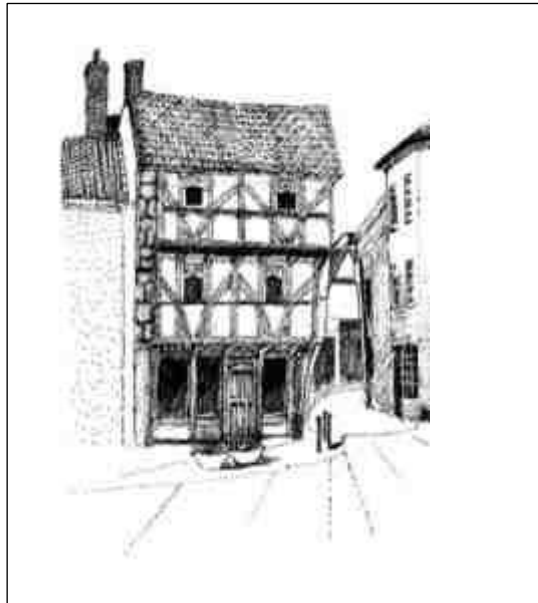


Retrospect

Issue No 19, November 2024

Newsletter
of the
Friends of King John's Hunting Lodge

News, views and events



We can be nothing without you, our Friends and members of the former Axbridge Archaeological and Local History Society. We always want to hear your views, comments, and suggestions for the future, so keep them coming in – send your ideas to Liz by email at moorlandfm@btinternet.com and contributions to editor Ian Tabrett at tabrett.cross@btinternet.com

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YOUR DIARY DATES

November 20: Somerset Fingerposts, Signposts, Milestones and Tollhouses. Talk by Richard Raynesford, of the Milestone Society, with introduction by Janet Dowding, author of *The Toll Houses of Somerset*. **Cross Memorial Hall, 2.30pm; non-members £5, refreshments £2**

December 13: Christmas Social meal and quiz, Lamb Inn, Weare, 7pm. Menu choices to follow.

December 14: Christmas Coffee Morning with mince pies by invitation of the ADMT
The Lamb Axbridge at 11.30am

January 15: Members get a chance to speak on local topics of their choice. Cross Memorial Hall (CMH); 2.30pm. Visitors £5, refreshments £2

OCTOBER'S EVENTS

It has been a busy month for the Museum. John Page has been involved with school visits, some of the trustees and friends have represented the Museum at a quiz night, the AGM has taken place and there has been a visit to Dyrham Park. Report to follow shortly.



Two of the senior classes from the Brent Knoll Church of England School visited King John's Hunting Lodge as part of their studies on Tudor times. **John Page** was their host and he writes: "There are many items in the Museum, as well as the building itself, which added to their knowledge of what it was like to live at that time. Unfortunately, the coach did not arrive at the school at the expected time so while we waited I was invited to talk about the Museum, using our website." Finally the group reached Axbridge, and John introduced them to the Museum. "They were a bit shocked to discover that there was minimal heating and no glass in the windows in Tudor times, but were intrigued to discover that this town house was larger upstairs than downstairs," he reports. "We looked at the reed and plaster walls, discussed lead mining on Mendip and its effect on the local drinking water, so that everyone drank cider or beer, including children! We looked at where the poor were cared for, the inadequate weights and measures, the lack of time-keeping, punishments and some now-banned entertainments. There was a quite a lot to explore."

After a look at the church and a short walk around town, the younger class returned to the Museum for a visit to the first floor to see the exhibit showing excavations at Brent Knoll some years ago. One even recognised the dig was in the garden of her house! John concludes: "It was a lovely day and the children

seemed to really enjoy themselves. On the way home one little girl obviously thought she would like to repay my help by offering to show me round their school sometime, which was very sweet of her.”

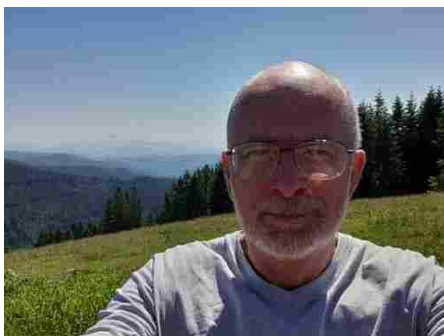
THE QUIZ NIGHT

Ad Astra is the name of the cider barn in Stone Allerton, and the owners hold regular quiz nights with the profits going to local charities. On October 3 the charity to benefit was Axbridge Museum. Kevin Rooke, the trustee who had initially approached Ad Astra, organised a team to take



part. Kevin gave an excellent presentation about the Museum and encouraged more local people to visit the Hunting Lodge. The evening was a lot of fun and our team gave a respectable performance.

MEET A TRUSTEE: Graham Paine.



Graham joined the board of trustees in 2023 and as well as being a trustee, he is a museum key holder. He has an MBA from Bath University and is a member of the Somerset Integrated Care Board. His career spans health, social care, education, consulting and financial services. He has experience of influencing high-level strategies to drive change and helping Boards to achieve their strategic goals. His hobbies including walking in the Mendip Hills and watching Formula 1 car racing. He is also an excellent person to have on a quiz team!

REFLECTIONS OF A STEWARD – and Axbridge’s lost Cross

Stewarding at the Hunting Lodge is rarely dull but can be particularly rewarding when people are genuinely interested and ask awkward questions. Sometimes the questions are easy, such as – what are coneyes? At other times the questions are more difficult and these keep us on our toes. A regular question however is - what happened to the Axbridge Cross? Is it now in Cheddar?

Looking back through copies of *Retrospect* and its precursor, the *AALHS News Sheet*, I recently found an excellent article on just this topic. It was written by Frances Neale and dated October 1980. So, exactly 44 years ago Frances, an archivist, former librarian of Wells Cathedral and Vice - President of the Axbridge Archaeological & Local History Society, tried to put the matter to rest. I have no hesitation in quoting from her article and hope it will be of interest to others.





17th century



Illustrations courtesy King John's Hunting Lodge Museum archives and John Page

'The facts are that the two crosses are/were both 15th century, with their surrounding roofed colonnades added rather later. Local records of the 1600s show that both crosses were standing, in Axbridge and Cheddar, at the same time. In Axbridge court rolls of 1611 and 1612 refer to repairs to the cross in Axbridge Square. The Cheddar, parish churchwardens' accounts of 1618 refer to paving around the cross

there. These references are quite close enough in date to be sure that there are two crosses, one in each parish, especially as the Axbridge cross was standing in Axbridge until 1756, and so could not have been whisked to Cheddar between 1611 and 1618. The Axbridge cross was taken down in 1756, while Cheddar cross still stands today.

Axbridge and Cheddar have been so closely linked, in origins, history and feudal lords, that it would seem likely that the two crosses, both 15th century, were put up at much the same time, in much the same style. And if in the same style, then perhaps by the same band of masons – and further, perhaps by the mason of the Bishop of Wells, who as chief lord of Cheddar and an important property owner in Axbridge would be influential in such a matter in both places. He, moreover, had his own masonic workshops, based at Wells.'

Frances continues her article with many observations about the design of the crosses that may be of interest to anyone with a keen interest in architectural detail. Copies of all previous newsletters are stored in the Old Court Room in Axbridge Town Hall.

Ref: Axbridge Archaeological and Local History Society News Sheet No. 43, October 1980

Madeleine Roberts.