



# Lambley Historical Society

[www.lambleyheritage.co.uk](http://www.lambleyheritage.co.uk)

JANUARY 2012 - No 10

## Lambley Historical Society Review 2011



A chilly but interesting hilltop meeting!

### A year of change

This year has seen key changes to the committee with the welcome addition of Kay and Margaret.

With support from Celia and members of the committee, Kay has worked very hard to put together an excellent programme of talks and visits for 2012 which I am sure members will enjoy.

Margaret's knowledge of local history and contacts has proved most useful in helping with the programme for 2012. She also made a significant film find for the MACE project (see article by Roger). Most important of all she makes a lovely cup of tea at the Society meetings with a great choice of biscuits. I know all members appreciate this aspect of her work for the Society!

As ever Roger and Jackie have done excellent work for the membership.

Roger has developed the LHS website to a professional standard – I have received complementary comments from the residents of Lambley about the contents and look of the site.

Jackie has kept our finances on the straight and narrow. This is a difficult and unsung task, but vital to the future of the Society.

On behalf of myself and the members, thank you all for your invaluable help with the Society.

### Review of talks and visits 2011

We had a wide range of talks with a focus on local history.

**Peter Hammond** gave an interesting talk entitled 'On the Buses in Nottingham'. My enjoyment of the event was tempered by the realisation that I could remember the Nottingham buses and uniforms of the drivers and conductors etc he talked about and featured in his films – how time flies!

**Stuart Rose's** presentation and old Pathe style news film whetted the appetite for the visit to **Laxton**. We

were not to be disappointed. A memorable (if chilly evening) tour of the farms and Laxton in a trailer pulled by a tractor.

**Dave Walker's** fascinating high tech view on the caves of Nottingham was a revelation. His virtual tour of the labyrinth of passages and caves that were designed and used for a variety of purposes, from simple storage to grand wine cellars with seating and tasting facilities, had us all thirsting for more! Dave marries his hi tech presentation and work with low tech environmentally friendly transport (bikes with a trailer) to travel to the city's caves.

Our own **Ted White** gave us an in-depth insight into the lives and people who lived at Bromley house – full of family intrigue, money and power with many twists and turns. Better than a TV period drama? I think so!

**Jean Townsend's** talk on the Real Queen Victoria, made us all reassess our view of the 'Lady in Black'. Jean's extensive research gave us an insight

into aspects of Victoria's life and character that are not widely known. As a young queen she was vivacious with a penchant for champagne and men in tight trousers! Jean held us in suspense right until the end when she revealed that upon her death, Victoria had arranged for 'items' from John Brown (her trusted Scottish servant) to be secretly placed in her coffin. This fact has only recently come to light, when the families whose relatives performed this clandestine act revealed the truth.

Our other visits this year; included a tour of **Marston Hall** with its cobwebs and secret garden! – did anyone find the garden? We had an enjoyably warm evening walk around **Plumtree and Normanton**, with its grand houses – we had fun playing 'Who lives in a house like this' and expressed our surprise and delight at finding the smallest library we had ever seen!

All aboard at Laxton!



See details of 2012 programme in attached insert or visit [www.lambleyheritage.co.uk](http://www.lambleyheritage.co.uk) and click on Programme

## Looking ahead to 2012:

The committee has a number of ideas for projects that we welcome members to participate in:

- Formally catalogue our picture library. We would like to do this to meet archiving best practises.
- 'Then and Now' picture theme. Pictures of the same location in Lambley.
- Build on our 'Voices on the past' library. To interview and record local people's memories of Lambley on digital voice media (tape recorder) for uploading on to the website.

If you would like to get involved in any of the above projects, then please speak to a committee member. The above are not exclusive, so if you have an idea for a Society activity, then please let us know.

I would like to record my thanks to members for their support in 2011. I look forward to seeing you all at our meetings and events in 2012. **John Smith, Chairman**



Marston Hall



Library & Church at Plumtree



## TREASURER'S REPORT 2011

2011 has been an eventful year for the Society, with an interesting programme of speakers and visits, giving us, on occasion, unexpected insights into local (and national) history. We also have had an opportunity to become involved in a national collection of archive material through the MACE Project.

Our membership has remained at 30 and we continue to enjoy the use of Lowdham WI's premises with its comfortable room and well equipped kitchen.

All this comes at a cost however. The Society's accounts remain in credit but our current account has a somewhat reduced margin on last year. This is not a major problem but is, unfortunately, par for the course in many institutions, big and small, in today's economic downturn.

We have decided to retain our membership fee at the good value of £10 for the coming year with a view to attracting new members. Our programme of lectures and outings will continue to be of high quality, interesting and varied as ever and the development of our website will continue.

All in all 2012 promises to be another good year for the Society: the accounts remain in credit and there are many new developments in the pipeline.

**Jackie Mansfield**

## LAMBLEY LOCAL MOVIES HERITAGE DAY

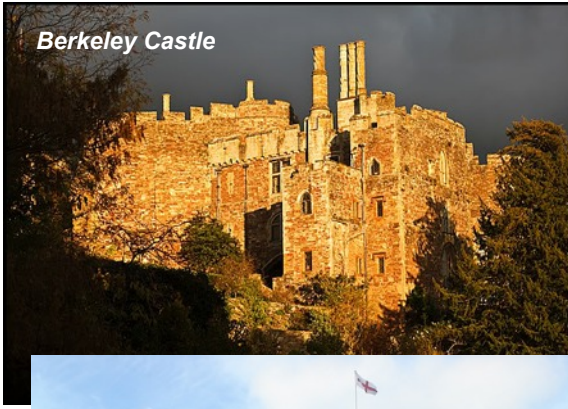
The Lambley Local Movies Heritage Day held on Saturday 8th October at the Village Hall, Lambley was judged a success by everyone at the end of the afternoon's film and slideshows. Kay Ogilvie from MACE introduced fascinating local archive film from the MACE collection and talked about the importance of saving old film before it deteriorates too far. Several films were brought in and added to the MACE collection.

Following a break for refreshments and much chat, John Smith, chair of the Lambley Historical Society, presented a slideshow of previously donated photographs to the LHS archive. This was a huge success and generated a great deal of audience interaction and useful feedback.

Further information about MACE can be found on their website [www.macearchive.org.uk](http://www.macearchive.org.uk)

Roger Crooks





*Berkeley Castle*



*Forde Abbey*



*Corsham Court*



*Blenheim Palace*



*Chavenage*

# A VERY BIG THANK YOU

**At the Annual General Meeting last January we were presented with membership of the Historic Houses Association. We had no idea then what pleasure this would bring us.**

Our first use of the membership was on our Yorkshire holiday in April, visiting Kiplin Hall, Bolton Castle and, on the way home, Newby Hall. All excellent venues and very different from each other.

In May, on the way home from Stockwood Park we visited Woburn Abbey. As we arrived only an hour or two before it was due to close, I am sure we would not have gone without our membership.

During the Summer months we visited such places as Tissington Hall, Belvoir Castle, Eyam Hall and Doddington Hall. All fascinating properties with wonderful gardens.

In August we were "forced" to have a few days away in the Cotswolds to see more of the properties of the HHA. Two particular gems stand out, Berkeley Castle with its 12th Century keep which is incorporated into the 11 century Castle, and the other being Chavenage, north of Tetbury. Chavenage started off as a 15th Century Medieval Hall and the house has been enlarged over the ensuing years. At Chavenage we had the pleasure of being taken around by the owner, David Lowsley-Williams, an interesting and very entertaining guide. Whilst in the Cotswolds we also visited Sudeley Castle, but they had run out of tickets for the house visit by the time we arrived!

After a short holiday in Wiltshire (being guided on the archaeology of Wessex by the archaeologist Julian Richards) we visited Corsham Court, with its walls full of paintings, before returning home.

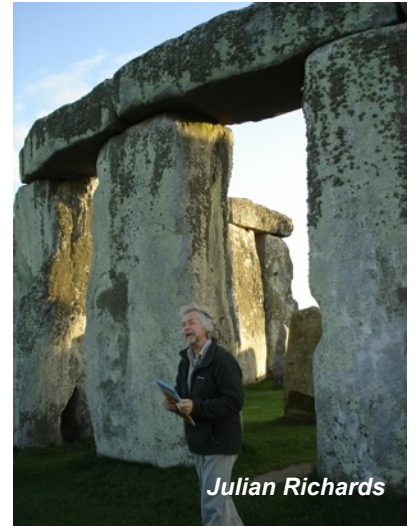
On a glorious day in September we travelled down to Blenheim Palace and spent a very pleasant day in the sunshine exploring their vast grounds as well as a long tour of the house.

Unfortunately by November there were very few properties open, but we did manage to squeeze a visit to Forde Abbey in Dorset with its lovely grounds and historic property.

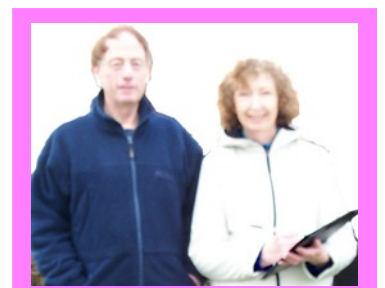
Our year of membership will be finished in grand style by a visit to Rockingham Castle on the 14th December, being greeted with coffee and warm mince pies, followed by a personal guided tour of the Castle, after which we will sit down to a two course Christmas lunch. What a splendid way to finish the year!

Over the year we have seen many fascinating places and wonderful grounds, all thanks to your gift of membership. Thank you.

***Celia & Alan***

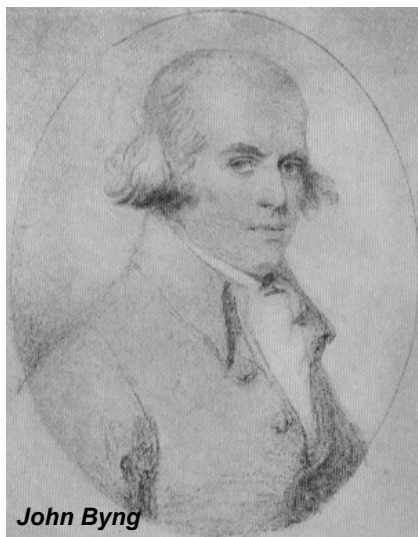


*Julian Richards*



# ALL FOR SHOW!

## JOHN BYNG'S 'TOUR THROUGH THE MIDLANDS'



John Byng

**Between 1781 and 1794 John Byng, a well-to-do gentleman, decided to spend his summer months touring through England and Wales. Byng was the son of George Byng of Southill in Bedfordshire and was a nephew of Admiral John Byng.**

John Byng was educated at Westminster School and made a good living as a Commissioner of Stamps with the Inland Revenue. He was elevated to the status of Viscount Torrington in 1812 but died less than a year later. In later life Byng had both the means and the time to devote to his first love, touring the countryside and towns while at the same time committing his observations to a wonderful diary.

Most of Byng's tours were undertaken on horseback with a servant often going on ahead to engage lodgings but occasionally he would travel sections of his route by wagon or chaise. A chaise was though his second choice for he always preferred to travel on horseback and stop at inns where he could sample 'good liquors and civility'- nothing pleased him more than to 'come across a host of communicative turn' as he found at Ollerton's Hope Pole Inn. Even when he knew the residents of country mansions he usually opted to stay at a local inn. In 1789 and 1790 he toured the Midlands and part of this tour took him through Nottinghamshire.

On arriving in Newark on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1789 he first noted the Sessions House. He described it as 'a fine building' further recording it had cost 'a fine sum'. He did not record where he stayed in Newark but he did record that it was 'cheap and the cooking good'. The fortifications around the town from the Civil

war days were also noted. After Newark, Byng heads towards Rufford. On the way he enjoyed a 'cheerful passage' passing through several villages, including Wellow and 'pleasant country'. But Rufford proved something of a disappointment to him and he lamented 'a lofty ugly addition' to the former monastic buildings....adding that 'the old rooms, now disused, are very melancholy'. Fortunately for Byng when he entered the kitchen he found 'a noble fire' that warmed 'two well-laden spits'.

This event appeared 'to proclaim a celebration of sheep shearing amidst the servants'. Moving on he came to Ollerton where he found the church to be 'ugly and ill-contrived' but the Hope Pole Inn provided a fine meal

to say nothing of the wine, punch, rum, brandy, cider and porter!

The next stop was Thoresby but this did not meet with his approval. He considered its French furniture to be 'gaudy' and 'all for show' and was not impressed by its 'useless china'. In fact he felt that 'the foolish expense and vanity of this duchess' were 'visible in every room'. Clumber, however, evoked a very different reaction. This was the 'best house I ever entered'. He loved its magnificent apartments, its library, its spacious apartments and 'noble' kitchen. He was also hugely impressed by its surrounding grounds and estates and took the opportunity here in his diary to promote his own ideas of administering the countryside through providing low-rent cottages each with 2 acres of land to encourage self sufficient living. On journeying to Worksop he travelled through more countryside that pleased his eye. In particular he admired the 'pleasant views' over Worksop Manor Woods. However his stay in Worksop was marred by conditions at the town's Red Lion Inn. His stay at that hostelry was 'of the worst kind' being 'upon a sweltering feather bed with a straw kind of mattress'.

Byng was a countryman at heart and was never happier than when riding through pleasing country landscapes or well-run rural estates. The occasional country seat produced his admiration but many, like Thoresby, left him cold. He did though admire entrepreneurs and appreciated the value of new industries. He greatly admired Wedgewood's creation of the Potteries and Arkwright's cotton mills at Cromford. The mills he likened to 'first rate men of war'. He added that

'when they are lighted up at night they look most luminously beautiful'.

John Byng had a great eye for the landscape and had the time and inclination to leave us a lasting legacy. His views could be a bit extreme. He seemed to have a particular dislike for the Scots. He said that 'like their native thistles' it seems 'they can never be weeded out!' As a Scotsman I have always tried to overlook this comment! Byng's writings may not be for everyone but he certainly has lots to say! So, if you have a bit of spare time you could keep an eye out in antiquarian bookshops (or on the internet!) for a set of his printed diaries or you can see a set of them at Nottinghamshire Archives (in the reference library in the Search Room).

**Chris Weir, President**



Thoresby Hall