



Bucks Archaeological Society Newsletter



Welcome to our second new look Newsletter – all comments welcome

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Society Spring Events and News

Saturday afternoon lectures Spring 2025 Illustrated on-line talks and face-to-face lectures held on the second Saturday of each month in the [Discover Bucks Museum](#), in Aylesbury starting at 2pm and lasting about one hour plus time for discussion. Refreshments are available after the event.

Saturday April 12th: John Nash and Clare Leighton: Bucks artist gardeners between the Wars
Speaker: Sarah Gray (**BAS Librarian**) Register now for the online lecture [Here](#) (We will email the Zoom meeting invitation to you).

Two artists deeply affected by the first World War who embedded themselves in the Bucks countryside in the 1920s and 1930s. They portrayed the landscapes of the Vale and of the Chilterns scarp and tended their gardens but also became activists in 1934 to defend Whiteleaf Cross against the pressures of creeping suburban sprawl and of the motor car.



Saturday May 10th (after the AGM): Thomas Jefferson and John Adams tour of English Gardens in 1786. Speaker: Julian Hunt (**BAS President**)

In April 1786, Thomas Jefferson, then the first American diplomat in Paris, visited John Adams, who was acting in a similar position in London. They embarked on a tour of English landscape gardens, including Wotton Underwood, Stowe, The Leasowes, Hagley Hall and Blenheim. Julian follows their journey, quoting from their diaries and displaying their surviving tavern bills on route.



Active Archaeology Group (AAG) Thursday evening talks in October to May

A programme of talks at 7.30pm on the second Thursday evening of each month in the Discover Bucks Museum and on Zoom. All are welcome to attend at no charge. Entrance is from the footpath on the side of the building that faces St Mary's Churchyard. These illustrated talks will also be streamed on-line. Click here for [information about the Society's AAG talks](#).



Thursday 10th April **Volunteer post-excavation Work at Cookham Priory** **Keith Abbott**

Keith will discuss working on the finds from the excavations at Cookham Priory, uncovering a 'lost' early medieval (8th and 9th Century Mercian) site next to the Thames. **Register for this meeting [Here](#) if you want to attend via Zoom**, otherwise please come to the Museum.

Thursday 8th May

Further excavations at Old Linslade Holy Well details to follow

Active Archaeology Group (AAG) Fieldwork Update

We have lost some days to the weather but have managed to complete our work at **Great Linford Manor** for the season.

In **Trench 11** we explored the back of the wall, and clarified a large area of damage repaired while the ha-ha was still in use. We clarified the front surface of the wall, and located the foundations so were able to take some measurements. After recording this trench was backfilled.

Trench 12C was complicated and often wet with a lot of sticky clay. The main wall came to a clear end but a secondary wall branched off to the south east



where a large slab was laid across the junction of the two parts of the wall. When lifted, the large slab proved to be a reused coping stone from elsewhere in the park. After recording, the trench was backfilled.

The team opened a new Trench (C) and continued work in two earlier trenches at **Stanton Low**. These showed that debris from the Manor demolition (1760s) spills down to the base of the garden terrace.



The key find during this period was a small flint tool, found in **Trench B**.



The new **Trench C** has exposed the top of the debris before we closed for the winter break.

Can you help? If you would like to take part in the group's field activities, such as surveys and excavations, there is one requirement: everyone taking part **must [join the Bucks Archaeological Society](#)** – because membership brings with it insurance against accident while involved in archaeological activities.

Ready for the 2025 season.

Pauline Hey and Douglas Stuckey March 2025
For a more detailed report click [here](#)



Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Joan Elding Prize 2025



Do you know an individual or organisation that has made a substantial contribution to conserving, enjoying and understanding Buckinghamshire's heritage?

The biennial BAS Prize is open to any individuals, local societies, public bodies and commercial organisations who have done or supported archaeological or historical work in the county. Previous winners are:

- **Mike Farley** for his lifetime contribution to Buckinghamshire's archaeology
- **Tabatha Barton** for Milton Keynes Museum's restoration of a Roman mosaic from Bancroft villa
- **Seer Green & Jordan's Society** for 'Our Living Village' Project



Nominations can be made by anyone and are [open on the BAS website until May 31st](#).



We are looking for contributions to one or more of these objectives:

- Advancing knowledge of the county's archaeology and history
- Promoting public awareness of, involvement in and enjoyment of the county's archaeology and history
- Protecting or conserving some important aspect of the county's heritage
- Demonstrating enthusiasm and/or innovation in achieving the above



The prize will be awarded at the Buckinghamshire Local History Network Conference in October 2025.

Society Membership Subscription Renewal for 2025

A last-ditch reminder - the BAS membership year runs with the calendar year so subscription payments were due on the 2nd January.

Membership subscription rates for 2025 remain the same as last year:

Ordinary (individual) membership = **£24**

Family (all family members residing at the registered address) = **£26**

Junior membership (under 18, with RoB) = **£12** **Junior** membership (under 18, without RoB) = **£6**

Affiliate membership (for institutions) = **£26**

Reminders have been sent to all last year's members who either did not have an autorenewal arrangement in place or whose subscription amount was still at pre-2023 subscription rates (**please update your payment amount if this applies to you**).

We offer several alternative **ways to pay**:

1. Make a **direct bank transfer** to our account: **Lloyds Bank sort code 30-90-38; account number 00086161; account name 'Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society'**. Please use as reference: **'MemSub' and your surname**.
2. Complete and return a **Bank Standing Order** mandate, for which a template is available by request (**please leave the initial payment date blank** for us to complete when we send to your bank)
3. Apologies but we are unable to take online payments at the moment but click [here to go directly to the BAS membership page](#) for more information
4. Send a **cheque made out to 'Bucks Archaeological Society'** by post to: Harry Ball, BAS Treasurer, Bucks Archaeological Society, Discover Bucks Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury, HP20 2QP.
5. Of course, we will always accept cash if that is most convenient for you!

And if you are a tax-payer then please consider making a Gift Aid declaration as this is worth an extra 25% to BAS (as we are a charity) at no extra cost to yourself.

If you do not intend to renew your membership for this year then please let the Membership Secretary know (by email to membership@bucksas.org.uk, or telephone the BAS Library **01296 798015** and leave a voicemail).

Nigel Rothwell, BAS Membership Secretary

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

PROGRAMME 2025

Meetings are being held on Wednesdays at **8.00 pm online through Zoom**
(**excepting the June event which will be in-person**)

<http://buckshistoricalassociation.org.uk/>

16 APR Prof Martyn Rady, Emeritus Professor of Central European History, Univ College London
The Hapsburgs: The Making of a Dynasty

21 MAY Prof William Doyle, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Bristol
Robespierre and Danton

7/14/21 JUNE **SUMMER Afternoon Event** (*details will be forthcoming in the year*)

Admission to meetings is **free** to full and associate members of the Historical Association.

Visitors and Students WELCOME and donations of £3 appreciated.

Please contact secretary for details:

Terry Bloxham (Hon Secretary), 138 High Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1RB

Tel: 07952 703535 E-mail: secretarybucksha@gmail.com



We are always on the look-out for willing speakers, heritage crafts people, site visits and of course any excavation or other archaeological / heritage activity. If you can offer help, please contact us at: chilternyac@hotmail.co.uk ; it is also very rewarding and great fun! We are currently based in Jordans Village Hall, near Chalfont St Giles.

New 2025 Season update

In October

Doug Stuckey, BAS Chair, volunteered to come and talk to us about the Aztecs and their predecessors, lots of cultures ending in “tec”... We discussed which foods originated in the New World and then had a tasty practical “create your own guacamole” break.



In December

Dr David Saunders was another keen volunteer from BAS who gave a fascinating workshop on Paleolithic art techniques. We tried scratching lines on shells like Homo erectus and ended up crawling in a ‘dark cave’ under a table to experience our own Lascaux Cave. How many teenagers can you fit under a hall table? Quite a few, as it turns out...



Our 2025 programme so far includes Iron Age hoards; how to curate material with Amersham Museum; practical archaeology with CHAPS; RB pottery with Lucy Lawrence; looking at Lidar with the Ridgeway Lidar project & always looking for places to dig...

To read the full YAC Newsletter click [HERE](#)

Further information on the YAC organisation is available at <https://www.yac-uk.org/clubs/chiltern/>

Library and Archives List of Periodicals

The Society receives by subscription or donation a wide variety of periodicals from national and local historical and archaeological societies, ranging from academic journals to more informal newsletters, all of which are held in the Society's Library at the Discover Bucks Museum. They constitute an important information resource and, in some cases, may be the only copies of these publications in any library in the County that are accessible to the general public.

Members and non-members are welcome to visit the Library to consult any of this material during our regular opening hours of 10am-3pm every Wednesday. As we are short of space, these publications are not all on the open shelves in the Library but we will be happy to fetch items on request. Members of the Society are also permitted to borrow journals and newsletters, but this service is not available to non-members.

This is a list of the journals, newsletters and reports held by the Society. Please note that series are not necessarily complete and there may be gaps within the covering dates indicated. As you can see, many of the titles are no longer being received. There is no need to make an appointment on Wednesdays if you are coming to browse but if you are intending to consult a particular title, it may be advisable to check that we do hold it (and that it is not out on loan).

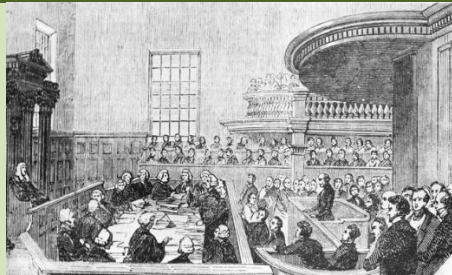
Our contact details are bucksas@discoverbucksmuseum.org and 01296 798015 (voicemail), but please be aware that our voicemails are only checked on Wednesdays.

Sarah Gray & David Noy, BAS Librarian & Archivist

Agricultural History Review, 1953-2013; Supplements, 1999-2009
Ancient Monuments Society: Transactions, 1961-date; Newsletter, 1981-date
Antiquaries Journal (formerly Society of Antiquaries Journal), 1950-2001
Antiquity, 1927-81
Archaeologia, 1906, 1947-91
Archaeological Journal (Royal Archaeological Institute), 1964-date; Supplements, 1988-date; also RAI Newsletter, 2000-09
Archaeology in Marlow Newsletter, 2003-07
Archaeology International, 1997/8-2012/3 (see also Institute of Archaeology)
Archives (British Records Association), 1999-2010
Aylesbury Society Magazine, 1989-date
BBOWT (formerly BBONT) Wildlife News, 1994-date
Beaconsfield & District Historical Society Newsletter, 2002-04, 2012, 2014
Berkshire Archaeological Journal, 1895-date
Bird Notes (RSPB), 1955-65
Bird Study (British Trust for Ornithology), 1965-84
Birds (later Nature's Home) (RSPB), 1994-2014
British Archaeological Association Journal, 1911-date
British Archaeology, 1995-date
BTO News (British Trust for Ornithology), 1990-date
Buckingham & District Archaeological & Historical Society Newsletter, 2004-10
Bucks Archaeological Society Newsletter, 1976-date
Bucks Countryside, 1996-2006
Bucks County Museum, Friends & Patrons Newsletter, 2001-04; 2015-25
Bucks Gardener (Bucks Gardens Trust newsletter), 2000-11; 2013-20
Bucks Record Office Report & Lists of Accessions, 1976-1999/2000 (see also Centre for Bucks Studies)
Bucks Record Society publications, 1937-date

Centre for Bucks Studies newsletter: The Researcher, 1995-98; Off The Record, 2005-date
 Chess Valley Newsletter/Journal, 1973-date
 Chiltern Conservation Board: Chilternsaetna (Archaeology & History Newsletter), 2007-date; Chalk & Trees, 2011, 2015
 Chiltern Society: Chiltern News (later Chiltern), 1994-date; also Jubilee Survey Treasures List, 1977/78
 Chiltern Woodland Project: News of the Woods, 2007-08; Special Trees & Woods of the Chilterns, c.2006-10
 Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Local History Group Newsletter, 2000-10
 Current Archaeology, 1998-date
 Czechs & Chequers newsletter, 2005-08
 East Herts Archaeological Society Transactions, 1899-1961
 English Heritage: Conservation Bulletin, 2006-14, Heritage Counts, 2006, 2008, Research News, 2006-13
 Garden History, a broken run Volumes 18-50, 1990-2022, most volumes present
 Georgian, The, 1999-date
 Georgian Group Journal, 1987-date
 Heritage Alliance: Heritage Update, 2015-date
 Hertfordshire Archaeology (later Hertfordshire Archaeology & History), 1968-2009
 High Wycombe Society Newsletter, 2002-date
 Institute of Archaeology: Reports, 1946-56; Bulletin, 1958-94 (later Archaeology International, q.v.)
 John Hampden Society: The Patriot (newsletter): 1996-2001
 Lincoln Record Society publications, 1912-97 (not complete)
 Lincolnshire Architectural & Archaeological Society Reports, 1936-63
 Lincolnshire History & Archaeology, 1968-77
 Local Historian, 1976-2013
 Local Population Studies, 1968-72
 London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1856-date
 Marlow Society Annual Review, 2001-08/9; Newsletter, 2000-08; Times Past, 2002-04
 Medieval Archaeology, 1960-2013
 Medieval Settlement Research Group Reports, 1986-2005
 Medieval Village (formerly Deserted Medieval Village) Research Group Reports, 1955-85
 Milton Keynes Archaeology News, 1978-81
 Milton Keynes Journal of Archaeology & History, 1972-82
 Moated Site Research Group Reports, 1973-80 (not complete)
 Newport Pagnell Historical Society Newsletter, 2001
 Northamptonshire Antiquarian Society Reports & Papers, 1937-63
 Oxfordshire Record Society publications, 1921, 1947-date
 Oxoniensia, 1936-date
 Pitstone & Marsworth Museum Society Newsletter, 2002-04
 Post-Medieval Archaeology, 1967-75
 Rare Books Newsletter, 2002-08
 Royal Archaeological Institute (see Archaeological Journal)
 Royal Commission on Historical MSS: Reports, 1968-99; Annual Review, 1988/9-2002/3
 Royal Commission on Historical Monuments: Annual Review (later Annual Report), 1987/8-1998/9
 Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: News, 1980-date; Reports (later Annual Review), 1966-69, 1978-date
 Society of Indexers Genealogical Group Newsletter, 1998-2003
 South Eastern Naturalist & Antiquary, 1944-63
 South Midlands Archaeology (formerly CBA Group 9), 1971-date
 Surrey Archaeological Collections, 1955-date
 Surrey Archaeological Society: Annual Reports, 1959-63; Research Volumes, 1974-81
 Vernacular Architecture, 1970-91, 2011-21
 Wolverton & District Archaeological Society, Newsletter/Journal, 1958-70; Newsletter, 1996, 2014
 Young Archaeologist, 1998-2014 (now published digitally)

A fairly gruesome project, but **Mike Farley** writes that he hopes (soon ...) to conclude some research on **gallows sites in Buckinghamshire**. As has been noted on many occasions field names containing a 'gallows' or related element such as 'gally', can provide a useful clue to the location of former sites. Such names often appear on local estate maps and sale catalogues as well as on tithe and inclosure maps. So, if you are aware of any that you have noted then Mike would be pleased to hear from you. (mfarchaeol@btinternet.com). For those interested in this topic the Historic Environment Records of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes include a number of references to known or suspected locations.



Aylesbury's original gallows was sited on the Bicester road, close to the town's northern boundary. Subsequently, between 1810 and 1864, a front window of Buckinghamshire's County Hall (behind which was the county gaol), was utilised to provide access to a 'drop'. Executions, the last of John Tawell in 1845, drew substantial crowds to witness the event from the adjoining Market Square. Tawell, wearing his distinctive long brown Quaker coat, was tried in the Aylesbury Court-house behind for the murder of his mistress.

Dangerous Pamphlets

It is well-known that in the mid-eighteenth century the 'authorities' spent many years attempting to prevent the circulation of essays produced by one John Wilkes, member of Parliament for Aylesbury, well-known libertine, proponent of 'liberty' and resident of Prebendal House. In particular he supported the 'common law' and refused to accept the right of the monarch to override same. For a fascinating account of his life see Arthur Cash's *John Wilkes: the Scandalous Father of Civil Liberty*. In view of his historic significance both for Britain and America, it is strange that he is not commemorated among the town's statues.

Browsing through the published Quarter Session records of 1694-1705, it was interesting to discover that in 1702 an earlier radical had a home in Aylesbury. The entry reads as follows:

'The Court was informed that Thomas Read, who keeps a public Coffee house in the town of Aylesbury, had in his Custody several dangerous Pamphletts exposed to reading in his said Coffee house. He was sent for to attend the Court and was reprimanded, with a caution not to take in any scandalous pamphletts for the future. The pamphlets were ordered to be burnt in the open Markett day att Aylesbury.'

Following on tradition, do you think the inhabitants should be scouring the premises of Café Nero or Costa for 'dangerous pamphletts' on display?



Prebendal House in 1980

Mike F

Some good news - if you will be looking for reading matter in AD 2031.

Many of us will have wondered when we will see final reports on the extensive archaeological investigation conducted on the route of HS2. Well at last we have news (of a kind). Helen Wass, head of Historic Environment at HS2 Ltd, has written in the CBA's publication *British Archaeology* for November/December 2024 that, [at last] a contract has been awarded to the Access + consortium whose contract 'marks the beginning of a six-year research and analysis phase'.

It would now be interesting to hear whether any of these results will be in hard print and where/how will the immense amount of space required to store the finds be located, bearing in mind the parlous state of many museums.

Mike F



Roman-period portrait of a lady discovered quite unexpectedly during HS2's excavation on the site of the former parish church of Stoke Mandeville. photo Mike Farley

Now, just who could the portrait head depict?

The female portrait head was found alongside two others - of a man and a child - so this may be a family portrait group from a mausoleum under the medieval parish church. Research and conservation cleaning continue but an early research thread was based on the hairstyle of the lady and whether provincial fashions followed the distinctive styles of the Imperial Court.

One thought was to look at Hadrian's long-suffering wife, Vibia Sabina (83-136/137 CE), a resemblance which would point to an early second century CE date.

Sabina probably endured poor relations with her husband though she accumulated more public honors in Rome and the provinces than any imperial woman had enjoyed since the first empress, Augustus' wife Livia. Indeed, Sabina is the first woman whose image features on a regular and continuous series of coins minted at Rome and she was the most traveled and visible empress to date, accompanying the Emperor on his inspection of the northern frontier of Britannia in 122 CE.

The *Historia Augusta* reports that the historian Suetonius, who was Hadrian's secretary, was dismissed by Hadrian from his position in 119, for 'conducting [himself] toward his wife, Sabina, in a more informal fashion than the etiquette of the court demanded.' Meanwhile, her husband was thought to be more interested in his favourite Antinous and Sabina died without children.

Even allowing for the more provincial skills of the craftsman who carved the Stoke Mandeville head in Cotswold (Bibury) stone, this clearly does not emulate the centrally parted hairdo of the Empress. And many of the coins of Sabina show a pigtail plait in profile which again does not fit with the lady from Stoke Mandeville.

<https://www.coinarchives.com/a/results.php?search=SABINA+AUGUSTA+AND>



A montage of portrait busts of the Empress Sabina from museums in Rome and Tivoli.

Other possibilities

During the cleaning and conservation of the statues, further details emerged as can be seen in this YouTube video

https://youtu.be/4RCwsCi_44A

Although the statues were found in a ditch alongside a glass vessel and cremation burials, the state of preservation would indicate that they were originally inside a building. Unusually, the sides of the torsos are decorated rather than depicting arms.

David Noy muses that 'Very interesting, especially the glass vessel. There was a bit of a provincial fashion for depicting the deceased as a goddess, usually Venus or Ariadne I think, so that might come into it.'

Research continues but, as Mike writes, no definitive answers will emerge for at least six years...

Sarah Gray



A detail of the back of the head of the adult female statue after cleaning

Flackwell Local Area History Group

Flackwell Local Area History Group (FLAHG) covers Flackwell Heath, Loudwater, Wooburn Green and the surrounding areas. The Group was set up in April 2012, originally to attract footfall into the newly constituted Community Library, but it soon became a focus for our talented local historians and people eager to learn about our history and share their memories.

Anyone who is a Friend of Flackwell Heath Library is automatically a member of FLAHG and we have a lively Research Group with projects such as researching our past, archiving, organising speakers, running our website and Facebook pages, publicising our events and delivering talks.

We hold nine talks every year and attract audiences of 50 to 60 people. Over the years diverse topics have included: local farm ownership and use of land, chairmaking and the papermills, the paper riots of 1830 and the fate of the rioters, the changes brought by the railways, the history of technical education in the area, and the impact of both world wars.

We have a full programme of events during 2025, with talks from our own local historians and from external speakers from further afield. For our programme and other interesting information and photographs take a look at our website www.localhistorygroup.org.uk and Facebook page (Flackwell Heath, Loudwater & Wooburn Local History Group).

Sue Granshaw

Hon Secretary, Flackwell Local Area History Group

To find out more about **FLAHG** click [HERE](#)



St Osyth's Day

The aim of this preliminary study is to examine the way St Osyth was remembered in Buckinghamshire, particularly the celebration of her feast day. Though not directly addressing the question of the historical Osyth, some suggestions about the historical origins of Osyth's cult will emerge from this examination.



An illuminated capital commencing the anonymous *La Vie seinte Osith, virge e martire* (Campsey Manuscript, British Library Additional Ms 70513, fol. 134v)

Both Hohler (RoB vol.18) and Hagerty (RoB vol.29) have noted that the memory of Osyth remained strong in the Aylesbury area (though Hagerty thought that Osyth had replaced an original cult of St Edith). This is the evidence Hohler presented for the continued memory of Osyth in mid-Buckinghamshire:

- c.1200 William de Vere, Bishop of Hereford, wrote a 'Life' of St Osyth (now lost, but extracts are preserved by Leland, mid 16thC). The 'Life' establishes that at the end of the twelfth century two things (at least) were believed about Osyth in Aylesbury: a) about her life, that she was born at her parents' home at Quarrendon, and was brought up by her aunt at Aylesbury; and b) about her cult, that miracles were attributed to her 'Osyth distinguished Aylesbury by many miracles' (Leland apparently quoting de Vere).
- 1239: A charter of Henry III granted a fair at Aylesbury 'on the day of St Osyth's translation' (with 'translation' struck through), and acknowledged that there was an existing fair which had been held for a long time past on 'the feast of St Osyth in the summer'.
- 1319: A Medmenham Abbey charter relating to Darnedene (Beaconsfield) is dated 'On Sunday, the feast of St Osyth', which would be 3 June (= 'the feast of St Osyth in the summer').
- Although the 'official' feast of St Osyth is 7 October, there are a number of monastic calendars ('those whose home lies nearest Aylesbury': Hohler) which place her feast on 3 June.
- c.1500 Robert Harom, Vicar of Aylesbury, opened a tomb which he claimed to be that of St Osyth in Aylesbury church and was evidently attempting to promote Aylesbury as a centre for the cult of St Osyth, until ordered to desist by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1502 because Harom was challenging St Osyth in Essex as the recognised resting-place of Osyth.

Here we can add three more pieces of evidence for the observation of St Osyth's day in mid-Buckinghamshire on 3 June and for its significance in the locality:

- 1299 Haddenham manor account roll. Under 'account of the plough' the manorial servant accounts for 4s for four measures of iron utensils 'bought at **the fair (nundinae) of St Osyth the Virgin**', and for 5s for 6 iron bolts bought at the same time. The reference must be to the celebration of the saint on 3 June, because this account only covered the period from 21 May to 2 August.
- 1346 Feoffment: Gerard de Braybrok, knight, lord of Horsenden, granted to Nicholas Petipas a messuage and croft in Horsenden, Dated at Horsenden **Tuesday after feast of St Osyth, Virgin**, 20 Edward III.
- 1357 Court of King's Bench session at High Wycombe, Michaelmas 1357: 'Walter Billyng, Rector of the church of *Eselburgh* came to Stoke Hallyng on the **Monday after the feast of St Osyth the Virgin** in the thirty-first year of the reign of the King of England that now is and there he feloniously seized [*rapuit*] a certain Joanna, daughter of John of Hallyng and took her away etc.' The reference to the feast of St Osyth must be to the celebration on 3 June, otherwise if we take the 'official' date of 7 October the alleged crime would have taken place after the session of the court.

(Incidentally, this is one of a number of alleged abductions by clergy in Bucks in the late 14thC-mid-15thC, which would be a study in themselves).

Observations

1. The memory of St Osyth as a local figure was retained throughout the Middle Ages (de Vere's 'Life' c.1200, Robert Harom's promotion of Osyth's tomb c.1500).
2. The importance of St Osyth's day was particularly evident in the centre of the county (the only reference well outside the Vale is Medmenham's Beaconsfield charter of 1319).
3. The Aylesbury fair of St Osyth 'in the summer' remained important even after Henry III's charter of 1239 granting a second fair later in the year (Haddenham account roll, 1299).
4. St Osyth was recalled in Bucks consistently as a virgin, and not, as in Essex, as virgin *and* martyr. This may suggest that the two cult centres were based on different individuals.
5. In Bucks St Osyth's day was celebrated on 3 June, while at Chich/St Osyth she was celebrated on 7 October. The different dates for their celebrations may also suggest different individuals.

If anyone knows of any other reference to **St Osyth**, especially to **St Osyth's day**, I'd be glad to know.

Will Strange

will.a.strange@gmail.com

Of Sarsens, Puddingstones and Climate Change

Puddingstone (Fig. 1) is a conglomeratic sedimentary rock; it is unusual in that it is made of rounded (quartz) flint pebbles set in a (quartz) sand matrix, and bound together by silica (quartz) cement. Thus, it is a type of sarsenstone; technically these rocks are called silcretes, a family of silica cemented sedimentary rocks which form a 'spectrum' from fine-grained sandstones to coarse conglomerates. Famously, sarsenstones form the trilithons and outer circle at Stonehenge (Fig. 3). Sarsens occur across Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire (and further afield) as glacial erratics (Fig. 4), and as rare sandstone outcrops within the chalk, like the Denner Hill stone quarried from Hughenden / Prestwood and Bradenham in the 19th century. The Denner Hill stone was used for the stone setts, kerbs and gutters of (Local Heritage Listed) Aylesbury Market Square (Fig. 2) and elsewhere across the region. Although it is hard to work, this material is extremely hard-wearing and thus is well suited for use as grinding stones and for paving heavy traffic areas. The example Roman grindstone illustrated here (Fig. 1) would have been fitted with a wooden handle for use as a rotary quern.



Figure 1. Puddingstone quern, Hambleton (©Jill Eyers)



Figure 2 Cobble setts & Gutter, Aylesbury Market Place



Figure 3. Stonehenge (CCo 1.0 UPDD)



Figure 4. Sarsenstone, Grim's Ditch, HS2 Hunts Green

These silcretes were formed during a particularly warm period some 55.8 Ma (million years ago), a period known as the Palaeocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (PETM). Overlying the puddingstones across the Southeast of England are the early Eocene Reading Beds, containing the London Clay Formation, source of much of our regional brick-clays. During the PETM (around 55.8 Ma) when greenhouse gases were released at an alarming rate, with an increase in volcanic activity resulting in a global average temperature increase of 5-8°C. The boundary between the Palaeocene and Eocene epochs is geologically defined by extinctions in the fossil record, oceans became more acidic and many modern mammal species (including primates) started to appear in Europe and North America.

This is not a perfect analogy; the Late Palaeocene was already a warmer environment before the release of these gases than the Earth is now; but it is the best we have for understanding how global warming impacts our planet. However, the rate of carbon release during the PETM pales in comparison to the anthropogenic driven emissions of today, which owe nothing to volcanic activity. These silcretes offer a hard and stark lesson – planet Earth can adapt to sudden climate changes, but the ability of humankind to do so is far less certain.

Nigel Rothwell

To find out more about the geological background click [HERE](#)

Inspired by, and partially based on, an article written by Dr. Bryan Lovell and published in the Winter 2024 edition of 'Geoscientist', the magazine of The Geological Society of London. Bryan, a long-term resident of Hertford and keen puddingstone aficionado, died in September 2024. And to accompany - here is Mike Excell conveying Bryan's message in song: <https://youtu.be/zymatD3aUZc>

As many will know, the **National Library of Scotland** hosts a magnificent **online maps resource** on the website

[Map images - National Library of Scotland](#) .

Recently spotted in a post by Garden Heritage on X, formerly Twitter, was a new overlay on the NLS website to plot Historic Parks in England 1890s-1900s, on 1888-1915 maps, allowing comparisons with their current form, at

bit.ly/4d7SCvg .

The screenshot shows the National Library of Scotland website interface. At the top left is the logo for the National Library of Scotland, with the Gaelic text 'Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba'. At the top right is the logo for ZULU ECOSYSTEMS. The main heading is 'Historic parks in England, 1890s-1900s'. Below this are options for 'Overlay viewer' and 'Side by side viewer'. A navigation bar contains the links 'Maps home > Projects > Historic parks, 1890s-1900s'. The central part of the image is a map of England with a red line indicating the border with Scotland and numerous green dots representing historic parks. On the left side of the map are navigation controls: a '+' button for zoom in, a '-' button for zoom out, a magnifying glass icon for search, and a square with an 'X' icon for full screen. At the bottom left is a 'Help' button, and at the bottom center are icons for a stack of papers and a printer.

Lloyd Haberly, *The Keeper of the Doves* (Seven Acres Press, Long Crendon, 1933).

While living at Long Crendon in the 1930s, the American artist Lloyd Haberly composed a story in verse concerning a young boy, Michael, who arrives at Notley Abbey on a Maundy Thursday with nothing but his bundle over his shoulder, and his tame hare under his arm. Michael is soon revealed to be the son of the now-dead Wat Tyler, leader of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

The abbot, John Winchendon, immediately recognises a kindred spirit, partly because he, too, arrived at the abbey in a similar state sixty years before, also on Maundy Thursday, and as a boy the abbot, like Michael, climbed the precinct wall and courageously jumped down from it. Michael's affinity with animals and birds leads to him becoming keeper of the abbey's doves, initially kept in the gatehouse.

When the abbey is threatened with an attack by Sir John Walsingrime and fifty knights from Windsor, Michael and the abbot find hiding places for the abbey's treasure. And when Sir John and his knights enter the abbey during Mattins the abbot and Michael (following a plan devised by Michael) foil them – Michael himself knocking Sir John over with a thurible. When Sir John dies as a result of Michael's blow, the canons make Michael a novice with the name of Columba (which means 'dove') to protect him from prosecution and to hide his name of 'Tyler'.

The abbot and Michael ride out to seek the king and give their version of events. As the canons wait anxiously at the abbey, one of Michael's pigeons (he has also trained a flock of carrier pigeons) brings back the good news that 'At the sight of a Novice so small, / and yet so stout, the King had pardoned all'. In the absence of the abbot and Michael, the 'monks' set to work and build the dovecote which still stands, 'after Michael's plan':

'The monument to steadfast will / And simple courage that in staunchness still / Broods over the green valley and the stream, / From whose smooth banks has vanished as a dream / That home of piety and peace and love, / Where nought [sic] is heard now but the mournful dove.'

Haberly not only wrote the verse, he personally illustrated the story, typeset and printed the book, bound it and published it in a limited edition of 100 copies. Haberly's poetic dedication of the book to Christopher Hohler makes clear that he had worked with Hohler in the latter's excavation of floor tiles at Notley and this experience clearly fired his imagination, even though it would be hard to imagine someone temperamentally more different from the meticulous Hohler.

Haberly's text, for instance, unlike Hohler's notes, contains several errors. Also, Haberly's literary flights of fancy have been overtaken by later discoveries: John Winchendon was no longer abbot at the time of Wat Tyler's death; architectural historians now believe that the dovecote was built long after the abbey's dissolution; and Notley's canons wore black, not white. But for all that, *The Keeper of the Doves* is the story of religious life which G A Henty would have written (if he had written his adventure stories in rhyming couplets).



To Christopher Hohler.

ALL those secrets, open laid
By your' trowel and my spade,
That in broken accents say
"Heaven on earth has passed away,"
You will dress, in season due,
With learned words, as fresh as true,
Building NOTLEY'S fame anew.
But to those happy weeks we spent,
This is the poet's monument.

Will Strange has sent

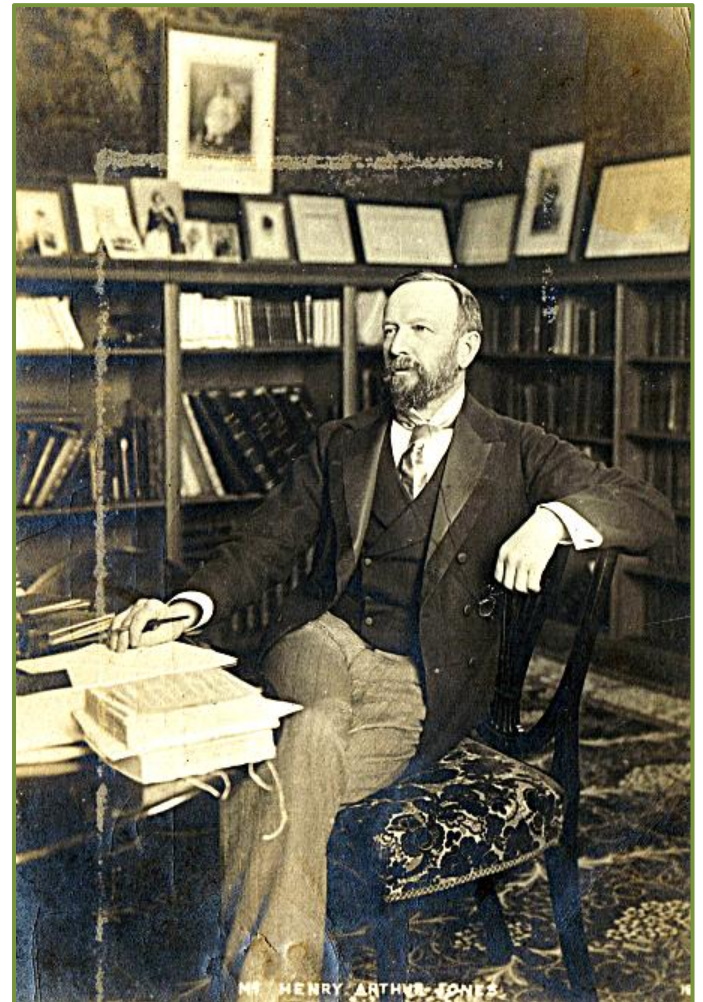
'Something a bit light-hearted about Lloyd Haberly, an American book illustrator and printer who set up an art press at Long Crendon in the 1930s, and printed his own poem about Notley, dedicated to Christopher Hohler (I attach a piece which I thought about adding as a fun appendix to *Notley Abbey*). Haberly was quite a character. He went on to run the art press at Gregynog in Montgomeryshire. He had a wonderful gift of annoying people without realising it, as when, at Gregynog, he printed a limited edition of a Welsh poet's poems, and 'improved' the text without consulting the poet.'

Will Strange

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A dramatist, an Arts & Crafts architect and a farmhouse at Steeple Claydon

Charles Spooner (1862–1938) was a successful Arts & Crafts architect. This drawing and plan of one of his designs “for a small farm-house” was published in 1906. Spooner’s client Henry Arthur Jones (1851–1929), eldest son of Silvanus Jones of Winslow, was at the height of his success as a playwright in the same period.



Although Henry Arthur left Winslow when he was thirteen, he regularly visited his father (a farmer, cattle dealer and local Liberal politician), and his career was followed closely by the *Bucks Herald*, which usually referred to “the famous dramatist”. The house designed by Spooner can be identified (with thanks to Clive Dobbs) as Windmill Hill Farm, Sandhill Road, Steeple Claydon, which survives largely in its original form despite not being a listed building.

Silvanus Jones was the tenant of Windmill Hill Farm, and Henry Arthur bought the freehold from the Butterfield family for £3,200 in 1891. He decided to build a new farmhouse in a fashionable style so that his brother Charles Jones could move in. He spent £600–£700 on it and Charles was living there by 1896, but left in 1900, apparently for health reasons.

Other tenants occupied the farm at an annual rent of £165. Silvanus died in 1915, and Henry Arthur tried to sell his father’s and his own Buckinghamshire property, but did not find a buyer for Windmill Hill until 1917 when Thomas Sidney Perry of East Claydon paid £3,300.

David Noy

For the whole story of Windmill Hill Farm click [HERE](#)



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