

HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY

ALMANACK

Newsletter of the Huntingdonshire Local History Society

AGM & Summer Excursions 2024



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Inside you will find the programme of this summer's excursions. We hope you will find them interesting and will join us on several.

*Philip Saunders
Chairman*

www.huntslhs.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 290741

7.30 p.m, Wednesday 8th May, Huntingdon Methodist Church: Annual General Meeting and talk by Chris Close on 'Finding Collyweston Palace'

Please arrive early so we can start promptly. We shall try to get through the business part of the meeting quickly, but it is an important opportunity to review the workings of the society, not just a constitutional nicety. Please consider if you would be willing to help run the society. All the officers and most of the committee are willing to stand again but there are vacancies. Meetings, around four a year, are usually held on *Zoom*. If you are thinking of this it would be helpful if you could contact Philip Saunders, in advance (phone 01954- or email paksauanders@talk21.com).

After the AGM **Chris Close of the Collyweston Society** will talk about the search for the palace of the Lady Margaret Beaufort, a fascinating figure in late medieval politics and culture, mother of Henry VII, founder of two Cambridge colleges and an Oxford chair of divinity, who spent the last decade of her life secluded on her Northamptonshire estate. Chris will tell the story of how an amateur group discovered the site with very little resources. There will a chance to see it in June.



Excursions

An afternoon at Farm Hall, Godmanchester, Wednesday 22nd May

The impressive house (see cover) built for lawyer Charles Clarke, a Baron of the Exchequer, in 1746, today better known for its wartime training or recreational use by SOE agents and later the detention of German nuclear scientists in order to eavesdrop on how far they had got in the quest for a nuclear bomb mirroring, that of the Oppenheimer Project. Today's resident, Marcial Echenique, a professor emeritus of architecture, will talk about the house and his discovery of bugging devices, then show us some rooms and the rose garden where this all took place, followed by tea and cakes in the garden.

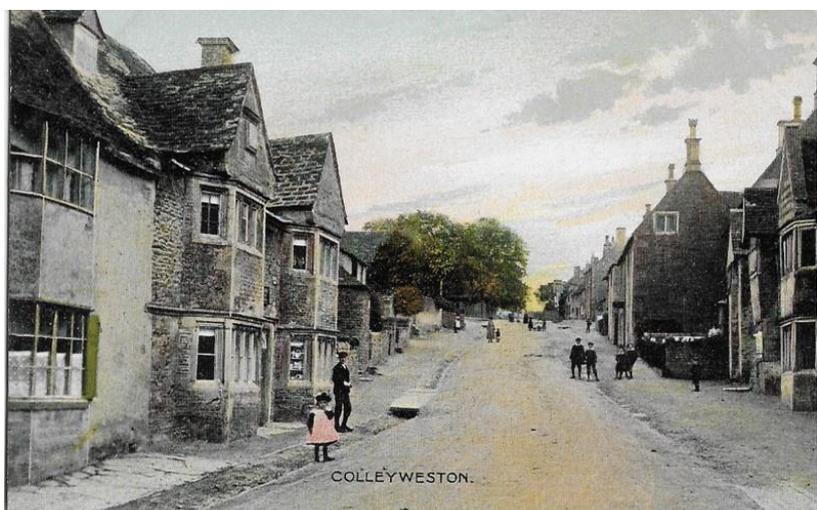
Meet at Farm Hall, West Street, PE29 2HG, 2.30 p.m. [see cover for directions]

Cost: £10.00, including tea.

Book by Friday 17th May. Spaces limited so early booking advised.

Morning or Afternoon, Thursday 20th June Visits to Collyweston (village, palace site, church)

This is a fascinating village, abounding of course with Collyweston slated roofs, with much to see. Sandra Johnson, whose family has been in the village for generations, will be our guide and will take two groups of ten only, at 10.30 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. on a walk through and around the village lasting about an hour and a half, finishing at the medieval parish church (largely Perpendicular, with a pinnacled tower reminiscent of Conington), where there is an exhibition. It will be a substantial walk, mainly footpaths of 1½ -2 miles, some



of it unavoidably beside a main road. Please wear suitable footwear. The slate mines are unfortunately too far away but Sandra will no doubt be telling us a lot about them.

Meet either at 10.30am or 2.00 pm at The Collyweston Slater public house (on A43, facing down High Street; large car park – can be used if you expect to refresh there later). *Please indicate on form or in email which timed group you wish to go on and whether you would be willing to go at the other time if your first choice is booked up.*

Cost: £10.00; Book by Friday 14th June.

Afternoon visit to Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC), Chester House Estate, Wellingborough, Wednesday 10th July (2.00-4.30 p.m.)

The Chester House Estate is a site that aims 'to bring 10,000 years of human activity to life'. At its centre is the ARC, Northamptonshire's archaeological store, where we shall have a full guided tour including a session on Roman finds by a leading Roman Pottery specialist and a tour of the excavation area which will be in the second month of its regular University of Leicester dig.



Meet at ARC at 2.00 p.m.

Directions will be sent to those booking. You may like to come early and make a day of it. There is a café, farm shop and much else on the [estate](#).

Cost: £8.00 Book by Friday 5th July.

Afternoon visit to Kimbolton church and village, Thursday 8th August

This excursion re-kindles our connection with the Kimbolton Local History Society that for years was a fruitful partnership. Nora and Roy Butler will be taking us on a walk around the town which abounds in listed buildings (40 in the High Street alone). In short, anyone with an interest in Huntingdonshire history needs to know Kimbolton. We shall finish at the church containing a medieval painted screen, monuments to the Manchesters (including a window by Tiffany) and much else, and finish with tea and cake.



Meet 2.00 pm at church

Cost: £6.00 Includes tea.

Book by Friday 2nd August.

We currently have no visit arranged during September but are hoping to offer an coach excursion jointly with Cambridgeshire Association for Local History to 'Roman Colchester' and Museum, with some contrasting short stop en route, and may arrange a visit to archaeological excavation at short notice. Information to follow.

Excursion Notes

- Booking is essential. Preferably, use the accompanying form and pay in advance by cheque. Otherwise, email David Smith info@huntslhs.org.uk or phone 01480-350127 and have correct money ready to pay on the day.
- **If you need a lift please let us know and we will try and arrange one.**
- Note especially the 'Book By' deadline, usually the preceding Friday. Early booking is helpful. However do contact us if you are able to come at the last minute. Where possible we will accept you.
- Non-member guests are very welcome.
- The Society undertakes to make arrangements for the excursions but cannot accept liability for any mishap or loss connected with them.

Writing for Records: Would you like to write an article for the *Records of Huntingdonshire*? Contributions are needed for the next issue. Whatever the topic, they should focus on the historic county of Huntingdonshire. We also expect to be offered original material, not published elsewhere. Brief articles, say 6 sides of A4, are preferable but the some subjects may demand more space. Prospective contributors should contact the editor, Richard Halliday (01480-455669) for an early opinion on likely acceptability and guidance on house style. Submissions should be in *Word* and photographic illustrations as *jpeg* files. The society expects to have copyright.

Huntingdonshire History Festival will be back in July, with a programme of events throughout the month, not just in Huntingdon but elsewhere, including Ramsey and Kimbolton, on all aspects of local history. The opening weekend, 29-30 June, will see First World War Living History on the market square. Recruitment parties, Hunts Cyclist Battalion members, a World War I cavalryman, YMCA tea stall and suffragettes will be present, as well family activities 11am – 4pm both days. The full programme will go live on media channels and website on Friday 17 May – visit <https://huntshistoryfest.com/> then for more details.

Cromwell Museum Spring Online Lectures: The Museum has announced its next series of popular online lectures, with the Spring 2024 Lecture Series, again being held via Zoom, on four successive Wednesdays, 29 May – 19 June, including a talk by world expert Professor John Morrill. For details of these and of two author talks being held in May at the Town Hall, including one on Cromwell and Ireland by Tom Reilly, see the Museum's [website](#).

Last year our member Sadie McMullon gave us an interesting talk on 'Building the Brickopolis'. She has produced a condensed 10-minute version of this for BALH under the title '**J.C. Hill the Maker of Modern Fletton**' available at <https://www.facebook.com/share/4pVTvot9vdNMy1rh/>



A group from the society on its very enjoyable visit to the Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge, in March