

Introduction

This newsletter is the second for 2024 and produced to coincide with the annual closure of the Museum and the start of the 2024/25 series of monthly talks.

History Society News

Chairman of the Society – after over five years of service as the chairman of the History Society Malcolm Storry has decided to stand down for health reasons. We are grateful to Malcolm for his leadership during a testing period. Martin Jarratt has agreed to act as interim chairman until the 2025 AGM where we will be looking to elect a permanent chairman.

Charitable Status – we have now completed the transition to a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) from our previous status as a ‘simple’ charity. To recap, our reason for doing this was to give the Society the legal status to enter commercial arrangements (e.g. the Coop lease for the Museum). Soon the transfer of assets/liabilities to the new ‘CIO’ charity (1205796) will be complete. When this is finished the ‘simple’ charity (800336) will be wound-up.

Fund-raising Activity – our primary means of fund-raising is the provision of refreshments at Chastleton House/Church on a number of occasions during the summer. This raises about £2,500 per year. Other fund-raising activities involve participation in local events (e.g. the Town Festival) where we sell books and other items from the museum shop. This, plus membership subscriptions, donations and earnings for the museum constitute our sources of income. These do not cover our outgoings so we are in the process of making applications to various funding bodies (e.g. the Foyle Foundation).

Museum Accreditation – to support our fund-raising the trustees decided to apply to the Arts Council for accreditation of the Museum. This is a long process. You’re allowed three years to complete the application and have a mentor assigned to assist you. It will involve writing and re-writing our policies to comply with the regulations. The trustees feel that, although this is a lot of work, the investment in time and effort will pay off by improving our chances of securing grant funding.

Council grant – we are delighted that the Chipping Norton Town Council has awarded us ‘core funding’ status with a £3,500 grant per annum for the next two years. This money will be used to pay an element of our running costs and also part fund our plans to make the artefacts held in the Museum better understood and more easily accessible to people of the town. We will create interactive displays in the Museum and revamp our web site to reach those unable to visit the Museum.





History Society Talks – every year between September and May we arrange monthly talks on topics of local history. The 2023/24 season was exceptionally well received and attended. The 2024/25 season kicked-off on 9th September with a talk by Mark Davies on “Jericho - Oxford’s ‘dangerously hospitable’ first planned suburb”. The next talk on 14th October will be given by Helen Castle on “A Shepherd’s Stone - How the headstone of Great Rollright shepherd Richard Widdows sparked a local history blog.”

Details of the remaining talks for this season can be found on our web site or on display in the Museum.

CHIPPING NORTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY and MUSEUM

A Shepherd's Stone

How the headstone of Great Rollright shepherd Richard Widdows sparked a local history blog
a talk by
Helen Castle
at the Methodist Hall, West Street
Chipping Norton
Monday 14th October 2024
2:00 pm
Come and join our friendly group
New members and visitors (£5) always welcome

Museum News

The Museum closes this year on 26th October for the winter and re-opens around Easter 2025.

Window displays will continue through the winter. The current display is about CHARG's work on local archaeology. This will be superseded by a British Legion display around Remembrance Day. Other window displays will then follow.



Physical Archives – the archives are an incredibly important part of the Society's and the Museum's assets. We have recently taken advice from an archivist with the objective of improving our archiving and its indexing to better facilitate the research undertaken by History Society members and visitors. This will also support our plans to improve the access to our digital resources and the indexes to the physical archives. This work will take place over the winter.

Digital Resources – the new computer system is now fully implemented and hosts a variety of digital archives comprising documents, digitised photographs, recordings of local people interviewed on "Radio Chipping Norton" that broadcast in the 1980s.

The new system also supports a rolling display of topics from the **digitised photograph archive** (e.g. "Chippy at War"). However, many visitors prefer to browse through the books of photographs and so those will not be replaced!

We have also improved access to the "Ancestry" application for family history research to facilitate the research of members and visitors.

To complement the display of some of the over 400 objects (mainly Roman) that comprises the "Cashmore" Collection" we have added direct access to the British Museum's "Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). This will allow museum visitors to see an image and archaeologist's description of the finds held in the Cashmore collection.

ARCHI MAPS UK is an on-line resource of detailed Old Maps, LiDAR and aerial photographs that can be used for archaeology and local history research. We now have a licence to access this rich source of information.

The development of the Society's **graphical information system (GIS)** has continued. The latest version is installed on the Museum's computer system to allow members and museum visitors to see, for example, the history of the development of Chippy through the ages from the neolithic to the mediaeval period.

Further development of the **web site** will complement the Museum's displays and artefacts to bring them to a wider audience in Chippy and further afield.

Development Plans – over the winter closure period we will be reviewing the displays in the Museum and the archives with a view to ring the changes to some of the displays and using the advice of the archivist reorganising the archives to facilitate easier access to the contents of the archives.

New Exhibits/Collections/Acquisitions in the Museum

Acquisitions – over this year we have been offered many new items but, as space is at a premium, not all offers were taken up. A few examples of those that were accepted are: -

- A replica of a blue silk dress as given to the Ascott Martyrs by the Agricultural Workers Union (Queen Victoria also gave each of the women a red-flannel petticoat and 5 shillings!) after their release from Oxford Gaol in 1873.
- A mandolin made by an Italian POW incarcerated in a POW camp near Chippy after the war. As this item needs some restoration it will be a while until it's on display.
- The "Louisville Slugger" baseball bat has been restored and will be securely displayed in the museum.

Roman Chipping Norton – we are in the process of analysing the magnetometry and excavation reports to allow us to create a series of displays of information on the "Roman Settlement" Scheduled Monument. For example, what it is, its importance as a site and its place in the history of Chippy (e.g. its Iron Age roots).

Victoria County History Report on Chipping Norton – you may recall the talk the History Society hosted in the Town Hall by the authors of the Chipping Norton volume of the Victoria County History in April 2023. The volume has now been published and the Society has been given a copy to add to the reference works available for research in the museum.

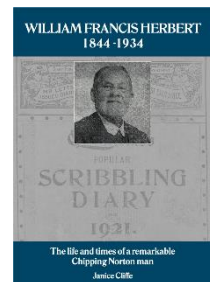
Publicity

We have updated the Museum's publicity leaflet/brochure. This is at the printers and will be available soon.

"Cotswold Tourism" will publicise the Museum in their magazine.

Museum Bookshop and Publications

Jan Cliffe's book "**William Francis Herbert – 1844 to 1934**" based on his 1921 diary and scrapbook is now available to order in the bookshop. He was an extraordinary man: self-educated, a singer, composer and founder of the Church Army Centre School of Music when in his eighties.



For railway enthusiasts the bookshop now has for sale copies of "**Somewhere Along the Line: Banbury & Cheltenham Railway 1887-1987**" the story of the Banbury and Cheltenham railway and the people associated with it by Barbara Brown.

The Revd. Ralph Mann was a history teacher at Chipping Norton Grammar School and a keen local and family historian. He bequeathed his extensive archives of family history documents and the copyright of his unpublished papers to the Museum. Jan Cliffe will be reviewing these documents to see if any are suitable for future publication by the Society.

There are other local books on local history on sale in the Museum.



Outreach Activities

In the spring, we supported the Oxfordshire Local History Association's "Oxfordshire Protests!" study day held in the Town Hall with guided tours of Chippy focusing on its built history. We hosted a visit to the museum by a class of St Mary's School who were studying the Second World War and how it affected Chipping Norton. Over the summer we took part in the "Town Festival".

On Saturday 2nd November we will have a stall to promote the Society and Museum at the "Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum" in Woodstock as part of their First World War Family Open Day.

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 19th October 2024 – "Finds Day"

Dr Ed Caswell will again be our resident expert on hand in the Museum to identify any objects brought in by visitors. He records any finds of significance in the PAS database, which then allows us to add them to our map of local finds. The poster shows Ed at last year's event, which attracted over 60 people.

The Museum will be open to all between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm. All welcome.

CHIPPING NORTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY and MUSEUM

FINDS DAY



Dr Ed Caswell – the Finds Officer for Oxfordshire will be in the Chipping Norton Museum on **Saturday 19th October 2024** between 11:00 am and 4:00 pm

Bring along whatever you've found – coins, pottery, etc. in the garden, metal detecting or hidden away in a cupboard. Ed will identify them for you!

OR just drop in to have a look around and see what others may have brought in.

Free Entry for This Event
The Museum is located at 4 High Street, Chipping Norton

Thursday 31st October 2024 – talk on "Bronze Age Oxfordshire"


Dr Ed Caswell, a Bronze Age specialist, will give a talk on "Bronze Age Oxfordshire, was it the Wild West of its day?" The Bronze Age was a time of major change, with the introduction of metals, a possible upsurge in the use of farming and a significant change in population.

Come and hear Ed talk about this fascinating period and hear why it may have had much in common with the American Wild West!

The talk is being held in the Lower Town Hall and entry is free.

CHIPPING NORTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH GROUP (CHARG)

BRONZE AGE OXFORDSHIRE



WAS IT THE "WILD WEST" OF ITS DAY?
a talk by
Dr Ed Caswell
in the Lower Town Hall, Chipping Norton
Thursday 31st October 2024
7:30 pm

The Bronze Age was a time of major change, with the introduction of metals, a possible upsurge in the use of farming and a significant change in population. Come and hear Ed talk about this fascinating period and hear why it may have had much in common with the American Wild West!

There is no charge for entrance but donations will be welcomed