

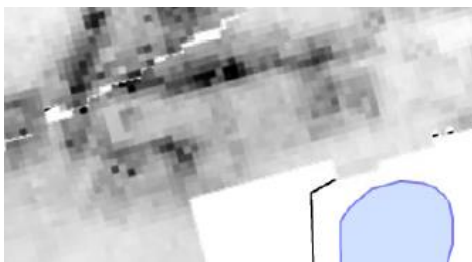
OLD WARDEN HISTORY & HERITAGE SOCIETY

Issue 3: August 2017

OUR AIM

We aim to promote interest in and knowledge of the history of Old Warden and surrounding area, including buildings, landscape, people & community and items of historical interest.

We want to support the preservation and security of items of historic interest and to assist the community in carrying out historical projects.



Warden Abbey Geophysics – an initial ‘plot’ of a structure south west of the complex.

NEWS FROM YOUR SOCIETY:

From Monks to Mottes! No sooner had we completed the geophysics at Warden Abbey than work started on researching another piece of Old Warden’s lost history, the enigmatic Quince Hill ring-motte. OWHHS was also represented at the Bedfordshire Local History Association Annual Conference in June, providing a display showcasing some of the work we have done.

Some great news on membership - we now have 37 members but would love to recruit some more ‘active’ members to help support the committee’s work with events, such as that on 10 Sept at Warden Abbey Vineyard.

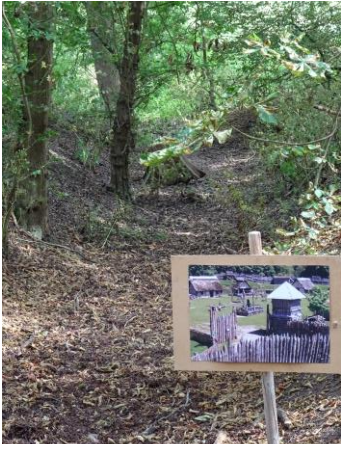
Finally, work is now under way to create an OWHHS website, part of a commitment in our Warden Abbey Project grant funding bid to Greensand Country.



9 July 2017: Quince Hill – visitors examine the huge inner bank and ditch of the ring-motte.

WARDEN ABBEY PROJECT UPDATE

The 33-page geophysics report from Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) arrived at the end of June, but please be patient! The survey successfully mapped the ground plan of the claustral complex, including the church, cloisters and inner court as well as revealing unknown structures and kilns.



Above: The route along the outer ditch.

Below: The height of the inner bank can be seen in this image



However, it has not yet been possible to confidently identify the use of some structures and the 'rooms' inside so we are taking advice from subject-matter experts with the aim of better understanding how the White Monks really lived and worked at Warden Abbey. We hope to complete interpretation of the results in time for a 'grand reveal' in October (see events section).

QUINCE HILL TOUR

After an introductory talk in the church around 40 people were able to see the Quince Hill earthworks close up, thanks to permission given by the Shuttleworth Trust. For many local people it was the first time ever. The site was looking magnificent, and full credit to Robert Diggle, Richard and Ned Batty for their hard work in clearing a safe path and preparing easy access over the fences. Thanks also to Victoria Diggle and Nancy Batty for organising the delicious post tour refreshments.

Two quotes give a flavor of the reaction;

'Staggering' – Will Fletcher, Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments, commenting on the inner ditch and bank.

'The biggest ditch in Bedfordshire' – Stephen Coleman, Historic Environment Officer for Central Beds Council, again on the size of the inner ditch.

Old Warden's early Norman Lord of the Manor, William Spec, the probable builder of the Quince Hill ring-motte, was also likely to have built his private manorial chapel in timber on or near the site of C12 St Leonard's Church, so it is rather fitting that the event raised a satisfying £337 for church funds.

Grade 1 listed St Leonard's Church is Old Warden's oldest building. It needs substantial and urgent restoration work to be carried out which will cost upwards of £750k. OWHHS will be supporting the Parochial Church Council in raising this massive sum.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10 September 2017: Warden Abbey Vineyard Open Day 11.00am – 4.00pm. OWHHS will have a stand and display in the Great Vineyard focusing on how the Geophysics was carried out (not the results – that's for October) and also Quince Hill. The Open Day is traditionally well-attended and the OWHHS committee would love other members to join them Please see details accompanying this newsletter.

October 2017: A grand reveal of the Warden Abbey Geophysics results. Date and venue to be advised but it will be a truly unmissable event! John Walford, Geophysicist from MOLA, will give an illustrated talk on the survey and results, and volunteers who helped with the survey will be delighted to share their experiences with everyone. Large size display panels showing the geophysics results will be on view. Our very own Time Team.

PUBLICATIONS

*A fascinating new publication! **The Original Warden Pear** by Margaret Roberts is now available to purchase for £7.50, proceeds to Warden Abbey Vineyard. Available at all OWHHS events.*

Having enjoyed widespread popularity until the late seventeenth century, the warden pear gradually faded into obscurity. *The Original Warden Pear* uncovers its story, bringing together evidence from monks, horticulturalists, physicians and bookkeepers. Poets, songwriters and playwrights captured the spirit of the pear from the late fourteenth century onwards, while twenty-first century DNA testing has sought to discover whether anything of the old warden pears has survived. *The Original Warden Pear* will appeal to those interested in horticulture, the arts, theology, Bedfordshire local history and medieval medicine. Recipes are included, so that readers can recreate the sorts of pear dishes enjoyed by the fifteenth-century nobility, or bake one of the famous Warden Pies.

THE ORIGINAL WARDEN PEAR



Margaret Roberts

A Local History Publication

Published by

Eventispress



MEMBERSHIP AND HOW TO JOIN

If you know anyone who would like to join the society the initial membership fee is £10 followed by a nominal fee £1 per annum. Payment by bank transfer is preferred, with a confirmation email to the treasurer and secretary providing your name, address and contact details which will be held securely in our records. Alternatively cheques payable to Old Warden History & Heritage Society may be sent to the treasurer at Orchard Grange, Old Warden, Biggleswade, Beds SG18 9HB

OWHHS Bank Account Details:

Lloyds Bank | Sort Code: 30-90-79 | Account No: 31653668

There will hopefully be something to interest anybody who is curious about Old Warden's past; events, talks, site visits and newsletters. Being a very small society at present people who would like to be active within the society, helping with research, organising events etc, would be very welcome. Please phone the secretary for a chat or send an email to register your interest.

Enquiries:

Old Warden History & Heritage Society

The Secretary, Christine Hill

01234 381982

christinehill742@btinternet.com

The Treasurer, Robert Diggle

01767 627247

robert@diggle.org