crown after the forest clearance, was the subject of an earlier detailed study by our former chairman John Steane, which is now especially valuable as most of its farm buildings have since been converted to other uses. The volume also includes discussion of the area's varied churches and of large country houses such as Bruern Abbey and Cornbury Park, where the standard interpretation of the house's evolution (incorporating work by Nicholas Stone and Hugh May) is questioned.

To obtain a 25% discount (bringing the price to £71.25), either download a discount leaflet [here](#), or order online from [Boydell & Brewer](#) and enter the code BB768 at the checkout. More information is available on the [VCH Oxfordshire website](#). Places covered: Ascott-under-Wychwood; Bruern; Fifield; Idbury; Leafield; Lyneham; Milton-under-Wychwood; Ramsden; Shipton-under-Wychwood (with Langley); Wychwood Forest and Cornbury Park.

NB: New VCH Oxfordshire website

Please note that the VCH Oxfordshire website (which hosts draft work in progress) has been replaced and has a new URL, which you may wish to bookmark: [click here](#). If using the old address and redirected to the new national VCH website, follow Counties A-Z, then Oxfordshire. The site is in its early stages, so please bear with us as material is added and glitches ironed out. Published VCH volumes remain available at [British History Online](#), which is unaffected.

Simon Townley

RADLEY MANOR AND VILLAGE; A THOUSAND YEAR STORY

Available from 30 November 2019. Price: £15 plus postage and packing

This book tells the history of Radley's manor and its relationship with the village from around the time of the Norman Conquest to the present day. It was researched and written by a group of Radley History Club (RHC) members in collaboration with Radley College's archivist.

The book takes a fresh look at first hand and contemporary sources from the Radley College and RHC archives, as well as source material from the Berkshire Record Office and the National Archives. Each chapter, divided mainly by time period, starts by describing relevant national events, enabling the reader to understand the local story as part of the bigger picture.

Radley Manor and Village: A thousand year story should be of interest both to local people and those researching wider manorial history.

Order from the Club's website at <https://www.radleyhistoryclub.org.uk>, or attend the book's launch in the old manorial seat, Radley Hall, where there will be an exhibition and refreshments [further details on the website].

Forthcoming Events

OBR Presentation Day

This will be on Saturday 9 November in the Canterbury Room of St. Thomas of Canterbury church in Goring. See application form appended to this OR for further details.

Mapping the Town; 50 years of the British Historic Towns Atlas

Day course on Saturday 12 October. See conted.ox.ac.uk for details

The House Detective's Toolkit

A 10 session evening course at Rewley House from 23 January to 26 March 2020. See conted.ox.ac.uk for details. [Tutor: David Clark]

Oxford Architectural & Historical Society Oxfordshire Local History Association

See websites (http://www.oahs.org.uk/new_program.php and (<http://www.olha.org.uk/events/talks-and-meetings/>) for listings and details of events, and talks.

Next copy date for contributions is 1 December. Please send any contributions or comments to Richard Farrant at newsletter@obr.org.uk Contributions need to be Word or Pages documents with accompanying photographs sent separately in high resolution jpg format.

OBR Contact details

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OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD

PRESENTATION DAY 2019 – SATURDAY 9th NOVEMBER

This year's presentation day will be in Goring. It will follow the usual format with a walkabout in the morning, a buffet lunch, and talks in the afternoon. This is a chance for members to meet up and hear about the various recording projects which have taken place over the past year.

Our base will be the Canterbury Room, St Thomas of Canterbury church. The walk will be led by Simon Draper of the VCH team who has been working on Goring for volume 20, and will start at about 11am – exact time to be confirmed. Should you wish to read about Goring beforehand, the VCH's draft history (written by our walk guide Simon Draper) is [available online](#) here.



Lunch will be a finger buffet (with vegetarian options) provided at the venue, from 12.45pm to 1.30pm, where we shall stay for a round-up of recording activities during the year – whether 'official' OBR events or not – and to discuss experiences, pose questions and (maybe) find answers. Please share your findings with others in the group. If you would like to make a presentation, display drawings or photographs please say so on the form.

If you intend to come, please complete and send in the form below.

A programme and further details will be sent about a week before the day to those attending.

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I should like to come to the presentation day on Saturday 9th November 2019.

Name.....

e-mail address.....

I should like to book lunch and enclose a cheque for £forpeople at £7.50 each, made out to Oxfordshire Buildings Record.

I have the following dietary requirement (please specify).....

I should like to say something about.....for.....minutes.

Please return to Felix Lam, 53 Crown Road, Wheatley, OX33 1UL, tel: 01865 874945 or e-mail choochoopress@icloud.com by Saturday 2nd November