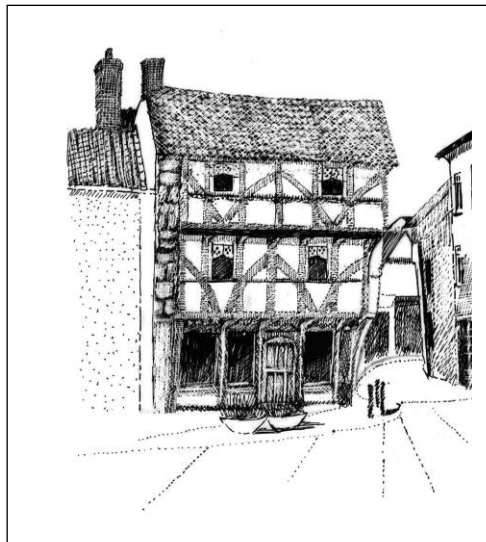


# Friends of King John's Hunting Lodge

Newsletter: No 1 April 2023



Archaeological and Local History Notes and News

Museum charity no.

[1091161](#)

## The Friends of King John's Hunting Lodge

We have formed a new group which will be of interest to archaeologists and local historians alike and indeed to those of us who are just interested in learning a little more about the history of the area. We will be holding monthly talks/activities and the group will now be known as **the Friends of King John's Hunting Lodge**. Members will have the following benefits: -

- Monthly talks, activities or site visits at a reduced rate.
- Invitations to activities organised by the Museum including coffee mornings.
- Free entry to King John's Hunting Lodge.
- A regular emailed Newsletter.
- An opportunity to meet a friendly group of like-minded people.
- An annual outing to a local NT property in October.
- Opportunities to help support and maintain the volunteer run Museum.

This group will now replace the Axbridge Archaeological & Local History Society (AALHS) and the Friends of the Axbridge & District Museum Trust. Details about joining or about future activities can be obtained from me, Liz Scott, either by email at: moorlandfm@btinternet.com or by telephone on: - 01934733341. Family membership will be £20 pa and individual membership £15 pa .

Liz Scott

Co-ordinator, Friends of KJHL

### Programme

**Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>. 2023**

***The Story of Compton Bishop and Cross – an illustrated history of two interesting villages.***

Speaker: Margaret Jordan.

Venue: Cross Memorial Hall at 7.30pm £5 to include refreshments

**Wednesday May 17<sup>th</sup>**

***Peter Wickens Fry – a pioneer photographer from Compton House, Axbridge.***

Speaker: John Page.

Venue: Compton House, Axbridge from 7.00pm. £5 wine available £2 per glass

**NB Numbers are limited for this venue. Please book early with Liz Scott to ensure a place.**

**Friday May 19<sup>th</sup> Axbridge and District Museum Trust**

10.30am A coffee morning at the Almshouse, Moorland Street, Axbridge. Invitations will go to everyone on our mailing list in April. An informal get together to hear about our plans for the Museum this season.

**Wednesday June 21<sup>st</sup>**

***Ashton Windmill.*** A private tour of this local landmark. Led by David & Madeleine Roberts.

Venue: Meet at the Windmill at 2.30pm donations for the windmill (minimum £2)

Numbers are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. Ring Liz Scott on 01934 733341 or moorlandfm@btinternet.com

Please note that access to the upper floors of the Mill entails climbing ladders. Full details of safety factors are available from the leaders (01934 712895)

**Other News and Events.**



**Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Programme for April.**

**Friday April 14<sup>th</sup>**

***Westbury "Villa Rustica" – an excavation in progress.***

Speaker: Andrew Buchanan

Venue: Wells & Mendip Museum, 8, Cathedral Green, Wells, Somerset. 19.30 – 21.00

**Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

***Taunton Stop Line Walk.***

*A short, guided walk along part of the old railway line to see some emergency defences built in 1940. 10.30 – 14.00.*

Suitable for family members. Non-members welcome. Book by email at: - [office@sanhs.org](mailto:office@sanhs.org) or call 01823 272429.

## First Event

The first meeting of the Friends of King John's Hunting Lodge took place on Wednesday March 15<sup>th</sup> and was a great success with the talk being given by Steve Tofts on the subject of '*Lead mining on Mendip. What the Romans did for us.*' Liz Scott and John Page welcomed everyone and talked about the new organisation and its hopes for the future. While IT issues were being resolved, an interesting discussion ensued and somehow touched on the unlikely subject of the perceived gender of witches and warlocks and the variety of apotropaic symbols found in old buildings.

With IT issues resolved, Steve was able to draw on many years of research by himself and other members of CHERT\* to show how lead has been exploited over possibly more than 5000 years. One of the highlights from a talk packed with information was the analysis of the lead content found in stalactites which found fluctuations in the balance of Uranium to Thorium. These indicated that there were peaks of mining activity not just in the Roman period but prior to that in the Bronze and Iron Ages and after that in the late Medieval and Victorian Periods.

It seems likely that Rome was trading with the area prior to its invasion in 43 AD. The Romans prized not only the lead but also the silver content of the lead ore and Steve speculated that the wealth generated from the silver content could even have funded the invasion. Mendip lead, identified by its chemical signature, has been found widely and has even been identified at Pompeii where it has been found under the volcanic ash erupted by Vesuvius in 79 AD.

Steve showed us a fascinating photograph of the site that had been taken by Harold St George Gray in 1931. The position of the Roman amphitheatre, the extent of the Roman town and part of a Roman Road were all clearly visible.

Steve also described how later in the Victorian Period improved techniques had made the reprocessing of slag possible. He described how the Pattinson Process enabled both lead and silver to be extracted more efficiently than had previously been possible. But that these activities had led to riots in Cheddar in 1838 where the water was found to have become heavily polluted.

Steve's talk was well received, led to an interesting discussion and also the request that a visit to the site be organised.

Madeleine Roberts.

\*CHERT = Charterhouse Environs Research Team **Celebrating our Local History.**

## **400 year Anniversary June 25th**

Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup> is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the James I Charter of Incorporation that permitted Axbridge to have 2 maces and to extend its jurisdiction to the unruly inhabitants of West Street. To celebrate this event a display is being organised in King John's Hunting Lodge.

Do you know of any other events that should be celebrated? Besides Axbridge, this area includes all the villages from Wedmore to Shipham, Cheddar to Brent Knoll and Mark to Brean. If you would like to bring an important anniversary to our attention or indeed would like to contribute an article to this newsletter, please contact John Page at: [myrtle.bk@gmail.com](mailto:myrtle.bk@gmail.com) or Liz Scott.

It would help if contributions to Retrospect could be in Calibri (Body) 12 point. We shall look forward to hearing from you.