



Newsletter – January 2015

Introduction

Hello All,

You are receiving this newsletter because you have shown an interest or exchanged correspondence with the Orpington History Organisation in the past. If you do not wish to receive any further newsletters then please reply and we will take your contact information off the distribution list.

Phil's Update:

A New Year has begun. I trust you and your families have had a great festive break and are looking forward to 2015 as much as we all are.

Above and beyond all, the Orpington History Organisation or 'OHO' as we are being referred to more and more has had a very positive year. We are in a strange but not unwelcomed situation where if we want to take things to the next level in our activities we need more help and assistance. We have had people come forward this year, which is great, but need more.

We need volunteers to come forward to get involved in the following:

- Document and Image Scanning;
- Guidance on approach and control methods regarding cataloguing historic items;
- Assistance with drafting and editing sections or the entire quarterly newsletter;
- Monitoring and responding to emails (enquiries and requests) that come to the OHO;
- Event coordination.

The OHO is not run or governed by committee (it may well be sometime in the future) but for now is led by me and I am supported by a team of about 20 regular dedicated volunteers. We have never made a bad decision and have always agreed. Finance control is quite simple. Any donations made and any profits from my book 'Around Orpington Through Time' are added to a bank account that is used to pay for expenses and materials. We never charge for our presence at talks or shows. The most we ask for is reciprocal membership of another organisation or a free talk or place at a future event.

The OHO is a founder member of the Bromley Heritage and Arts Forum and we are treated with high regard by likeminded local organisations, the local business forum, our MP Jo Johnson, local councillors and various departments within the London Borough of Bromley. The foundations are now set and we are ready to firmly place the OHO as the primary local history reference group online, with a real presence interacting with all communities within the former Orpington District for the future.

With nearly 3500 people regularly interacting with us on Online and the 100s that come to see us at the events we attend I know there are those out there that would come forward and help take us all forward.

Please let us know if you can help in anyway – see the very end of this newsletter for details on how to get in touch.

Finally we hope you like the new format newsletter which will now be available as a PDF document rather than contained within an email.

Take care, Phil W.

Success and Achievement in 2014

Online information media channels

Again, in 2014, the OHO broke all records, last year, month by month in terms of numbers of new Enthusiasts, visits to our website and interaction within our social media channels. The success continues to this day and when you think that the comparison to the same metrics last year are based on 2014 also being hugely successful, we find ourselves in a very good place.

Facebook

Facebook 'Likes' are up by approximately 800 on the year. We will break through 3000 subscribers this year (with the 3000th getting a free copy of the Around Orpington book).

Facebook 'Reach' (the amount of people that see our posts) is up on average by 300% and we hit a record in November by reaching nearly 21000 people! This was the image of the Orpington War Memorial bathed in red light in preparation for Remembrance Day.

Twitter

Twitter 'Followers' is up to 576.

Main website

Our main website is visited by 5000 people on average per month and the increase in visitors is up by 90%



Events and Activities

During the year the OHO have attended a number of talks including the Croft Tea Rooms, for the Bromley Borough Local History Society. We have attended a number of events including the Cray Festival. We held an exhibition at the Bromley Museum. To cap the year off we took it on ourselves to light the Orpington War Memorial in red light which made the local press and local TV reports!



2) Phil W giving one of his talks at the Croft Tea rooms in the summer.

1) Our exhibition on George Allen advertised on the LBB website held at the Bromley Museum.



3) Our exhibition within the Heritage Zone at the Cray Festival. Note the interactive display in the corner that attracted much interest.

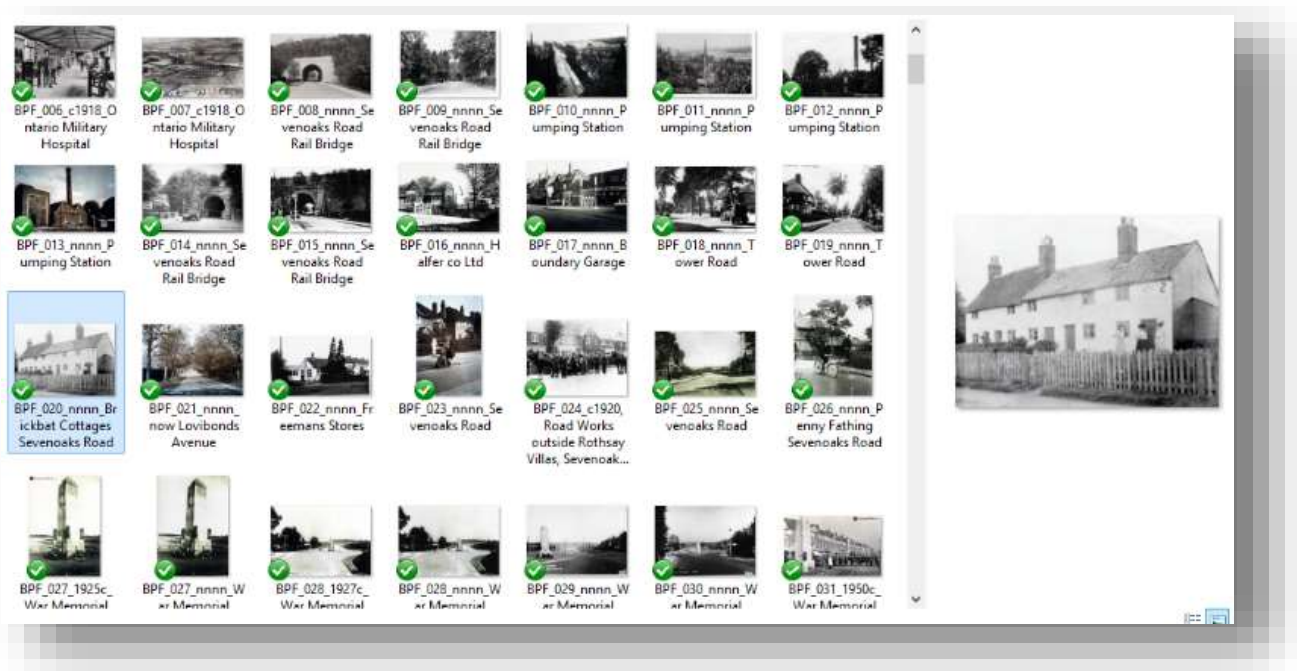


4) The George Allen exhibition at the Bromley Museum @ the Priory.

Article Donations

We have been in grateful receipt of many articles, images and documents which have been painstakingly scanned by our volunteers. One collection warrants a special mention.

Mr Brian Fisher, a lifelong resident of Orpington with family ties to Court Lodge Farm going way back to the 1800s introduced himself to Phil Waller a few years back and told him of his and his brother's collection of images showing many parts of the former Orpington District. The anticipation to see the collection was further increased when Brian said the collection had been put together by him, Jim Howitt and Bill Morton. Jim and Bill had inspired Phil to start his interest in local history 25 years ago (they are both very well-known local historians). Brian delivered the said collections to Phil in the late summer and it took the OHO team several months to scan the 1000+ images for the OHO Collection. This has pushed the number of images we now have to over 3000! Some of the images are quite unique when catalogued, protected and shared online will create quite some interest!



5) An example of some of the images in the 'Brian Fisher Collection' which we now have electronically scanned.

Bromley Heritage and Arts Forum (BHAF)

The OHO is a founder member of the Bromley Heritage and Arts Forum (BHAF) with Phil W the current Chair. BHAF was set up in 2013 as collective of heritage and arts organisations within the borough with the main aim to share and promote arts and heritage activities. The group met twice in 2014.

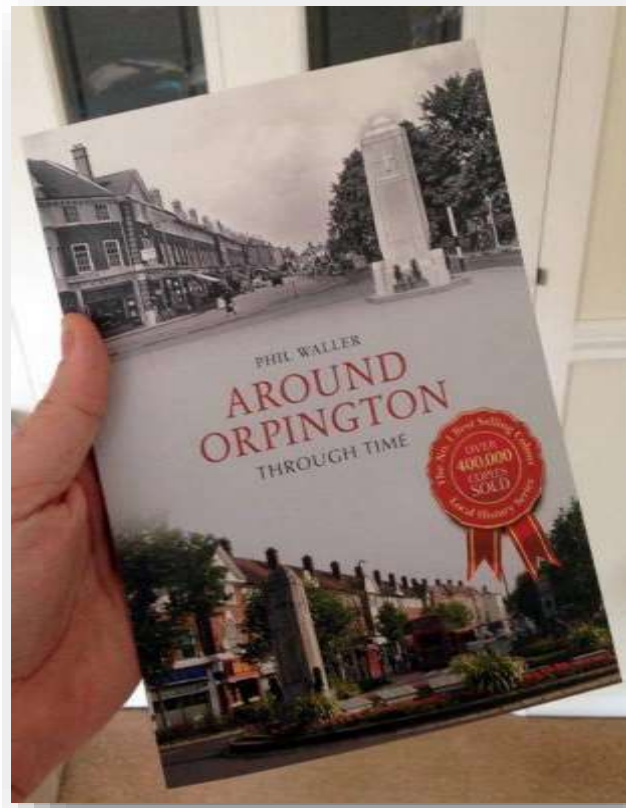


Current Members - ..Beckenham and Bromley National Trust Group, Bethlem Royal Hospital: Gallery, Archives and Museum Services, Bromley Arts and Community Initiative Bromley Arts Council, Bromley Borough Local History Society - BBLHS, Bromley Little Theatre, Bromley Museum, Chislehurst Caves, Chislehurst Society, Churchill Theatre, Crystal Palace Museum, English Heritage, Gerald Moore Gallery, Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (KARU) - Crofton Roman Villa, LB of Bexley & Bromley Local Studies & Archives, Leefest, Orpington and District Archaeological Society - ODAS, **Orpington History Organisation** - OHO...

6) The BHAF Facebook page.

Around Orpington Through Time

The book 'Around Orpington Through Time' has now been in the shops for just over a year. We are anticipating strong sales. We were very pleased to be told the first print run had sold out and a second had been sent to press. This makes the book a best seller!



7) *The Book Around Orpington Through Time.*

You can buy the book from a number of local shops and online:

- Orpington Library has a special discount of the book (with limited stock)
- The Croft Tea Room, St Mary Cray
- Waterstones, Nugent Shopping Centre, St Mary Cray
- Tesco, Orpington
- WH Smith, Orpington
- Buy directly from us here – www.around-orpington.co.uk
- Go to [this website](#) which introduces the book and lists the many online stores that sell the book

Activities commemorating the 1st World War.

For the next 4 years we will be actively taking part in events commemorating events during and that were part of the 1st World War. We will be particularly ensuring that the importance of Orpington Hospital is known and the extensive devastation of loss of local district men, when Orpington was just a village, is remembered. The OHO has already be inundated with requests by other groups and organisations to contribute and provide documents/events/images from our extensive collection. One other key area will be to ensure the awareness and locations of the District's war cemeteries are known.

2014 Remembrance Sunday

Most recently the OHO arranged for the flood lights surrounding the Orpington War Memorial to bath it in red light. The OHO also presented a wreath at the remembrance ceremony on the 9th November. The OHO also pushed for all local remembrance service details to be published on the LBB website. With help from local Councillors we managed to do that. The service was one of the best attended in years, Phil Waller was honoured to be able to stand with the British Legion Veterans and the whole day was reported by the News Shopper!



8) The wreath laid by the OHO.



9) The Memorial with the 50+ wreaths and 100+ remembrance dedication crosses.



10) The scale of the turn out at Orpington.

All images are copyright P. Waller 2014 – permission must be obtained before reuse.



11) [Click here](#) to see News Shopper Article.

Caring for the Casualties of the First World War in Bromley

Bromley and Bexley Local Studies and Archives Department have been leading a borough wide project to commemorate and celebrate the role that the London Borough of Bromley (or rather Bromley Rural District and Kent County back then) played in handling the countless numbers of casualties from the 1st World War. We are already engaged through our involvement with BHAf but are now getting ready to share more images and to promote 100 years of Orpington Hospital, arguably Orpingtons most well know contribution to the 1st World War, in 2016.

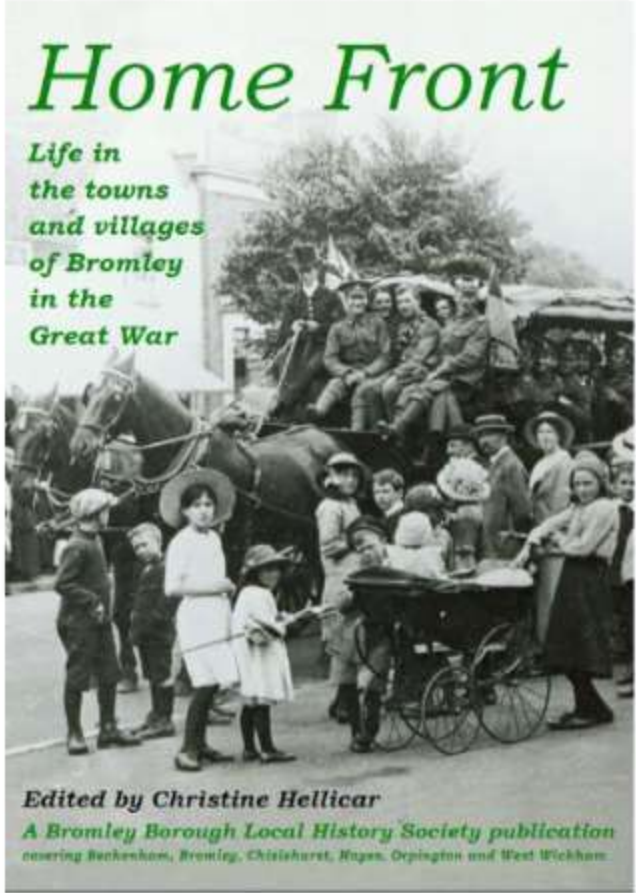
Click here for more information - <http://www.bromleyfirstworldwar.org.uk/>



12) The promotional flyer for the LBB project on casualties of the 1st World War.

The Bromley Borough Local History Society (BBLHS) – Home Front.

The BBLHS have produced a fine book on life in the towns and villages of Bromley during the 1st World War and it is called 'Home Front'. This is an absolute must for any local historian wanting to know more about the impact the 1st World War had on the borough.



Home Front
Life in the towns and villages of Bromley in the Great War

Edited by Christine Hellicar
A Bromley Borough Local History Society publication covering Beckenham, Bromley, Chislehurst, Hayes, Orpington and West Wickham.


Home Front
Life in the towns and villages of Bromley in the Great War

This book is not a history of the First World War, it is not even a history of what is now the borough of Bromley — a collection of small towns and villages — during the First World War. It is a series of snapshots, in words and pictures, that capture how this momentous event affected people and places.

Each article focuses on a different town or village of the borough or a different aspect of wartime life. We look at everyday life, the work of the Red Cross, refugees, children and farmers and discover how people's day-to-day existence changed.

We also hear their voices through letters and reminiscences. And, of course, the background to everything is the terrible loss of life.

A Bromley Borough Local History Society publication
covering Bromley, Beckenham, Chislehurst, Hayes Orpington and West Wickham.



ISBN 978-0-9574633-1-8

13) A promotional flyer from the BBLHS website.

Please visit the BBLHS website for more details and how to purchase a book

<http://www.bblhs.org.uk/>

The Bromley Museum and the Priory Buildings

Towards the end of November/early December it came to light that there is a very real risk to the current service delivery of the Bromley Museum Service, it's presence at the Orpington Priory and the future of Priory Buildings themselves.

As members of the BHAF, the OHO have attended a consultation meeting, where a Senior Council Executive Officer spoke and took and responded to questions from BHAF members. There is a process that the LBB are engaged with which ultimately requires them to save a lot of money from spending budgets and implement changes. Although the final decisions haven't been confirmed, the situation where the Bromley Museum is withdrawn from the Priory Buildings and run in some degree at Bromley Central Library is more likely than not. There have now been enough public meetings and documents posted on the LBB website to indicate significant changes will be made.

There is a draft document on the LBB website which you can read for further information and this document broadly outlines the budget requirements for 2015, the fact there is a gap and notes (within appendices) that contain feedback from the online survey and some public meetings. [CLICK HERE](#)

BHAF members, the Bromley Borough Local History Society (BBLHS) and Orpington and District Archaeological Society (ODAS), have since written to their own members have highlighted this subject to, concerns and risks.

BHAF members are in agreement of the approach to the situation as it unfolds and Miss Janet Clayton, Chair of ODAS has written this statement to their members. We have asked for permission to reproduce this as it is exactly in line with Phil Waller's and the OHO view of the situation.

The letter Miss Clayton sent to Councillor Morgan at the LBB is made online on their website and can be found here (<http://www.odas.org.uk/future-bromley-museum/>) or by clicking the image (screen shot of the page) below.



The position the OHO takes is to support Miss Clayton and ODAS and to ensure that voices are heard and to ensure that the elected Council Members and the Orpington MP consider the impact decisions will potentially have on the Museum Service and the Priory Buildings whichever way they go. Those decisions, potentially made in the next month or so, will have a profound impact on our local heritage forever. This may sound dramatic but it is fact. Who will educate children (especially) and adults on local history going forward. Who will go to local schools and carry out talks to children? Who will host local exhibitions and displays? Who will catalogue and collect important

local artefacts and be passionate about promoting their interest? Who will interact with other local museums and like-minded organisations on a national level to share knowledge and promote the boroughs rich and important local history? Who will look after the extension archive containing many many priceless historic collections? Without the Museum Service in place as it is now this is all very sadly likely to be impacted.

It has been suggested that the museum will close in Orpington and a display will be present within the Central Library building in Bromley and the Local Studies and Archives department administer it. The Local Studies and Archives Staff are fantastic at what they do but are they really best placed to additionally run a museum?

Phil Waller wrote to Councillor Peter Morgan (the senior councillor Portfolio owner for Recreation and Renewal) to confirm current facts and position. Phil Waller also confirmed backing Miss Clayton of ODAS.

Phil Waller is meeting with Jo Johnson MP on the 23rd January to raise concerns.

The OHO will attend a further consultation meeting on the 27th January with other BHAF Groups and Council Officials as a result of Phil Waller's letter to Cllr Morgan.

What you can do? – write to your Councillors and MP and the Executive Councillor responsible for Renewal and recreation.

List of councillors concerned with the future of the Priory can be found on the LBB website here:

<http://cde.bromley.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1> From here you can select your own Ward of select the Ward that the Priory is in and some of the other museum sites in the Cray Valley. Listed below are the most local Councillors to the Priory.

Orpington Ward

Cllr Kim Botting - Kim.Botting@bromley.gov.uk

Cllr William Huntingdon Thresher - william@ocat.co.uk

Cllr Pauline Tunnicliffe - Pauline.Tunnicliffe@bromley.gov.uk

Cray Valley East

Cllr Teresa Ball - Teresa.Ball@bromley.gov.uk

Cllr Angela Page - Angela.Page@bromley.gov.uk

Cllr Chris Pierce - Chris.Pierce@bromley.gov.uk

Cray Valley West

Cllr Judi Ellis - Judith.Ellis@bromley.gov.uk

Cllr David Livett - David.Livett@bromley.gov.uk

Cllr Terence Nathan - Terence.Nathan@bromley.gov.uk

Jo Johnson MP for Orpington

<http://www.jo-johnson.com/>

Remember there are two issues here:

- **The Museum as a service to residents of the London Borough of Bromley, London and Kent:** There are many important artefacts within the collections (some donated on loan). Education and awareness will be diminished and again, heritage will be pushed further back in priorities.
- **The Priory Buildings themselves:** These are the oldest buildings in the area and are in good condition for their age (mainly because they are used). The buildings need to be properly protected.

Articles and items being worked on

[Click here for the link to the Articles Page](#) on the main Orpington History Website.

It's been a little quiet over the year. Most attention has been given to creating and updating article folders within the Facebook page. Through 2015 we will cross reference them and update the main website

Here are a list of the newer Facebook article/image folders

- **Cray Wanderers** – We have been given a number of rare images of the 'Wands' playing and the need to celebrate this historic local Football Club was much to not doing something above. [CLICK HERE](#)
- **Town and Village Folders** – On the Facebook page, there are now folders for the image collections on each location. [CLICK HERE](#)

If anyone would like to assist us and help or even create their own article, please let us know – research@orpington-history.org

Lost and Found / Wanted

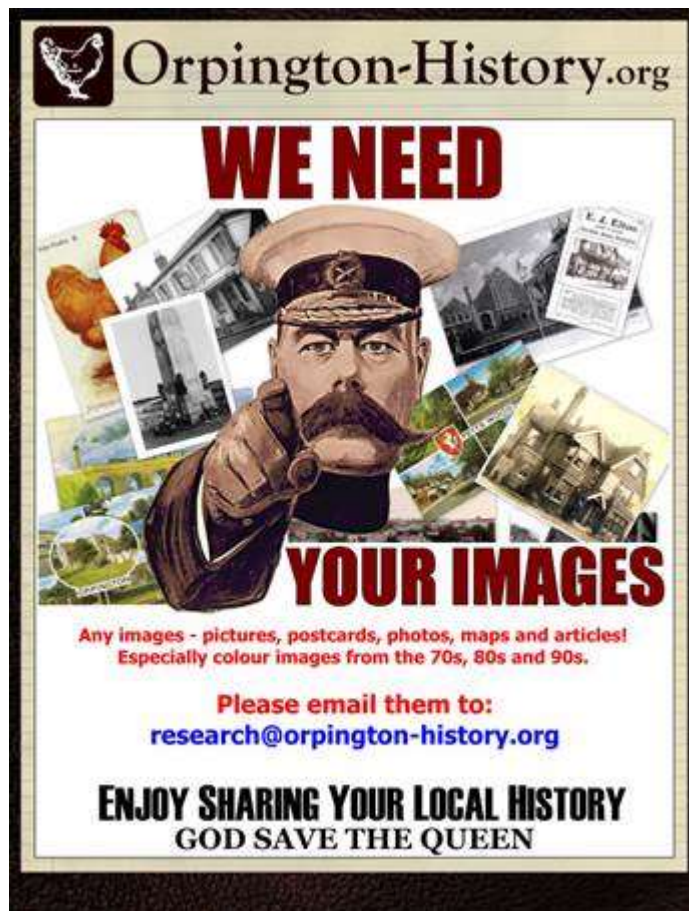
[Click here for the link to the Lost and Found Images Page](#)

This is another section that will be refreshed on the main website over the coming months.

As always after an issue of the newsletter this section drums up a large amount of interest and response. A number of enquires have been answered a number are ongoing and we have some new ones!

We are currently looking for information/images on the following:

- Images, memories and articles on **Ontario/Orpington Hospital** – 1st World War period – As part of our collaboration with the Bromley Local Studies and Archive Department we are working on the 'Caring for Casualties of the First World War in Bromley' project
- **St Paul's Cray, Downe, Knockholt and Cudham** – Our image collection for these parts of the district still needs new material so if you have any images or articles you would like to share please let us know.
- Information on the **Cook Family** and the Poultry Farms they ran. We intend on completing a very in-depth article on this later in the year so would still like to hear from anyone that has information on the Cooks.
- **Colour Images of Orpington and the District** from as early back as possible.
- **Memories and images of the Carnival, May Day procession and Donkey Derbies** held in Goddington Park
- **Downe House School** – Located formerly in Downe then moved to the very Southern end of Orpington High Street. We are STILL after any images and articles on this school long since gone.
- **Cray Cycle Speedway/Cray Tigers** – Cycle Raceway at Cockmannings Farm.



[Help, assistance and guidance we have given](#)

We have processed about another 125 items of correspondence via email since the last newsletter!

[Planned Events](#)

We use our events schedule on Facebook to display what events we are arranging or attending. Please refer to these as there is more detail on the published events and sometimes dates and times can change and we are current arranging a few more that haven't got dates or venues yet!

If you think we can add any value to a talk or event, please contact us.

[Click Here](#)

[The coming year and a final word..](#)

Last year we agreed to use objectives to ensure we didn't spread our resources too thinly and that we actually achieve something! Most of us are volunteers and time passes so quickly and if we are not careful not a lot gets done! We had a good 2014 and therefore the same approach is used again

So in no order of preference 2015 is focusing on the following:

1. Support and aid consultation of the future of the Bromley Museum and the Priory Buildings which are now under direct threat of reduced Council/Borough Funds
2. Continue to catalogue and archive all the outstanding images and documents we have on loan (big old task);
3. Continue to work with the LBB Local Studies and Archives Team on a Borough wide project to commemorate the centenary of the First World War and improve our collaboration with other Bromley Heritage and Arts Forum member;
4. Attend and give a number of talks at other organisation and groups meetings (4 already booked);

5. Hold a social evening (possibly an interactive showing + local quiz + fish and chip supper) at the Temple Church.

If we can accomplish those and build on our merry band of experts and helpers then it will be a good year.

As mentioned at the very beginning of this newsletter, If you would like to join us and help out (wherever possible) you would be welcome. We really just require enthusiasm, energy and a small amount of time. As the OHO has grown so has the demand been on the organising team. More the merrier. Please let us know if you want to get involved in anything to do with the Orpington History Organisation. We are looking for like-minded volunteers to help administer our website, work on articles and spread the word by handing our 'flyers' to shops and community notice boards to display our website etc. Contact Phil on this email address (research@orpington-history.org).

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Any feedback is welcome.

We also publish this newsletter [online here](#). You can also find older issues on this page.

Thanks,

Phil and the OHO Team



Orpington-History.org

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