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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.

Keep in touch: visit our website at <https://obr.org.uk> for more information as well as back copies of the Oxon Recorder, or our facebook page @oxfordshirebuildingsrecord

The next copy date for contributions is 1 September. 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 News

OBR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

24 members attended the AGM held at St. Kenelm's Church in Church Enstone on 14 May, followed by lunch and a walk around the village. The draft minutes of the meeting are appended to this issue.

OBR ANNUAL LECTURE

This year's OBR lecture - as usual, part of the OAHS winter lecture series - will be given by Prof. Owen Davies, from the university of Hertfordshire, on Tuesday 29 November at 5.30pm in Rewley House, Oxford. His topic will be 'Building Magic' - an examination of the evidence for (and against) the interpretation of marks on buildings as apotropaic (evil-averting). This is likely to be stimulating and controversial, so please put it in your diary. We look forward to a lively discussion.

CASE WORKERS NEEDED FOR OXFORDSHIRE LISTED BUILDINGS SUB-COMMITTEE

A number of OBR members are caseworkers for the OAHS listed buildings sub-committee, which comments on planning applications involving listed buildings - or others of historic interest. Looking at planning applications, and perhaps carrying out a site visit to find out what is actually going on - is an ideal way of building up your knowledge of the buildings in a specific area, as well as playing an active part in the planning process, and helping to preserve historic features that might otherwise be removed. We aim to cover the whole county, but if you are new to this sort of thing we would normally pair you with a more experienced caseworker until you were happy to work on your own.

Our secretary, David Clark, is chairman of the sub-committee and would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in doing this valuable and interesting work. secretary@obr.org.uk

OXFORDSHIRE PAST CONFERENCE

The OAHS are hosting this year's Oxfordshire Past conference 'live' in Banbury Museum on Saturday 9 July. After the OAHS AGM, there will be short talks on recent archaeological work in Oxford city and in the county more generally; OBR secretary David Clark will review our recording work in 2021, and committee member Simon Townley will report on the recent work on the Victoria County History. In addition, the Banbury Historical Society will celebrate the publication of 'Banbury Remembered', a compilation of articles written over 25 years by local historian Brian Little, and Wendy Morrison will speak about the 'Beacons of the Past' project, which uses LiDAR scans to help locate hill forts in the Chilterns - see more on <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/projects/beacons-of-the-past.html>. Those attending will also be able to visit the museum's new exhibition on 'Heroes of the Viking World'. For more details check out the full programme and sign up via the OAHS website www.oahs.org.uk

EDITOR OF OXON RECORDER STILL WANTED

As already announced, after a long tenure Richard Farrant is standing down as OR editor at the latest by the end of this year. The Committee is still looking for a replacement.

The OR is published quarterly, and emailed to all OBR members, and a few others - total circulation a little over 200. The editor is a member of the OBR committee, so is party to all that we are doing, and has direct access to key office-holders, so there is usually no lack of material to publish. The editor can also commission or write content. Thereafter it is a matter of getting it into a suitable form for publication using whatever program you are familiar with, and then distributing it using email addresses provided by the Membership Secretary.

This is a rewarding task at the heart of the OBR's communication with members (and the outside world, as copies of the newsletter go on our website and are valuable in recruiting new members). To learn more, contact Richard at richardfarrant@waitrose.com for a full job description and further information.

OBR BURSARIES.

A reminder that OBR offers bursaries of up to £500 to pay part or all of the fee for courses or conferences which will improve the applicant's ability to record and interpret a vernacular building. Further details are available from the Secretary at secretary@obr.org.uk, and applications should use the form available on the website.

BOB MEESON

VAG members and vernacular architecture students will be saddened to learn of the death of Bob Meeson, a past president of the Group. Bob made many important contributions to the study of vernacular buildings, including the compilation of roof chronologies using tree-ring data, and assisting in the preparation of the invaluable glossary of terms of recording timber-framed buildings produced by the CBA in 1999, and recently made available online via the VAG website www.vag.org.uk. An archaeologist by training, he always stressed the importance of the physical evidence, urging students to get up close to the buildings they were studying, and look carefully for the vital clues they could find to help reveal their secrets. He will be remembered as someone with whom one could discuss a building without being made to feel an ignoramus: those who knew him always made sure to be on his coach on conferences, knowing that his knowledge and insights would greatly enhance their experience.

AGM day in Church Enstone

The OBR AGM and walk about was held at Church Enstone on May 14th. OBR members congregated in the Church of St Kenelm's toward the east of the village. Felix welcomed everyone with refreshments and members had a chance to mingle before the AGM began. St Kenelm's is set within a large churchyard surrounded in swathes of buttercups and cow parsley. Those arriving early had a good opportunity to observe features in the church which included much Romanesque stonework, especially over the south doorway. The south nave arcades have decorated capitals with geometric patterns and animal head stops, while the spurs on their bases are decorated with leaves, birds and flowers. At least two of the piers have water-holding bases.

Once the AGM formalities were over John Pritchard, a local resident and owner of the Manor House, introduced us to the history of Church Enstone. The village has early beginnings with a Neolithic barrow just outside the centre off the Charlbury Road. Three standing stones stand on the barrow. Known as the Hoar Stone [sic] they mark the oldest settlement of the village, the largest stone is called the 'Old Soldier'. The name Enstone is thought to derive from Ent-stone, 'ent' from the Old English meaning 'giant'. Roman remains, coins and pottery have been found in the area.



Members congregating at St Kenelm's

The Church is dedicated to St Kenelm the son of Mercian King Coenwulf. Legend says that when young, Kenelm was murdered by his sister. His soul was transported as a dove to the Pope who investigated the crime and as a result Kenelm was beatified. However, facts of this murder are vague and some records show that Kenelm succeeded to the throne and his sister entered a cloister and became a successful Abbess. Never-the-less in c.810 Kenelm was buried at the monastery in Winchcombe (then the capitol of Mercia) which had been built by his father, who also built a shrine to him. It was very popular, attracting pilgrims from distant regions in Europe and beyond. The shrine was destroyed at the dissolution in 1539.

The Church of St Kenelm's was founded in the ninth century, but none of this Saxon church now remains. Of the Norman church much can be seen, especially the Norman south aisle dating from 1082. The church was progressively added to over the next nine hundred years. In the 1980s £1 million was raised for improvements, which included a mosaic reredos depicting the life of St Kenelm and a very smart oak kitchen, ramp and staircase and new toilets designed by Nigel Hammett, architect and OBR member.



The new mosaic reredos at St Kenelm's made from pieces of Murano glass

John then described some of the notable houses in the village, including the seventeenth century Old Forge Cottage, the Old Courthouse where the old manor court was held, Church Cottage, Winchcomb Cottage, and a house once belonging to Albert Brassey a railway engineer and director of the Great Western Railway.

Enstone also boasted an engineered waterworks, built in 1626 by Thomas Bushell in honour of his wife Isabell, called the Enstone Marvels. Having discovered a natural spring on his land, Bushell made a grotto with waterworks, including fountains, singing birds etc. It became very popular, Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria visited in 1626. The works were damaged in the Civil War and gradually vanished although part of the grotto was rescued and re-built at Higley's Cottage in the village. An article on the Enstone Marvels is at

<http://www.polyolbion.org.uk/Hanwell/Enstone/Marvels.html>

The village of Church Enstone comprises Church Enstone and Neat Enstone which are on either side of the River Glyme. Seven villages make up the Parish making it one of the largest in Oxfordshire.

After John's talk we walked to the Manor House for lunch in the garden. Then we divided into two groups to explore the Manor House, now divided into two. This is a complicated building with numerous phases. The primary phase was thought to be a seventeenth-century, two bay farmhouse of two stories, cellar, and some rear outbuildings which were later incorporated into the main building. Some gentrification happened in the eighteenth-century, visible in the more symmetrical frontage and the sash windows. As it stands now the house comprises a central range with two cross-wings. The West Manor part was thought to have been added around 1810 to provide servants' quarters; at the same time the whole roof was raised to create usable attic rooms.



Lunch in the Manor House garden © Felix Lam



South elevation, Manor House.



King post truss in the front range

The roof at the front is all one build with king post trusses and queen struts, probably all nineteenth century. The queen struts are pegged into the tie-beam, the king posts secured by iron rods held in position by square-headed nuts.

The king post roof truss in a crawl space in the cross-wing has a different configuration to those on the front-range. Here, in a more typical style, the queen struts are pegged into the base of the king post and could be 18th century. There was some discussion about whether the cross wing roofs were hipped and this has yet to be decided.



King post truss in the cross-wing

East elevation of the Manor House; note the roof line shadow, the disappearing quoins by the ventilation pipe, and the niche actually in the cellar.



The exterior of the house has many curiosities; where courses of quoins begin and then finish half way up a wall, blocked windows, shadows of previous roof lines, a trench on the east elevation running the length of this side of the house. The wall here has an archway with a fox-head keystone which is part of the cellar (it was thought that the trench was cut to allow for the slope in the ground) and so on.

The interior structure gave many clues to an earlier building with thick walls, substantial beams and exposed joists, with chamfers and stops although there remain many nineteenth-century decorative schemes especially the plaster friezes.

Still scratching our heads we went to the Tithe Barn nearby. This is indeed a magnificent building (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) begun in 1382 (there is a date stone). The barn was built by Winchcombe Abbey who owned the manor. It is of six bays with five cruck trusses that spring approx. 1.5 mts from the floor. There are opposing double doors at bay three. Each cruck truss has two collars and an apex yoke. The roof has two flights of trencled purlins, a ridge beam and rafters. Many of the roof timbers were replaced when the then derelict barn was re-roofed in the 1960s, although the crucks surprisingly remained in relatively good condition. There were few ventilation slits apart from a slit in the west gable and a few triangular vents in the east gable.



OBR members in the tithe barn



The tithe barn roof, the rafters and purlins replaced



A notch in a cruck blade

We found three sets of carpenter's marks, probably laying-out marks, on three of the cruck blades. Many of the cruck blades had notches cut into them, thought to have been made during an earlier renovation for supports to the blades while they were being underbuilt with rubble stone (often the ends of blades rotted out).

After seeing the barn the group again split into two groups to visit cottages in the village. We were welcomed by the owner in Winchcomb Cottage, located very near to the Manor House within the curtilage of what may have been agricultural buildings for the Manor estate, such as stables, blacksmith etc. It is now a pretty thatched house, taking a corner site it probably began as a mix of agricultural buildings dating from the sixteenth century. Later, perhaps in the seventeenth century, it was divided into three separate buildings, part dwelling and agricultural buildings.

The northern most range was converted into the village bakery in the nineteenth century. This range contained a large commercial-sized oven which extended some four or five feet into the lower storey of a small detached building at the north end of the property.



Winchcomb Cottage



The rear elevation of Winchcomb Cottage. The agricultural range to the left

Built on the corner of a cross road between Main Street in the village and a main route north to the church Winchcomb Cottage occupies an important early site in the village. There is a large stone on common ground at the south corner of the house which may be a way-marker. There is also a vermiculated stone set into the corner of the house now exposed possibly due to land erosion. The owner has found a disused well in the garden which she intends to restore.



The stone on the public road at the corner of Winchcomb Cottage, and the (possibly) pumice stone part of the foundation course of the cottage

To end the day and now short of time I visited Higley's Cottage, where what is thought to be the remains of the grotto from Thomas Bushell's waterworks had been installed. It was surprising to see a small vernacular cottage with a grotto in a rear extension, especially one with a table set for dinner amongst the vermiculated stonework and carved mask grotesques.

My thanks go to the organisers for their time in creating a very successful day, and to the house owners' for their generosity in allowing us into their homes. It was a very enjoyable day with much to learn.

Donna Thynne (photos © Donna Thynne)

[Editor's note: On 18 July David Ashby, the supervising archaeologist of local digs and other research, will make a presentation of what he has found in his research at Church Enstone. See Forthcoming Events below for more details.]

Forthcoming Events

Charney History and Archaeological Group

Mon 18th July 2022, 7pm in St Peter's Church Charney. Findings and Conclusions of the Archaeological investigations of the last few years.

This talk will be by David Ashby, local supervising archaeologist and advisor. The talk will cover the findings and conclusions from the various digs, geophysics surveys in

Charney and most recently the 3D laser scans of Charney Manor and St Peter's Church. It will last about 1 hour plus a Q&A session.

The talk is open to all and is particularly aimed at updating all those who took part in the various activities and those interested in the history of Charney. It will be fascinating to hear the conclusions of the work so far.

Refreshments will be available and whilst the talk is free any donations would be appreciated to help cover expenses. A booking system will be used (contact: ianp.graham@btinternet.com).

Oxfordshire Local History Association

OBR belongs to the OHLA and members can participate in its events. See its website (<http://www.olha.org.uk/events/talks-and-meetings/>) for listings and details of events and talks at local history societies throughout Oxfordshire.

Oxford Architectural and Historical Society

The OAHS are hosting this year's Oxfordshire Past conference 'live' in Banbury Museum on Saturday 9 July. See "OBR NEWS" above for further details on content. For more details check out the full programme and sign up via the OAHS website www.oahs.org.uk.

The OAHS has a programme of lectures and local guided walk excursions throughout the year for its members (£18 pa individual membership). Go to oahs.org.uk for further details.

Oxfordshire Family History Society

Oxfordshire Family History Society's Fair on Saturday 1st October 2022, at The Marlborough School, Woodstock, OX20 1LP. Doors open at 10:00 close at 16:00. Entry to the Fair is free, as is parking. Refreshments available.

What can you expect to see at the Fair? A variety of Family History and Local History Societies providing information and selling books and other goods related to their respective areas. There will also be some specialised stalls such as: military history, old postcards of areas you may have a family link to and specialised genealogy goods. The Society has a hall dedicated to Oxfordshire records, including Wills. Advice is also available to try to help break down your brick walls with your Oxfordshire ancestors.

For further information on organisations attending this year follow this link – [Who is coming to the Fair?](#)

OBR

This year's OBR lecture - as usual, part of the OAHS winter lecture series - will be given by Prof. Owen Davies, from the university of Hertfordshire, on Tuesday 29

November at 5.30pm in Rewley House, Oxford. His topic will be 'Building Magic' - an examination of the evidence for (and against) the interpretation of marks on buildings as apotropaic (evil-averting).

OBR Contact details

Membership - Paul Clark (membership@obr.org.uk)

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OXFORDSHIRE BUILDINGS RECORD

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the twenty-second Annual General Meeting of the Oxfordshire Buildings Record held on Saturday 14 May 2022 in St Kenelm's church in Church Enstone, starting at 11.30 am.

The Chairman, Paul Clark, was in the chair. The following members attended the meeting: Malcolm Airs, Barbara Allison, Vic Allison, Janet and Mark Casson, David Clark, Jan Cliffe, Mark Davies, Kamran Iqbal, Heather Horner, Vicky Hubbard, Abigail Lloyd, Ann Lloyd, Felix Lam, John Marshall, Melody Mobus, Cliff Potter, Sue Richards, John Steane, Sally Stradling, Donna Thynne, Wendy Tomlinson, Simon Townley, and Nick Wright.

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Jean Bailey, Laurence Balbes, Paul Barnwell, Jessica Brod, Richard Farrant, Ruth Gibson, Nigel Hammett, Michael Heaton, John and Sue Hine, Chris Howlett, David Hughes, Peter Mothersole, Richard Shaw, Barbara Tearle and Emily Tucker.

2. Minutes of the twenty-first AGM held online on 8 May 2021.

The minutes were taken as read, approved *nem con*, and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year 2021

These had been circulated. The Treasurer had noted that limitations on our activities during the year due to Covid restrictions had reduced transactions in the accounts. Income from subscriptions, joining fees and members donations, however, remained essentially constant at £1535. OBR were grateful to the membership for their undiminished support.

The costs of meetings at £303 reflected the Zoom license fees for our online committee, and membership meetings, presentations, and conference, plus speaker's fees.

Overall, the OBR remained in a sound financial position, with a balance of £10451, of which £389 was reserved for the publishing cost of the Chipping Norton recordings.

Donna Thynne proposed and Sally Stradling seconded a motion that the accounts be accepted; this was agreed *nem con* and David was thanked for his work as treasurer during the year.

5. Secretary's Report

This had been circulated with the agenda, and the main points were as follows. For most of 2021 the pandemic inhibited group recording work, though we were able to arrange a day in Wallingford in December which attracted 14 members. Our projects in the north of the county continued apace, with the recording of the sixteenth century Guildhall in Chipping Norton and nine individual houses in Hook Norton, the latter feeding into the forthcoming Victoria Country History volume for the

area. During the year we were also invited to study a number of houses of some status in their communities, and perhaps due to periods of ownership by people with resources and ideas, these in most cases entailed such radical changes as to make interpretation difficult. In this group were Coscote Manor (East Hagbourne), Grandpont House (Oxford), Charney Manor (Charney Bassett) and Duck End House (Great Rollright).

At the year end the reports total (completed or at draft stage) stood at 477. Work had continued through the year to get these into a form suitable for depositing them in the Oxfordshire History Centre.

We managed one excursion, to Waterstock in October, which was a great success thanks to meticulous planning by Felix Lam – it was reported in Oxon Recorder 87.

A major event in September was our 21st Birthday Day-School. This had been planned as a gathering at Rewley House with a celebratory party afterwards, but had to be changed to a free event on Zoom – which attracted a worldwide audience, though lacked the buzz of an in-person event. Nevertheless another benefit of the technology was that we have recordings of the papers which can be viewed on our website. There was also a comprehensive report in OR87.

The OBR annual lecture was on the topic of Baltic Timber Marks, and was given by Tansy Collins and Lee Prosser via Zoom. We have been collecting examples of these marks in local buildings as one of our current research projects and some preliminary results were published in OR85. Of the other research projects the most successful so far have been the District Valuation transcripts, where 16 volumes have been completed, and the collection of Inscribed Dates, of which 830 had been collected by 31 December (and has now reached 1100).

Richard had continued to produce our quarterly newsletter, The Oxon Recorder, which is invariably full of much interesting material as well as reports of past events and notices of forthcoming ones. But he was retiring after a number of years in the post and we do urgently need someone to take over. It's a great job at the heart of what OBR does.

6. Membership Secretary's Report.

Paul Clark reported that membership during the year at 197, with 17 new members replacing 12 who had lapsed and two deaths, Ann Atkinson and Malcolm Osmondson.

7. Election of Officers and Committee for 2022/23

The Chairman declared that nominations had been received for Paul Clark as Chairman, David Clark as Secretary and David Hughes as Treasurer. There being no further nominations, Heather Horner proposed and Melody Mobus seconded a motion that they all be elected. There being no objections, he declared them duly elected.

Offering themselves for election to the committee were:

Kathy Davies, Heather Horner, Felix Lam (Events), Abigail Lloyd, Sally Stradling, Simon Townley and Nick Wright. There being no further nominations, Malcolm Airs proposed and Janet Casson seconded a motion that they be elected *en bloc*. This was agreed *nem con*. The Chairman thanked Richard Farrant (Newsletter Editor), Donna Thynne (Archivist) and Emily Tucker (Social Media)

for their work over the years. Richard and Donna would be co-opted to serve on the committee until their retirements later in the year.

8. Election of Examiner

The OBR accounts examiner, Ian Workman, had been nominated to the post. David Clark proposed and Heather Horner seconded a motion that he be elected as the examiner for the 2022 accounts. This was agreed *nem con*.

9. Any other business

No items were raised.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am with a vote of thanks to the committee.

D R Clark, Secretary, 15 May 2022.