DON'T MISS OUT! COME ALONG TO MAULDEN ON THE 18TH OF FEBRUARY.

LOCAL HISTORY IN THE MAKING

LUTON UNIVERSITY & LOCAL HISTORY

A TALK BY

DR. STEPHEN BUNKER

MAULDEN VILLAGE HALL

SATURDAY 18TH. FEBRUARY 1995
COMMENCING AT 2.15 P.M.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on May 13th, 1995 at Rice Trevor Lower School, Bromham, commencing at 2.15 p.m. (NOT Bromham Mill as stated in last months issue). The agenda and other information will be sent to members in due course.

After the formal business of the Annual General Meeting, at approximately 3.00 p.m., Dr. Margaret Gelling OBE, Honorary Reader in English Place Name Studies, Department of Mediaeval History, University of Birmingham will address the Association on PLACE NAMES AND THE LANDSCAPE with special reference to Bedfordshire. Dr Gelling who was made OBE in the new year’s honours list is President of the English Place Name Society. She is author of Signposts to the Past and Place Names in the Landscape and is one of the foremost experts on the subject.

Refreshments will be available after the meeting. A conducted tour of the surrounding area has been arranged for the remainder of the afternoon. A short walk will take delegates to Bromham Mill for a look around the interior, followed by a tour of Bromham Park taking in the mediaeval bridge, church and deserted mediaeval settlement site. All together it promises to be a very enjoyable and informative afternoon, not to be missed.

CONFERENCE OF LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES

For the past five years the Mid-Bedfordshire History Societies have organized the annual MID-BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE. In 1994 for the first time invitations were extended to all the history groups in the County, this proved very popular. Building on this success, TODDINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, who are acting as this year’s hosts, are inviting all Bedfordshire history groups to participate in the 1995 CONFERENCE OF BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETIES which will take place in Toddington on Saturday the 17th of June.

Last year participants will recall that Dr. Mark Bailey, in a most enjoyable talk, described five main headings under which the history of a community should be examined. This year Toddington plans to use these headings as a basis to examine their own community from the earliest times. In other words putting Dr. Bailey’s talk into practice. It is planned to have three main speakers and up to six guides stationed in various parts of the village to explain to the delegates the relevant features before they go out to explore the ‘town’.

Toddington is an ideal village for this purpose as considerable evidence of its original plan is visible in today’s landscape, so do make sure your society is represented at this event. If your society has not received an invitation by the time you read this contact Mrs. I. M. Walker, Mulberry Cottage, Park Road, Toddington, Bedfordshire, LU5 6AB.

AROUND THE SOCIETIES

Bedford Archaeological and Local History Society invites

On Sunday 2nd July members of the Bedfordshire Local History Association are invited to join the Bedford Archaeological and Local History Society when they visit Kent by coach as part of their Summer 1995 programme. First stop will be the fascinating moated manor house at Ightham Mote near Sevenoaks. Although of medieval origins the buildings, arranged around a courtyard, consist of elements from several periods. These include the 14th century Great Hall, Old Chapel and crypt and a chapel with a fine painted ceiling of c. 1520. This National Trust property also includes a Conservation Exhibition and gardens.

A little to the north at Lullingstone near Eynsford extensive excavations have revealed the remains of a large Roman country villa. Some splendid mosaic tiled floors will be seen besides the usual domestic quarters, an early private Christian chapel, baths and a mausoleum, all in the care of English Heritage.

The coach will leave Bedford at 8.30 a.m. but if there is sufficient interest extra pick-up points will be arranged. The fare will be £7-00 (not including admission charges). For further details please contact Stephen Coleman on Bedford 751453.

Ampthill & District Archaeological & Local History Society invites

On Monday the 6th of March members of the Bedfordshire Local History Association are invited to join the Ampthill & District Archaeological & Local History Society at the Library in Flitwick at 7.45 p.m. to enjoy an illustrated talk entitled The History of Barrel Organs by Ted Bowman. Ted Bowman will explore the story of the barrel organ from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century with musical illustrations both on record and from the real thing. It promises to be an entertaining evening. Refreshments will be provided and a meeting charge of £1 will be levied.

Your Society invites

To include, in this column, one of your Society’s lectures or visits that you wish to throw open to a wider audience send details to the editor by the 12th of the following months: January, April, July, October for inclusion in the same months issue. A number of societies do send programmes and/or newsletters to the editor for which he is grateful but as he does not know the capacity of each venue or the number of society members likely to attend a particular meeting he needs a further indication of what, if any, should be selected for special highlight in HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE.
THE OSBORN PAPERS

In 1936 when Chicksands Priory was sold to the Crown the estate papers were deposited with the Bedfordshire County Record Office by Sir Algernon Osborn. He retained some valuable volumes relating to America and some exchequer documents of the time of Sir John Osborne, Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer. However, in 1973, the Papers were withdrawn by Lady Osborn and held by the family. During 1994 the Osborns decided to sell the Papers. Following an agreed valuation, the documents were purchased by the Bedfordshire County Record Office with the aid of grants from the V & A Heritage Fund, The Friends of the National Library and The Friends of Chicksands Priory.

The Papers, filed under references O/1 - 192, cover the 13th to 19th centuries. They include title deeds to the Manor of Chicksands and Hawnes Grange (O/3-48), the Manors of Little Wakering and South Fambridge in Essex (O/95-96)), various mortgages and leases, personal wills and other papers. They are now available for inspection in the Record Office.

Towards the end of 1538, following the dissolution, Henry VIII granted to Richard Snowe of London - gentleman and to Elizabeth, his wife, the Manor of Chicksands and also the reversion of leases held by Thomas Wyndham, William Arden and Richard Cooke. Richard Snowe died in 1553 and was succeeded by his son Daniel who demised the Manor, including ‘fishtinge’, ‘appleyeades’ various closes and woods (O/4) to Peter Osborne of Latchington, Co. Essex, Keeper of the Privy Purse to Edward VI. In 1578, however, Edward Snowe, the brother and heir of Richard, brought a suit against the Osbornes claiming the estate as Richard’s next of kin under the provisions of the will of Daniel Snowe dated 16 March 1576/7 (O/5). The will left one-third of all lands in Bedfordshire to his brother Edward and “the remaining two-thirds of lands in Bedfordshire in Dean and Hawnes and house in London” to Mary Osborne, second daughter of Peter Osborne.

After litigation the Manor was finally conveyed “for various considerations” to the Osbornes by Edward Snowe in 1587, together with the Manor commonly known as Hawnes Grange and Hawnes Rectory. In 1592, on the death of Peter Osborne, the property passed to his son John, Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer, who was knighted in 1618 and was apparently the first member of the family to live at Chicksands. His descendants owned the property until it was sold in 1936.

Other title deeds refer to: the advowson and a close at Campton (O/49-59); the ‘Cock’ Inn at Shefford (O/60-70); the Manor of Polehanger and appurtenant lands in Meppershall (O/71-87). Leases include properties in Campton, Hawnes and Haughton Magna in Northamptonshire (O/111A-129).

Extracts from the Lincoln Episcopal Registers relative to the Church of Chicksands (O/97-5-24) cover the period 1209 to 1418 and record the establishment of the Vicarage of Bishop Hugh de Welles and the institution and exchange of various succeeding Bishops.

Interesting items include a Royalist Pass made out to Lt. Col. Osborne dated 19th November, 1645 and an Ambassadorial Passport of John Osborn Esq. to the Court at Dresden dated 30th March, 1771 (O/187 - 192). The will of Sir George Osborn dated 21st September, 1816 (O/46), after leaving all his messuages, lands, hereditaments etc. in Trust to his son John, grandson Robert and their heirs, included the following bequests to his wife Lady Heneage Osborn £1,000 also “the use and wearing of my silver knives forks spoons and candlesticks” “also all table and household linen, pictures, books, prints, household goods and furniture in messuage in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, Middlesex” and to Lady Osborn for life “all liquors in the cellars provisions carriages and unexpired portion of lease of messuage in Charles Street”.

In 1855 a detailed survey of the estate was made by Frederick Thyme of Great George Street, Westminster - this beautiful book (O/163) is in excellent condition, apart from the binding, and is illustrated with colour plans of the lodges and outlying farms. It gives a brief history of the Priory, presents a detailed picture of the woodland and farms and records the names of the tenants with the condition of their properties. The survey also shows the income from the estate and suggests new rentals for some of the farms.

The Papers mentioned above are only a few of the documents which are available. The Friends of Chicksands Priory are pleased that they have been able to assist in the return of the Papers to the County Record Office.

N.B. At the end of the seventeenth century the family dropped the “e” at the end of Osborn, therefore, in this article both spellings of the name have been used as appropriate to the particular period addressed.

PETER WOOD
CHICKSANDS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The impending withdrawal of the American Air Force from RAF Chicksands has been widely covered in the local press. The local Councils and the Ministry of Defence have been discussing future planning possibilities for the site. Apart from the hall at Bushmead, Chicksands Priory, which lies within the MoD owned site, is the only building in the County to contain much of the original monastic house. It is, of course, well known for its connection to the Osborn family whose papers have recently been acquired by the Bedfordshire County Record Office, as described on page 3 of this issue. Due to the concern expressed by some members of the Association, a questionnaire was sent to members last spring by the Secretary to ascertain member’s views on the setting up of a trust to secure it’s future. The questions asked and a summary of the replies are set out below:

1. “Are you concerned as to the fate of historic buildings in Bedfordshire and Chicksands Priory in particular?”  Yes 37.5%; not in particular 42.2%; no reply 20.3%.
2. “Have you ever visited the Priory?” Yes 33.3%; no 8.3%; no reply 58.3%.
3. “Do you think an attempt ought to be made to form a trust to secure the Priory’s future as a historic building quite apart from the rest of the base?” Yes 25%; thought it a good idea but were concerned with the practicality 8.3%; no 6.3%; no reply 50.3%.
4. “In view of the enormous cost of upkeep do you agree that unless the Ministry of Defence or some other body agreed to provide endowment then the trust should not accept the responsibility for the Priory?” Yes 33.3%; probably 2%; 6.3% commented on other possibilities and one said that the BLHA should not get involved; no reply 56.3%.

In retrospect the committee feels that the results of the questionnaire do not give a clear answer to the question of whether the BLHA should become involved with such a trust and, therefore wish to use HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE to put the following question to the membership: “Should the BLHA play a direct part in the setting up of a trust to secure the future of Chicksands Priory provided that such a trust is provided with an adequate endowment?” Please send your answers to the Secretary Mr. M Kemp or the editor so they may be put before the committee. Letters for publication on this or any other subject should be addressed to the editor.

Local History Lecture Competition

HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE understands that a number of entries have been received for this competition. However, the organizers have decided that the original deadline set was too short to give sufficient opportunity to all those who may wish to enter. They have decided, therefore, to extend the final entry date to 31st March 1995 by which time they require the completed entry form together with a synopsis of the proposed talk. More entries are needed to do justice to this project.

This competition is jointly sponsored by the Bedfordshire County Record Office and the Bedfordshire Local History Association with the aim of encouraging potential speakers to research local history and give a talk on their chosen subject. The entrants must not have previously given a talk on their selected subject. The short listed candidates will have six weeks to prepare for the final, at which the lectures will be given in public and a winner and runners up chosen by the judges. Prizes have been kindly donated by Mr. Paul Bowes of the Book Castle. Entry forms are obtainable from the Bedfordshire County Records Office, telephone 01234 228833.

Attention Member Societies

It is our intent to distribute HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE as widely as possible and to further this aim, may we request Societies’ secretaries please to endeavour to bring HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE to the attention of as many of their members as possible by displaying it on their notice boards, recopying or such other means that may suit their particular society. We make this appeal as a number of members of constituent Societies have complained to committee members of the BLHA that they do not see copies of this publication. It may be partly our fault as the address to which the three copies of HISTORY IN BEDFORDSHIRE (all our budget will allow) are sent for each member Society may not be the correct one to achieve efficient viewing by all your members.

If any Society wishes this publication to be sent to an alternative address to that in our treasurer's file will they please inform the Editor.

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