


**Sherington
Historical Society**

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NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is under new management and is going to change format somewhat, as this is now the effort by Mark and Kay. We will still try and bring the current heritage news, Marks Musings, what happening with the Milton Keynes Heritage Association that's of interest, and perhaps an article or two, depending on what going on.

One thing our treasure reminds us is that Subs are due if you have not paid., so we have included a copy of the membership renewal form.

We hope you find it of interest.

Mark's Musings?



My apologies in the length of time it has taken to get out this newsletter, but I have been full of work, cold, family and adjusting to the new way of living. The AGM seems to have been quite some time ago but I was pleased to see that all went well and people seemed to enjoy Gordon's talk, it was quite technically challenging as the pics that he wanted to show were not where we both expected them to be, but we got there in the end and all the pictures that were shown were shown.

The 2020 program has all be pushed asunder with the recent events of the lockdown, and all the self-isolating that is happening, but we will try and bring it back as soon as we can. As you can imagine we have cancelled April and May's talks, as we will be constantly review with the changes after that. June we are due to be visiting Woburn Gardens, but we might look to do that next year if we are not allowed to this. For John and Stephen, we will try and reorganise the program to fit them in to a slot later in the year. As soon as we know more, we will let you know.

Since our last newsletter in each scan we have needed to add a few lines with a passing of a different member, with Ian Collinge, Jackie Inskipp and Ro Smith. I do hope that what we put reflects what we know about the person. I find these things quite difficult to write. I'd much rather write about the new members that have joined the SHS.

Mark

Dates for the Diary

Currently nothing is being timetabled for the SHS. we will let you know as soon as we can start up again



Into the future we have the Milton Keynes Heritage Open Days between the 11th – 20th September, with a theme of “Hidden Nature”.

Please look at <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/organising/hidden-nature> for more information

Sherington Historical Society makes it to 20!



Well it all started to happen 20 years ago, who would have thought that we would be celebrating our 20th Anniversary. We thought that this was a good reason to celebrate with a cake!

In the January 2000 SCAN magazine Norman Arnold put in a request for like-minded villagers who felt that they did not want the history of the village to disappear with its aging residents, would join together to create

an archive that was available to all, the knowledge of the village would not be lost. If you were interested, then to meet in the Village Hall Committee Room at 8pm on the 23rd February to see the viability of it.

The Celebration Cake

7 people tuned up (Enid Pepper, Helen Vale, Norman Arnold, Sheila Quinn, Jesse and Sheila Line, and by invitation, Don Hurst), and apologies from Gail Waters, Mrs Elliot and Mark Vale.

There seem to be enough interest and with the input from Don Hurst to help guide the process that it was thought to be something that was wanted to start up. So, a next meeting was set to discuss how we move this forward, with taking further advice from other local groups that were doing similar things. This second meeting was be in Ted and Enid Pepper’s front room. And from there a committee was set up of Norman Arnold (chair), Sheila Line (secretary) and Mark Vale (treasure).

After a short time, we managed to be able to meet up in the Pavilion and then we managed to get the 2nd Tuesday slot in the village Hall, that we still hold today for our meetings. The committee meetings are still being in one of the committee’s member’s



Norman Arnold and Philip Smith out judging Scarecrows

houses.

In the early days we modelled the structure of the archive on the Stoke Goldington group's archive, having three main sections; People, Places and Events, which we hold generally for all that is not a significant subject in its own right.

I think that we have become part of the village's fabric as we have only have for many years had a very popular Open day, We appear to manage the scarecrow competition, we have for several years ran a photographic competition outside of our regular monthly society meetings.

In 2000 the committee started with Norman Arnold, Sheila Line and Mark Vale, we now have a committee of Kay Turrell, Liz Revell, Diana Morgan, Betty Feasey and Mark Vale. Between the start and now we have also had, Sheila Quinn, Pearl Teasdale, Caroline Leslie, Jackie Inskipp, all spend time on the committee to help run the society. Norman passed away in 2006 just after our most popular Open day and since then Mark took up the Chairmanship and has been chair since this time.

For this year's AGM, we had (in the picture above from left to right) Betty Feasey, Mark Vale, Richard Morgan, June Drew, Sheila Quinn, David Hyde, Liz Revell, Diana Morgan, Pearl Teasdale, John Goss, Evelyn Goss, Jill Burgess, Rosemary Clark, Gordon Clark



*2020 AGM: members with the cake
(less Dave Revell who took the picture)*

Kay's Corner....

I would like to stay optimistic in these uncertain times and inform you all about the theme for the HOD's weekend this year, 11th - 20th September. The theme will be **Hidden Nature**, celebrating our extraordinary natural heritage, from centuries-old trees to farmer's fields steeped in history,

As you may recall Liz and Dave Revell have encouraged us to submit photographs for the two photographic competition categories 'Sights and Seasons' and 'Wild Sherington'. The photographic competition started back in 2015 and has amassed some lovely images from around the village. We all could try to continue to take photographs in our gardens or whilst out on our walks whilst taking exercise over the coming months.

Your photographs can still be submitted to Liz for the web site and should the HODs weekend go ahead we may be able to organise an exhibition of these.

I was thrilled to see our members celebrate our 20th Anniversary at the AGM and have suggested to the committee that we also mark this achievement by planting a tree which would also tie in with the HOD's weekend, of celebrating our natural heritage. If you are interested, we have Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) on quite a few trees in the village.

Just one last thing to mention from me and that is I'm checking the enquires that come into our web site via Yahoo. In March we had several emails, one from a person asking about road names and the term 'Turnpike' an explanation of which you can find on our websites home page under 'Places' in the left hand column and then under the heading 'General' also in the left hand column.

Another person wanted information about an inscription on a gravestone for a William Looms.

Lastly a comment about Kevin Varty's talk in February and the writer wished for some addition information be passed on to Kevin.

Kay

The below article was on the Milton Keynes Heritage Association newsletter, and we thought you might find it interesting.

MILTON KEYNES HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

Margaret Roberts has volunteered at Warden Abbey Vineyard since January 2014 and has spent six years researching the abbey's story.

Warden Abbey's story

Walter Espec, lord of the manor of *Wardone*, founded Warden Abbey on top of the Greensand Ridge in 1135, and the monastery was populated by an abbot and 12 monks of the Cistercian Order (the White Monks) from Rievaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire. Warden flourished thanks to the monks' dedication, and by the middle of the 12th century it had spared 33 of its brethren to colonise daughter houses at Sawtry (Hunts), Sibton (Suffolk) and Tilty (Essex).

Known as *St Mary d'Assartis* on its foundation, the monastery was popularly referred to as *Wardon Abbey* by the close of the 1140s. The monks had a sizeable claustral complex built over the following decades, and their impressive stone church was dedicated before the turn of the 13th century. The monks also established a precinct that ultimately extended to 137 acres (the largest in Britain) containing pasture, gardens / orchards, vineyards, fishponds and a lake. (Shown below is one of the medieval fishponds beside the vineyard.)



Thanks to the Warden's excellent reputation for monastic observance, the monks received substantial grants of land during the 12th century, eventually setting up 23 monastic farms (granges) and 13 mills to support their growing community. Although most of the farms could be reached in a day, others lay at a considerable distance, including West Wardon Grange near Aston le Walls (Northants) and Livermere Grange at Wangford (Suffolk). To these, the monks added urban properties in Bedford, St Neots, Cambridge, Norwich, King's Lynn, and London.

From the mid-13th century until the early 14th century, the abbey ran a thriving wool business, selling fleeces to merchants from Italy, Flanders and France. It was on the back of this success that the monks started to extend their abbey church, but unfortunately, they suffered a reversal of fortunes during the first half of the 14th century. The Great Famine (1315–17) and challenges to the wool trade were exacerbated by the monks having overreached themselves to pay for the building work. Serious financial difficulties ensued, and the abbey took out loans equivalent to nearly £½ million in today's money. The church extension was probably completed during the 1330s, but it took decades to repay the loans and the monks liquidated some of their capital by disposing of lands in the Ampthill and South Cambridgeshire areas before the end of the century. The Great Plague (1348–50) hit the monasteries even harder than the general populace, and by 1379 the community at Warden had dwindled from around 65 monks and 190 lay brothers in about 1200/1220, to Abbot Walter Clifton, 23 monks and 6 lay brothers.

Walter Espec had given the abbey the right to nominate the local parish priest, but in 1376 the monks took this a step further by paying £26 13s 4d to Edward III for a licence to appropriate the church, thereby taking over the financial responsibilities (along with the income).



In 1380/81 Abbot Walter sponsored the installation of a stained-glass window in the north wall of the nave (the abbot's beard was a Victorian addition) and the church may have been dedicated to St Leonard around that time.

The abbey continued to struggle financially during the 15th century due to excessive financial commitments, the impact of the 100 Years' War and the Wars of the Roses. However, Warden continued to be well-regarded and in 1429 the abbot was granted the right to wear the mitre, ring and other pontifical insignia. People flocked to the area, and in 1453 the Pope granted the abbot permission to take on a second job to offset the expense of hosting over 2,000 visitors annually. Abbots of Warden were highly influential in managing discipline within the Cistercian Order between the 1450s and 1480s, but this came to an abrupt halt with the election of Abbot John Bright in 1491. Independent investigation showed that the claustral buildings were much in need of repair, the abbot had pawned some of the monastery's books and plate, and one of the monks had been charged with conspiracy to poison him.

The actions of Henry VIII led to the valuation and dissolution of the monasteries during the 16th century. Warden was back in a relatively strong position and its 1535 taxable income of £389 16s 6¼d was the 8th highest of all the 103 Cistercian houses in England and Wales. The community remained faithful and the monks were deeply distressed by restrictions imposed by the visiting royal commissioners on 16 October 1535, and which were implemented with alacrity by their new abbot, Henry Emery. By summer 1537 Emery had lost control of the monastery and was ousted temporarily in late July. He was only reinstated on 17th August thanks to the influence of the Duke of Norfolk and on 4th December Warden was the first of the greater monasteries to surrender voluntarily. The abbot and 12 monks were granted generous pensions by the Crown in March 1538 and Henry Emery became the parish priest. This was in sharp contrast to Woburn Abbey whose abbot was executed for failing to toe the king's latest party line.



After the surrender, the site was assigned to Sir Francis Bryan for safekeeping and on 24 January 1539 it was granted on a 21-year lease to one of the abbey's former bailiffs, Robert Gostwick for £13 19s 8d annually, on condition that he had the church and claustral buildings pulled down and the stone removed. On 16 July 1545 Gostwick acquired the title of the lease for 41 years, and on 10 June 1552 the Privy Council granted 400 cart-loads of stone to Oliver St. John towards the building of Bedford Gaol

(formerly on the corner of High Street and Silver Street). Gostwick built a red-brick farmhouse next to the site of the former abbey church, but the building was demolished

around 1785 apart from one fragment, which was said to have been left 'for the sake of its beautiful serpentine chimney'.

The remains (above) are now used as a holiday let by the Landmark Trust.

The land was purchased by Samuel Whitbread in 1786 and remains in the family's hands today.

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Well that about it from us this time. Hope you are all coping well and the curfew will be soon over,

Many Thanks Kay and Mark