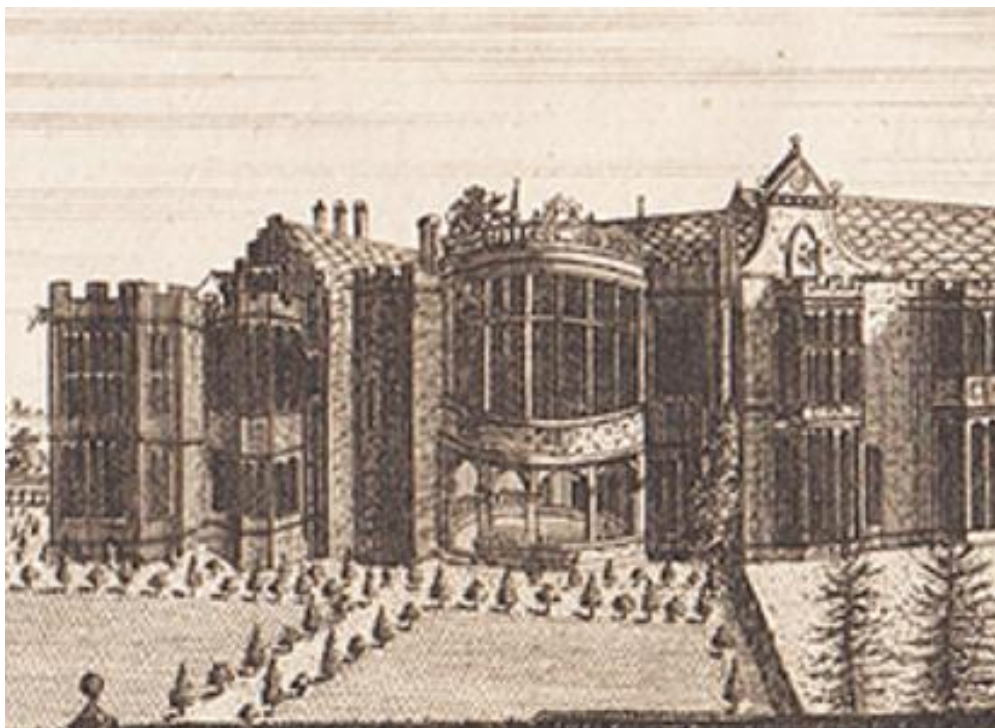


HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY

ALMANACK

The Newsletter of the Huntingdonshire Local History Society Autumn 2025



*Hinchinbrooke derived from S&N Buck c.1730
(Cambridgeshire Libraries)*

Inside is our programme for Autumn 2025 to Early 2026, some online, some face-to-face. We hope you will find it interesting, and that you will join us for some or all of them

Philip Saunders, Chairman



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Lectures, etc., Programme Oct. 2025 – April 2026

In timing and venue we continue the mixed theme of last year, so please pay attention to when and where things are taking place, put them in your diary, and leave home or work in good time. Various factors have regrettably led to us being late with finalising these this year, for which I apologise and so this edition is still somewhat skeletal. We will keep members up-to-date with meeting information as they become clearer, and a final edition will be circulated, I hope, within a fortnight. Remember you can always find it online www.huntslhs.org.uk

We are also sticking to *Zoom* for the talks in January and February, complemented with some daytime activities. A further *Almanack* is planned for January with more information on these and on the March to May meetings.

Unless otherwise specified, meetings start at 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 1st October, Huntingdon Town Hall

Disabled parking only on Market Hill (approach via High Street from south). Please use public car park at Malting Close PE29 3AR and don't be late as meeting is upstairs.

Goodliff Awards Presentation Evening

Once again, an amazing variety of projects, popular and academic, spanning many centuries, types of history, covering the length and breadth of Huntingdonshire. Come to hear and see about the successful projects and congratulate the successful applicants. Refreshments.

Our President, Julie Countess of Sandwich, will present the awards.



Anyone who follows her on *Facebook* will be aware that our president has been exceptionally busy lately, travelling in Europe, following up on some earlier Montagus, and touring historic family homes in England for her [American Countess Youtube channel whilst](#) doing her best to keep followers aware and engaged of the business of running an historic house herself with her husband at Mapperton. She is foregoing a talk this year (though may give us an update) in order to give Stuart Orme, Curator of the Cromwell Museum, a chance to speak to us on ...

Hinchingbrooke during the English Civil Wars

At the commencement of hostilities Hinchingbrooke was the home of the staunch royalist Sir Sydney Montagu, but by the time the Commonwealth was established it had passed to his parliamentarian son Edward, who steered an independent path as a Cromwellian general, at one time criticising his cousin and fellow Huntingdonshire landowner, the earl of Manchester, and eventually coming round to play a part in the Restoration of Charles II. It is a complex and intriguing story and no-one better than our Cromwell Museum curator to guide us through this fascinating time in the house's history.

Wednesday 12th November, Huntingdon Methodist Church

Limited car parking at church. Please use public car park at Malting Close PE29 3AR if you can.

Roger Leivers: *Farm Hall: House of Spies*

Roger will give us his talk about how Farm Hall in Godmanchester became a vital link between SIS HQ in London St James and RAF Tempsford. Who ran it, who passed through it on the way

to occupied Europe, a canine warrior, the German Nuclear Scientists incarcerated there and one of the most amazing wartime survival stories, worthy of a film any day. This talk draws on his second book, *Godmanchester at War*.

Wednesday 10th December [provisional], Huntingdon Methodist Church
Speaker and topic to be announced

Producing a musical evening this year has defeated us. The committee just needs more support to do these things. So we are planning a talk followed by seasonal fare instead.

Fuller Information about January-May talks will be published in the New Year 2026 of this newsletter, but put these in your new diary.

Early January 2026

Short Zoom talk and visit to King's College Cambridge

We are planning a guided visit to King's College, preceded an evening or two before by a *Zoom* introduction to the history of the College and particularly the Chapel. The likely cost for the visit is £20-25. The college does not release dates when it will be open more than two months in advance, so we cannot fix a date till November. Booking information will therefore be circulated nearer the time. The Chapel is a breathtaking building and nowadays has good displays on its history within, but a guided visit, with time also to browse at will, is the way to get the best out of it, and this is the best time of year, without the crowds of other tourists.

We are also planning a second *Zoom* talk on a separate subject within January.

February (by Zoom)

Zoom talk followed by afternoon visit to Huntingdonshire Archives
Philip Saunders: *Ordnance Survey Maps for the Local Historian*

Tuesday 10th March, Huntingdon Methodist Church

Paul Stamper: *The Decline of the English Country House*

Wednesday 8th April, Huntingdon Methodist Church

Keith Alexander and David Hand: *History of the Nene Valley Railway*

Wednesday 13th May (provisional date), venue to be announced

Annual General Meeting with a short talk &/or display

Subscriptions

New subscriptions during Autumn 2025 cover all 2026. Renewals are due on 1st January, £10 single, £15 double, indisputably good value. Please renew promptly through our treasurer, David Smith (info@huntslhs.org.uk). If you are a UK taxpayer, he can arrange a Gift Aid declaration, thereby increasing the society's income. Tell him too if you have made a declaration in the past but no longer earn enough (£12,570) to pay income tax.

News: Bridget Flanagan and Keith Grimwade have published their book *The Watermills and Landscape of the River Great Ouse in Cambridgeshire* which they came to talk to us about in March. To mark 'Rail 200' Sadie Macmullon has a new blog post on the coming of the railway to Fletton at <https://flettonparish.co.uk/>

Weekend Excursions 2026

We are currently investigating two contrasting possibilities for May/ June:

As an alternative to our more usual May weekend, we have been approached by a local travel agent, who is working with **Ledger Battlefield Tours**, on organising a tour to one or more of the WW1 or WW2 sites, each visit will be accompanied by one of their specialist guides.

For WW1 this would be a 4 or 5 day tour of the Ypres, Battles in Flanders Fields. The 4-day tour about £600 per person including hotel & breakfast. Itinerary: day 1 travel by coach; day 2 Passchendaele and Flanders Fields Museum; day 3 Messines Ridge and the underground war and Hooze crater; day 4 return home. The 5-day tour about £800. Itinerary same as 4-day trip but day 4 travel to Nieuport and Ramscapelle trenches and also life behind the lines at Poperinghe. In either case dinner at a separate cost individually or perhaps block booking.

For WW2 we could visit either of Dunkirk and the Pas de Calais or Normandy and the D-Day landings. Both tours offer either a 4 day or a 5 day excursion costing approximately £500 and £650 respectively, including hotel and breakfast, dinner separate cost. Single supplement for anyone not wanting to share a room, but the agent unsure what that would be.

The 4-day tour Dunkirk and the later stages of Fortress Europe: day 1 travel; day 2 including Battle of France and Retreat to Dunkirk, following the story of the Durham Light Infantry as they were forced to Dunkirk; day 3 the Dunkirk evacuation and memorial sites and visit the massive V2 Block House that was bombed before it became active. Day 4 travel back home. The 5-day trip is the same as the 4-day trip but day 4 is a visit to Raversijde and the WW1 Aachen Battery, the V3 Supergun installation and the liberation of the French Coastal region. Day 5 travel home.

The 4-day tour of the Normandy beaches: day 1 travelling; day 2 Pegasus Bridge and the British beaches Sword, Juno and Gold; day 3 the American Omaha Beach and the Airborne landings Sainte-Mere-Eglise; day 4 travel home. The 5-day trip same but on day 4 we venture beyond the battle on the beaches towards Falaise Gap, Bocage and Scottish Corner and Mont Ormel to remember the Polish troops that took part in the landings. Day 5 return home.

If sufficient interest the travel agent may be able to organise a separate coach for the Society. If you are interested in going on one of these trips please let David Smith know, including your preference for the visit, by email to info@huntslhs.org.uk by Wednesday 15 October.

Jean Burbidge continues to investigate a group visit to **the Isle of Man**. This would probably not be a simple coach visit, but organised train & ferry using group rates, with minibus tours on the island. Date yet to be determined and if this proceeds we would endeavour not to overlap with Battlefield Tour so those who wish can go on both. Further details to follow. Meanwhile please let Jean know if you are interested, goslingwing@gmail.com

Cambridge Antiquarian Society and Cambs. Association for Local History

Members are reminded that the society is affiliated to these organisations and they can go to their meetings free or for a reduced charge. You can find details on their websites but we also try to circulate reminders of coming meetings of Huntingdonshire interest.

CALH and HLHS also support the online meetings of the **Local and Landscape History Research Group**. The next meeting is

6.30p.m., Thursday 30 October: Michael Coles, field officer, Cambridge Archaeology Field Group: *Recent excavations at the Wimpole Estate*

To subscribe free to this group and be notified of meetings, email Evelyn Lord, evelynlord9@gmail.com. The group also produces a biannual digital research bulletin.