

bridge

Newsletter of the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

Issue 52 • Autumn 2017

Vyne visitor roof walkway

Bob Hine, Vice Chairman

In autumn 2016 the National Trust set out on an ambitious 18-month conservation project to save The Vyne, one of the most important historic houses in the South East and only 18 miles away.

Built for Lord Sandys, Henry VIII's Chamberlain, The Vyne – a former Tudor 'powerhouse' – has stood strong for 500 years but it's losing the battle against age and the elements, on the brink of catastrophic damage from a leaking roof and crumbling chimneys.

Scaffolding was erected last year so that repairs on the roof could begin, parts of which date back to the Tudor period. Inside The Vyne the biggest upheaval in decades has taken place with contents cleaned and packed away for protection.

The re-roofing project cost to the Trust is £5.4 million of which £1.4m is for scaffolding and temporary waterproofing the entire mansion. 41 miles of tube/beams were delivered to site weighing 339 tonnes in order to build the substantial scaffolding structure which incorporated the Visitor Roof Walkway, standing 13m (42ft) high.



The idea of the roof walkway is to show visitors precise and detailed conservation work actually happening before their eyes. Visitors are immensely interested in the preservation of The Vyne and the roof walkway enables a fascinating insight into the complete re-roofing project which is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year. Access is wheelchair and buggy friendly via a lift, accompanied by trained staff and volunteers. Alternatively there are 74 steps up to the walkway.

A summary of the project scope:

- Renewal of all tiled and slated coverings to all mansion slopes. Roofing materials on the two towers are being replaced with lead as the gradient is insufficient for adequate drainage with the original slate.
- Renewal of all leadwork to valley and parapet gutters and flat roof areas to accommodate new sand cast leadwork in conformity with current best practice.
- Alteration of rainwater outlets

to more effectively discharge water.

- Repair/repoint or take down/re-build unstable and defective chimney stacks and bases. Assess condition of chimney supports and upgrade/replace as necessary.
- New insulation materials within the roof spaces and ventilation.
- Protected Species – it is known to be an important roost for bats.
- Archaeology – the roof structure is known to be of great significance with the fabric dating back to the early 1500s.

The Vyne Walkway Project is my first experience as a National Trust Volunteer which I am finding fascinating especially as each week there is something different the conservationists are tackling.

Bridge is the newsletter of the
Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

email: bridge@sonning.org.uk
web: www.sonning.org.uk

Printed on paper from responsible sources by a
company supporting the Woodland Carbon Scheme

Village History In Safe Hands

Pauline Simmonds, Education Panel

Armine Edmonds was married to our past President John Edmonds. She lived in North Lodge for over thirty years, edited the Parish Magazine and updated the "Book of Sonning" in 1999. She was born at Shelvingstone in Pearson Road. Her mother, Margaret Williams, was a member of the Ewen family from Dedham in Suffolk, and her great aunt, Mary Isabella Ewen, was married to Henry Golding Palmer, the owner of Holme Park from 1880 - 1897. He commissioned Henry Woodyer to make alterations to the house in 1881.



Armine left an assortment of family photos and drawings in a leather-bound album, together with some old catalogues, collected by her mother and aunt over the years. These include views of the main rooms at Holme Park dated 1895 (see below), a list of pictures and library books owned by the Golding Palmers, sketches of Woodyer's in-

teriors and early photos of Sonning in the late 19th and early 20th century. These documents have recently been deposited in the Berkshire Record Office in Reading and are a useful addition to the social history of the time. More details about the history of Holme Park can also be found in the Library at the Reading Blue Coat School.



Exploring our village: Local events

Heritage Open Day Weekend

If you haven't already booked do join in the local Heritage Walks organised by the Sonning and Sonning Eye Society.

The free walks start in the Churchyard by The Bull at 2 pm – and last about 2 hours. Experienced guides highlight the architectural and historical features of St Andrew's Church, the Bishops Palace and many of the interesting domestic buildings along Pearson Road and High Street.

The Walks will be held on Thursday 7th, Friday 8th and Sunday 10th September.

Booking is essential – Please contact Diana Coulter on tel. 969 2132 or via email to diana.coulter@me.com



Society AGM and Supper

Our AGM and Supper will be held in the Pearson Hall on Saturday 18th November. Tickets cost £16. There will be a welcoming drink and the AGM starts at 7.15 pm sharp. The guest speaker will be Jesse Elzinga, the Headmaster of Reading Blue Coat School.



2018 Committee Elections

Nominations for committee members close two weeks before the AGM and nomination forms will be available on our website shortly. We would be delighted to receive nominations from candidates who are not currently on the Committee.

Society Treasurer Required

We are looking for someone to take over the position of Treasurer from Alan Furness who wishes to step down after holding this office for 10 years. The Executive Committee meets every 2 months, Alan says it only takes him an hour or two to deal with the small number of transactions and to prepare the accounts ahead of the meetings so although it is a key position it's not very time-consuming. Please let us know if you would like to take it on.

Tickets are available from Penny Feathers – Tel 0118 934 3193 or at the Village Show

