

NEWSLETTER January 2024



Oundle from the sky

Photograph used with the kind permission of Glenn Jones
of Airstream Media <https://airstreammedia.co.uk/>

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024 and my last Chairman's message before I stand down in April.

2023 was another successful year for the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum. Your hard-working committee supported members throughout the year and delivered excellent events for members.

Partnership and working together for mutual benefit has developed further. A recent example was the History Day in Oundle, organised by a partnership of the Oundle School Archive, Oundle Museum and the Oundle Historical Society. It was a splendid day and enjoyed by all.

I am sure that members will be looking forward to collecting the newly printed heritage booklets in April. The previous edition of 25,000 was immensely popular and has contributed significantly to the raising of the profile of member's venues and events. Together with our individual websites and social media, we will continue to spread the message of Northamptonshire's wonderful heritage offer.

In April members will also receive the latest edition of the Forum's journal, 'Hindsight'. With additional copies printed it has been possible to share this excellent publication more widely. It is popular with both readers and contributors and plays an important part in bringing our heritage community together.

The newsletter continues to be a welcome opportunity for our members to promote their activities. Please continue to utilise this widely distributed publication. We welcome Colin Ashworth as our new newsletter editor.

The ability of the website to inform the wider public about the Forum's purpose and membership continues to grow, as does the number of visitors. Please ensure that your entry is up to date.

It has been a huge privilege to have been asked to be the Chairman of the Northamptonshire Heritage Forum and to have been elected by its membership. I cannot thank the committee and the members enough for the support and friendship I have received from them during my term of office.

I have felt huge encouragement from all the stakeholders in the county who value the Heritage Forum and have been so willing to engage with us.

It is a time for fresh thinking and new leadership. I wish the Heritage Forum every success for the future.

Martin Lawrence MBE - Chairman

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I am writing by way of introducing myself, further to the brief biography which appears on the Forum website. I took on the role of Editor after a short conversation with Janet Lawrence (at a committee meeting of the Northamptonshire Family History Society), followed by a few emails and a Zoom 'interview' with Martin. I am most grateful to Janet for guiding me through the editing process of this, my first issue. I still expect to be finding my feet for a while, but in the next issue I shall be 'flying solo'. I bring experience from two other Family History Journals, which I still edit, but every publication is different and comes with its own challenges. Constructive feedback is welcome, so please do get in touch. I also hope I have not missed out any material which was sent in, as a result of the change in the Editor's email address.

I spent 40 years as a teacher before retiring so I daresay what follows may sound rather didactic. Suffice it to say that these few simple guidelines can potentially save me a great deal of time.

- Please send your articles **directly** to the new email address nhforumnewsletter@outlook.com before the deadline, if possible. The deadline does have to be the deadline!
- Your email subject should contain your society name or the title of your article, not just 'Article for Newsletter'.
- It is very helpful if images are (also) sent as separate .jpg files. Please confirm that we have permission to reproduce the images and tell us if we need to credit the photographer. Captions are also helpful.
- Please remember to include the author's name at the end of your article.

Thank you!

I look forward to working with and getting to know Forum members both 'electronically' and in person over the coming months (and years).

Colin Ashworth

The deadline for the next edition of the Newsletter is

Sunday, 7 April 2024

For publication before the end of April

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Dear Forum Member

Happy New Year to you and we hope you had an enjoyable Christmas.

FORUM BOOKLET 2024

The Forum's aim for the first part of this year is to produce the biennial Forum Booklet for 2024-2026. It will be overseen this year under the direction of Committee Members, Jon-Paul Carr assisted by Lynne Dickens and Katie Boyce.

Most of you will have seen the hard copy that was produced back in 2022. Please follow the link to the online 2022 booklet version for information: [Heritage Booklet — Northamptonshire Heritage Forum](#)

The Forum will produce around 30,000 of the booklets for 2024-2026 that will be distributed both to members and to other locations around Northamptonshire as well as further afield.

To enable ease of production this time by the volunteer team undertaking the work we have produced some electronic links for you to update, change aspects of your entry, or say your booklet entry as it appeared in 2022 is still valid.

The links will also enable the Volunteer team to check your Website entry as well – so please do make yourself aware of your Website entry as well at this address [Northamptonshire Heritage Forum](#)

Please choose one of the following electronic links below to complete your booklet and website entry depending what type of Forum Member you are:

Historic Houses, Heritage Sites and Archives, Museums and Galleries

<https://forms.gle/xA9xkYufJgkQHxoBA>

Societies and Organisations

<https://forms.gle/93UwppZWWhyXoG4JC9>

Individual and Joint Members who offered Talks and Tours

<https://forms.gle/krT3GttUgRiLQk88A>

As we are on a tight schedule for production - PLEASE COULD YOU COMPLETE BY THE 26 JANUARY 2024

We look forward to hearing from you as we do need your email consent for your information to appear in the booklet. Without it your details will not appear.

FORUM MEMBERSHIP 2024-2025

By agreeing to appear in the 2024 Booklet and also by updating the Website you will be agreeing to pay your Membership for 2024-2025.

If you have any questions about any of the above please do get in touch with the Forum by emailing: northamptonshireheritageforum@gmail.com

WELLINGBOROUGH DISTRICT HINDU ASSOCIATION



Wellingborough District Hindu Association (WDHA) hosted the annual community Diwali dinner, in collaboration with Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, on 18 November 2023.



His Majesty The King has approved the KAVS National Assessment Committee's recommendation that the volunteers of Wellingborough District Hindu Association (WDHA) should receive The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) 2023. This represents a tremendous achievement, and we hope that the group's volunteers will feel immensely proud of it.

A worthy recognition of the hard work and dedication of volunteers over the last 50 years. Over 200 people joined in the celebrations and enjoyed the culturally diverse performances.

The programme for the evening included distinguished guest speakers, cultural presentations to promote community cohesion, inter-social and cultural understanding among communities from different backgrounds, with the aim of protecting people from harm.

The event also celebrated the announcement on 14 November that WDHA was awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service by HM The King. This award is the highest given to volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their own communities.

The announcement, in part, read as follows:



Ishver Patel MBE

Facebook: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/theWDHA/>

Website: <https://wdha.co.uk/>

HISTORY DAY AT OUNDLE

The Annual History Day, held on 28 October 2023, was a collaboration between Oundle School, Oundle Historical Society and Oundle Museum which was attended by over 90 delegates.

The first speaker, David Bond, (Chair of the Historical Society) gave an interesting presentation of the history of Oundle. Going back to Saxon times, Bede wrote that Oundle was a region or territory; its prosperity due to the fertility of the land situated as it is next to the River Nene. A monastery was founded there by Wilfred but it lost out to a second one when Peterborough was chosen instead to become the ecclesiastical centre for the area. Oundle never had a great medieval house or hall. Nearby Biggin was a park with a house, built for the Abbots, and this remained the centre of the manor to date.

The town itself, built of local limestone is centred on the Market Place with the tall spire of the church dominating the skyline. A plan of Oundle shows the houses laid out in strips with back lanes top and bottom. The Guildhall, built in the churchyard, was originally an almshouse on the lower floor and the guild hall above was the origin of Oundle School, originally associated with the Wyatt family and refounded by Laxton. When the parish was enclosed in 1807, the school was able to take advantage and a whole range of buildings were erected; these still dominate the town. The School chapel was built as a War Memorial to the scholars and teachers who lost their lives in the First World War.



Oundle Memorial Chapel



One of the windows

Our second speaker was Colin Pendrill who spoke about the windows in the Oundle School Chapel. The main ones are the East windows, designed by John Piper and created by Patrick Reyntiens. The set consists of 9 windows, the first three depict Christ as The Way, The Life and The Truth, the middle ones The Vine, The Cup and the Water of Life with the final three being The Judge, The Teacher and The Good Shepherd. They were unveiled to much acclaim by the Queen Mother in May 1956. Along the sides of the chapel are the very colourful and vibrant millennium windows.

The final talk of the morning was by David Parker on Oundle's historical buildings and their former

residents. For each of the main properties, David showed a photograph of the house and gardens together with a list of the primary residents. Here we could see the names of the more prominent families such as the Pickering family from Titchmarsh, the Creeds and later the Smith family who became important brewers in the town. Cobthorne was built in the late 1650s by William Butler, it is now the residence of the headteacher of Oundle School. Berrystead was built c.1690 by William Whitwell whose son was left Audley End in Essex, now a National Trust property. It was eventually bought by the Grocers' Company. The Rectory dates from pre-1678 and was later owned by the Smith family; it too was purchased by the Grocers' Company and is now the Gascoigne Building. The fact that the Grocers' Company owns many of the buildings in the town has probably ensured their survival.

After an excellent buffet lunch, delegates were able to choose from a number of different tours around Oundle. This included the church, the Roman Catholic church and other places of worship; a tour of the inns and public houses, the Museum or the school Chapel – or even a mixture of the above.

All in all, a very informative and enjoyable day was had by everyone. Our grateful thanks to all those involved in the organization of this event. Well done and Thank You.

Article & photos by **Angela Malin**

PYTCHLEY CHURCH HERITAGE TRUST

Friday 23 February

The Trust proudly presents 'Heritage of Wicksteed Park 100 Years', a Talk by Ruth Rignall.

Friday 23 February, 7.30pm, All Saints' Church, Pytchley, NN14 1EW.

£10, to include a glass of wine or soft drink.

Please book in advance and pay on the door.

Contacts: Mike Walsh 01536 790984 or mikeawalsh@me.com.

Kate Everard 07999 570435 or kate_everard@btinternet.com. (Note the underscore _)

Friday 12 April

A Talk on the Gardens of Burghley House.

7.30pm, All Saints' Church, Pytchley, NN14 1EW.

Details to be confirmed, Contacts as above.

KELMARSH HALL AND GARDENS

2024 Open Season at Kelmarsh Hall & Gardens

Kelmarsh will be opening the historic Hall and beautiful Grade II* listed gardens again for the 2024 open season! The season runs from Sunday 31 March – Sunday 29 September on set days of the week. The gardens, woodland walks, lakeside walk and fairy walk will be open for exploring on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sunday. The Hall, Servants' Quarters and exhibitions can also be enjoyed by visitors on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. For more information on opening times and prices, visit the website: www.kelmarsh.com.

This year visitors can expect a fabulous array of in-house events at Kelmarsh, including the annual 'Fairy Picnic in the Woodland' event, the Jazz Night on the back lawns, and the special garden opening for the National Garden Scheme. Tickets for the Jazz Night and Fairy Picnic are already live now – visit the Kelmarsh website to book.

Garden Season Tickets

Have a keen gardener in the family? Why not treat them with a garden season ticket for Kelmarsh Hall's Grade II* listed Gardens. The gardens are open from March - September, giving garden lovers a chance to explore throughout the changing seasons. Experience seas of daffodils in the Spring, stunning lupins and foxgloves in the Double Border throughout Summer, and early Autumn Dahlias in the Walled Garden.

To purchase a season ticket, please email enquiries@kelmarsh.com or call 01604686543.



The Double Border by [Sarah Vivienne Photography](#)

Humour, Satire and Play in History, Pedagogy and Therapy

University of Northampton, Waterside Campus, 27 - 28 June 2024

Keynote speakers:

- ⇒ **Dave Cohen**, BAFTA award winning songwriter for BBC's Horrible Histories, comic, broadcaster, and novelist. (www.davecohen.org.uk)
- ⇒ **Dr Sharon Lockyer**, Founding Director of the Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR) and Associate Dean for Equality and Diversity, Brunel University (www.brunel.ac.uk/people/sharon-lockyer)

Humour, satire and play are central features of human life, past and present. For historians, exploring humour can offer a window into the political, social, and cultural dynamics of previous times. Humour is underpinned by many spoken and unspoken cultural norms, values and ideals, and what is deemed 'funny' has changed dramatically in differing historical contexts. The roles played by humour are also diverse and it has been used to speak truth to power, to bring pleasure and enjoyment to life and to develop senses of community and wellbeing.

This two-day conference aims to interrogate the many uses of humour, and related topics of satire and play, both in the past and in the contemporary world.

To what degree has humour shaped history? In what ways have forms of humour provided people with a sense of agency and identity? Can humour be both empowering and disempowering? How has humour changed across time? Does humour allow us to understand the human life cycle, from childhood to old age?

Moreover, humour can be an important teaching and even therapeutic tool. What are the benefits and challenges of using humour in teaching contexts? How can aspects of humour and play be incorporated into curricula, and what issues does this pose to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion? Can humour be an exclusionary teaching practice?

Finally, what is the role of history and humour beyond teaching and learning contexts? How might historical cultures of humour and play be used in caring and therapeutic contexts?

We invite contributions in the form of 20-minute papers and proposals for 90-minute panels. We also welcome other formats based on 20-minute and 90-minute timeframes, such as interviews, performances and dramatizations, and workshop sessions.

Potential themes for papers and presentations may include:

- ⇒ The history of humour, comedy and political satire
- ⇒ Cultures of humour and play
- ⇒ Humour and the lifecycle
- ⇒ Humour as a means to providing agency and identity

- ⇒ Humour as a form of power and control
- ⇒ Racism, antiracism and humour
- ⇒ The political value of humour
- ⇒ Cultures of satire, irony
- ⇒ Popular culture and humour
- ⇒ The history of emotions and humour
- ⇒ Humour and the body
- ⇒ Material culture and humour
- ⇒ Gender, ethnicity and class in humour
- ⇒ Disability and humour
- ⇒ LGBTQ+ history and humour
- ⇒ Online humour and historical themes
- ⇒ The value of humour in teaching and learning contexts
- ⇒ Humour as a means to bring history 'alive'
- ⇒ The place of humour in therapy and care settings

We welcome submissions from researchers at all career stages, from postgraduate students to research professors. We are also especially keen to receive presentation proposal from professionals such as teachers, healthcare workers and independent educators and writers.

Please submit abstracts to Siobhan Hyland by **31 January 2024**

Siobhan.hyland@northampton.ac.uk

If you have any questions or queries about potential submissions, please contact the conveners

Professor Mark Rothery (mark.rothery@northampton.ac.uk) and

Professor Paul Jackson (paul.jackson@northampton.ac.uk).



Heritage Education Fair



JOIN OUR MARKETPLACE

MEET NORTHAMPTONSHIRE TEACHERS

FIND OUT WHAT SCHOOLS NEED

heritageskills hub

1st February
13:30-17:00

Corby Sixth Form Centre
Queens Square
NN17 1QN

Have you booked your place?

Book by Friday 26th January 2024:
<https://forms.office.com/e/fzUbMWbg7K>

FULLER BAPTIST CHURCH KETTERING HERITAGE EXHIBITION

Our large collection of artifacts from around the world has been further expanded by a missionary family's gift of domestic objects from the Kond Hills in India and the history of a mission hospital.

We are planning to have an exhibition to commemorate the missionary emancipator, William Knibb, who set sail for Jamaica in November 1824.

For group visits and details of our Spring open days please contact

Revd David Milner: davidbmioner1@gmail.com or 07876564617

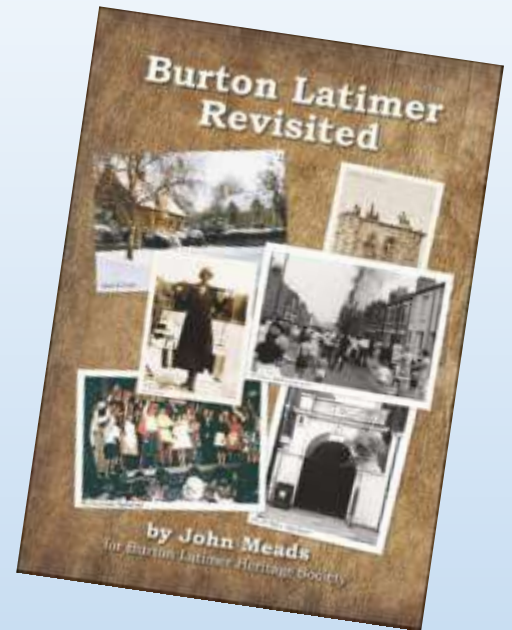
BURTON LATIMER HERITAGE SOCIETY

New Book: Burton Latimer Revisited

It is now thirty years since Douglas Ashby and the Rotary Club of the Ise Valley produced the wonderful *Portrait of a Certain Place*, copies of which are now hard to find. So the Heritage Society Asked John Meads, our Secretary (and now 92 years of age) to put together a new illustrated book about the town and its people. It contains new information and photographs, most of them donated to the Society since it was formed twenty-three years ago, as well as some old favourites.

With the title *Burton Latimer Revisited*, it is an A4-sized hardback, with 190 pages and over 600 photographs, many in colour, and costs £24.00. The Museum is closed until 2 March, but if a copy is required sooner, please email Linda Gregory:

linda.gregory152@yahoo.co.uk or text her on 07944 083170.

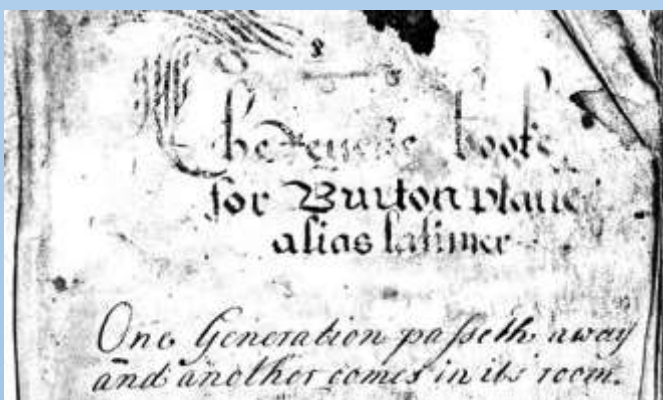


Books can be collected from 27 High St Burton Latimer NN15 5LB. For those unable to collect in person, postage and packing will cost £4.00 to UK addresses. Details for payments will be given on enquiry.

Spring Exhibition

Our Spring Exhibition in the Heritage Museum - in the Harold Mason Centre in Burton Latimer (120 High Street, NN15 5RH) - will open on Saturday, 2 March at 10am with a coffee morning from 10.30-12.00. The title is yet to be finalised, but it will feature some wonderful recent donations together with artefacts from our archives which have not been displayed in recent exhibitions. Entry is free. The museum will then be open every Thursday and Saturday until 29 June 10am-1pm. We can also open on other days by appointment with Linda Gregory (details above).

Notes from the Treetops! by Linda Gregory



Not an arboreal tree, but a genealogical one. One of our members, Tony Granger, knew that his ancestors were Burton Latimer people, but had no idea quite how far back until I began researching more deeply.

Tony's ancestors are in the early Parish Registers of Burton Latimer, which were begun in 1558. The frontispiece (left) reads, '**One generation passeth away and another comes in its room.**'

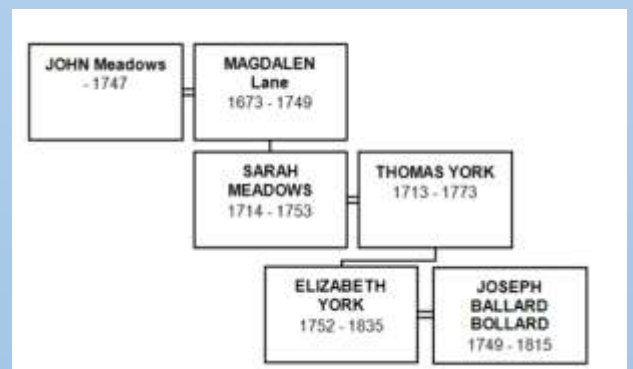
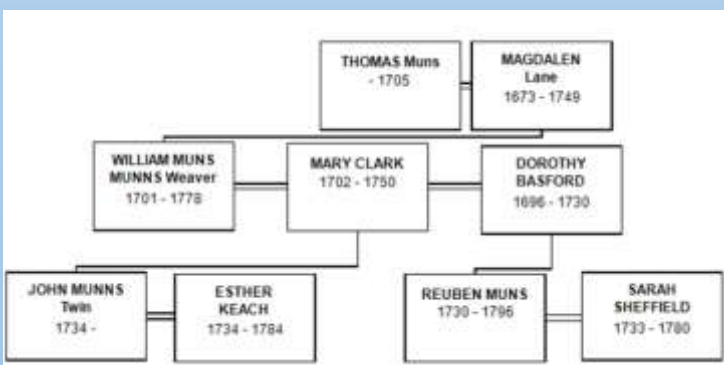
The records relating to Tony's family are interlinked with some interesting events in the town's history. Henry Clarke, 1644-1702, Tony's 8x great grandfather is recorded as being a cobbler. His baptism entry for 1644 is incomplete, so his parents aren't named. The time of his birth was troubled as it was during the Civil Wars. Robert Sibthorpe, Rector from 1629, a Royalist, was ejected from the Rectory in 1644 by Parliamentary troops and fled to London. An entry at the bottom of the previous page to the entry for Henry Clarke's baptism gives an interesting insight into the lack of organisation that ensued (Sibthorpe had been a stickler for the accuracy of records):

'The 3 years following were most of them lost in the tyme of ye warres; what could be found was incerted (sic) or appeareth; Michael Swinson being then Clerke (as he saith) lost the notes of the names which he had taken in paper that they could be ingrossed. So of Baptizings so of Marriages & burials as appears in this work.'

Tony's family have another connection with Sibthorpe. In 1639, during the Bishops' War, George Plowright, a Parish Constable, was pressed to serve in the King's army, but illegally paid James Basford 10 shillings to serve in his place. Sibthorpe supported Plowright in the ensuing court case. James Basford 1608-1681 is Tony's 8x great grandfather. He was a tailor and is listed in the 1673 Hearth Tax as having one hearth but exempt from paying, implying that he was not a wealthy man. His father (Tony's 9x great grandfather), also James, who died in 1631 was a "slatier" and tiler. He was well off enough to leave a will, which gives a small insight into the family. James senior had six children alive when he died, leaving twenty shillings each to five of them, but his son Hugh is crossed out. No reason is given, but there must have been some disagreement for him to be excluded, as Hugh was still alive at the time of his father's death. Oh, to know the story behind this!

Tony's tree has a marked example of "pedigree collapse" towards the top. In genealogical terms this occurs because approximately 80 percent of historical marriages were between second or closer cousins, so the same people occupy multiple spots on pedigree charts, causing shrinkage. It has been calculated that out of the 1.11 million residents of England at the Norman conquest in 1066, about 86 percent are ancestors to all current English-born people.

Tony's 6x great grandmother Magdalen (possibly Lane, see below) married Thomas Muns from Burton Latimer. Tony is descended on two lines from their son William: via a son from his marriage to Mary Clark (John Munns) and a son from his marriage to Dorothy Basford (Reuben Muns). To add to this, Dorothy was the granddaughter of James Basford (tailor), already mentioned. After Thomas died in 1705, Magdalen remarried, to John Meadows. Tony is also descended from their daughter Sarah.



There is also more tree collapse involving the Yorks and the Clarks, firmly establishing Tony's genealogical roots in Burton Latimer.

A plea, about Magdalen Lane, above. As we cannot find a marriage record, we cannot prove that the Magdalen who married Thomas Muns was a Lane. Magdalen was a rare name in this area in that period. Every published tree has her as the daughter of Francis Lane of Glendon Hall (1626-1689). However, after much research and the discovery of a memorial plaque in Rothwell Church, we know that Francis had two daughters named Magdalen, both of whom died young and unmarried. Thomas Muns was born in Rothwell, to a comfortably off family, who may well have had contact with the Lanes. Francis Lane had a younger brother Edward, of whom nothing seems to be known except his name. Edward and Francis' father was William Lane of Glendon Hall (d. 1637, his wife was Anne Isham). Was Magdalen Edward's daughter as the name was well established in the family? Magdalen and Thomas Muns had five children. The eldest two, John and Mary were named after Thomas' parents. Their third child was Thomas and then came William and Edward. This naming pattern again hints at a connection, but without proof it is just conjecture. If any of you in your research have come across an Edward Lane from the Rothwell/Glendon area in the 17th Century, we would love to hear from you!

NORTHAMPTON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

We are collecting D-Day stories and would love your help

Northampton Museums & Art Gallery are collecting D-Day stories and would love your help. The 80th anniversary of the World War II D-Day landings and Operation Overlord on the Normandy coast falls on 6 June 2024. To mark the occasion Northampton Museums and Art Gallery are creating a commemorative exhibition in libraries at Brackley, Daventry, Towcester and Weston Favell. Each library will host exhibition cabinets filled with Northamptonshire stories, objects and memories of D-Day and its immediate aftermath.

How you can help

Telling the story of home and away the project will emphasise the Northamptonshire connection to D-Day. It will look at those serving in the theatre of war and the impact on the home front. The project wants to connect with local people and their family stories of D-Day. Information is being sought on the following themes:

- Northamptonshire Yeomanry at Normandy and their families on the home front
- Northamptonshire airfields, the RAF and the Jedburgh teams and their families on the home front
- Northamptonshire people in the armed forces at Normandy and their families on the home front
- Northamptonshire Regiment soldiers seconded and active in D-Day
- The impact of D-Day on families and civilian life
- A snapshot of what was happening in Northamptonshire on D-Day

During The Second World War Northamptonshire was host to American Airmen who played a significant part in the invasion of Normandy. We hope to build a picture of the impact of the bases and how these American servicemen interacted with the local populace.



77th Fighter Squadron Mustang at Kings Cliffe Airfield August 1944
Photo Credit: 'The 20th Fighter Group Project'

Did they use your local pub? What impact did they have during their stay? Do you remember them or know of any family stories? We are interested in the build up to the D-Day landings and the early months of the invasion (April – September 1944) with particular focus on the following bases:

- RAF Kings Cliffe – 20th Fighter Group
- RAF Harrington – Carpet Baggers
- RAF Spanhoe – 315th Troop Carrier Group
- RAF Chelveston – 305th Bombardment Group
- RAF Deenethorpe – 401st Bombardment Group
- RAF Grafton Underwood – 384th Bombardment Group
- RAF Polebrook – 351st Bombardment Group

We are looking forward to receiving your stories!

If you or anyone you know has a D-Day story or memorabilia, please email either jane.seddon@westnorthants.gov.uk or museums@westnorthants.gov.uk.



DAVENTRY MUSEUM

Daventry Museum currently have an exhibition entitled “World War Two: D-Day 80 Years On” which lasts from Saturday 13 January to Friday 14 June 2024.

This exhibition marks the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings and the Battle of Normandy, the largest scale Allied invasion of Nazi-occupied France that led to the liberation of north-west Europe.

Contact: Sophie Good, Museum Officer

Email: museum@daventrytowncouncil.gov.uk

Website: <https://daventrymuseum.org.uk/whats-on/world-war-two-80-years-since-d-day/>

Address: 3 New Street, Daventry, Northants, NN11 4BT

World War Two: D-Day 80 Years On

DAVENTRY MUSEUM

Exhibition marking the 80th Anniversary of D-Day

Sat 13th Jan to Fri 14th June 2024

FREE Entry

2024 Opening Times: Tues-Fri 9.30am-1.30pm
First Saturdays of month 10am-4pm
3 New Street, Daventry, Northants, NN11 4BT

If you have spare copies of the Forum Booklet that you think you won't use before a new one is published in the Spring, please email us as we have members asking for copies. **Please check your entry on the Forum website** to make sure it is up to date. This information will be used for the new Forum Booklet. Please email us with any corrections at the address below.

northamptonshireheritageforum@gmail.com

THE FRIENDS OF THE ALFRED EAST GALLERY AND MANOR HOUSE MUSEUM

Despite the continued closure of the Gallery and Museum, we have had an active and enjoyable year. Dodging from one venue to another, we have kept up a semblance of our normal monthly meetings. To compensate, and to keep the members together, we have had a variety of visits: Drayton House, and to Oxford.

There has, at last, appeared a glimmer of good news about progress with the Gallery reopening: the North Northants Council has approved in principle the plans to move forward with the project to restore the Library and Gallery roofs. Formal plans and estimates can now be drawn up; the final step will be to try and acquire the estimated £5.8 million to pay for it; but it will probably still be another couple of years before completion.

The future of the Museum is far less certain. Extensive work on this Grade II listed building will be required to stabilize the fabric of the building, and to upgrade it in order for it to be fit for purpose as a modern museum. We are told that a solution is being actively pursued, and suitable grants for the work are being explored.

It is very difficult to continue to be 'Friends of the Gallery and Museum', when for the last three years we have had no gallery and museum to be friends of. This coming year we will need seriously to reconsider our role and ethos.

David Brown

IRTHLINGBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Irthlingborough Historical Society was founded in 1990 with the specific aim of actively researching and recording the history and development of the town. We are not specialist historians, just people who are interested in the place where we live. We research our local history, welcome guest speakers, arrange exhibitions and organise visits to places of local and national interest.

The society meets most Tuesdays from February through to November 7:00pm to 8:30pm in the Goliath Hall behind the Methodist Church on College Street. Visitors are always welcome.

1 January, 2024 is the anniversary of a significant event in the town as you will discover from what follows.

Let the prospective benefactor only visit Irthlingborough '*...to see how eagerly the children press to go to school by 5 o'clock in the summer mornings and grudge every hour they spend out of it.*' wrote Revd Robert Watts, vicar of Great Gidding, to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Was mathematics or English the great attraction? No, spinning and knitting in fact, and the enthusiasm to

go at the crack of dawn and return just in time for bed undoubtedly came from parents '*...who are so interested that they allow children only a little intermission for dinner*' rather than from the girls.

The finished product then went to Coventry for serges (a type of twill fabric) with the children earning between a shilling and half a crown a week, which in some cases amounted to half a family's income.



The school in 1921

With the rise of the National School movement in the early 19th century the need for Charity Schools disappeared and, in 1830, Trigg's Charity School, founded in the early years of the previous century became Irthlingborough National School.

The original school was demolished and in 1867 a new National School building stood proudly in place in the High Street.

Unfortunately, Rector Richard Ash Hannaford died soon afterwards and the popular curate

whose enthusiasm had brought the project to a successful conclusion, but who had been denied preferment, had accepted the post of headmaster of Kimbolton Grammar School.

The final period of 45 years in the life of the National School was one of steady decline accentuated by a general feeling of indifference, misunderstanding of its financial management, inspection reports and attendance numbers. The latter being a constant problem with so many children being 'half-timers' combining their attendance at school with stone picking and bird scaring for local farmers.

The opening of a Board School in 1877, albeit in a warehouse rented for five shillings a week, was greeted with approval from nonconformists in the village who objected to their children being educated in accordance with the principles and tenets of the Church of England. The two schools, however existed happily side by side but gradually the Education Authority became more insistent that the fabric of the Church School should be put in proper repair for the purposes of scientific education and began to dictate terms even to the point of handing over of the fabric and property. The death knell of the school came in 1923, when the Local Education Authority required the managers to carry out alterations to the extent of £600, which they were not prepared to do.

The school was therefore removed from the list of Maintained Schools, and Irthlingborough Church Day School closed on 31 December, 1923 and the children, known locally as Church Buckets because of the unique toilet arrangements at their school, transferred to Irthlingborough Board Schools on 1 January, 1924.

This occasion was marked by Society members designing information boards, producing an informative 32 page booklet "From School Lane to Board Street" and leading School assemblies recounting the early days of life at the Board School with information sourced from the original School Log Book, now safely preserved in the Society's Archive.

Roy York

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD



Cropmarks of buried archaeological features at Wollaston, 1994 (WNC AP 8863/078)

Northamptonshire's Historic Environment Record (HER) is the primary information source for planning, development-control work, and land management. However, it is also an important starting point for anyone interested in researching the archaeology and historic built environment of the county. The HER contains details on a wide variety of local archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings and historic landscapes. Some examples of information the HER holds data about include the 'Lyngby' axe found at Grendon, which is made from reindeer antler and radiocarbon dated to around 10,000 BC, as well as results of large-scale excavations undertaken as part of the Raunds Area Project in the 1990s to the Northamptonshire Boot and Shoe survey which identified and recorded buildings around the county involved in the boot and shoe industry. In total, the HER currently has over 70,000 individual monument records.

The HER based within the Archives and Heritage Service and is run by West Northamptonshire Council on behalf of both North and West Northamptonshire Councils. It is physically located within the Record Office buildings at Wootton Hall Park in Northampton. The principal component of the HER is a powerful database with a digital mapping system (Geographic Information System) which is backed up by a well-stocked library including books, reports, plans, and aerial photographs. These include reports of all types of archaeological investigation, books about subjects as diverse as parks and gardens, finds and historic buildings. The database is being continuously updated with new information from a wide range of sources including from new aerial imagery and LIDAR, national and regional journals, reports from commercial archaeology units, as well as community groups and individual researchers.

Many of the resources are available in the Record Office search room, although some primary sources, such as the aerial photographs, are kept in the Record office repositories and are available on demand. The HER team are both professional archaeologists and have a wealth of experience both in a local and wider context. They are always happy to help with any enquiries you might have.

The HER database can be accessed by appointment at the Record Office and online at the national Heritage Gateway resource: www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/ This site is updated by the HER Officer on a fortnightly basis with new Northants records. Photographs are now being added to the records on a parish-by-parish basis. At present, these photographs are mainly of buildings or aerial views. Many of the reports about local archaeological investigations (known as grey literature) are also available digitally and our team can help you with access.

Currently, the HER is part-way through a major, Historic England-funded project to transfer the relevant records from the National Record for the Historic Environment (NRHE). There are over 10,000 records for Northamptonshire, so this will represent a major enhancement of the HER when the project is complete in just under a year's time. The aim of this national project is to transfer the responsibility for maintaining, securing and providing access to the NRHE dataset to each relevant local authority.

Significant recent news in this sector is that HERs have been made a statutory requirement upon local authorities. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act was passed late last year, and it includes provisions that 'A relevant authority must maintain an historic environment record for its area' (Clause 230). While specific regulations and guidance are yet to be developed, this should ensure a robust future for HERs across the country.

Please email her.ncc@westnorthants.gov.uk if you would like to visit the HER or would like any further information.

NORTHAMPTON CENTRAL LIBRARY



THE CARNEGIE LECTURES
AT CENTRAL LIBRARY



COMING ATTRACTIONS

JANUARY 20TH: THE CULWORTH GANG
FEBRUARY 17TH: THE NENE LACE MAKERS
MARCH 16TH: ALCHEMY



Carnegie Talks

The Culworth Gang

*The Notorious Culworth Gang of
South Northamptonshire*

Richard Blacklee
Saturday 20th January 2pm

Richard Blacklee will discuss the relevance of the location of Culworth village and show where many of the robberies took place. He will introduce the leading members of the gang and explain the circumstances of their downfall. He will also include something of the history of Northampton County Gaol and the Session House, fascinating listed buildings from the seventeenth century which can still be seen today.

Scan the QR code to book your free tickets on Eventbrite and join us for what is expected to be an exciting talk



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY



The poster features a green tree with a brown trunk and roots. A green parrot is perched on a branch, blowing a yellow trumpet. The text 'FHF REALLY USEFUL Family History Show' is written across the tree's canopy. To the right, 'LIVE in 2024' is written in large, red, slanted letters. The Family History Federation logo is in the top right corner. Below the tree, the event details are listed: 'Saturday 20 April 10am-4pm Burgess Hall, St Ives, Cambs PE27 6WU'. Further down, it says 'Featuring..... Family History Societies from the East Anglia region and surrounding counties, local groups and commercial stands'. It also lists 'Talks by: Nick Barratt, Ian Waller & Gill Blanchard' and 'plus Workshops, Help & Advice Desks and more...'. At the bottom, it says 'Celebrating 50 years of the Family History Federation' and 'Northants FHS will be there!'. The footer includes 'Free parking Refreshments available Entrance: £1 for show programme' and the website 'www.fhf-reallyuseful.com'.

**FHF REALLY USEFUL
Family History Show**

**LIVE
in 2024**

**Saturday 20 April
10am-4pm
Burgess Hall, St Ives, Cambs PE27 6WU**

Featuring.....
Family History Societies
from the East Anglia region and surrounding counties,
local groups and commercial stands

Talks by: Nick Barratt, Ian Waller & Gill Blanchard
plus Workshops, Help & Advice Desks and more....

Celebrating 50 years of the Family History Federation
Northants FHS will be there!

Free parking Refreshments available Entrance: £1 for show programme

www.fhf-reallyuseful.com

We continue with our programme of online meetings and details of our programme can be found on our website. Upcoming online talks for the Spring include: Criminal Children, Victorian Entertainment and Archaic Medical Terms so something for everyone – whether you are a beginner or a more experienced researcher. Branch meetings are held at Kettering and Weston Favell and are open to all.

To assist researchers, we have added many downloadable guides and resources on topics such as workhouses, hospitals, cemeteries, maps, non-conformity and more to our website. These can be found under the County Resources section. Additionally, each month we add a new blog under the Spotlight page covering different topics or stories. Do have a look! www.northants-fhs.org

We will be taking part in the FHF Really Useful Family History Show Live in April which is being held at

Burgess Hall, St Ives as shown on the image above. This is an opportunity to promote what the Society has to offer to those researching their Northamptonshire ancestors.

We are also looking forward to our One-Day Conference in 2024, to be held at Delapre Abbey on Saturday 28 September. Speakers include Sarah Bridges (Northants Archives), Dave Annal, Janet Few and Dr Colin Chapman. The booking form can be found on our website under Fairs & Events and the event is open to all.

Angela Malin

SPRATTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

A new book has been published charting the history of Spratton Church of England Primary School which is now over 200 years old.

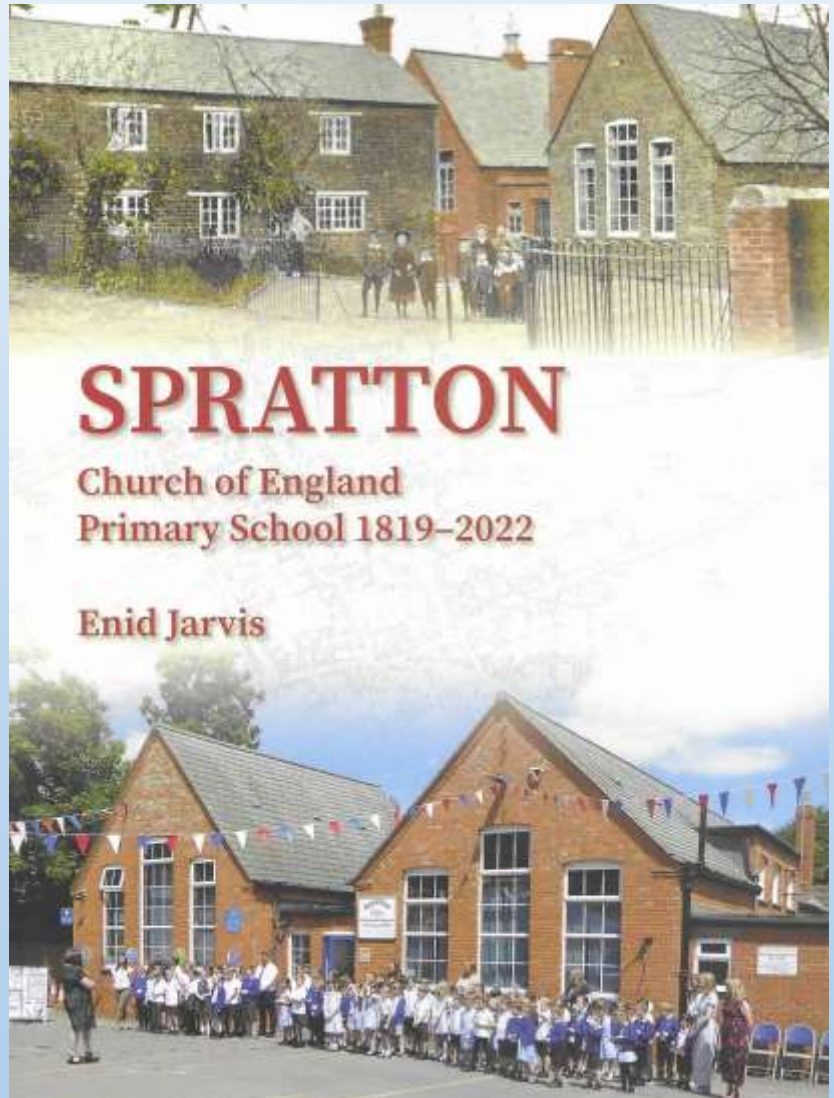
The book, written by Enid Jarvis, was launched at a special assembly at the school in December followed by a question and answer session and book signing with the author.

Spratton Church of England Primary School 1819-2022 is the result of a year and a half of detailed research by Enid Jarvis. The book tells the history of Spratton Primary, its buildings and the people connected with it. Topics covered include the curriculum in the early years, the difficulties faced by the first headteachers and logs from their diaries. It also details the sadness when some of the young men who had attended the school went to fight and die in both the World Wars. The 20th century is covered with photographs of major school events, including May Days, and shows how the school is an important part of the village community.

Spratton Local History Society has donated 25 copies of the book to the school library and to be used as a classroom resource.

Rebecca Dunkley, Head of School at Spratton Primary which is part of Peterborough Diocese Education Trust, said, "The children have been so inspired by Enid's book and some have even started to write their own books about the school. We would all like to thank Enid for her hard work producing this informative read which will be enjoyed for years to come and serve as a permanent reminder of how the school started and what it has developed into today - a thriving village school at the heart of the local community."

Spratton Church of England Primary School 1819-2022 is available to buy for £10 from the village shop in Spratton. Alternatively you can obtain a copy direct from Spratton Local History Society by visiting their website at: <https://www.sprattonhistory.org/publications.php>



ROCKINGHAM CASTLE



Snowdrops at Rockingham Castle*

Sunday 18 and Sunday 25 February 2024

11:00am – 15:00pm

Join us at Rockingham Castle this February for 'Snowdrops'! Bring your family, friends and four legged friends for a beautiful Snowdrop walk around the Rockingham Wild Garden. We have many varieties of Snowdrops on the trail and the white canopy they provide over the garden looks stunning on these cold and frosty days that the new year brings.

We will have a mobile catering unit onsite offering hot and cold drinks and light refreshments.

*Please note that the castle will not be open during this event.

Tickets are available on our website, www.rockinghamcastle.com and pre-booking is advised to avoid disappointment.

SULGRAVE MANOR & GARDENS

Sulgrave Manor & Gardens will be re-opening on 20 March 2024 and we look forward to welcoming you.

After the season ended last year, we started working on some larger scale projects in our garden. We have recently planted a new Liquidambar tree and we have also received a shipment from the Woodland Trust of 60 native trees and hedgerow plants to add to locations around the grounds which will help to boost the number of the declining native species in the UK. This includes Hazel, Rowan, Silver Birch, as well as Dog Roses, Hawthorn and Bird Cherry, among others. These will not only add much colour from the flowers, bark, berries and foliage, but will also improve biodiversity and encourage native wildlife to enjoy the garden. There are already some telltale signs of spring plants emerging and our hard work over winter collecting leaves will soon pay off as our composted leaves will be an invaluable resource to add nutrients and increase water retention to the beds in the next few months.

In the house, we are re-organising some of our exhibitions ready for the new season. We are looking forward to an exciting programme of events in 2024 and hope you can join us.

Gemma Tomalin

FOR SALE

Northamptonshire Archives and Heritage Service has some boxes that aren't needed. I was wondering whether any of the small archives or museums in the county, who are members of the Heritage Forum, would like to buy them at much lower prices than you can get from the main conservation suppliers? Some of them have been used so they might have writing on them or be a bit scuffed, some of them have never been used and the prices reflect that.

Below is a chart with the dimensions and number of boxes in each size and condition. I've also attached a couple of photos to show what type of boxes they are. Anyone who is interested can email me directly. Collection would be from Northamptonshire Archives, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton, NN4 8BQ.

Elizabeth Yamada (Elizabeth.Yamada@westnorthants.gov.uk)



(Left) Ryder Style Boxes
(Above) Lantern slide box

Northamptonshire Archives - Boxes for Sale
Measurements in mm

Ref	External Length mm	External Width mm	External Height mm	Internal Length mm	Internal Width mm	Internal Height mm	Lid Depth	New Boxes	New Price £	Used Boxes	Used Price £	Notes
C	410	340	86	397	315	80	Full	78	2.00	305	1.00	Ryders style brown boxes
D	400	310	125	380	285	120	Full	6	2.50	5	1.00	Ryders style brown boxes
E	395	280	77-80	375	255	70	3cm	185	2.00	0	1.00	Ryders style brown boxes
G	460	340	138	435	350	130	Third	3	3.00	1	1.50	Ryders style brown boxes
I	394	88	262	373	72	257	5cm	44	2.00	0		Ryders style brown - upright boxes
LS	300	108	93	292	100	90	Full	0		200	5.00	Grey archival boxboard, 1300 micron with metal edges.

BOUGHTON HOUSE

Conservation works continue within the House itself as progress is made on the glorious ceilings of the 2nd and 5th Staterooms, created by Louis Cheron, a Huguenot artist brought over to England by Ralph, 1st Duke of Montagu.



Each ceiling takes several months of restoration by skilled conservators in the cold for which Boughton is well known to many visitors!

They are scheduled to be completed in February and we hope to display all five staterooms with the full glory of their ceilings at our Easter Opening.



In the Designed Landscape that surrounds Boughton, work nears completion of restoration work on the Star Pond (pictured on the next page). Created in the 1700s it was part of the extensive and celebrated gardens at Boughton, it will complete the intended works and provide a new feature for visitors to enjoy. The Gardens will next be open for the National Gardens Scheme on Sunday 25 February.



The House and Gardens will next be open on the Easter weekend – 30 & 31 March and 1 April. Boughton is available for pre-booked groups and events throughout the year by appointment. For more information on all these and much more see: www.boughtonhouse.co.uk

Charles Lister

BRIXWORTH HISTORY SOCIETY

The autumn saw us welcoming Ruth Thomas who spoke about the growth and prosperity of Northampton in Medieval Times; this was well received with lots of questions concerning the town at this time and which Ruth answered comprehensively. In November Pete Austin came to talk about the Northampton Film Archive Trust; this was very interesting and he showed archived films of the county: these made most of reminisce about the 'old times'!

At the December meeting we held our annual social where everyone contributed to the food and drink. There were quizzes on the village and an old 1990s Anglia TV film of Brixworth was shown again, because a lot of members had not seen it before.

In December we also took part in the Christmas Tree Festival at All Saints. Our tree was decorated with copies of old pictures and details of the village.

We begin our new programme of events on the 18 January when Roy Strong is telling us about 'Our Last Naval Hero - David, 1st Earl Beatty' and, on 15 February, Mike Stroud is talking about Kelmarsh Hall.

Meetings are held in the Village Hall beginning at 7.30pm. Further details from our website <https://www.brixworthhistory.org/> our Facebook page or by email: helloBHS1990@gmail.com.

Pauline Kirton



Our tree in All Saints Church

THE ROYAL ORDNANCE DEPOT WEEDON BEC VISITOR CENTRE

Well, not too much to report since the last update, though we are very pleased to welcome MORE volunteers. Each brings their own talents and expertise to the team and the growing numbers, now hovering around 25, allows us to spread the load of manning the Visitor Centre on our current roster and even consider opening on more days.

In December we were delighted to welcome television military archaeologist Stephen Taylor as guest speaker at our monthly volunteers' meeting. Stephen is the host of WW2 Treasure Hunters with 'Suggs' of the pop band Madness. The show, produced by The History Channel and regularly repeated on Freeview, investigates historic world war two locations, excavating weapons, tanks and crashed aircraft. Several years ago the programme visited Weedon Depot and dug its extensive waste pits uncovering many hundreds of items, most badly rusted, rotten and burnt.

Despite this Stephen memorably described the site as 'The Valley of The Kings' of military archaeology! He has developed techniques to preserve and stabilise seemingly ruined artefacts for his own collection and he shared his methods with us so we can better preserve future finds. His talk also covered the significance of the Depot in storing, repairing and disposing of literally tens of millions of weapons over 150 years. Stephen also kindly donated a superb collection of stabilised items, some of which have gone on display at the Visitor Centre.



Buried treasure on show at Weedon Depot

And finally, last year our chairman, Martin, encouraged members to use the Tourism Hub at Rushden Lakes to promote their group. I popped over with a load of our leaflets and a USB stick containing our short video 'trailer' for their giant TV. The staff could not have been more helpful and friendly to this NHF member (though I am sure 'genuine' visitors also get the same treatment!). They and the Hub itself are a valuable asset we should all use.

For more information or to arrange a visit to the Depot please contact me: Steve Larner, Volunteer, tel. 07790 244542, email y.larner@btinternet.com

Steve Larner

WICKSTEED PARK

Volunteers

Our volunteers are continuously hard at work keeping [Wicksteed Park](#) a beautiful place to visit. They recently replanted flowers on our fountain lawn to enhance stone urns that were placed as a project acknowledgement for the @Play project which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Young Curators

At the beginning of December, our most recent Young Curators tranche who join us from Isebrook school as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award, installed their exhibition in the Learning Space. The theme of their exhibition is to recreate modern renditions of photos from the archives. This group has now allowed us to exceed our goal of 3 Young Curators groups bringing our total to 4 under the National Lottery Heritage Funded @Play project. In the new year two more groups will complete the programme, a community group of home educated young children and a Group from Tresham College

Bike Life

In the month of December, we hosted workshops organised by Brightwayz. These workshops aim to encourage to build confidence in cycling and encourage active travel. Stage 1 of the workshops focus on understanding the components of your bike and how to make basic repairs and adjustments on your own while supervised by an experienced bike mechanic. Stage 2 is a practical workshop where you will learn how to signal, join traffic, and overall build your confidence in cycling. These sessions will be continuing into the new year in January. To find out more about dates, times and locations visit the [Brightwayz website](#).

If you are interested in a placement, volunteering or want to know more about heritage at Wicksteed, let us know at getinvolved@wicksteedpark.org.

Connor McIntyre – Community and Heritage Coordinator community@wicksteedpark.org

Ruth Rignall – Volunteer and Activity Coordinator getinvolved@wicksteedpark.org



History of town centre churchyard revealed with new signage

The history of a long-forgotten churchyard in Northampton town centre is now revealed through new signs placed within its former grounds.

St Katharine's* Churchyard, which was located in St Katherine's Gardens until around 1945, has a long and varied past, beginning in the late 1450s when a chapel was built to commemorate victims of the plague.

The signs, funded through a National Lottery grant obtained by Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID), describe how victims of later plagues were also buried in the churchyard, with a new church built on the site of the chapel in the 1800s.

Northampton Town Council undertook research to inform the content of the signs, and local history enthusiasts Avril and Michael Sharp and Don Kennedy provided some additional information and photos.

The signs explain that the church was demolished to make way for a memorial square created in 1951, complete with an ornamental wall that still stands today.



Local builder William Branson (right) in 1951, building the ornamental wall that formed the memorial square.

Image credit: Avril Sharp (William's Granddaughter)

Further explanation is also given about the remains of an ornamental pond and the current location of its unique centrepiece sculpture, entitled 'Woman with Fish.'



The unveiling of the 'Woman with Fish' sculpture at a special ceremony in May 1952.

Image credit: Don Kennedy

Northampton Town Council's heritage champion Cllr Bob Purser, said: "St Katherine's Gardens has a fascinating history, which was largely untold before the installation of these new signs.

"Thanks to recent renovation works, the garden provides a peaceful green space in the town centre, and I hope that people enjoy learning more about its past when they next visit."

The signs are the latest stage of a restoration project delivered by the town council and the BID, that began in May 2023 as part of 'The Big Help Out' campaign for the King's Coronation weekend, with a £10,000 National Lottery grant obtained by the BID to fund the work.

The gardens were transformed by staff from both organisations, along with volunteers from the town council's Environmental Services Committee, the Royal British Legion, the University of Northampton, Northampton College and local businesses, who helped to create new wildflower beds, sustainable planters and a wellbeing inspired mural, along with upcycling benches, bins and railings.

Mark Mullen, operations manager for Northampton Town Centre BID, said: "Seeing St Katherine's Gardens revitalised has been one of the undoubted highlights of the past year and we are looking forward to continuing that work in 2024. The BID has secured permission to install additional seating areas and will also be commissioning artists to work on further murals on the surrounding perimeter walls."



Avril and her husband Michael pictured by the wall more recently, along with Don Kennedy.

Image credit: Northampton Town Council

*The spelling of Katharine in this area has varied over the years. The church was known as St Katharine's, whereas the modern-day street and the gardens are spelt 'Katherine.'

BE HEARD ON THE NNBN PODCAST

Attention Northamptonshire Heritage Forum members! An exclusive opportunity awaits for you to shine a spotlight on your endeavours! Join Forum member Simon Cox on the NNBN podcast for a captivating discussion about your contribution to Northamptonshire.



Simon Cox

This is an opportunity to showcase the remarkable work you do and the invaluable impact you bring to our beloved County. Share your story, your passion, and the unique value you add to the rich heritage of Northamptonshire.

Interested in seizing this chance to feature your organisation? Contact Simon Cox at hello@nnbn.co.uk to secure your slot. Alternatively, booking your talk is just a click away!

Visit <https://calendly.com/simoncoxnnbn> to schedule your recording.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to amplify your voice and share your heritage with the community. Join Simon Cox to celebrate and spotlight the essence of Northamptonshire's heritage!

Simon Cox – Director [NNBN](#)

A FURTHER REMINDER

The deadline for the next edition of the Newsletter is

Sunday, 7 April 2024

For publication before the end of April

Articles should be sent by email to

nhforumnewsletter@outlook.com

and not to the old address!

FROM MEMBER ANDREW PRESLAND



Rothwell Independent Church - from regional centre of nonconformity to estate agent's web page.

In a recent edition of Footprints, the journal of Northamptonshire Family History Society, Robert Page told, in an article on The Aprice family of Desborough, how Perott and Abigail Aprice were probably attracted to the Rothwell/Desborough area (when leaving South Wales in the late 1660s) by the area's strong allegiance to religious non-conformity in general and by Rothwell Independent Church (left) in particular. Similarly, others have noted the Church's large impact on a wide area, such as Belinda Humfrey, Chair of Desborough Civic Society, whose researches suggest that her nonconformist Riley ancestors (who moved from

Coventry to the Rothwell/Desborough area in the 1830s to set up factories for the weaving of silk and silk plush) were attracted to the area by the existence of the Church.

Several of us who live locally were therefore surprised and saddened recently to learn that the Church - which had become Rothwell United Reformed Church - closed down quietly in the autumn of last year and is now on the market – as a Grade II* listed building plus accompanying cemetery, with a guide price of £325,000. (There are details and a 'virtual tour' [HERE](#).)



Family historians may be particularly interested to note that the cemetery (pictured above) is (currently) freely accessible and contains gravestones of several local families, with many stones carved in slate and easily readable.

After a bit of enquiring, fellow family historian Francis Howcutt - like me - a descendant of the TEBBUTT family (stalwarts of the Church from the 1650s to the 20th century) has found that the Church records, including registers, are safe and accessible. They are held at the Rothwell Arts and Heritage Centre, 14-16 Bridge St, Rothwell, Kettering NN14 6JW. Would-be visitors are encouraged to phone the archivist (Kay) in advance on 01536 711550, so she can get the documents out. Opening times are Monday & Thursday 10.00 - 3.00 and Friday & Saturday 10.00 - 12.30.

Finally, if any group or individual interested in trying to keep the building going, as a church or at least to preserve its heritage, please feel free to let me know, on andrew.presland.harborough58@gmail.com.

Update from Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust

- Last year's Ride & Stride sponsored walking and cycling event took place on Saturday 9 September (2023), one of the hottest days of the year. Despite the heat, the money raised (£40,170 at the time of writing) is higher than in the previous year, with 295 churches having taken part.
- This year's Ride & Stride will be taking place on Saturday 14 September. Details to follow.
- A budget of up to £90,000 is available for grants for the fabric of historic churches in 2024: details of criteria and how to apply are at <https://nhct.org.uk/Main/GrantsInformation>

Andrew Presland

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

In early 2022 we published volume 41 of the County Archaeological Journal, a special edition on *The Archaeology of Medieval Northampton*. Anticipating a broader public interest beyond our usual membership and institutional subscribers, we printed 400 copies. It has taken nearly two years but we are now down to around 30 copies, and we must thank Northampton Museum and Art Gallery for stocking the book and helping to boost sales. If anyone has missed out on a copy, it is now available as a half-price bargain, £10.00 plus £4.00 p & p. Details on the society website or email the editor Andy Chapman: NAS196674@gmail.com.

Since 2022, work on the next volume has been progressing, if more slowly than hoped. This will be a more general volume, covering archaeological sites across the county. Iron Age settlement will be the dominant theme, but articles will range in time from the Neolithic/Bronze Age burials to Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlement. It is hoped that volume 42, 2023, will be available by Spring 2024.

For volume 43, hopefully out in late 2025, there will be a return to a medieval focus, including Part 2 of the report on the archaeology of Northampton Castle.

In November 2023 the society held its AGM at Chester House Estate for the first time, with the number of members attending boosted by volunteers from the on-site Northamptonshire Archaeological Research Centre (The ARC), to hear the public lecture on *The Rutland Villa: Beyond the Achilles Mosaic*, delivered by Jeremy Taylor from the University of Leicester.

Andy Chapman

ROADE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wednesday 25 October 2023 – Volunteering at Northamptonshire Records Office

One of our new Committee members, Lesley Armstrong, gave an overview of the volunteering work done, including cleaning documents, understanding writing styles and interpreting dates. She then went on to interesting documents from collections she had worked on. This started with WW1 Tribunal papers, Freeholder lists, Parish records highlighting Parish relief documents such as Settlement Certificates, Settlement Examinations and Removal orders. She then showed records from Northampton General Hospital from 19th century. She also talked about family collections which included many amazing documents from various centuries. Highlights included Civil War passes, letters from France during the Revolution, an 11th century document mentioning Simon de Senlis which had his signature, finally showing us a lovely Henry VIII cartouche and wax seals. It was such an interesting talk and with Lesley's passion for history you could see how much she enjoys this work.



Lesley Armstrong

Wednesday 22 November 2023 – The Stories of Walter Tull and Frank Anderson



Graham McKechnie

We welcomed back Graham McKechnie, BBC Northampton's Sport Presenter, and historian of Northampton Saints Rugby Club for a fascinating talk on Walter Tull, who played for "The Cobblers" and lesser-known Northampton Saints rugby player Frank Anderson. When war broke out, sportsmen were expected to join up. Football received a bad press as they were still playing whilst other sportsmen had joined but football was the only sport where players were contracted to play. Eventually when the season ended, the Football Battalion was formed. Graham feels that Frank Anderson should be just as recognised as Walter Tull, because Frank was the first Saints mixed-race rugby player, and he found that Frank also joined the Football Battalion so actually knew Walter Tull and fought alongside him. Their stories came to life through Graham's enthusiasm and passion to bring their lives, courage and hardships to the fore, and fighting for our country in the First World War. We hope to bring Graham back in 2025 – do come and hear him – he's brilliant!

Wednesday 13 December 2023 – "Catch Me If You Can"

Ron Johnson, who wrote the play "The Every Brothers" and the Society's Archivist, is very keen on finding out about Family Ancestry. Whilst researching his own family, he came across a nasty rogue, criminal and trickster called Alf Johnson. It was quite sad that this young man started out at the age of 13 by stealing



Ron Johnson

bicycles. Over the years he had many personas from purporting to be an Officer in the RAF and obtaining a tailored officer uniform then absconding from the vicinity to having at least 25 other false identities. Alf did serve time in prison for his misdemeanours and was killed at the young age of 35 - ironically, on a bicycle, hit by a lorry. Ron also showed two films of Northampton past which brought back a lot of memories on the evening.

Saturday 13 January 2024 – Annual Get Together

We celebrated with our Secretary, Vivian Blyth, at our “Get Together” in that she has been awarded the honour of a British Empire Medal for ‘services to the community in Roade’. It was a lovely afternoon with songs, poems, a quiz and raffle whilst enjoying a buffet lunch.

Maggie Smith

FRIENDS OF ST MARY’S HIGHAM FERRERS



Spring bulbs have been planted in their thousands both in the churchyard, public gardens and spaces around the town.

We were fortunate to have been donated 5000 purple crocuses by the Rushden Rotary Club. These have not only been added to the wonderful drift along Church Walk and other areas of the churchyard but also in the little Castle Field, the cottage border at Chichele College, the Duchy Barn Garden and the town’s troughs and fountains supplied by Higham Ferrers Tourism.

Donations of purple crocus by the Rotary Club began in 2016 to raise awareness of their mission to eradicate polio from the world. A purple crocus was chosen to represent the colour of the dye marking the finger of a child that has been immunised. Over many years we have received several thousand corms to ensure a colourful display in early spring and we look forward to the rewards of their planting across the town.

The Friends of St Mary’s continue with planting daffodils along Station Road thanks to a donation by Higham Ferrers Tourism. Daffodils, alliums and tulips have also been added to the churchyard, so we are looking forward to an especially cheerful spring display.



Each year we visit Spalding Auction House to buy bulbs to sell at our Autumn Coffee Morning to cover the cost of planting. We add any unsold bulbs to the churchyard and plant miniature daffodils in pots for sale at the Spring Coffee Morning.

The Friends of St Mary's hope that you will visit and enjoy the emergence of these colourful blooms as the winter recedes and spring evolves. So much to look forward to!

A date for your diary! Spring Coffee Morning Saturday 16 March, 2024.

Carol Fitzgerald

KETTERING CIVIC SOCIETY

'The Lost Mosaic' film is on AMAZON PRIME!

What an incredible year for the Society!

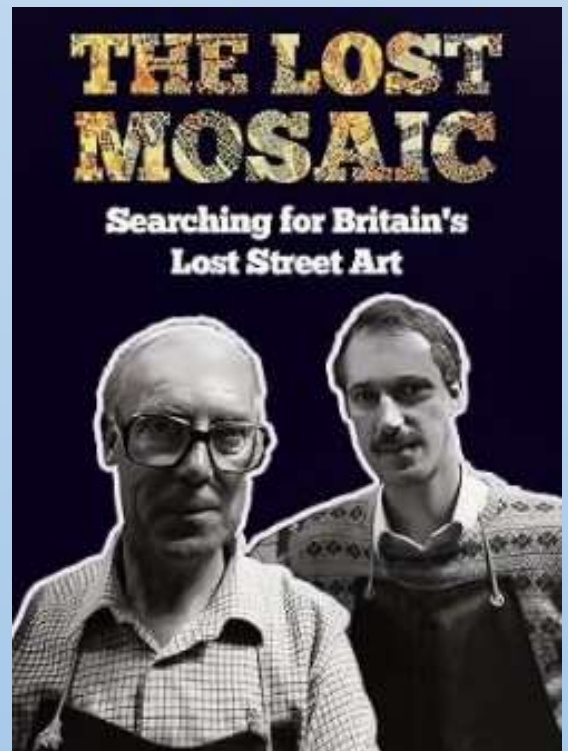
Filming the Kettering Mosaic story began in 2021 and ended on 5 January 2023 when the new facsimile of the mosaic was finally installed in the Alfred East Art Gallery. Unfortunately, the gallery is still closed. The premier showing took place on 16 March in Kettering's Odeon to an audience of two hundred. Since then, many DVDs have been sold and the film has been on tour to community groups with more bookings planned for the future.

The film can now be seen on AMAZON PRIME across the globe!

Please contact the Society at the email address below, if you would like to purchase a DVD or have a film show.

Monica Ozdemir

kettcivic@gmail.com



FRIENDS OF ST PETERS MAREFAIR, NORTHAMPTON

New Year 2024 began with a pleasant surprise for us. Our quiet corner of Northampton was screened on national TV. “*Digging for Britain*”, Alice Roberts and team, visited the Old Black Lion. They caught the restoration project at the stage when archaeologists had uncovered the stableyard, taking it down to early layers. St Peter's features as a backdrop. The Northamptonshire stone glows in sunlight. What a heritage tourism promotion for Northampton! Here is the link to this program:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001tmnh/digging-for-britain-series-11-2-anglosaxon-gold-and-rebellious-nuns> (It starts at 40:25 if you want to jump straight to St Peter's!)

This year, 2024, will be very special for the Friends of St Peter's. It's the 30th anniversary since the society was constituted. By 1994 it had become clear that St Peter's was struggling as a working parish church. The surrounding resident community had been “cleared” as slum housing. A *Miriam Rothschild Meadow* – a Green – replaced streets and dwellings. The congregation at St Peter's had shrunk to 20 or so. These loyal supporters lived at distance to the historic building, once the mother church of a medieval minster network. Redundancy loomed for the church.

The Friends of St Peter's was set up to ensure care for the building and facilitate public access. This is what we have done for thirty years.

In that time there has been so much change. The Council is developing this local quarter around Marefair as a Heritage Gateway to the town centre. The Churches Conservation Trust [CCT], in which the care of St Peter's is vested, has moved its national HQ to Northampton. The restoration of the Old Black Lion historic coaching Inn next door will give St Peter's its own hostelry and house the CCT. A new era as Heritage destination and community facility will begin.

This year we present another series of free zoom talks.* It's part of our constitutional aim to promote awareness of local heritage. Other live events will be advertised from Easter onwards. New members and volunteers are always welcome.

If you want to visit this beautiful building and see the skill of 12th century masons: Individual or group visits can be arranged. Email Stpetermarefair@gmail.com

More information about the church and what we do is at: fostp.org.uk

We wish you a happy and successful year ahead.

Jean Hawkins - Chair

*See the [Events Diary](#) pages for information about the up-coming talks - Editor

EARLS BARTON

Since the Heritage Weekends last September, Earls Barton had been busy preparing for festive events – **Jeyes of Earls Barton**, **Earls Barton Village Museum** and **The Friends of All Saints Church**, all members of The Heritage Forum, have been part of a programme to celebrate Christmas.

The First Christmas Market was held on The Square, even though the weather was awful that Sunday, there was a true valiant spirit: the Choir sang, we all opened our doors to support each other – it was declared a success with the words, “Same time next year”.



Georgina with her festive scene at All Saints Church,
“We Three Kings of Orient Are”

We also supported each other for the annual Christmas Tree Festival in The Church with all local groups, societies, shops and businesses providing imaginative trees or nativity scenes to decorate a warm and welcoming Church. Jeyes’ scene was “We Three Kings of Orient Are” – our plea for a missing camel was successful – though one visitor asked, “Why are the camels in brown sugar?” We had worked hard to create a desert with real sand even if the oasis palm was a house plant! We were all open over the weekend even though Sunday’s weather was again awful.

The traditional “Churches Together” Christmas Eve Carol Service took place on The Square – another memorable evening as usual – the weather was, for once, kind!

Our Museums are open all year round – we do not open usually on Sundays as it the day when the Church opens its doors!

I am writing on behalf of Earls Barton’s three members and look forward to working together to welcome visitors this year.

The first Atkinsii snowdrops are out in The Moongate Garden so spring is just around the corner – let’s all hope for a sunny, busy summer for us all in the county.

Georgina Jeyes

HIGHAM FERRERS' FOOD FOR THOUGHT TO HELP THE NEEDY

Members of Higham Ferrers Tourism are always thinking of projects for the benefit of the town and the local community. Having plotted one for months, they were able to help those in need over Christmas and beyond. They had earmarked proceeds from various events throughout 2023 for the Higham Ferrers Food Bank, run by the local charity Encompass.

Members had also been rattling the collection bucket at some of their functions to boost their donation to the food bank. Then, at the end of 2023, they donated a much-needed £500 to Encompass, which was converted into grocery and household essentials – along with some extra Christmas cheer – for local families facing financial hardship.

“This very welcome donation will definitely help people over Christmas and into the new year,” said a grateful Jo Burns, chief executive of Encompass, when several members of the tourism committee visited the Higham Ferrers Working Mens’ Club (in Westfields Terrace) where food parcels are sorted out ready for distribution every Tuesday morning.

They also met volunteers – Mayor Nigel Brown, Mayoress Jackie Brown and Councillor Jennie Bone – who were described as the “backbone” of the organisation by the chief executive.



Meeting up at the Higham Ferrers Working Mens’ Club were, from the left: Carol Fitzgerald (Higham Ferrers Tourism), Diane Eaton (Tourism Committee and Encompass), Councillor Jennie Bone (volunteer), Liz Barnatt (Tourism Committee), Mayor Councillor Nigel Brown (volunteer) and Jo Burns, chief executive of the Encompass charity.

Picture: Robert Barnatt

The Mayor pointed out that Encompass was particularly grateful to the Working Mens’ Club for making a room available to them free of charge, as without it, they could not operate.

Liz Barnatt, chair of Higham Ferrers Tourism, said that the charity did such “wonderful and worthwhile”

work for the community that there was no debate among members about which organisation should receive the donation.

Encompass provides food parcels to a total of 600 households in Higham Ferrers, Rushden, Raunds and Thrapston, with 94 families in Higham Ferrers benefitting from the charity. “Families receive food parcels six times a year, but if they are in real dire straits, we can increase it to eight times,” Jo explained. It is not just households which have been feeling the financial pinch either.

The charity relies on donations from companies as well as organisations and individuals, and donations had dropped during 2023. “Households and businesses are facing hard times and cannot give as much as they used to. At one stage, donations dropped to almost nothing and, as a result, we had to cut down on some of the items in food parcels,” Jo said. “However, donations have slowly been increasing again, largely due to Harvest Festivals and the festive season,” she added.

Kind-hearted local people tended to remember the charity at Christmas and just as we were leaving the photoshoot, a local woman arrived with £100 cheque from her elderly neighbour.

Encompass has food collection points across the county in local supermarkets and doctors’ surgeries and Jo said the charity was particularly grateful for the regular donations from the Higham Ferrers Co-op which donated fresh food which it has left over at the end of the day.

As well as helping people in poverty, Encompass also caters for those in addiction and homelessness.

To contact Encompass, telephone 01933 733001 or email: info@compasscharity.org.uk

Barbara Cole

MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT EAST MIDLANDS TRAINING

MDEM provides a wide range of training and events for museums in the region. Browse the full list of upcoming events on their website <https://mdem.org.uk/training-and-events/>. Below are a few randomly selected titles to give you an idea of what is on offer in the immediate future.

January 17	Carbon Literacy Connect and Catch-up session
January 23	Getting your House in order – Loans In and Loans Out
January 24	An introduction to audience data collection
February 9	Introduction to Museum Documentation
February 13	Making the most of your Museum – An introduction for museum trustees.
March 12	Marking and Labelling museum objects

EVENTS DIARY - by Organisation Name

Also refer to articles within Newsletter for other organisations

Organisation	Event (Shortened Title)	Speaker	Date	Point of Contact	Email/ telephone
Brigstock Historical Society	The Kettering Mosaic	Monica Ozdemir	24-Jan	Robin Phillips	01536 370144
Brigstock Historical Society	Commonwealth War Graves	Andrew Beckett	28-Feb	Robin Phillips	01536 370144
Brigstock Historical Society	Northamptonshire Victorian Inventions and Inventors	Jon-Paul Carr	27-Mar	Robin Phillips	01536 370144
Brigstock Historical Society	When Olive Oil was for Earache	Sharn Matthews	24-Apr	Robin Phillips	01536 370144
Brigstock Historical Society	That's Unusual	Derek Blunt	22-May	Robin Phillips	01536 370144
Brigstock Historical Society	The Life of Denys Watkins-Pitchford	David Osborne	26-Jun	Robin Phillips	01536 370144
Brixworth History Society	Our Last Naval Hero - David, 1st Earl Beatty	Roy Strong	18-Jan	Pauline Kirton	helloBHS1990@gmail.com
Brixworth History Society	Kelmarsh Hall	Mike Stroud	15-Feb	Pauline Kirton	helloBHS1990@gmail.com
Burton Latimer Heritage Society	Spring Exhibition		Starts 2-Mar	Linda Gregory	linda.gregory152@yahoo.co.uk
Daventry Museum	World War Two: D-Day 80 Years On		13-Jan	Sophie Good	museum@daventrytowncouncil.gov.uk
Friends of St Peters Marefair	Winters in the World	Dr Eleanor Parker	17-Jan	Jean Hawkins	stpetermarefair@gmail.com
Friends of St Peters Marefair	The Great Fire of Northampton	Ruth Thomas	28-Feb	Jean Hawkins	stpetermarefair@gmail.com
Friends of St Peters Marefair	Northampton's Sessions House.	Richard Blackwell	13-Mar	Jean Hawkins	stpetermarefair@gmail.com
Friends of St Peters Marefair	Delapre Abbey - Planting a Medieval Herb Garden	Antoinette France	10-Apr	Jean Hawkins	stpetermarefair@gmail.com
Friends of St Peters Marefair	Old Black Lion Project	Nick Patrick	15-May	Jean Hawkins	stpetermarefair@gmail.com
Northampton Central Library	The Culworth Gang	Richard Blacklee	20-Jan	Cheryl Workman	northampton.libraryplus@westnorthants.gov.uk
Northampton Central Library	The Nene Lace Makers	TBA	17-Feb	Cheryl Workman	northampton.libraryplus@westnorthants.gov.uk
Northampton Central Library	Alchemy	TBA	16-Mar	Cheryl Workman	northampton.libraryplus@westnorthants.gov.uk
Northamptonshire Family History Society (Kettering)	Solving your brick walls	Katrina Freiss	12-Feb	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (Kettering)	The Sawyer Family of Kettering	Jonathan Badger	11-Mar	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (Kettering)	The National Archives – How to use the Discovery Catalogue	Mick Rawle	08-Apr	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org

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Northamptonshire Family History Society (Northampton)	Breach of Promise to Marry	Denise Bates	19-Feb	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (Northampton)	Finding your Overseas Ancestors	Andrea Pettingale	15-Apr	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (ZOOM)	Update and News from Northants Archives	Sarah Bridges	22-Jan	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (ZOOM)	Ragged, Poor and Mischievous or Young Thieves and Street Arabs	Linda Hammond	26-Feb	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (ZOOM)	Death certificates and archaic causes of death	David Church	25-Mar	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (ZOOM)	The Victorians and Entertainment	Dr Judy Hill	22-Apr	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Pytchley Church Heritage Trust	Heritage of Wicksteed Park 100 Years	Ruth Rignall	23-Feb	Kate Everard	kate_everard@btinternet.com
Pytchley Church Heritage Trust	A Talk on the Gardens of Burghley House	TBC	12-Apr	Kate Everard	kate_everard@btinternet.com
Road Local History Society	RAF to Formula 1 - Silverstone	Gerald Lovell	21-Feb	Maggie Smith	events@roadehistorysociety.org.uk
Road Local History Society	Richard Dunkley 1806-1886 Builder of Blisworth	Dick Hennessey & Hilary Spurrier	27-Mar	Maggie Smith	events@roadehistorysociety.org.uk
Road Local History Society	Virginia Bradley, Actress	Andy Tennet	24-Apr	Maggie Smith	events@roadehistorysociety.org.uk
Rockingham Castle	Snowdrops at Rockingham Castle		18-Feb	Georgia	estateoffice@rockinghamcastle.com
Rockingham Castle	Snowdrops at Rockingham Castle		25-Feb	Georgia	estateoffice@rockinghamcastle.com
St. Mary Higham Ferrers	Spring Coffee Morning		16-Mar	Carol Fitzgerald	friendsofmaryshf@gmail.com
University of Northampton	Humour, Satire and Play in History		27-Jun	Siobhan Hyland	Siobhan.hyland@northampton.ac.uk

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Northamptonshire Family History Society (Northampton)	Parish Registers and Non-Conformist Registers	Mick Rawle	18-Mar	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Northamptonshire Family History Society (ZOOM)	Death certificates and archaic causes of death	David Church	25-Mar	Angela Malin	chairman@northants-fhs-org
Brigstock Historical Society	Northamptonshire Victorian Inventions and Inventors	Jon-Paul Carr.	27-Mar	Robin Phillips	01536 370144
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