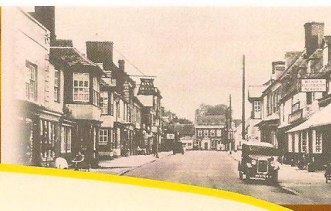


# Newsletter

Summer 2012



Number 5

This year saw the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Highworth Historical Society which was formed on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1972. To celebrate this event we arranged for a commemorative plaque to be placed on Westhill House where the distinguished Jurassic geologist William Joscelyn Arkell was born in 1904. We were all extremely grateful for the generous support which Peter and Anne Simpson gave us throughout this project. A further exciting initiative is the 'Snapshot of Highworth' project which is ongoing throughout this year. Suggested by Gillian Miller and organised by Ann Marie Murphy, our archivist, we have been photographing all the houses in Highworth for our archives. A huge vote of thanks must go to Oliver Duffy a young, local photographer who has been a key helper in this scheme.

For many years it has been the aim of the society to have somewhere to keep all our archives together. This Spring this finally came about when we took a room at the Highworth Community Centre. Already furnished with plenty of shelf space and work surfaces we were immediately able to begin putting our holdings in order and making them more accessible to members. We are very lucky in now having the help and advice of one of our members, Diana Sims, who is a librarian at English Heritage and who is assisting Ann Marie.

Our membership has grown considerably over the last five years, so much so that it was apparent that we had outgrown the community room at the council offices. From this autumn our talks will be held at the beautiful United Reformed Church, in the High Street. As it is a place of worship we will no longer be holding our monthly raffles.

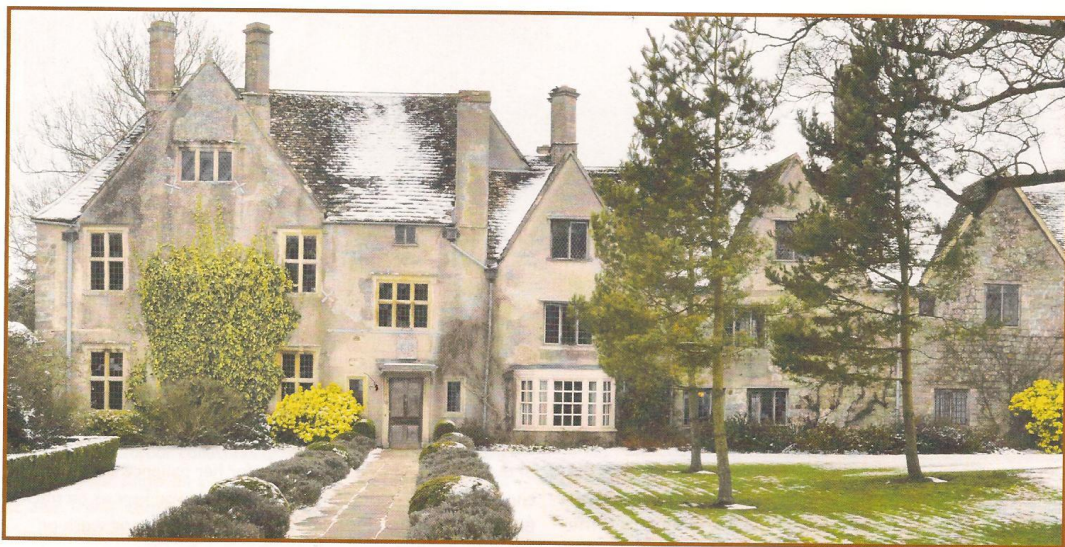
We know that you will be delighted to hear that we are bringing out two new publications this year. A 'Town Trail' guide with much fresh information on our town researched and written by Jo Clark and a delightful booklet by Chris Suter entitled 'Fun, Frolics and Friendship' which looks at the ways in which the people of Highworth entertained themselves in the past. An enormous vote of thanks must go to Brenda Bruce for her patience and encouragement whilst editing these works – you kept us on track Brenda- and to Paul Newton-Smith for his advice and work on designing the final product – a brilliant job Paul. Thanks must also go to Highworth Town Council who paid for the artwork for the 'Town Trail'.

There are quite a few changes due to take place at the A.G.M. I am stepping down as Chair of the society. I have been on the committee for the past ten years, five as Secretary and five as Chair. It has been a great privilege to serve the society which is now in a healthy position. It is time for some new and hopefully younger blood to pick up the reins and take it forward. I have been blessed in having some brilliant committee members helping me over the last five years. They will know who they are – thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Gillian Miller and Joanne Cook who have put together such an excellent and interesting programme of speakers over the years are also stepping down. In addition to arranging the talks they both continued adding to our collection of oral histories, the most recent being a wonderful talk which Gillian had with the late Bernard Woodbridge.







Chris Suter, who carried out the surveys of Highworth and Hannington churchyards, is also retiring. Chris also organised the monthly raffles at our meeting during the winter months.

So who amongst you is going to step up to the plate and put yourself forward at the A.G.M. for election to the committee? We have a wealth of talented people amongst our members. Nomination forms can be obtained from our Secretary and must be with her by 10th September 2012.

Jo Clark Chair

### Old Vicarage Tours



Members of Highworth Historical Society made two visits to the Old Vicarage in Highworth on 26<sup>th</sup> November and 3<sup>rd</sup> December. The building, next to St Michael's Church, had been occupied by EMO but they were relinquishing the lease early in 2012 and kindly offered us the chance of visits, possibly the last ever, around the building. The tours, which were extremely interesting and entertaining, were kindly facilitated by Clare Collings of EMO and ably assisted by Richard Dent (former vicar) and his wife Ann. Our thanks go to them for their time, interest and effort.

### Trip to Avebury Manor

Members enjoyed a very successful trip to Avebury Manor on a snowy Sunday morning in February. Avebury Manor is different to most other National Trust properties or stately homes in that visitors are positively encouraged to feel fabrics, play on the snooker table, handle items and sit in chairs (including a very interesting horse riding/exercise chair that definitely should be experienced!) Each room is decorated to a different era but all in keeping with the various owners and residents of the Manor. Well worth a visit!



### 1913 Highworth Elections

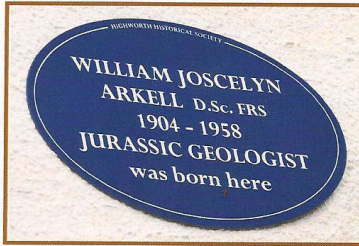
In March, Gillian organised the re-enactment of the 1913 Highworth Local Elections in the Council Rooms. The original elections cards were discovered by Chris and each candidate was depicted as a horse in a race, with the description loosely hinting at the potential councillor's real identity. Attendees were invited to guess the runners, also-rans and eventual winner over a fish and chip supper. There were a few surprises during the evening and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

On a blustery day in June, Highworth's mayor, members of the Highworth Historical Society and the Arkell family gathered together to recognise a former Highworth resident. William Joscelyn Arkell was born in Westhill House on Cricklade Road in Highworth and grew up to be an eminent geologist and palaeontologist. He was a renowned expert on the Jurassic Period, particularly with regard to the south coast, his interest no doubt sparked by family holidays in Swanage as a boy. On 16th June



## Another blue plaque in Highworth

2012, a commemorative plaque was unveiled to mark the place of Mr Arkell's birth and early life. Speeches were made by Jo Clark, chair of the Highworth Historical Society, Highworth's mayor Maureen Penny and one of Mr Arkell's sons before the blue plaque was unveiled (at the second attempt and with the aid of a ladder!) The party then retired to Highworth Library for a reception with food and drink provided by Arkells Brewery and AJ of the Saracen's Head.

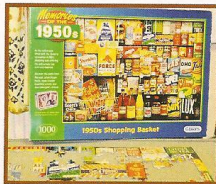


## May Day and our 1950s Display

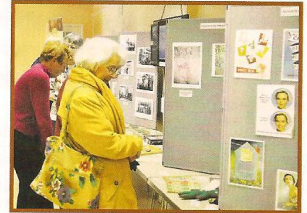
In order to help celebrate our Queen's Diamond Jubilee, this year's May Day had a 1950s theme. Our display in the Council Rooms,



brilliantly put together by Ann Marie, kept visitors enthralled with, amongst other things, a Pathe newsreel of 1950s news, fashions of the 50s, a puzzle of 1950s household products, a quiz and music from the charts of the day.

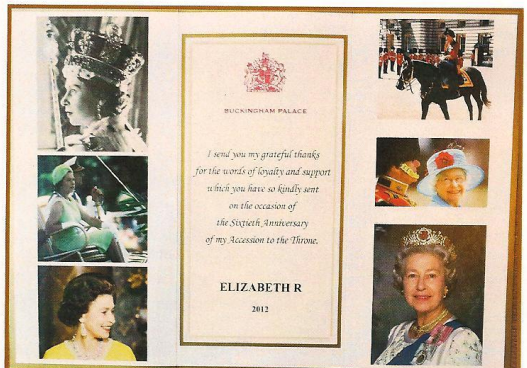


Thank you to all of you who helped out over the season with your time and effort and also donations of items for the 1950s display. All of it was very much appreciated.



## Message to the Queen

In May, HHS sent a card to The Queen to congratulate her on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee. In return, we received a card, thanking us for 'our words of loyalty and support'.



## DON'T FORGET...

OUR NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

24th September 7.30pm

TICKET TO RYDE

A history of the Isle of Wight steam railway  
with Colin Brading



## Archivist Report



The archiving of all our documents and artifacts has been made a lot easier this year thanks to the fact that I now have a dedicated history room at the Highworth Community Centre. That, combined by the invaluable help given to me by Diana Sims, means that at last we are able to log and store everything securely.

As you have probably noticed, we are becoming more and more involved in putting together exhibitions and displays both for the HHS and for others. This means that we require access to a large and varied selection of items and we need your help. Could you donate anything to our collection, or alternatively, if you are willing to lend specific items on a short term basis please let me have a list and I will contact you if and when we require them. In the meantime, I would like to say a big thank you to all those that have donated items to the shows we have produced this year, I really could not have done it without you.

Ann Marie Murphy

## Treasurers Report



This year has been another stable year for the Society's finances. I once again must extend my thanks to all those involved in the fundraising events held during the year which have contributed greatly to our income. The continued

generosity of our increasing membership at raffles during monthly meetings was also a welcome boost to finances which enables us to purchase much needed items of equipment. The gift aid claim has been submitted and I am hopeful that I will hear the result of this in the very near future.

A substantial number of members completed their gift aid declarations and these are now on file for any future claims should our initial claim meet with success. Thank you all again for your continued support. **Please note collection of subscriptions will be on the evening of 12th September.**

Jim Mitchell

## Annual General Meeting

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Registered Charity No: 1001376

The Annual General Meeting of the Highworth Historical Society will be held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at the United Reformed Church, High Street, Highworth commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The business of the meeting will be to receive the annual report of the Executive Committee as Trustees, to receive the accounts of the Society for 2011/2012, to elect the members of the Committee and to transact any other business on the agenda to be circulated at the meeting.

Proceedings and election of the officers will be in accordance with the Constitution.

Nomination forms for the elections may be obtained from the Secretary by post at 23 Crane Furlong, Highworth, SN6 7JX or by email. This should be signed by the proposer, the seconder, and the nominee and reach the Secretary by:

**Monday 10th September 2012.**

A copy of the accounts may be obtained prior to the AGM from the Treasurer at Inala, Lechlade Road, Highworth upon receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

Following the AGM there will be a talk by Colin Brading entitled 'Ticket to Ryde.'

## CONTACT US

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## Evening Lectures 2012 / 2013

**All meetings to be held in United Reformed Church, High Street, Highworth unless otherwise stated**  
**Meetings start at 7.30 pm.**

September 24th 2012	Ticket to Ryde - A history of the Isle of Wight steam railway	Colin Brading
October 29th 2012	A Lost Highworth Painting from Highworth Church <b>Please note this meeting will be in St Michael's Church</b>	Dr Ellie Pridgeon Steve Williams
November 26th 2012	Courts Martial, World War I	Dr Robert Jones
December 17th 2012	Open Forum with Bryan Lawton, Glenys Cox and Jo Clark	Paul Williams
January 28th 2013	Awakening the Blade - Medieval sword play	Allan Ledger
February 25th 2013	The life & times of William Hooper, Swindon photographer	Daniel Rose
March 25th 2013	18th Century Private Theatricals	
April 29th 2013	The Mechanics Institute, Swindon	