Windmill's sails set to turn once more

Adrian Marshall

A windmill in Chinnor which has been lovingly restored by volunteers over the last 32 years finally got its sails in September 2014, bringing it one step closer to grinding flour.

Chinnor post mill is thought to have been built in Mill Lane in 1789 and it continued in use, grinding wheat until 1923 when it ceased work after being severely damaged in strong winds. For the next 44 years, it decayed on-site until it was eventually dismantled in 1967 to make room for a housing estate.

Some of the gears and timbers were taken for storage to Essex and Norfolk, where they remained until 1981, when a restoration society was formed and the remaining pieces of the mill were transported back to Chinnor.

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Uplands – best of the old and the new?

Marian Miller  Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society

Uplands, a De Vere Hotel and Conference Centre near High Wycombe, sits high on Four Ashes Road overlooking Hughenden Manor on the other side of the valley; there can be few better locations in the Chilterns.

The central core is a country house built in 1859 by Captain John Maddy Moore Hewett, Adjutant of the Royal Bucks King’s Own Militia. His architect is said to have been Edward Buckton Lamb, the famous ‘rogue’ architect, whose connection with Buckinghamshire began with his work at Chequers for the Frankland-Russell family, and who went on to remodel Hughenden Manor for Disraeli.

Hewett had been born in India where his father was an army surgeon and later one of the doctors to King William IV. John served with the 62nd regiment in India and was subsequently posted to Ireland where he and his wife, Jemima, had two sons. Their three daughters were born after the move to Wycombe.

Uplands continued to be a family home until the 1950s. A banker, Vernon Cocks, bought the house and estate in 1900 and then Sir Alexander Murray, another man with strong Indian connections, lived there from 1935 to 1956. Then, like so many country houses, Uplands was taken over for institutional use, first as a training centre for the Young Women’s Christian Association and then by the Nationwide Building Society. By 1980 the Nationwide had commissioned Ted Cullinan, one of the country’s leading architects, to draw up plans for a radical upgrade to the facilities at Uplands.

The front range of the house was made the centre of a cloister-like arrangement of modern buildings. The architects wrote: “It has been our aim throughout to take the best of the old, the main façade of the house, the coach house, the old garden walls, the grass parterres framed by mature woodland and to improve the composition of the whole within its own terms...”

The architectural press heaped praise on the design which was recognised by awards from Wycombe District Council and the Civic Trust.

In 2013 a proposal by Redrow Homes to completely demolish Uplands prompted a local outcry and research into the history of the building. As a result the building is now listed Grade II. The list description is on the National Heritage Register http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1417919

The last Chilternzaetna commemorated the area during the First World War, but another profound legacy which followed that conflict survives in the Chilterns.

Five weeks after the armistice in 1918, the Government wrote to County Councils asking them to buy land for ex-service men wanting to establish smallholdings - literally providing 'Land fit for Heroes'. Fearing unrest, it was hoped to provide opportunities to keep men occupied and get into farming.

Government funding was available and in Hertfordshire, major landowners offered land. Minutes record “that the best thanks of the County Council be accorded to the Hon. Charles Rothschild for the patriotic and generous manner which he has adopted in selling 180 acres of Dunsley Farm, Tring, on advantageous terms, so as to enable the County Council to provide small holdings for ex-Service men in the neighbourhood of Tring”. Those terms were the princely sum of £5,850 (£32.10s 0d per acre). Today an acre can be worth £1 million.

Inquiries were held in 1919 at Tring and elsewhere and applications were received from well known Tring families - Eggleton, Hearn (a descendent is the current Mayor), Rodwell and Wilkins.

One successful applicant was a Mr A Jeacock of Albert Street, who applied for 1.9 acres at £4.00 annual rent (the equivalent of £150 now) and a cottage. He proposed to use the land for fruit trees, nursery gardening etc, and it was important that he should live on it. The cottage, outbuilding and fencing cost £1,000, plans being prepared by the County Architect in July 1920. Sanctioned by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Seal of the County Council, Dunsley Bungalow - and Jeacock's Orchard - were born.

Mr and Mrs Jeacock lived and raised a family on the smallholding until the 1960s. The Wildlife Site grassland and orchard have since been restored and produce apple juice for sale in Tring which helped to establish Tring Farmers Market in 1999. Apple Days held since 2006 are the main event of Tring's Own Apple Fayre. Throughout this time the original holding has remained intact and managed, unlike similar sites.

In 2004 the whole site was listed Grade II by English Heritage as “a rare surviving bungalow....set within a two acre smallholding, still intact and managed in the original manner, with an orchard and livestock”. This ‘curtilage listing’ ultimately saved the site from development.

Detailed documentary evidence within Herts County Council demonstrates the origins of the site, confirming and increasing its national historic and social importance. Featured in The Times and on Countryfile, it is a living testament to the people who served their King and Country and what society did for those Heroes that returned to look after the very land they fought for.

Lest we forget.
Windmill's sails set to turn once more

Continued from front page

An ambitious project began to re-build the mill at a site some 135m from its original position (which by this time had been built on). Since 1982 volunteers have put in over 15,000 hours of work on behalf of the Parish Council (who now own the mill), re-building the mill. Some of the original timbers were repaired and re-used, while other parts were newly made to an original design, with a view to recreating a working mill that would eventually be able to grind flour once more.

Whilst it may now look almost finished, there is plenty more to do in rebuilding the internal machinery before it will grind grain, however the plan is for the sails to turn under wind power for National Mills Day, 10th May 2015. To do this, a brake must be fitted (so it can be stopped safely), and the mechanism and wheels fitted to allow the whole mill to be turned to keep it facing into the prevailing wind.

The aim is to try to open the mill whenever there are village events on Whites Field. Volunteers are needed to assist with this; showing visitors round and helping on these additional open days when the working party members may not be on site.

Special tours have been arranged for Mill Lane Community Primary School and a group from Haddenham's University of the 3rd Age. If you'd like a group tour, please contact Chinnor Mill Society on chinnorwindmill@gmail.com or 01844 292095.

How can you help?

The mill is open during Chinnor Mill Society work parties on alternate Sundays (see 'visiting' page on www.Chinnor-windmill.blogspot.com) when volunteers will show you round, and encourage you to get involved, either helping with the remaining carpentry, sitework and procurement of parts, or the historical documentation of the windmill, and of course fundraising.

Help solve Tring Park's riddle of the ruins

Karen Trickey

Fascinating history and breathtaking beauty make Tring Park in Hertfordshire one of the Chilterns' most intriguing sites, and since 2012, the Woodland Trust have been working to restore it with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

Built in 1685 by Sir Christopher Wren, Tring Park Mansion passed through several owners who all put their mark on the building and surrounding parkland, before the estate was purchased in 1872 by Lionel de Rothschild, for his son Nathaniel.

Nathaniel Rothschild transformed the mansion, despite local protests, and built the Natural History Museum in Tring as a coming-of-age present for his son Walter. It was Walter who introduced a variety of exotic animals to the park: wallabies, cassowaries and rheas all roamed the mosaic of mixed woodland and grassland which is grazed by cattle now.

Nowadays, the mansion is alive with the sound of music as the home of Tring Park School of Performing Arts, but Walter’s Natural History Museum, with its extensive animal collection still remains and is open to the public, as is the extensive parkland.
Wildwood reveals more of its secrets

Stuart King

Local wood-worker and historian Stuart King is making good progress on his ‘Wildwood’ history project at the privately owned Coleman’s Wood, overlooking the Misbourne Valley.

Within the wood is an intriguing triangular shaped enclosure, covering some 120 square metres, which Stuart has been studying using a range of archaeological techniques.

He has now established with certainty the Romano British entrance, which bearing in mind the small size of the enclosure is extremely wide. Here, he discovered an Iron Age pot (illustrated). This vessel is likely to have been hand-made in the local area.

The enclosure entrance ditches produced a lot more pottery dating from late Iron Age to the end of the first century AD (Roman period). A late Iron Age brooch and a coin of Conubelin, one of the last Celtic Kings, came from the same exploratory trenches, as did the bones of cattle, sheep and the jaw of a dog.

This year Stuart will be concentrating on working out the make-up of the two enclosure corners once the weather improves. In the meantime, invasive holly and bramble are being cleared from the medieval enclosure area in order to open up of the topography to allow a better study of the previously hidden ‘humps and bumps’.

Finds in this area have included a twybill for cutting mortices in timber, heavy chisels, ox and horse shoes, nails, a brass plated sheep bell and a brass inlaid quillon from an early dagger of sword. Stuart hopes to be able to show that these finds are contemporary with the 12/13th century date for the Medieval enclosure. If he can, then this will surely generate more questions to be answered.

“The restoration of the parkland has been a labour of love which has been exciting, rewarding, and at times, frustrating”, explains Karen Trickey, Tring Park People Engagement Officer. “There are many unique and quirky features to discover here, including the obelisk and summer house and the recently restored Rond Point on King Charles Ride. There’s historical documentation and local knowledge for all of these but one feature remains elusive!”

Near the old horse chestnut avenue on the wiggly path in Bishops Wood are the crumbling remains of an unidentified structure. The mystery feature, thought by some to be ornamental in its origins, is similar in style to the estate walling found near the summerhouse, suggesting a late nineteenth century date, but quite simply no-one knows for sure what it is.

Suggestions for its use include a roofed seating area or open summerhouse which would have benefited from views across the park. However, its origins may be more prosaic - it could be an old ice house.

What do you think? Can you solve the riddle of the ruins? The Woodland Trust would love to hear your thoughts on what this old brick structure could be. Log on to their blog if you have any ideas or information www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blogs/trees-and-people/tring-riddle/
If the HS2 high-speed rail line between London and Birmingham is constructed it will carve its way not only through the ancient Chiltern landscape but a substantial number of historic sites in Buckinghamshire both above and below ground.

Since the announcement of the line’s proposed construction, the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society has been active in raising heritage issues with HS2 Ltd and by generally raising public awareness.

Recently for instance the Society arranged an Open Day for viewing the remains of the church and graveyard of old Stoke Mandeville village, a little known historic feature in the care of the local parish council which would be completely obliterated by the line.

Next on the Society’s agenda is a whole-day conference to examine HS2’s impact on many other threatened locations, ranging from ancient alluvial deposits where mammoth bones have been discovered, to a Roman small town and parts of two deserted medieval village sites. The programme has yet to be finalised but it will be a full day with eight speakers.

Heritage on the Line will be held at Weston Turville village hall on Saturday 16th May 2015. See the Society’s website http://www.bucksas.org.uk/ for further information.
Commons have been at the heart of our Chiltern communities since medieval times and have a valuable place in our social and cultural heritage. With around 200 commons in the Chilterns, they are a vital feature of our landscape.

On 24th January, the Chilterns Commons Project held a conference, entitled 'Our Common Heritage'. Over 150 delegates enjoyed six talks which turned the spotlight onto a diverse range of subjects all connected by the region's commons and our forbears' dependence upon them.

As well as focussing on the general themes of the history of common land, the effects of the Enclosures Act and the national and European significance of Chiltern Commons, the talks introduced the audience to the people who lived, worked and trained on our commons, including gypsies, drovers and soldiers.

Professor Angus Winchester of Lancaster University set the scene for the day, exploring how commons were used in the past and how they came to be as they are today; then Frances Kerner explained how various wooded commons in Chepping Wycombe were affected by enclosure and other local and national issues.

Bruce Smith gave a fascinating insight into droving (the practice of moving livestock over large distances) and the routes that the drovers took through the Chilterns as they moved livestock to market.

Dr Anne-Marie Ford continued on the theme of the people of the commons by introducing the Romanies (or gypsies) who camped on the common land in the 18th and 19th centuries, making their living from the materials they found there. She discussed their contribution to the local economy and whether they deserved the reputation often attributed to them.

Norman Groves and Brian Shepherd brought to life the experiences of men from the Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps who were trained on Berkhamsted Common and in the surrounding countryside from 1914 to 1919. Here they learned marching, map reading, musketry, bombing, field tactics and trench digging. Their legacy, still visible today, is a network of training trenches, which have recently been cleared, researched and mapped by volunteers. Tragically, about 2,200 of the 14,000 young men who trained here never returned from the Great War.

Finally, Graham Bathe (chairman of the Open Spaces Society and a director of the Foundation for Common Land) summed up by reinforcing what makes the Chilterns commons special, both from a British and European perspective. He reminded the audience that commons are an enduring part of the landscape and, whilst they have changed, they remain founded on local communities sharing the land, and ensuring its future.

A new publication, Our Common Heritage, containing these and other reports on the history of Chilterns commons can be downloaded free from www.chilternsaonb.org/products/downloads.html#commons

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Chilterns as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

To commemorate this landmark, the Chilterns Conservation Board is planning a range of events and initiatives throughout the year to help local people and visitors really make the most of this special area and celebrate its 50 years of national protection.

You can help us by sending us your stories, recollections and photographs of life in the Chilterns around the time that the area received its designation in 1965.

Perhaps you grew up in the Chilterns and went to school here, or maybe you came here for holidays? Did you work in the Chilterns in the 1960’s? Perhaps your parents told you about time they spent in the area?

We’re keen to see how the area has changed (or not) over the years, so photos from before or after 1965 would be interesting too.

Please send your words and photos to Claire Forrest at the Chilterns Conservation Board, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor, Oxon, OX39 4HA or e-mail to cforrest@chilternsaonb.org
Nine specimen trees, including oak, lime, beech and whitebeam were planted at various locations around the two villages in October 2014, the locations of which are shown on a map board which was unveiled on Remembrance Sunday by the War Memorial on Chinnor High Street. One further tree will be planted next year on the playing field in Chinnor once the new pavilion is completed.

In addition, rowan, silver birch and cherry saplings (donated by the Woodland Trust) have also been planted at Mill Lane and St Andrew’s Schools and Estover Way Wildlife area.

Copies of the map are available from the Parish Council office the Village Centre, St Andrews Church, Chinnor Railway Station and the library and the Peacock in Henton.

The Chilterns Conservation Board, South Oxfordshire District Council and Chinnor Parish Council all provided funding for this project, along with Mill Lane School, Chinnor Community Church and many local people who collectively raised £800. Taylor Wimpey produced the board at the War Memorial.

36 men from Chinnor and Henton who lost their lives during the First World War have been commemorated in a community tree planting project.
The Chilterns Buildings Design Awards scheme has been celebrating outstanding examples of design in the Chilterns since 1999. In that time, the Chilterns Conservation Board and Chiltern Society have given awards to about 70 individual entries. Of these award winning schemes, more than half have involved extensions or alterations to, or refurbishment of, existing historically important buildings. Not all of the winning schemes have involved buildings that are statutorily listed for their architectural or historic importance, but they still form a key part of the historic environment of the Chilterns.

The continued use or re-use of such buildings means that they will continue to remain important to the area for many years to come. In order to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it is vital that any work undertaken on the buildings is done in harmony with both the building and its surroundings. This requires a very careful approach on the part of owners, architects and developers. If anything goes wrong it may have catastrophic consequences for the building and its setting.

Excellent design tops the list of requirements and wherever possible, minimal changes and interventions should be made in order to retain the form and fabric of the original building. Where new additions or alterations are proposed, these should complement the original building and its setting. In addition, the use of the best and most appropriate traditional building materials will be necessary.

Modern living standards and expectations from owners and tenants often mean that more fundamental changes are often sought in order to make historic buildings more comfortable to live in or use. As long as these do not detrimentally affect the historic fabric and importance of the building there is usually no reason why such changes should not be made.

The Chilterns Conservation Board provides advice and guidance on design and the use of locally distinctive building materials, particularly within the Chilterns AONB. The Board published the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide in 2010 and this is supplemented by three technical advice notes on: Chilterns Flint; Chilterns Brick and Chilterns Roofing Materials.

Each of these publications provides many examples and numerous illustrations of best practice. They can be purchased from the Conservation Board’s website www.chilternsaonb.org/shop
How old is Marlow?

A recent archaeological investigation in Marlow has revealed an early Bronze Age burial, so has Marlow been occupied for longer than we thought?

John Laker from Archaeology in Marlow tells us more:

In Spring 2013, Northamptonshire Archaeology, now MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) Northampton, were commissioned by Talmage Homes, to conduct an archaeological excavation on a site to the rear of 90 High Street, Marlow. The investigation was headed by Simon Markus whose team discovered some amazing artefacts during their excavations.

A 200 sq.m. excavation revealed a pit, dated to the mid-12th century, containing a pile of approximately 250 re-deposited bones, radiocarbon dated to a much earlier date. Along with the bones was a piece of Early Bronze Age (Beaker) pottery, which was probably from a pot buried with the bones; as well as medieval finds from the 12th-14th centuries.

It became apparent that the bones and skeletal fragments appeared to be from two youngish individuals fairly close in age. Those bones that could be assigned as a specific skeleton were recorded as a full skeleton named ‘Skeleton 1’ and the individuals were named ‘Skeleton 2’.

Based on the condition of teeth and bones at the time of death, Skeleton 1 was an older juvenile (10-12 years). Skeleton 2 was a similar age (10-11 years). Due to the age of the remains, it was not possible to determine the sex of each individual.

The discovery of Bronze Age pottery raised the possibility that the bones might be from a Bronze Age burial, and likely a barrow (burial mound), which was disturbed around the 12th century AD. Bone samples from the two identified individuals were sent to the USA for radiocarbon dating, which revealed them to date from approximately 2030 BC (between 2140 and 1950 BC), making them Early Bronze Age in date.

An aerial survey (Lidar), around the barrow cemetery at Low Grounds Farm, identified the site as a possible island on the Thames. This would mean that the High Street burials would have been separated from the Farm by a section of the Thames. They are, however, at a similar height (within 2m) and so the High Street burial may represent an outlier to the Low Grounds cemetery. Since this cemetery has been dated to the Bronze Age by form only, it is unknown whether the two sites were active at the same time.

Local historians know that the earliest recording of the town of Marlow dates from 1015AD, where it is referred to as Merelafan in the Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici, but these new finds suggest that people lived in Marlow well before Anglo-Saxon times and that Marlow was a ‘des res’ over 4,000 years ago!

Many thanks to MOLA Northampton; article written by John Laker for Archaeology In Marlow (AIM) using extracts from the MOLA report. AIM website: www.archaeologyinmarlow.org.uk

Wallingford's royal castle revealed

Stu Darby
The Chilterns' best churches

Quiller Barrett

For the last year Chiltern Society’s PhotoGroup members have been photographing the features that make 17 churches the best in and around the Chiltern hills. The ‘best’ are those that Simon Jenkins describes as such in his England’s Thousand Best Churches published in 1999. It is no surprise that the book has become a best-seller but it contains few photographs. Now browsers of the website www.chilternphoto.org.uk can see in ‘Special Collections’ just why the 17 churches were selected.

The churches include those in towns such as Dunstable, Hitchin and, perhaps surprisingly Luton, as well as many villages. And there is one, isolated in the middle of an Oxfordshire field that was the first Jenkins chose for his Thousand.

More than 150 photographs show features such as 12th century Norman buildings and fonts, medieval wall paintings, magnificent stone and wood carvings, dazzling Chaucer family memorials and some lavish interiors including one ‘wedding-cake’ Baroque screen.

Parish churches in the Chilterns hold a glorious gallery of art and you can now see the best of it in the comfort of your own home.

The Chiltern Society PhotoGroup aims to maintain a pictorial record of the Chilterns’ heritage. Its library of more than 7000 photographs, taken by members in the last 60 years, is the most comprehensive pictorial record of the Chilterns available online at www.chilternphoto.org.uk

The PhotoGroup encourages Chiltern Society members to volunteer to photograph specific projects and it organises indoor meetings in the winter months and outings in summer. Outings to photograph Hitchin and Hurley are planned for May and July 2015.

There is information about becoming a member of the Chiltern Society at www.chiltersociety.org.uk

March 2015 brings a wonderful new special exhibition at Wallingford Museum - ‘Wallingford’s Royal Castle Revealed’. It displays for the first time the fantastic results of fresh historical and archaeological research into the life and importance of one of the greatest royal strongholds of Medieval England. It brings to life the amazing details discovered in newly translated documents, revealing the daily life and the layout of the castle.

Additionally, to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta there is a display highlighting Wallingford’s role in the events of 1215, and why it is only one of four towns mentioned in Magna Carta.

Just come along or contact Judy Dewey for details on 01491 651 127 or visit www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk
Research reveals ‘rabbit ranches’

John Morris, Chiltern Woodlands Project

Rabbits are thought to have been introduced into England by the Normans for fur and meat and were an important source of food in the medieval and later period. Originally they were delicate creatures that had to be sheltered from the weather and protected from predators. There are numerous place names linked to rabbit farming such as Warren House, Warren Farm and Warren Wood across the Chilterns. Also older names for rabbit, such as ‘coney’ are used e.g. Coneybank Wood near Great Missenden in Bucks.

The Victoria County History (VCH) of Buckinghamshire (1908) contains a reference for the Forestry Commission’s Wendover Woods, which was known as Warren Wood in the past. The prior and convent of Christchurch (Canterbury) obtained a grant of free warren in their demesne lands in Halton from King Edward II in 1316, and the grant was afterwards confirmed by Edward III and Henry VI. In the latter charter, reference is made to a charter of Henry II, granting warren in the lands.

In the Oxfordshire VCH references for Watlington Parish, “At Christmas Common lies the medieval park or warren created in the early 13th century by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and was specially privileged and protected. In 1279 Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, had 40 acres of wood emparked. The park was hedged: 207 perches of hedging were made in 1296-7, and in 1392 it was enlarged by 20 acres. The earl’s accounts in 1278, 1286, and 1297 recorded sales of pasture in the park and receipts from pannage of his tenants’ pigs. The park and coney warren were included in a sale of the reversion of the manor by Charles I in 1629. In 1718 Rawlinson reported that ‘from a warren the land ‘was converted into a park and a large house built here by the Stonors.’”

See www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=63819

However what evidence is there remaining on the ground for keeping rabbits? When were they in use?

The Chilterns Commons Project has documents from Gary Marshall, for the National Trust Ashridge Estate that links a pillow mound on a common at Ivinghoe to June 1656, when the Earl of Bridgwater “enjoyed a Right and Privilege to have and maintain a Game and Stock of Conyes”. It talks about making new burrows and the need to sufficiently enclose the Conyes by a fence to prevent damage to the grazing on the common. If not enclosed, the commoners would have the right to kill the rabbits. Box has been found growing on this pillow mound because rabbits do not eat box.

At least six pillow mounds have potentially been identified in the Royal Forestry Society’s Hockeridge Wood at Ashley Green between Chesham and Berkhamsted, on the Bucks / Herts border (see www.rfs.org.uk). Here there are a series of short banks, known as Pillow Mounds, where rabbits would have been kept. These mounds are surrounded by a ditch and about 5 metres wide (8 metres to outer edge of ditch), all six were around 20 metres long. There may be more to be discovered in this wood as some areas are dense conifer plantations with limited access and other parts have a lot of bracken hiding ground features.

See www.rfs.org.uk
New book chronicles Croxley Green in the First World War

In 1914, Croxley Green was a small, closely knit community beside Dickinson’s paper mill. Over the following four years Croxley people were thrust into the cauldron of international affairs. The Church Lads enlisted together to fight at the Somme. Volunteers rallied round to support a hospital for wounded soldiers. Well over 400 men from the village joined up. Every family was affected by the hardship, heartbreak and endurance of wartime.

Brian’s Thompson’s book Croxley Green in the First World War, recently published by Rickmansworth Historical Society is a chronicle of local events set within their national and international context. It begins with a brief survey of the village as it was in 1914, then follows the course of events until the peace agreement of 1919 and concludes by describing how the community commemorated the war. The 57 local men who are remembered on the war memorial on the Green are given special attention as are the Croxley Church Lads who were such a source of local pride.

Copies are available price £6 from Rickmansworth Historical Society and Three Rivers Museum.
Enquiries to rickhistsoc@virginmedia.com

New bursaries launched

Are you planning on doing some research into history, landscape, ecology, wildlife or recreation in the Chilterns? Would you like some money to help you achieve your aim? You might be eligible for one of the Chilterns Conservation Board’s new bursaries.

The Board offers the following bursaries:
- The Shirley Judges Bursary for the Historic and Cultural Environment
- The Roger Emmett Bursary for the Landscape and Land Use
- The John Norris Bursary for the Water Environment and Wildlife
- The Steve Rodrick Bursary for the Enjoyment of the Countryside

What can the bursary be used for?
This could cover anything from travel and purchase of equipment to the cost of a publication or attending a symposium. It cannot cover your time nor is it intended to support commercial activity as the aim must be public benefit for which there are few alternative sources of assistance.

What you plan to do must be linked with one or more of the following themes:
- Historic and Cultural Environment
- Landscape and Land Use
- Enjoyment of the Countryside
- Water Environment and Wildlife

Who is eligible?
The bursaries of up to £250 each are available to anybody who plans to carry out some form of study or research into a subject consistent with the aims of the Board and which would benefit the Chiltern Hills. You can only be awarded a Bursary once, however if you are unsuccessful with an application, you can apply again. Only one application can be submitted in any one year. Applications from undergraduate students for dissertation projects are unlikely to be accepted.

To make sure what you have in mind is eligible, it would be worth taking a look at the Management Plan for the Chilterns AONB which can be found at www.chilternsaonb.org/management-plan

In return for awarding the bursary the Board will require a report on what was achieved as a result and, if appropriate, a copy of a study or research report. Recipients of bursaries are also expected to acknowledge the assistance they have received.

Details of how to apply can found at www.chilternsaonb.org/bursaries
Visit the Woodland Trust’s Pullingshill Wood, Marlow Common today and you will find an intriguing set of earthworks extending over several hundred metres. They were constructed between May 1915 and August 1916, by troops billeted at nearby Bovingdon Green. Their purpose was to train the soldiers to dig and maintain trenches, before they left for the Western Front to fight in the First World War.

This network of training trenches, said to be the best and most complete set in the UK, was thoroughly researched and mapped in 2005 by Archaeology in Marlow as part of their ‘ROMADAM’ project (Recording Of Marlow And District’s Ancient Monuments). Their findings were published in 2007.

In this, the centenary year of the construction of the trenches, a number of local organisations are pulling together to organise a commemorative event.

The collaboration initially comprised members from the Marlow Museum, Archaeology in Marlow, Marlow Society, the Woodland Trust and a number of interested individuals, but it quickly added representatives from local cadet forces, a Scout troop, a Junior School teacher, the Royal British Legion and the Church.

The event will take place over the weekend of 11th / 12th July 2015. With the help of youth groups it is hoped to replicate in some way what took place a century ago. For example, it is planned for the cadets to take part in exercises and sports as the troops did, be entertained and camp out overnight. The next morning they should attend a Church Parade with Standards and the sounding of ‘the Last Post’. The Parade will enable the gathering to honour those soldiers who trained here but did not return from Northern France. Explanatory walks of the trenches and surrounding area will also take place. It is further hoped to have representatives of the original regiments and / or modern units present. All this will be recorded on film for future exhibition and commemoration.

If you have any story, comment or pictures to add to the commemoration, the organisers would be delighted to hear from you. Ring Mike Hyde on 01628 485474. For more information, visit www.marrowww1.org.uk and www.marlowmuseum.org

The Marlow Museum which is currently staging a ‘Great War’ display has a wealth of photographs showing the troops, initially Guards Battalions, arriving in Marlow, marching to the site and exercising in the area. Articles and present day photos relating to the trenches are also held.
Road Farm barn restorations  Wendy Gray

Road Farm is a working livestock and arable farm near Great Missenden, which has participated in the Countryside Stewardship scheme since its inception in 1991. Over the last three years, with the help of a grant from Natural England and hard work from skilled craftsmen, Farmer David Knight and family have restored the Grade II Listed, 18th century Threshing Barn along with Stable Barn and Victorian water cistern.

Much scaffolding was needed to effectively ‘suspend’ the Threshing Barn while works ensued. First the tiles were carefully removed, then certain timbers were skilfully replaced to restore its upright strength. Old walls had to be dismantled to enable footings to be laid; the bricks were cleaned off then artfully re-laid using traditional lime mortar. Eventually, the roof tiles were reset using hand-made oak pegs to hold the tiles in and then weather boarding hammered up along the barn’s sides, not to mention the re-mastery of the traditional threshing floor within the barn.

The Stable Barn required iron-work to prevent further tilt, but is now functioning as a stable again, complete with two donkeys. The water cistern takes all the run-off from the stable barn roof and would have been an essential part of farming on chalk until modern times, enabling sufficient water for livestock, let alone people, perhaps including travellers on the London Road.

The barns are still used for agricultural purposes but are also a strong educational tool to be marvelled at by schools and other groups which visit the farm. David explains how everything to build the original barn was both sourced and made very locally: timber from the woods, clay for bricks and tiles, chalk for the floors and lime mortar. Youngsters enjoy going up to Coneybank Wood to see the old saw pits, but also seeing some of the main stable barn timbers can stimulate discussion on recycling as the chamfered beams may have previously been part of great ships.

It is wonderful to see whole historic barns in their genuine setting, especially knowing they are surrounded by abundant wildlife including barn owls, skylarks, yellowhammers, harvest mice, glow worms and numerous bee hammers, thanks to several generations of consistent, sensitive farming. This truly is living heritage.

For more about Road Farm, including group visits and Care Farming (the therapeutic use of farming practices for vulnerable people), visit www.roadfarmcountryways.com

History and archaeology events 2015

Friday 6th March, 10.30am - 4pm
Woodland Archaeology Training Course
A one day course led by John Morris (Chiltern Woodlands Project), including an illustrated talk, with maps and books, a woodland visit to see and identify archaeological features found in Pigotts Wood, discussion of techniques to map and record features in this fascinating ancient wood. Please bring a packed lunch and wear sturdy footwear and clothing appropriate for the weather. Tea and coffee are provided. Pigotts Wood, North Dean, near High Wycombe, Bucks (about 4 miles north of High Wycombe, on road to Speen from Hughenden Valley).
£35 per person, booking essential on 01844 355 503 or woodlands@chilternsaonb.org

Saturday 7th March, 10.30am - 4pm
Woodland Archaeology Training Course
Repeat of course held on Friday 6th March

Saturday 7th March, 2.30pm
Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Talk: The Population of Buckinghamshire 1086-1801
What can the records in the BAS Library and in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies tell us about the demography of the county from Domesday Book to the 1801 Census? Mike Ghirelli reveals all.
At the Bucks County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury HP20 2QP
Free. No need to book. www.bucksas.org.uk/events

Friday 10th April, 8.15pm - 10pm
Talk: The Infantry Training at Halton in World War I
Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards History Group invites you to hear Francis Hanford’s fascinating talk about how recruits were trained at RAF Halton. Francis Hanford is Curator of the Trenchard Museum, RAF Halton and the new Flight Heritage Centre.
Cholesbury Village Hall, Cholesbury Common, Bucks. HP23 6ND
£4 per person, no need to book
For more information visit www.cholesbury.com or e-mail localhistorygroup@cholesbury.com
History and archaeology events 2015

Saturday 11th April, 11am - 1pm  
Walk: Wallingford Castle History
Back by popular demand, this walk around the grounds of Wallingford Castle is led by Judy Dewey (local historian and Museum curator).
Meet at Wallingford Museum, £5 per person. Not suitable for dogs.

Saturday 11th April, 2.30pm - 4.30pm  
Walk: Wallingford Town History
This popular walk around Wallingford is led by Judy Dewey (local historian and Museum curator).
Meet at Wallingford Museum, £5 per person. Not suitable for dogs.

Friday 8th May, 7.30pm - 10.30pm  
Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards History Society AGM and Talk: Coaching Inns
Following a brief AGM, Julian Hunt will present an insightful talk on coaching inns. Julian is an expert lecturer and prolific writer on all things historic in Buckinghamshire.
Cholesbury Village Hall, Cholesbury Common, Bucks. HP23 6ND
£4 per person, no need to book
For more information visit www.cholesbury.com or e-mail localhistorygroup@cholesbury.com

Sunday 10th May, 12.30pm - 5pm  
Chinnor Windmill Open Day
Along with windmills and watermills across the country, Chinnor windmill will be open as part of National Mills day. Chinnor windmill has been steadily rebuilt and now has its sails again, 47 years after it was completely demolished, so weather permitting, the sails will turn under wind power for the first time in over 90 years.
£1.50 entrance fee. Whites Field, Mill Lane, Chinnor, Oxfordshire, OX39 4QU
adjacent to Mill Lane Primary School.
Contact Adrian Marshall 01844 292 095 or chinnorwindmill@gmail.com
The mill is also open alternate Sundays, check dates at www.chinnor-windmill.blogspot.co.uk

Saturday 16th May  
Bucks Archaeological Society Conference: Heritage on the Line
Eight speakers will each look at the impact of HS2 on the historic environment in Buckinghamshire.
Weston Turville Village Hall
See the society’s website http://www.bucksas.org.uk/ for further information.

Wednesday 20th May, 8pm  
Hedgerley Historical Society Talk - Buckinghamshire Astronomers
Dr Mike Leggett will speak on the history of astronomy in Buckinghamshire. The contribution of selected individuals through history with Buckinghamshire connections is covered along with the emergence of scientific and astronomical societies, especially in the C20th. Buckinghamshire observatories past and present are summarised.
Hedgerley Memorial Hall, Klin Lane, Hedgerley, SL2 3UZ
More information from John Lovelock, 01753 647 187 or jdlovelock@btinternet.com

Wednesday 17th June, 8pm  
Hedgerley Historical Society Talk - History of Dropmore
Mary Trevallion reveals the history of Dropmore, near Burnham. Originally built in 1795 for Lord Grenville (who later became Prime Minister), Dropmore House later fell into disrepair and two fires left it on English Heritage’s ‘At Risk’ register. An ambitious restoration project brought the estate back into use as luxury homes. Hedgerley Memorial Hall, Klin Lane, Hedgerley, SL2 3UZ
More information from John Lovelock, 01753 647 187 or jdlovelock@btinternet.com

Wednesday 1st July, 8pm  
Hedgerley Historical Society Talk: Penn & Tylers Green in WWI
Ron Saunders, author of the book ‘Penn and Tylers Green in the Great War and the Men Who Did Not Return’ will reveal how WWI affected these Buckinghamshire villages, and tell the moving stories behind those men who lost their lives.
Hedgerley Memorial Hall, Klin Lane, Hedgerley, SL2 3UZ
More information from John Lovelock, 01753 647 187 or jdlovelock@btinternet.com

Wednesday 8th July, 8pm  
Hedgerley Historical Society visit to Jordans Quaker Meeting House
Librarian, Sue Smithson will present a talk about the Friends Ambulance Unit in WW1 and their training camp at Old Jordans Farm. Meet at Jordans Quaker Meeting House, HP9 2SN
More information from John Lovelock, 01753 647 187 or jdlovelock@btinternet.com

Saturday 25th July 2015, 10am - 4pm  
Buckinghamshire Family History Society Open Day
The many attractions include the Society’s research facilities, including its Buckinghamshire names database, containing in excess of five million entries. Parish register transcripts and other publications will be for sale. Come along for expert advice; guest societies from around the country, local heritage groups and suppliers of data CDs, maps, software, archival materials and much more.
At the Grange School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury, HP21 7NH.
Entry and parking free. Tea and coffee available.
Further information will be added to www.bucksfhs.org.uk as information becomes available.

contact details

This newsletter has been produced by the Chilterns Conservation Board.
For further information please contact:
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email: office@chilternsaonb.org

This newsletter can be downloaded from: www.chilternsaonb.org/newsletters