



**Abingdon Area  
Archaeological and Historical Society**  
[www.AAAHS.org.uk](http://www.AAAHS.org.uk)

**NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2011**

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**Meetings Programme**

All at the Northcourt Centre starting at 7.45pm. Visitors welcome (£3.00 entry)

- Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> September** Judy White: *“The History of Northcourt”* Preceded by short AAAHS AGM
- Thurs 20<sup>th</sup> October** Graham Moores: *“The Peninsular War - the Early Years”*
- Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> November** Martin Sirot-Smith, Director Emeritus of Sulgrave Manor: *“Sulgrave and the Washingtons”*
- Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> December** Christmas Social with Ian Lewis of Regia Anglorum: *“The Wychurst Project: recreating the 10<sup>th</sup> Century”*
- Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012** Amanda Clarke, Director, Silchester Field School: *“Recent work at Silchester”*
- Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> February** Tony Hadland: *“Thames Valley Recusants”*
- Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> March** Dr Gill Hey, Regional Manager, Oxford Archaeology North: *The Neolithic - subject tbc.*
- Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> April** Dr Jane Kershaw, Institute of Archaeology, Oxford University: *“Metal detecting and its impact on our understanding of Viking Archaeology”*
- Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> May** Liz Woolley: *“Child Labour in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Oxfordshire”*
- Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> June** Open Evening presented by members



AAAHS Members enjoying the “Unseen Oxford” walk in June.

## Chairman's Report

I am writing this on a sunny evening in early August. The first Christmas cards have already appeared in the shops (yes, I'm afraid so) and it seems hard to believe that the Society's 2010/11 year is drawing to a close.

This has been a good year for the Society. We have enjoyed a very varied and interesting programme of lectures, on topics ranging from the Vikings of Orkney to the history of Culham Science Laboratories. Our Christmas Social saw many of those present take to the dance floor, skilfully guided by the 'Vale Islanders' period dancers (who had struggled through the snow to reach of us), and our Open Evening in June was a very enjoyable and well-attended event. Our three outings – a walk around Victorian Abingdon led by Jackie Smith, a walking tour of Hidden Oxford led by John Gibbs, and a tour of archaeological sites in north Abingdon led by Jeff Wallis – were all over-subscribed, and greatly enjoyed by those who went on them. Full reports on the outings are on pages 3 to 7. The Local History Group has also continued to meeting regularly.

More has been going on behind the scenes. John Gibbs has continued his excavations at Kiln Copse, Marcham; Roger Ainslie carried out a geophysical survey on Radley Road on behalf of the Society, where he may have located part of Abingdon's Neolithic causewayed camp; Society members have been advising and helping to find objects for the new displays in Abingdon Museum, and also working on the 'Lost Abbey project' (which is producing information boards for a number of locations around the town connected with Abingdon Abbey). Earlier in the year, through the kindness of the late Ron Henderson's children, we acquired the records and finds from the excavations which Ron carried out for the Society in the early 1970s. Cataloguing these archives, and publishing reports where possible, are important tasks for the future.

The committee has also been taking an interest in planning matters, commenting on selected planning applications for developments which may have archaeological implications. We have also had an initial meeting with the Friends of Abingdon, about possibly working more closely together in future. The Friends are keen to expand their role as a civic society, and to play a full part in discussions about planning and conservation in Abingdon. There are clearly some links to the Society's areas of interest here. After the May elections, the two societies wrote jointly to the newly appointed leaders of the Vale and Town Councils, suggesting meetings with each to discuss topics of common interest. We are trying to arrange those meetings at the moment, and we will keep you informed about the outcome of them.

This move has a wider context, which is likely to be increasingly important in coming years. The government is keen to encourage 'localism' in planning – that is to say, local people and local communities being more actively involved in helping to shape the future of their areas. At the same time, new planning policies are proposed which may make it much easier get planning permission for development. Unfortunately, this coincides with serious financial pressures on many local authority planning and conservation departments. In Oxfordshire, the post of County Archaeologist seems, in effect, to have disappeared. In future, societies such as ours may need to be very vigilant, and to play a full and active part in ensuring that our heritage does not lose out somewhere between a very pro-development planning system and reduced conservation staffing in local councils. These, though, are matters for the slightly longer term. More immediately, we have our Annual General Meeting to look forward

to at 7.45pm on Thursday 15 September at the Northcourt Centre; the AGM itself will be followed by a talk from Judy White on (appropriately enough) the history of Northcourt. We have a full programme of lectures for the coming year and also plan to arrange further evening outings next summer. Among other things, these may provide an escape from the London 2012 Olympics for less sport-oriented members!

Finally, it's my great pleasure to report that George Lambrick has accepted our invitation to become an Honorary Vice-President of the Society. George will be known to most of you, I think, for his distinguished contribution to Oxfordshire archaeology over many years; George and his wife Camilla also sponsor our annual 'Lambrick Lecture' (in memory of George's mother, Gabrielle Lambrick, a very well-respected historian of Abingdon, who was instrumental in the formation of Society in 1968 but who sadly died shortly afterwards). We are delighted to recognise the Society's long association with George and his family in this way.

I'd like to end by thanking all of my fellow committee members (both retiring and remaining) for their help and support throughout the year and by thanking all of you, our members, for everything you do to make our Society such a successful one. I look forward to seeing as many of possible of you at the AGM.

*Roger Thomas, Chairman*

### **Membership Secretary's Report**

Membership numbers this year are roughly the same as last year. Counting family subscriptions as 2 members, this year we have 128 members compared with 130 last year. However, as can be seen from the table below family subscriptions have decreased whereas individual and concessionary memberships have increased. Eight members did not renew their membership this year but I am pleased to say we have had 12 new members.

	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Family	24	16
Individual	50	56
Concessionary	25	30
Distant	1	1
Free (Vice Presidents etc)	6	6

Most members have opted to receive their newsletters via e mail but if you prefer a paper copy please indicate this on your membership form.

Subscription rates for 2011/12 remain unchanged - individual £12, family £18, concessionary (pensioner, student, unwaged) £8.50 and distant £4. A renewal form is on the back of this newsletter. Subscriptions, due in September, can either be posted (address on form) or brought to the AGM.

*Sally Ainslie, Membership Secretary*

### **AAHS Outings 2011**

#### **Victorian Abingdon - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

Our group of Society members met in the small square outside 33 Bath Street and we were led by **Jackie Smith** on a guided walk around Albert Park, including parts of Ock Street and the High Street. We stopped at many locations on the walk where she described a number of historical and architectural features, with the emphasis on

the development of the park. We also learned some interesting facts about the residents of the park in Victorian and Edwardian times.

The establishment of the park had its origins in a review carried out by the Charity Commissioners of Christ's Hospital in the mid nineteenth century. This review resulted in the "Charity Commissioners' Scheme for the Management and Regulation of Christ's Hospital of Abingdon", which was introduced in 1859. Among other things, this scheme empowered Christ's Hospital to set aside some 10 to 20 acres on its open ground known as Conduit Field to create a recreation ground and allotments for "the benefit of the townspeople of Abingdon". Christ's Hospital was empowered to allocate £500 to develop the land and a further £40 annually for its maintenance. In April 1860 designs for the new park were invited, for a prize of 10 guineas. The successful design was provided by Mr I W Chapman of Dulwich and his basic layout was followed, but not all of the details.

During 1861 the basic structure was laid out including roads, railings and drainage. In 1862 there was further landscaping carried out and a park keeper was employed. One of the problems to overcome in the design was how to incorporate two well-used footpaths that crossed the area. One of these crossed from Conduit Road to Spring Road and this was incorporated into the present Park Road. The other, known as the Old Shippon Path, was diverted along Park Crescent to pass broadly eastwards to where it still exits on Bath Street. During 1861 building plots around the park were advertised for "double cottages", for mechanics and artisans, and "villa residences" for the more well-heeled. The park development was designed to be an enclosed community, similar to the "gated developments" of today. Indeed there was a main gate at the entrance to Park Road, near the present pedestrian crossing on Stratton Way, and a gate key was held by each householder on the park. There was a cottage on each side of the gate but only one of these exists today which is on the southern side of Stratton Way, the other having been demolished when Stratton Way was built.

The houses along the eastern section of Park Road, Abingdon School and the large villas on the northern and eastern sections of Park Crescent were built around 1870. The main architects were Edwin Dolby and Timothy West. The latter founded an architecture practice which survives today in the Abingdon practice of West Waddy ADP. St Michael's Church, which was completed in 1867, was built directly opposite the main entrance to the central park area on Park Road. Prince Albert died in 1861 and it was decided to include a statue of him in the park. Its location at the northern end of the park was chosen as a focus for the vista that is viewed when looking upwards from the main entrance to the central park area. The statue was produced by John Gibbs of Oxford and erected in 1865. The houses on the western side of Park Crescent were completed later: Nos 11-12 in 1895, Nos 9-10 in 1897 and Nos 1-8 in about 1902. The houses on the southern side of Park Road were also completed within a few years of the turn of the twentieth century.

Most of the large villas on the eastern side of Park Crescent are now used by Abingdon School. On our tour Jackie mentioned some of the notable former residents. At the northern entrance to the park there is a former vicarage on the western side. The villa opposite the vicarage was built by Charles Richardson who had a substantial grocery business in the town, and his initials can be seen in a roundel on the front wall of the house. His daughter Dorothy Richardson became a relatively famous novelist in Edwardian times. No 3 Park Crescent was the home of the Hooke family that had a printing business and a stationery shop in the eastern corner of the Market Place. Mr Hooke was noted for publishing "Hooke's Abingdon

Almanack and Directory” that listed every resident together with town officials, shops and other businesses.

Moving out of the park towards Conduit Road Jackie pointed out many features of historical interest. Trinity Church was built in 1875 from funds raised by Methodists, the main contribution being provided by John Creemer Clark who was a wealthy clothing manufacturer. An interesting feature of this area is the 16<sup>th</sup> century stone building used to house a water cistern that supplied drinking water to the residents of Ock Street through a conduit from a spring called “The Carswell” to “Mr Ely’s Fountain”. This fountain was relocated in the 1940s to a position on the wall of Tomkins Almshouses on Conduit Road. The name Carswell referred to the stream of that name and the abundance of cress in the stream. We stopped to look at Carswell Primary School which was established in 1865, and designed mainly by Edwin Dolby. Many buildings have been added since then. Apparently Mayott’s Road was specially built as an access to the school for the children as it was thought their noisiness would disturb local residents near the park if they arrived and left the school from the direction of Conduit Road!

By the second half of the nineteenth century the Clock House had passed out of the hands of the original Tomkins family and in the 1850s the front courtyard buildings housed the Mechanics Institute reading rooms. Part of the building was later occupied by the Beaconsfield Working Men’s Conservative Club, and still bears the name The Beaconsfield. The notable remaining features of that Club are the relief portraits on the outside wall of three prominent Conservative politicians of those times: The Earl of Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli), The Marquess of Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote.

We continued along Ock Street and stopped to examine three further buildings of note. Although the Baptist Church was founded in the mid-seventeenth century the present building dates from 1841, and the neo-classical facade was added some forty years later. A British School was built on the eastern side of the church and the building is now partly incorporated into the Coxeter’s premises. The school closed in the early twentieth century. The early Congregationalist Church was built around 1700, and was expanded to form the current building in 1862. The church incorporated two ships masts in its structure and Jackie related the traditional stories that they had either come from the “Mayflower” ship or the ship that brought William of Orange to England! Whatever the truth of these tales it was agreed that its conversion into the Ask Italian Restaurant was imaginative and successful. The old library in the High Street was designed by the West family of architects. The library, in which the reference books were in a first floor room, was vacated following the completion of the new library in the Charter development. We finished our tour in the Market Square having learned a lot in a relatively short time. Jackie covered more than could be included in this short account and those present greatly appreciated the benefit of her extensive knowledge.

*Stuart Hughes*

### **Unseen Oxford - 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011**(See Photo on page 1)

I imagine that most AAAHS Members would feel reasonably familiar with Oxford City Centre – the High Street, Cornmarket, the Westgate Centre, even many of the Colleges. There is however an ancient and mysterious quarter of the city sandwiched between the familiar Oxford and the river, known as St Thomas, which is probably much less well known, not only to Abingdonians but even to Oxford

residents. It was into this fascinating twilight world that **John Gibbs** led a party of about two dozen members on a showery evening in early June.

St Thomas, like its neighbour St Ebbe's, is a low-lying, densely packed neighbourhood, subject to frequent flooding and an historic centre of poverty and cholera. It housed the workers and tradesmen of the city reaching its peak in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, by which time it had become the transport node of the city with the arrival of the canal and the railway. The magnificent Osney Abbey has long since vanished, as has the convent of The Sisters of Mercy, but the mediaeval church of St Thomas the Martyr remains, albeit with a raised floor level to avoid the flooding. As chance would have it this is where we encountered a heavy downpour in an otherwise fine, sunny evening. St Thomas, under Canon Thomas Chamberlain, became a controversial centre of High Church ritual in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as good works and charity among the labouring classes.

At the other end of St Thomas Street, we viewed that other foundation of the labourer's life – the former Lion Brewery, now converted into flats. John then led us through hidden alleyways to The Hamel, an area of model housing created by Christchurch College in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century following an early bout of slum clearance. Via Oxpens College we reached Trill Mill Stream, one of a series of waterways which served the various mills in this quarter. We then explored the former canal basin and the various arms of the Oxford Canal, the early 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial heart of the city, and now the home of a thriving boating community. Intertwined with the canal are the various lines of the competing railway companies, including an ingenious swing bridge, which enthusiasts are hoping to renovate. And so we emerged into the former railway suburb of Abbey Road and back to the Botley Road with its former tollhouse, recalling the days of the Turnpike Road. John led us safely back to the more familiar territory of the Station, after a delightful and informative exploration of "unseen Oxford".

*John Rawling*

### **The Archaeology of North Abingdon - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

After a slightly delayed and rainy start, which fortunately didn't last, **Jeff Wallis** treated us to a very interesting and informative talk about the archaeology and history of North East Abingdon. The area of interest covered the Radley Road/Audlett Drive roundabout south to the Daisy Bank Fen and from Cameron Avenue on the Radley Road in the west to Thrupp Road and the Goose Acre Farm area in the east. The tour took in eight main points of interest in an area covering some 70 acres, although of course we didn't walk over all of it.

The group, consisting of about fifteen people, did however see areas as diverse as a the location of a Paleolithic settlement to the north (Lodge Hill) to the Bronze age at Barrow Hills Field, to a Roman cemetery site in Audlett Drive to the "Mediaeval Abbey fishponds" in Daisy Bank Fen. Indeed at one point we were shown evidence of continuous occupation from late Neolithic/Iron age to post mediaeval at Barton Court Farm/Villa, or at least where it used to be. This area is now of course under the housing estate but it is such continuous occupation that allows Abingdon its claim to be the oldest continually inhabited town in England.

Jeff's knowledge, experience, enthusiasm and a good set of notes, with photographs and diagrams of what Jeff was discussing, kept us going through a quite chilly evening. I don't know if anyone else noticed but we did get some curious glances

from people as we marched around the more populated areas such as the Cameron Avenue area. Such a group clustering together apparently looking at modern houses at dusk must have looked strange.

Overall this was a very instructive well presented talk covering a large part of the history of Abingdon within a quite a small geographical area and it helped to keep us fit too.

*Andrew Steele*

### **Local History Group**

Two meetings have been held since the last report in the Newsletter.

On 15<sup>th</sup> February, the main presentation was given by the indefatigable Dick Barnes who keeps coming up with more and more about St Nich's to wonder at. We followed the peregrinations of the Blacknall monument as it moved from the south side of the nave to the Blacknall aisle on the north, always just outside the chancel arch. We noted that it had been rather inexpertly trimmed to abut the wall on its left (as you look at it), and had had a fillet inserted to fill the resulting gap; we wondered whether the amputation had been performed during its last move, or a previous one. And we admired the stylish 19<sup>th</sup> century wall paintings from a now lost pattern book. The big question we finished with was whether the Blacknall aisle really deserves its name, which is not known to have been used before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When was it built, who by, and for what purpose? Was it a small side chapel, or an additional space for high-status burials, or both? Any ideas will be gratefully received.

Judy White gave a short talk on Mienneke Cox's historical archive, which has been gifted by the Cox family to the AAAHS and of which she is, at least for the time being, custodian. It is a significant mass of files and index cards, including much data on individual Abingdon people over many centuries and on their trades and doings; there is potentially material for several studies and theses. There is at the moment simply a hand-written listing, which Judy undertook to photocopy and pass round. Over time, this may be expanded to a more detailed catalogue. Anyone who wishes to have access to the archive should arrange this with Judy.

The meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May attracted a capacity crowd. Janey Cumber gave us the gist of her recently accepted doctoral thesis, which adds enormously to our understanding of 16<sup>th</sup> century Abingdon and overturns much of what we thought we knew. Abingdon after the dissolution of the abbey and the guilds was not miserable, dilapidated or in decline. It had long been effectively self-governing, with an economy sufficiently diversified to take the loss of the abbey in its stride. Janey used tax assessments to show the increase in wealth and the growth of a solid commercial middle class in the mid-century period. Wills and inventories give evidence of domestic comfort, and surveys and rentals show that erstwhile tenants were buying their homes, often with the help of the local lawyer Thomas Denton acting as agent. Abingdon survived the stresses of the period much better than has been believed, and better than some much larger towns.

After coffee, Jane Bowen gave a short presentation on plans and progress in the museum refurbishment. Building work should be finished, and fitting-out begin in October; and the museum is planned to re-open in May 2012. There will be a permanent display on the history of the town, and room for temporary exhibitions. The top floor also will be used, with collections that have not previously been on

show. For those who cannot manage the stairs, there will be computers in the basement. Thanks, English Heritage!

The next meeting will be on 18<sup>th</sup> October. As I write this, I have not yet received any offers of presentations. Hope I don't have to twist anybody's arms.

*Manfred Brod*

### **Dates for Your Diary**

**Oxford Open Doors** – 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September: Many interesting buildings and spaces open to the public. Details: <http://www.oxfordopendoors.org.uk/>

**Abingdon Heritage Open Weekend** – 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> September: Many interesting buildings and spaces open to the public and events including walks. Try the new Abbey Heritage Trail. Details: <http://www.abingdonheritage.co.uk/>

**Radley History Club** - School Hall, Radley Primary School. Mondays at 7.30pm.  
12<sup>th</sup> September - AGM followed by talk by Andy Lamb, Curator of the [Bate Collection](#) of musical instruments at the University of Oxford

10<sup>th</sup> Oct - Mark Davies: *"Alice in Wonderland"*

14<sup>th</sup> Nov - John Leighfield: *"From Gough to Google - maps through the ages illustrated with maps of Berkshire/Oxfordshire"*

9<sup>th</sup> Jan - Robert Sephton: *"Early days of the Salvation Army in Oxfordshire"*

13<sup>th</sup> Feb – Paul Carter: *"The coming of the Bastilles - Abingdon's first poor law union"*

12<sup>th</sup> March – Tony Hadland: *"The Wantage Engineering Company"*

#### **Wallingford Historical & Archaeological Society**

7.45pm in Wallingford Town Hall (in the Market Place)

Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Sept - Bill King: *"The Home Front in World War II"*.

Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Oct - Brian Eastoe: *"1000 Years of Oxfordshire Woodcarving 1007-2007"*.

Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Dec - David Beasley & Andy Russell: *"Wallingford at War"*

**Kennington History Society** Methodist Church, Upper Road, Kennington at 7.45pm  
19<sup>th</sup> September - Frank Cooper: *"The Great Western Society: 50 years at Didcot"*

**Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre**, Standlake, OX29 7QG  
Sun 9<sup>th</sup> October 10am – 4.00pm Open Day

**Marcham Society**, 7.45pm

Tues 8<sup>th</sup> Nov - *Martin Buckland: "The Wilts & Berks Canal Past, Present & Future"*

**South Oxon Archaeological Group**, Goring Heath Parish Hall, Whitchurch Hill  
Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept - Dr Mary Lewis (University of Reading): *"Death of a traitor? The case of a hanged, drawn and quartered skeleton from Hulton Abbey, Staffordshire"*

Thurs Oct 27<sup>th</sup> - Dr Hella Eckardt (University of Reading): *'Foreigners in Roman Cities'*.



## Try these!

Some more websites of interest:-

<https://www.archeox.net/fact-sheets-0>

The East Oxford Community Archaeology Programme has a new website, including a selection of really useful fact sheets on things like earthworks and recording.

<http://www.skyeyecam.co.uk/video-clips>

Contains great aerial videos including the 2011 dig at Marcham/Frilford (and Minster Lovell and Hurst Castle).

[www.black-history-month.co.uk](http://www.black-history-month.co.uk)

A site promoting knowledge of Black History, Cultural and Heritage

<http://www.ecclsoc.org/pictureessay.html>

Site of the Ecclesiological Society - for those who love churches. Great little site with information on Anglo-Saxon churches, brasses, mediaeval dooms and loads more.

<http://www.etymonline.com/>

This online etymology dictionary describes itself as a map of the wheel-ruts of modern English. Etymologies are not definitions; they're explanations of what our words meant and how they sounded 600 or 2,000 years ago.

<http://www.phrases.org.uk/index.html>

Along the same lines, this gives the meanings and origins of English sayings, phrases, idioms and expressions. Worth a look – it could leave you all agog.

<http://www.abandonedcommunities.co.uk/index.html>

Deserted villages and more

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-13879363>

BBC site showing the nation's favourite paintings, including the "Monk's Map", which Jackie Smith described on BBC South Today.

## Edmund Warcup (1627-1712)

The later 1670s and the 1680s is probably the time when English politics reached its lowest point ever. Political conflict was inescapable at all social levels; it was merciless and sometimes literally deadly. Fantasists and opportunists, adventurers and informers, had free rein. The judiciary was a branch of the executive, unscrupulous and corrupt almost to a man. One of the most nauseating of the careerists who flourished in this period was Edmund Warcup. And when in 1686 Abingdon was manipulated into accepting a new municipal charter designed to put it permanently under Tory and Anglican domination, Warcup was one of nine outsiders who were named to become its magistrates for life.

Warcup was born in 1627, a nephew of William Lenthall, later the speaker of the Long Parliament. It was Lenthall's patronage that gave him his first opportunities as a lawyer, but he was an enthusiastic networker and after 1660 was in the entourage of the future Lord Shaftesbury, who would become leader of the nascent Whig party. His position was as a sort of examining magistrate, interviewing witnesses and

writing out their depositions for submission to the courts. His achievement was to develop techniques whereby the process could be turned back to front; he would produce the depositions his principals required, and would then recruit the 'witnesses', typically Irishmen down on their luck, who would sign them and if necessary stand by them in court. It was not long before he was in a position to buy a country estate at Northmoor, conveniently between the clusters of Lenthall properties at Burford and at Appleton.

The king and his supporters decided they wanted Warcup on their side, and courted him, expertly playing on his inordinate vanity. His diary relates his pride in being admitted into the company of the great of the land, who affected to take his commonplace opinions seriously and no doubt laughed at him behind his back. Once, he was treated to an hour-long private interview with the king himself. Charles was a consummate hypocrite who could be charming when he wanted to. The ploy worked almost too well. Warcup, having turned, feared for his life if he stayed in London. He retired to Northmoor, and put himself under the patronage of Lord Norris, the government's man in Oxfordshire and North Berkshire. His greatest triumph was still to come.

In 1681, Norris was ordered to arrange a great show trial in Oxford. A low-level Whig activist, Stephen Colledge, was to be convicted on a trumped-up charge of treason. It would be a warning to the Whig leaders. Colledge defended himself with unexpected skill, and forced witness after witness to admit he had been scripted and rehearsed by Warcup. Warcup, rattled, asked to be allowed to address the court to clear his name, but the judges told him with a grin that it would be unnecessary; they were taking no notice of these groundless allegations. Colledge was executed, and in due course Norris became Earl of Abingdon. Warcup got a knighthood.

Warcup spent much of his time acting as Norris's political agent in the Oxford Corporation. In 1687, he aspired to become one of their MPs, but was given short shrift. He knew Sir Edmund so well, said one of the leading members, that he would 'neither trust his Religion, Estate, or Liberty with him'. What, if anything, he did in Abingdon while a magistrate there is unknown, but JPs at the time would have had a stranglehold on individual interests, regulating businesses, municipal facilities, and apprenticeships.

His ability to change sides is visible again in early 1688, with James II's policy switch to favour his Catholic co-religionists and Protestant dissenters over his erstwhile Tory/Anglican supporters. Of the eight new Abingdon JPs who were still alive, seven refused to follow, and were dismissed. The Earl of Abingdon also lost all his government offices. But Warcup seems to have given the right answers to James's agents, and remained. Only in October, as William's invasion fleet set out, were all changes to municipal charters since 1679 precipitately cancelled.

Warcup's private correspondence, carefully preserved in the Bodleian, reveals a Pooterish mediocrity of thought and an amazing lack of political insight. He welcomed equally the accession of James II and the usurpation of William III, in neither case with any doubt in his mind. He saw himself as a bulwark of law and order in the Oxfordshire/Berkshire borderlands. He manoeuvred desperately to get the Earl to dine with him at Northmoor, which invitations that worthy determinedly fended off. He died in 1712, leaving a fortune that included over £7,000 in cash. What comes to mind is a phrase attached to a much later tyrannical regime – 'the banality of evil'.

*Manfred Brod*

## Call for volunteers for community shop in the Precinct 5th - 10th September

The AAAHS, along with the Friends of Abingdon and the MG Club, will have the use of one of the shops in the Precinct for the week leading up to Heritage Weekend, which this year is Sept 10/11th.

Like last year, we will be putting on an exhibition and I am organising a rota of volunteers to help mind the shop for a couple of hours. Those of us who did it last year found it a very enjoyable experience and I hope that even more of you will volunteer this year.

Please let me know if you are able to take part - [aaahsmembersec@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aaahsmembersec@hotmail.co.uk)

Sally Ainslie

### **Editor's Notes**

Thanks to all members for their contributions and feedback – all gratefully received. Any suggestions for outings, speakers or newsletter items are most welcome. Please note that the views contained in the articles are those of the contributors rather than the society itself, and contributions may be edited for content.

*Tim Barnett, Newsletter Editor*

### AAAHS Membership form 2011/12

Membership type (please tick)	Individual	£12
	Family	£18
	Senior/unwaged/student	£8.50
	Distant	£4
Full name & address		
Telephone no(s)		
E mail address		
Newsletter. Please tick preferred option(s)		
	by e mail	paper copy

Please send completed form with cheque payable to AAAHS to:  
Membership Sec, AAAHS, 4 Sutton Close, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 1ER  
or bring form with cheque/cash to any lecture meeting. Thank you