



**AMPTHILL & DISTRICT
PRESERVATION SOCIETY**
Autumn 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to the 2024 Autumn Newsletter.

This year has seen some big changes with our committee. Andrew Sewell left the committee as Vice-Chairman and we would like to thank him for his contribution to ADPS and the furtherance of the Society's aims. James Gibb also announced his retirement from his roles as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. However, James remains a committee member and so we will still have the benefit of his 23 years of experience with the Society.

Ian Wright and Kelvin Horton were formally voted onto the committee at the AGM. Kelvin is our Countryside and Planning Officer and Ian has agreed to take on the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary roles. We offer our grateful thanks to both as without them we would have had a very large "hole" in the committee. Vacancies still exist and although Mariella expressed her wish to relinquish at least one of her roles, under the circumstances she has agreed to continue with both in the short term. If you would like to join the committee then please do contact us on membership@adps.org.uk.

In one other piece of news, it has been decided that the Society will no longer issue membership cards. All the required information can now be found on our website at adps.org.uk. The website includes lots of information about the society, including links to the Past Memories podcasts, details of the committee and our policies. However, if any member would like a paper copy of our talks and walks, they will be available at each meeting. If you have any questions, please contact the committee via the following email address: membership@adps.org.uk. **Please note that this is a new email address.**

Our 2023-24 programme continued be interesting and informative and we were fortunate to welcome such excellent speakers.

Steve Roberts provided great insights into Researching Military Family history using local examples. Richard Luscombe gave us a very detailed and engaging talk on the 800-year history of Wrest Park and whetted our appetite for the summer visits. Professor Simon Keynes enlightened us about King Offa and looked at the evidence which exists to support the claim made in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that the mighty Mercian King Offa (died 796) was laid to rest in Bedford.

Programme of Talks 2024-25:

Tuesday 1st October 2024:

The Two Apothecaries *A talk on Medieval Medicine delivered in 15th century costume with numerous herbs, spices and artefacts to describe their medicinal uses and medical "theory" upon which diagnosis and treatment and folklore was based.*

Tuesday 5th November 2024:

The Stars of the D'Oyly Carte Theatre Company, 1900-1982 *Dr Mike Muncaster will talk on Stars of the D'Oyly Carte, using historic recordings and images to illustrate principals in the company from 1900-1982.*

Tuesday 3rd December 2024:

The Sound of Bells *John Hele will speak about local bell towers, and we will all be encouraged to have a play with the hand bells John will bring for us.*

Tuesday 4th March 2025:

Rosebery House – one of our own local historic houses *The history of the house given by owner James Gibb.*

Tuesday 1st April 2025:

Amphill Past Memories *An evening with some of the interviewees invited to chat and answer questions.*

Tuesday 5th May 2025:

Pepys' Navy: The Eric Houfe Memorial lecture following the AGM *Award winning Naval Historian and Historical Fiction Author Dr David Davies will deliver a lecture on Pepys' Navy. For more information about David and his work please see his website at jddavies.com.*

Programme of Walks 2024-25

Whilst retaining some of the popular walks John has also introduced some new ones for this year. Thanks to John for his ongoing enthusiasm and for allowing Sandra and Mariella to experiment with recording them, so that we can make them available for those unable to join the walks to listen to and follow the trail on a map of Amphill.

Tuesday 29th October 2024 and Tuesday 21st January 2025:

Ghost Walks *John's Ghost Walks continue to attract many Ghosthunters.*

Saturday 26th April 2025:

John's Pub Crawl! *Over the years, there have been at least 22 hostelries in Amphill. These inns and alehouses have been the mainstay of quenching the thirst of residents and visitors for centuries. Although the Morris Brewery was the main producer of ale for about 130 years, there were many other small brewers in the town. This tour around Amphill will point out where the hostelries were and how they fitted into the local community.*

Saturday 17th May 2025:

Secret Amphill *With any town of the age of Amphill there are going to be those interesting little features that you probably walk past every day and never notice. This walk explores the town and highlights the hidden gems and why they are there, including the various graveyards in the town.*

Saturday 21st June 2025:

Vintage Ventures: Discovering Amphill's Bygone Shops. *In years gone by many tell us that you could buy all that you needed in Amphill. No need to venture further. Join us to explore and visit the sites of various old shops and find out what pre-dates some of the current ones.*

Saturday 19th July 2025:

Graveyard Tour *For its size, Ampthill has one of the largest graveyards in the county. There are some fascinating characters buried there with interesting stories to be told. The tour covers some sad stories together with memorials and graves of the Lords and Ladies with fascinating stories to tell.*

Saturday 6th September 2025:

Ampthill's Origins through the Park *Ampthill Park has had an enormous influence on the town, from prehistoric times to the present day. This walk around the park will highlight a whole range of historical features and why they are there, as well as piecing together how various historical events have contributed to the nation's historical past.*

Saturday 8th November 2025:

Ampthill in Wartime *The Civil War and both World Wars have had a marked influence on the development of the town. We look at why Ampthill has four war memorials, as well as visiting important buildings in the town that were used for wartime activities*

Ampthill Past Memories Project Autumn 2024

The Ampthill Past Memories Project continues to expand and grow. With more than 32 local residents now "live" on podcasts, some who have provided several interviews, and we have more to record and upload. Almost 2000 people have listened to the podcasts worldwide.

With more funding awarded, this time from the Rookery South Community Fund, this will allow us to develop the project further and will lead us to transcribing the podcasts for others to read as well as holding a meet up for the participants celebrating the project and enabling them to reminisce together (see below).

We are still very fortunate that we continue to have the expertise of Terry Lee, a University of Bedfordshire Senior Tutor in Radio & Audio who lives locally, and a special "thank you" to Rev Silas Wood, who allows us to use his office for recording interviews.

Some interested volunteers have come forward and expressed an interest in helping us to transcribe the podcasts into documents, copies of which will be lodged with Bedfordshire Archives and National Archives. We have exceeded our target for completing the 20 interviews as podcasts by May 2024 and now look forward to achieving many more interviews by the end of this year, although the editing and conversion to podcasts does take longer.

We are organising an Ampthill Past Memories 'Reunion Afternoon' on 27 September 2024 for those that have taken part in the project thus far. We are hoping it will provide the opportunity for them to reunite with friends and former classmates and reminisce about their shared memories and experiences of living in Ampthill.

As always, if you are interested in becoming an interviewer or transcribing interviews, being interviewed yourself, or indeed helping in any other way please do get in touch.