



June 2017 Newsletter

Summer Saint's Day Feast

As we have suffered bad weather on past June picnics, this year we will have a summer feast in July; basically a picnic as before but inside an historic building. As there is much work being done at St Kenelm's church and following conservation architect Nigel Hammett's revealing talk to us recently about the architectural history of the church, it seemed appropriate to hold our summer feast there on Monday July 17 at 6pm. The date celebrates the feast day of St Kenelm, the murdered boy king (see left) whose body was carried by monks from the Clent hills south of Birmingham to Winchcombe Abbey



where in the twelfth century it was the most popular pilgrimage place in England. Those feeling energetic can walk the St Kenelm Trail which follows the path the monks took from murder site to burial place. There will be more information about the feast in the next newsletter but please start to make up picnic parties. We will try and arrange tables and chairs ready in the church. Nigel Hammett will be coming to continue his talk about the church where he will be able to point out the salient sites. Mark Abrey will also be talking about his drones and how they are recording the gravestones of the parish. If by some saintly miracle, the weather is fine and warm, we can picnic in the churchyard.

Brown, Brexit and Buildings

On Tuesday May 23, Dr Oliver Cox, Heritage Engagement Fellow at Oxford University and author of books on the eighteenth century and the English country house gave a talk which he entitled Capability Brown, Brexit and the Future of the Country House. The very invigorating talk described how country

houses struggle to remain financially viable and provide heritage for coming generations. Between 1880 and 2014, 1921 houses were demolished and at the peak time of 1955 one house was lost every five days. Those that survived have had to find ways of attracting visitors and providing a complete experience whether this is based on historic possessions or the cult of modern films and TV such as Downton Abbey. Three exhibitions in 1974, 1985 and 2014 summarised the history of the country house since World War 2 and showed how the role of the country house has shifted and evolved over fifty years often becoming important in rural economy. Dr Cox summed up 'culture, sitting alongside community and commerce will be the key to this next phase of the country house's history'.

Roundabout

Open until September the restored Sarsden Washpool where sheep were washed has been restored by Rupert and Amanda Ponsonby. The pool would have been seen by William Smith from his home and in 1818 he was asked to prepare an irrigation scheme in the Sars Brook. Further information from Janie Hextall 01608 658278 /jani.hextall@btinternet.com

Running for 3 days from Friday 7th to Sunday 9th July, the Shelswell History Festival celebrates local history and rural heritage. From Saxon invasions and Civil War battles, hidden histories of the 10 Shelswell villages, WW2 Home Guard and Special Operations, to "lost villages" and country crafts, there's something for everyone. Created by a team of local residents, the event offers talks and workshops, demonstrations and displays, historical re-enactors, a play, a barn dance and activities for all the family, complete with BBQ, bar and Tea Tent. The event is being held in Shelswell Park, in the countryside setting of Victorian author Flora Thompson's novel "Lark Rise to Candleford" Shelswell Estate, Fringford, Bicester, OX27 8EF. More information and ticket from www.shelswellhistoryfestival.org.uk



History Cinema Club

The Soldiers of Oxford Museum in Woodstock are running a SOFO Cinema Club with shows starting at 6.30pm; tickets cost £3 50 (or two for £6). Upcoming showings are My By Jack in June about Rudyard Kipling's search for his missing

teenage son in WW1 and in July Fury, partly filmed in Oxfordshire about a WW2 tank mission behind enemy lines. The museum's June talk is by Peter Doyle on the Raising of Kitchener's Army of thousands of volunteers for WW1. 7-8.30pm, Tickets £10. More details sofo.org.uk.

Neighbouring museum, the Oxfordshire Museum is opening its doors until 8pm on the first Thursday of each month from May to September providing an opportunity to see the museum and its extensive gardens in a new light and to enjoy some summer specials including free gallery talks and live music. The Museum's garden cafe will remain open into the evening providing light refreshments. Admission is free; more details on 01993 814106

Engage with Gagingwell

Resulting from my attendance at the Middle Barton history society committee meeting, I have been asked to prepare a feature on historic aspects of Gagingwell for the next volume of Bygone Bartons. I would be grateful if any one who has any Gagingwell history details from any period could get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Carol Geare, Chairman, 01608 677246 / carolawt@gmail.com

Anne Francis, Hon Secretary, 01608 678820 / annefrancis1@gmail.com

Diary dates:

No meeting in June

Monday July 17 at 6pm , St Kenelm's day summer feast at St Kenelm's Church.