

Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Local History Group

NEWSLETTER No. 6
2002/03

Chairman's Introduction

Our sixth Newsletter follows one of the most successful seasons in the Group's history, with 71 members and a record attendance of 59 for Mr Tony Crawforth's talk on the restoration of Waddesdon Manor. Further highlights were another enjoyable Members' Evening, thanks particularly to contributions from David Clarke and George Cobby, and a really interesting talk by Mrs Vivienne Evans on the social history of religious houses around the Chilterns. The final event was a memorable visit to the Cabinet Office to see the remains of Henry the Eighth's Whitehall Palace, kindly arranged by Caroline Coates, and to the Cabinet War Rooms.

We now look forward to the 40th Anniversary of the Group's inauguration, about which our President, Mrs Evelyn Money, writes elsewhere. The Anniversary season's programme promises another wide-ranging selection of themes and speakers, concluding with a combined AGM and Members' Evening next May. Your committee again looks forward to seeing all of you in October.

David Ridgwell

A Tradition of Jubilees

A month or so after this year's celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee I happened across in the *Hilltop Villages of the Chilterns* (page 209) an account of the celebrations which took place in Hawridge to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. Unlike today you have to remember that village life in 19th Century was pretty austere for all but the more wealthy property owners. A Jubilee was an opportunity to lift the spirits and the parishioners of Hawridge resolved at a public meeting in March that year

'...that a treat should be given to the labourers and their families on June 21st that year and that the Guardian be requested to call upon the owners of property to collect funds for the purpose.'

The grand sum of £25.3s.0d was collected and according to the report in the local paper you can see that a good time was had by all.

'In this little parish the celebrations of the Queen's Jubilee was a great success. First of all there was a hearty service in church at noon. This was followed by dinner arranged in two tents which had been pitched on the Common and were prettily decorated. All the inhabitants of the parish, three only expected (sic), sat down together arranged

in families, to an excellent dinner, which did credit to the caterers., Messrs Pallet and Bishop. In the afternoon there was a cricket match between married and single, with sports and games for the children for gifts and money prizes. Presents were also given to the 27 children who passed the record inspection at the district school. Tea for all was served at six, followed by sports and games. In the course of the evening an oak tree was planted on the Common to commemorate the Jubilee; after a short but pointed speech by Captain Parkinson. At 9.30 there was a display of fireworks; concluding with a bonfire of furze and billets which lit up the whole Common and greatly delighted the onlookers, who separated one and all expressing the great pleasure and enjoyment they had experienced...."

Village life, in these parts at least, has changed beyond recognition over the past 125 years. Despite this, perhaps a feature of this community that has persisted is the enthusiasm to come together at times of celebration to mark the passing of those important moments in history. As a testament to both the style and content of these two Jubilees separated in by 125 years seem remarkably similar.

Chris Brown

Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Local History Group is an amateur society founded in the early Sixties to stimulate interest in the Hilltop Villages. A regular feature has been the talks by guest speakers, be they acknowledged experts or enthusiastic amateurs, and the emphasis is naturally on subjects local to the Chilterns.

No one who delves into history comes away without regretting a lack of documentation on some aspect or other. The Group has built up a fairly substantial archive of local documents, maps and photographs, but this can never be complete and additions from any source are welcome, however trivial they may seem. Help us to record today what may not exist tomorrow.

2002 – 2003 PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 2002 8.00pm for 8.15pm Cholesbury Village Hall	THE ORDER OF THE GARTER Mrs P Lindsey
FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2002 * 8.00pm for 8.15pm St Leonards Parish Hall	LAW AND ORDER IN A SMALL BUCKINGHAM VILLAGE Mr D George
FRIDAY 6 DECEMBER 2002 8.00pm for 8.15pm St Leonards Parish Hall	VERULAMIUM AND ITS MUSEUM Mr J Brodrick
FRIDAY 10 JANUARY 2003 * 8.00pm for 8.15pm St Leonards Parish Hall	A HISTORY OF THE WINDSOR CHAIR Mr S King
FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2003 8.00pm for 8.15pm St Leonards Parish Hall	HENRY VIII – THE EARLY YEARS. VICTIM OR VILLAIN? Mrs J Curl
FRIDAY 7 MARCH 2003 8.00pm for 8.15pm St Leonards Parish Hall	WYCOMBE – THE TOWN BEFORE CHAIRS Mr J Rattue
FRIDAY 4 APRIL 2003 8.00pm for 8.15pm St Leonards Parish Hall	CURIOSITIES IN THE CHILTERNES Mr J Copeland
FRIDAY 2 MAY 2003 8.00pm sharp Cholesbury Village Hall	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and MEMBERS' EVENING Members and Visitors are welcome to a social evening when some of our members will give short talks on subjects of their choice.

*** Please note that this is the second Friday in the Month**

MEMBERSHIP £5.00 PER ANNUM – VISITORS WELCOME: £2.00 PER MEETING

Coffee and Biscuits served and a collection is taken

About the Speakers

Mrs Lindsey has spent much of her life in library work. This led her into research and a lasting interest in heraldry, thence but a short step to the Garter, when she became a voluntary steward at St George's Chapel.

Mr George describes himself as an enthusiastic amateur archivist of rural life around Newport Pagnell.

Mrs Curl also prefers a similar appellation, with a particular interest in the early Tudor dynasty.

Mr Copeland too falls into the amateur category, as now, in retirement, he has become a keen collector of social history memorabilia.

In contrast, both *Mr Brodrick* and *Mr Rattue* work in museums, the former for the Verulamium Museum Trust, also lecturing on Roman History, while Mr Rattue is Assistant Museum Officer in High Wycombe.

This season's 'old friend' is *Mr King*, whose work has made him an expert – and author – in his chosen field.

Finally, about our (at present) unknown speakers: this season the Group is experimenting with a combined AGM and Members' Evening and we hope to include two or three short talks from our own enthusiastic amateurs. Don't be shy about volunteering – experience has shown a vast, largely untapped reservoir of expertise among members. We have enjoyed many fascinating 'snapshot' talks in the past and look forward to continuing the tradition.

George Cobby

Snippets

Additions to the Library

This year's edition of the *Records of Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society* is Volume 42, 2002. Remembering the History Group's visit to the Sir John Kederminster Library, members might be particularly interested in one of the items called 'Charity and Status: The Activities of Sir John Kederminster at Langley Marish'.

Members may borrow any of the small collection of books belonging to the Group and a list may be obtained from Paddy Thomas on 01494 758460.

Founder's Prize

George Cobby responded to receiving the Founder's Prize by presenting a book to the Group Library. Most appropriate to our area, it is *The Iron Age Hillforts of England – a Visitor's Guide* by Geoffrey Williams.

Place Names

Having spotted the following in John Field's *Place Names of Greater London*: 'St Leonards Road, N.W.10, is named from a Buckinghamshire village, near which the owners of the Harlesden land also had property', George asks if any reader knows who the owners were or anything about them?

www.cholesbury.com

During the past year the website has been further developed and now contains a number of articles about the local history of the villages as well as a diary of parish events, information about the churches and other groups and societies in the four villages. If you are connected to the internet why not take a look and send us a message to say you have visited and what you think about the website or suggest other subjects we could cover on the site.

We are also receiving an increasing number of enquiries from other parts of the UK and overseas asking for help about the history of the area and whether we have any information about their ancestors who came from these parts. One of the more unusual enquiries subsequently resulted in a visit by a group of dignitaries from Macedonia, on a study tour to the UK, who wanted to hear about community life in a typical English Village. An interesting experience for one and all!

What's in a Place-name?

If you have read *No Bed for Bacon* or seen the film *Shakespeare in Love*, you will be aware of a recurring joke: poor Will not being able to decide upon the spelling of his surname. Place names seem to have been the victims of the same dilemma, at least partly because the English language has absorbed more outside influences than its Continental counterparts. And sometimes names were deliberately changed – conquerors write history.

However it is amazing how much of Saxon England has remained. So we can hazard a guess that spelling changed as a result of a combination of dilemma, dialect and illiteracy. **Amersham** is a good case in point: the Conqueror's subjugated Saxons called it *Elmoldesham*, Richard the Third's burghers *Hakmersham* and Henry the Eighth's subjects *Egmonsham*.

Shakespeare's contemporaries came closest to what we now recognise, even coming up with today's spelling, although in the six centuries from William the First to Charles the Second there were almost forty variations.

I invite members to carry out a little research into the origins and variations of the names of their birthplaces or other significant locations. Perhaps as material for Members' Evening or the next Newsletter? In the 1970s, commuter Cyril Harris tried this to relieve the tedium of Tube travel – and ended up writing a booklet on the origins of all the station names on the London Underground.

George Cobby

Notes on the Potteries at Buckland Common

Much of the work undertaken by the Group's founding fathers remains unpublished, although parts of the late Mr F K King's work on the Buckland Common Pottery were incorporated in Hilltop Villages of the Chilterns. The following is an extract from his Notes.

The first evidence we have of the existence of a pottery at Buckland Common is in 1701. The Catalogue of the Principal Works of Art at Chequers (1923) mentions a "Jug, red earthenware, covered with dark manganese-brown glaze, globular, with short neck, small handle with three thumb-marks at its base and reeded round mouth and shoulder. On the front 'H.K.1701' incised under the glaze. Probably made at Buckland Common, near Aylesbury. This jug has always been at Chequers and is of special interest as the work of a small rustic pottery hitherto unrecorded in the literature of ceramics."

Also at Chequers is a second jug, described as "red earthenware, with dark manganese-brown glaze, globular body, short reeded neck, small loop handle. On the shoulder, star-shaped devices and the inscription 'JOHN REVET Esqr. 1759 THOMAS BRACKLEY POTTER AT BUCKLAND COMMON' incised after the application of the glaze but before firing. Colonel John Revett, who married Joanna Thurbarne, was the owner of Chequers about 1759."

We can trace this Thomas Brackley. In 1701 a Thomas Brackley married Sarah Higgs at Cholesbury and in 1705 a son, also Thomas, was baptised. This son married Sarah Dodman at Buckland in 1726. Thomas senior died in 1747 and Sarah in 1751, so the 1759 potter must have been Thomas junior.

In 1818 and 1819 William Cook and James Chandler were described as pot-carriers in the Parish Register and in 1819 Thomas Osborne was a pot maker. In 1821 James Brackley was a pot maker, but by 1823 appears to have become a blacksmith and Emanuel Pratley was the potter. Emanuel is almost the last person in the Cholesbury register described as a potter or pot maker, so perhaps the trade ceased soon after then.

However between 1853 and 1858 three children of Job and Eliza Cox were baptised at Cholesbury and Job Cox was described as a potter. There is no other reference to this family to be found – possibly the trade was revived for a short period.

In 1844, at the time of the Inclosures, the owner of The Pottery, as it was then called, was Job Brackley, who had married Phebe Brackley in 1805, but the property was now described as 'House, yards and orchard' in the Inclosure schedule. It is said that a young girl relative came to live with the Job Brackleys, who appear to have had no children. She was Hannah Osborne and she married Thomas Sills at Cholesbury in 1858. After the deaths of Job and Phebe the Sills must have taken over The Potteries as a farm. The Sills family remained there until after the death in 1958 of Rosanna, widow of Thomas' and Hannah's son, Harris Sills. The last remaining member of the family, Ruby Mills, then sold the property to me.

F K King, September 16th 1964

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our foundation, the President, Mrs Evelyn Money, has kindly researched the origins of the Local History Group from minute books and other records and has contributed the following article.

Our Beginnings

The 40 years since our local history group was formed have probably seen more changes in our villages than did the preceding century, so it was an excellent time to start recording. The electrifying of the railways and the building of the M1 made the population change from one of elderly retired people and some younger people engaged in local work such as brickmaking, farming, the garden services and herb business, or in jobs in nearby towns, and it became an area for commuters. Young couples with families settled here, houses were extended and the child population rose markedly.

According to our minutes it was decided at a preliminary meeting of interested people at the Newmarks' house on 11th January 1963 to form a group 'whose object should be (a) to seek out and record all aspects of life in Hawridge, Cholesbury, Buckland Common and St Leonards from earliest times to the present day and (b) to rouse the interest of the community in the place in which they live and the continuity of History'. It was agreed that the name should be 'The Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Local History Group'. A working committee was elected comprising Miss M G Phillips, George Reid Esq., A F Gomme Esq., photographer, F L King Esq., treasurer and Maj.-General Money, photographer and secretary, with powers to co-opt additional members as required. Subscriptions were 5/- a year or 2/6 for those at school.

At the first committee meeting on 19th April 1963 the treasurer reported cash in hand of £17.14.11 and it was agreed to open an account at Lloyds Bank in Chesham. The membership numbered 47. It was decided to affiliate to both the CPRE for 2/6 and the Bucks Archæological Society for 10/-.

At the first AGM on 10th January 1964 the Chairman reported that, due to the work of Mr F King and Mr H Brackley, virtually all the field names had been collected and copies of the 1843/44 Tithe and Rent Charge Awards obtained.

At the 1975 AGM it was agreed that the rather low subscription of 25p should be kept; the balance in the bank was £34.99. Many of you will be wondering how the speakers' fees were paid out of such meagre resources – the explanation is that fees were usually token or non-existent, as speakers were entertained on the Friday evening to a pleasant meal or invited to stay for the weekend! This was done first by the General and a little later by volunteers among the committee, or rather their wives. Some years ago this practice discontinued as volunteers to do the entertaining became fewer and the arrangements with speakers more commercial.

For a number of years we met exclusively at Cholesbury, that being where the Group saw the light of day, but the problem of winter parking became more acute as more people came by car. Also St Leonards Hall was more convenient for the showing of slides. Now only the first and last meetings are at Cholesbury.

The question of finding speakers for meetings has presented some problems. At first they were those known to the General and other members. The Bucks Archæological Society provided quite a number and other sources were the County Record Office, the County Archæological Department, libraries and lecturers from colleges and schools. Today there are people who offer their services as speakers – they may have had interesting experiences or careers or have researched a subject which they hope will be of general interest. Our office of Programme Secretary has existed since the burden of finding speakers became too much for the then Chairman and Horace Brackley took on the job, which he did very successfully until his last illness.

Over 40 years our Group has made many changes and doubtless will continue to adapt to this fast-changing world. We now have a programme of our meetings for the whole year in October – at the beginning it was a postcard each month.

Evelyn Money

As a footnote to Mrs Money's article, Mr Edward Newmark has kindly permitted us to append a brief extract from his Memoir:

General Money was very active in the village for many years. He founded the Local History Group of which the first meeting was held in our house. Not only an excellent photographer, he was also a very skilled wood-carver.

Edward Newmark, January 2002

Memories of the Hilltop Villages in the 1920s

This memoir has been contributed by Mrs Margaret Probert (née Eggleton), who was born at Browns Lane, Hastoe, where she lived from 1923 to 1933, when the family moved to Buckland Common.

We lived in the top house in Browns Lane. My father, Jack, was employed by Joseph Timberlake, a tenant farmer on Lord Rothschild's estate. Lighting was by paraffin lamps and candles. Cooking was kitchen range with hot water tank one side, oven the other. Supplementing the cooking was a twin Beatrice paraffin stove with an oven that fitted over. The scullery had a pump for water from the well in the backyard. Bread was delivered twice a week by Bob Warriar, who had a shop in Akeman Street, Tring, opposite Rodwell's soft drinks factory.

My paternal grandparents lived in the first house in Church Lane – they had six children, all the males were employed on the Rothschild estate. The church and clubroom, built by the Rothschilds, were looked after by Chris Parslow – he lived in the last house in Church Road. On the left was the poultry farm, looked after by Les Parslow. The farmhouse was a private residence, the then occupants Mr and Mrs Cooper (he was a retired music teacher from Harrow). My mother did their washing and some domestic work.

My father was a ploughman and worked with two shire horses, Topsy and Ben. My two older brothers and I would run home from school, change our clothes and rush to the field my father was working. The first two of us were perched on the horses' necks, holding mane and collar to keep on board, then with a wallop on the rear the horses would set off home to their stable – we would duck down low as they entered their stall to avoid hitting the door frame – we got down by sliding down the horse on to the manger. All the fields had names and I remember three – the one opposite our house was "Big Field", down the lane was "Broad Axe", the next one under the wood was "Hares Garden".

My mother was educated at St Leonards School and that must have influenced our fate. My older brother would have started school one year before me. We would cross Big Field, over the stile through "5 acres", cross Shire Lane and through the Bridleway to Leylands Farm.

Just down the road left we went right over two more fields, coming out opposite St Leonards School, having completed three miles, all weathers. I can smell now drying clothes on the huge fireguard in the infants' classroom. If we had cheese sandwiches in our packed lunch, we could – under supervision – toast them on the largest toasting fork I have ever seen. In winter, if the weather was snowy, we would be allowed to go home early. In those days Shire Lane was filled with snow from hedge to hedge.

Our task on Saturday was to take our trolley, a wooden box fitted to pram wheels, and go down the lane into the wood on the left and fill the trolley (when I say fill, we had to put four long poles, one at each corner) and we had as much wood on top as inside the box.

My older brother and I had to go to Tring to do the week's shopping. We had three bags made from good sacking and handles of braid. Gilbert Fulks, the grocer, would pack the bags with even weight and my brother and I had one bag each and one between us – again another three mile walk (no wonder I'm only 5'2").

August bank holiday Lord Rothschild would open Tring Park and it was a miniature county show: sheep dogs working, farrier/blacksmith, woodcrafts, tea tent, fortune-tellers, W.I. tent with cakes and preserves. In the park running along Hastoe Hill Lord R kept emus – we would poke our fingers through the knotholes and quite often got pecked if you didn't pull your hand back quickly.

My maternal grandparents lived in Buckland Common at no.1 Six Row, on the spot where the first bungalow now is. Every Sunday afternoon we would walk down the lane, cross Broad Axe, down Shire Lane, through the wood to Bottom House, up past Little Twye, past the Boot and Slipper (now a private house) down to the Piece, a triangle of grass in the centre of the crossroads. Granny lived opposite Chapel Hill.

Margaret Probert

It is hoped to continue Mrs Probert's memoir in the next Newsletter with her recollections of Buckland Common in the nineteen-thirties.

The following article is reproduced by kind permission of the author, Mr Victor Gray, and The Rothschild Archive. It was first published in The Rothschild Archive's Review of the year April 2000 – March 2001.

Whatever Happened to Sarah?

Vic Gray explores the background to a chance survival which uncovered a forgotten Rothschild initiative.

We know nothing of Sarah Tomlin. We know that the Tomlin family lived modestly in the Buckinghamshire village of Aston Clinton in the 1860s, a family of rural labourers, but when the census enumerator called, Sarah was not there, perhaps away in service. Beyond that, all we have is her name, engraved on the rim of a bronze medal. It may have been her only moment of fame. The medal, recently acquired at auction by the Rothschild Archive (000/851), commemorates the Halton Industrial Exhibition of 1868, now virtually forgotten but in its day a bold experiment in rural community regeneration.

The Exhibition was the brainchild of Sir Anthony de Rothschild, second son of Nathan Mayer Rothschild, a committed countryman who, in 1851, had taken up residence in Aston Clinton at the foot of the Chiltern Hills.

1851 was a significant date. In that year Joseph Paxton was designing the Rothschild's first English country house, at Mentmore, just down the road from Aston Clinton, while at the same time his innovative and influential structure at Crystal Palace was taking shape to house the Great Exhibition, intended to display the best in industry and arts from around the world. It spawned many imitations around the world, most of them on an equally grand scale. What Anthony did in 1868 was to take the concept of the Great Exhibition and apply it on a more local scale, in an effort to demonstrate the range of creativity and skills in a small rural community.

The seed of this idea rapidly took root. The original intention to focus on Aston Clinton and its immediate neighbourhood, was rapidly left behind as applications to display crafts, artefacts and produce poured in from an area more than 20 miles across and covering 50 parishes. The fact that small rural industries, often cottage work undertaken by individuals, might merit a place in an Exhibition aimed at a broad range of society, encouraged participation in just the way that Anthony had intended. More than 3,000 exhibits were eventually submitted and displayed.

Central to these were agriculture and cottage husbandry and the traditional Buckinghamshire craft of straw plaiting. But exhibits demonstrating individual crafts – building furniture, tool-making – were welcomed as a means of demonstrating and raising standards and of encouraging self-help initiatives to relieve poverty. Exhibits included scientific models, decorative glasswork, lace and silk goods and, in the produce section, newly baked bread, butter and preserves. Among the wilder products of cottager's ingenuity was a model church made

of 5,000 pieces of cork and 16,000 pins and a model mansion constructed wholly of fragments of chair leg, the fruit of 20 years' labour. A special prize was to be awarded for the best model of modern farm cottages to be submitted by a local carpenter or builder, a contribution to the great movement of the time to provide cheap but hygienic housing for the rural community.

The Exhibition opened on 1st June on a 4-acre site at Halton Park on Sir Anthony's estate. A brave showing of marquees lined the site on a fine English summer day. At one o'clock, a band of Grenadier Guards and a choir of local village schools took up their positions on the lawn. Past a Guard of Honour formed by the Aylesbury Corps of the Bucks Volunteers, filed Sir Anthony and his family with an entourage of dignitaries. They included Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts, the philanthropist, Mr Abel Smith M.P. who, ten years previously had introduced Lionel de Rothschild to the House of Commons and, as guests of Honour, the Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli and his wife, long friends of the Rothschild family.

The Prime Minister made the opening speech, extolling the virtues of the county of Buckinghamshire. Then to the strains of "God Save the Queen", the crowd was let loose on the displays. In the old mansion at Halton, once the seat of the Dashwood family, were displayed painting and other artwork by local amateurs together with locally produced lace. In the first of the marquees, surrounding an ornamental fountain erected by the Chiltern Hills Spring Water Co., were the produce exhibits, bread, butter, beer, wine, jam and confectionery. Next door, was a geological model of the parish of Halton together with specimens of fossils and rocks and locally collected natural history specimens. In two further tents, were the products of local industry: straw-plaiting, silk weaving, engineering models, needlework and furniture. More than 5,000 visitors attended the Exhibition on its first gala day, at a cost of two shillings per head. On the four following days entrance was reduced to two pence. On the Wednesday along 8,000 people attended – no mean number when the nearest railway station was five miles away. Canal barges and omnibuses had been commandeered to provide transport to the site.

On the final Saturday, 300 medals were distributed. The gold Medal, for cottage design, was awarded to Mr A. Mayne of Aylesbury, with plans for cottages which he proposed to build for £225 a pair. And among those who wandered away happily on that June evening, clutching her bronze medal for embroidering a baby's shirt, was Sarah Tomlin, back home and into obscurity.

Summer Outing to the Cabinet Office and the Cabinet War Rooms

A sunny day in June found us at Westminster Station in time to join other early arrivals for coffee before the short walk to the Cabinet Office at 70 Whitehall. No less than 27 members and friends gathered at the Cabinet Office steps as Caroline Coates emerged to greet us. Inside she introduced Dave Huggard, Chief Security Officer, who was to be our guide for the tour, and his colleague Mick, who acted as “sheepdog”, rounding up stragglers. Modestly Dave introduced us to his extra-curricular role as a CO guide and proceeded to give us a very polished tour, enlivened with fascinating insights into the place, its origin, its environs and its history. He was an enthusiast, warming to his subject as the tour progressed.

We were shepherded through a rabbit’s warren of corridors, staircases, landings and galleries, assembled in the true British manner as an evolving mixture of shapes, styles and periods fashioned principally, it seems, by the arts of expediency and compromise. The corridors gave onto splendid and well-proportioned rooms with high ceilings, decorated and furnished in period(s) going back through the centuries rather like some stately homes, down to the familiar neglected state of the décor in the public areas. The CO’s quartermaster could not be accused of over-lavish expenditure, even allowing for the occasional picture, borrowed (freely) from the national collection, which adorned ministerial offices – one must remember that this is a busy working and living environment for a group of professionals who work long hours on shift.

For me one of the highlights was the Tudor brickwork in English Bond (what else?), which

was made a distinctive feature of several parts of the building – the Tudor Wall behind glass for display purposes by the main door, the Turret staircase, the Viewing Chamber with the Great Window of Henry VIII’s “real” tennis court, and some of the exterior brickwork in the buildings around Treasury Green. An Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Michael Green, who was involved in the 1962 renovations, realised the conservation value of the Tudor brickwork and made sure that as much of it as possible was preserved for posterity.

We admired the 18th century Kent’s Treasury Boardroom with its large period table around which had been built a more modern table with the dual roles of being both protective and functional. The original could almost certainly not be got out of the room without destroying it in the process. We also enjoyed the Judicial Courtroom of the Privy Council. Glass cases in a corridor displayed some intriguing artefacts found during restoration and modernisation works. The simple architects’ model of the Tudor Palace of Whitehall helped to set the whole thing in context.

After a sandwich-break in the staff canteen, we thanked Caroline, Dave and Mick for their time, enthusiasm and good organisation and left (under escort) via Treasury Green, seizing the chance to take photographs outside No 10. One felt it was a real privilege to have taken this tour! We went on to view the Cabinet War Rooms, which were entirely different, fascinating, and thought provoking.

Windsor Thomas

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