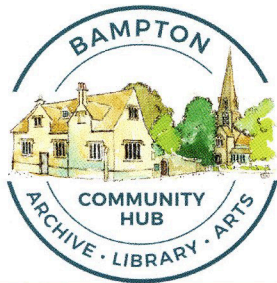


SATURDAY
9th JULY
from 10.30am

2022



OPEN DAY

Come and join us for the official opening of
your Bampton Community Hub

Meet the teams from

Bampton Community Archive & Bampton Library

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony 11.00am

with a glass of fizz.

'Birding in the Bush' Exhibition

*See our latest exhibition giving a fascinating insight into
the wonder of the birdlife in and around Bampton.*

Enjoy a look round this wonderful restoration
and hear all about the future plans for
Talks, Workshops and Events.

Join the Archive and Library, sign up for something new

Open 10.30am - 4.00pm

www.bamptoncommunityhub.org

**at The Old Grammar School,
Church View, Bampton, OX18 2NE.**

Chairman's report

Bampton Community Archive AGM

26th October 2022

As I set about preparing this report I looked back at earlier attempts and found one in 2016 that started as follows:

“As I sit down to write this report the country seems to be in the throes of the most extraordinary political crisis, the likes of which I have not seen in my 68 years on the planet.”

Given that memory you could be forgiven for thinking that nothing much had changed and that the Archive must be given allowances for having not managed to progress much. Add to the equation Covid, years of lockdown and massive restrictions on our movements and surely you could be forgiven for thinking that progress was absolutely impossible.

But that, ladies and gentlemen, would be making the basic mistake none of us in this room would ever make, of underestimating the energy, intelligence, determination and drive that the population of Bampton is capable of.

The huge and extraordinary group of people who make up the organisation that is the Bampton Community Archive, along with their allies and colleagues in the Bampton Exhibition Foundation, despite all the adversities, have never, at any time over the last 6 years, missed a beat.

The results of this determination and resilience are clear. The Archive itself is going from strength to strength, its future assured, its long-term benefit to future generations guaranteed, and the huge project it took on in 2015, to raise the money for and then to complete the restoration of this Old Grammar School to provide it with a permanent home is fully completed.

It has been my privilege to chair the Archive for the length of this great project and today it falls to me to shine a light on this enormous group of determined Bamptonians, along with a small group of people who come from elsewhere, drawn here no doubt by the magnetism of the people and the excitement that goes with all great endeavours.

Later in the meeting you will be given a clear picture of the truly wonderful benefits this project is going to bring to the village as a whole, by one of those who will now be taking this brilliant organisation forwards.

For now I want to mention to you all the various groups of people, as well as an assortment of outside organisations, that have taken us from scratch to close to half a million pounds raised and spent, a wonderful 17th century building restored to strength and beauty for another 100 years; all the while maintaining and improving our core archive activities.

Starting with the latter, a visit to the archive website will soon show you how the archive itself has grown. It is full of fascinating records of past and present that are forming an incredible centre of information for future generations. Janet Rouse, with the help of Nik Stanbidge have kept momentum during these difficult times; they have started a massive improvement in the technology so as to future proof the archive itself, something about which I understand exactly diddly squat, but the importance of which I completely understand. The process isn't complete but it soon will be.

For years we have been aware that Janet is an extraordinary asset for the Archive. She is supremely and, we thought, uniquely qualified for her archivist role, but, like many of us, is a 60s child. How would we deal with her retirement, when, eventually, she decided upon it?

Well a couple more Janets and a Trish have come to the rescue with all the deep knowledge and understanding of the village and its history that is needed for this role. Janet Westman, Janet Newman and Trish Pickford. I thank them all and am reassured that our core activity will continue in excellent hands.

The exhibitions, staged every other quarter by the archive, which have been running continuously for nearly two decades suffered the inevitable hiatus over Covid but as soon as the team were released from that restriction they have continued as before, as if nothing had happened. Thanks to you all who have ensured this continuity for all these years.

And so to the “special funding exercise” we took on over a decade ago.

We had been planning this project since before Downton Abbey was a glint in Julian Fellowes’ eye, and so I must take this last opportunity to thank Jo Lewington for having the vision in the first place. She was seduced by the romance of this extraordinary 17th century building in which we are sitting and possessed all the skills to pass that sentiment and enthusiasm on to others. It’s not by accident that the room in which we are sitting is called the Lewington Room. Thanks Jo.

She, with the help of others, in particular Tony and Lis Page, set up the Archive in the first place and she was looking for a permanent home. What better place than this? Jo... Welcome home.

Dozens of people have passed through the doors of the Bampton Community Archive committee meeting room over the years. Each and every one of them has made a huge contribution to this success. They have played many roles, some extremely arduous, lots of them very demanding, and all of them needing specific talents. I can’t emphasise enough how important it is for an organisation like this to have that kind of support. For us it has been unwavering and I am eternally grateful to them all.

Of course the volunteers who help in the shop, sitting sometimes in grand solitude for hours on end and then suddenly surrounded by dozens of spend-hungry visitors who, knowing their bus will be leaving in a few minutes, all want to be served at the same time. It can be a nerve-wracking business and our wonderful sitters have all managed it - with barely a hitch - for all these years. Our gratitude goes out to each and every one of them.

The Downton tourists they have served also deserve our thanks because they forked out huge sums for the lovely contents of the shop, making a very substantial contribution to our coffers.

Outside help came, with the not inconsiderable encouragement of Gillie Wright, from both our local councils. WODC made two very generous contributions to the fund, only too aware of the benefit our success will give to the West Oxfordshire tourism offering, and the OCC, with some determined prodding from the Library service and the inimitable Jenny Chaundy, also came good with a substantial contribution. To them also, we offer our appreciation and thanks.

I have only been marginally involved with the actual building work but I know that Bicester Roofing, who completed the roof a few years ago now, and Drew Warren, who did all the rest, made the job as problem free as possible for those in our team who worked closest with them. The amazing quality of work you see around you is testament to their commitment and expertise. Our thanks go out to them.

I want to mention Geoff Woodward, a lovely man and brilliant architect whose original designs formed the basis of what you see today, who was unable to complete the project despite his really

wanting to do so, and James Cauwood who so ably took on the project half way through and guided us through to the end. Very many thanks to both of them.

The real danger of this kind of speech is that it turns into a list and then you miss someone absolutely crucial causing eternal offence. So many people have been involved in this project over the years that I can't possibly mention them all, so I am not going to try.

I just want to say that in all my long life I have never enjoyed such support, enthusiasm and constant optimism as I have experienced over the last 10 or so years. It would have been so easy for people to say "it's impossible, you'll never make it, etc etc".

In fact there were a few who did. They didn't last long as you can imagine.

It's been a great journey, and now I leave you in the capable hands of the spectacularly brilliant and hardworking team of trustees, without whom life would indeed have been impossible, watched over by Nick Newland who has kept us on the financial straight and narrow throughout, Jo Lewington whose enthusiasm has never faltered, your new chair whose appointment will be the first thing on the agenda for the next committee meeting, and all held together by the extraordinary Jenny Chaundy, whose remarkable strength of vision and determination in adversity has got us here today. Believe me this village is extremely lucky to have this team of people working on their behalf.

So MY thanks to them, and to all of you ladies and gentlemen, for one of the most enjoyable interludes in my life.

Robin Shuckburgh

Chairman, Bampton Community Archive

For years until Wednesday, 26th October, 2022.