

Christopher Flanagan (1941-2013)

We regret to announce the death of one of our out-of-town members, Chris Flanagan of Solihull, who died of an inoperable brain tumour in April. Chris had been a member of The Badsey Society since 2003. Chris' mother, Dorothy, was a member of the Sandford family of Badsey, but she had moved to Birmingham in 1936 when she married John Flanagan. Chris, however, was actually born in Badsey, as Dorothy returned to her childhood home during the war to escape the bombings. After the war, Chris returned frequently to Badsey during the school holidays. His memories may be found at www.badsey.net/will/inlivingmemory.htm.

Membership Fees 2014

During the lifetime of the Society, we have been extremely successful in acquiring grants which have allowed us to become established with exhibition boards, computers, printers, etc and to keep membership subscriptions low. But now that our Last Market Gardener Project has finished, we are having to ensure that we meet our running costs each year. It has therefore been decided to raise the membership fee to £5 per person. This is in recognition of the fact that the Society has grown and has more assets to look after, thus there are increased costs and responsibilities. The subscription covers such matters as stationery, postage, printing, annual subscriptions to genealogical websites, improved insurance cover, web hosting and development, and possible payments for archive storage. It is with this in mind and in recognition of the need to provide a secure platform for the future growth of the Society, that we have made this decision. We plan to keep the fee at this level for the next few years so that you are not subjected to annual increases. We hope that you will agree that this is still good value for money. If you have not yet paid for 2013, we would appreciate it if you would give your money (2013 rate of £2) to Tony Wood, 16 Badsey Fields Lane; 2014 subs due early in the new year.

Tony Jerram Award

It's that time of year again when we begin to think about nominations for the annual Tony Jerram Award. If you know of someone who you feel is worthy of nomination, please return the enclosed form by 1st January. Last year we had six nominations for the award; if your nominee was unsuccessful last year, please don't hesitate to try again.

Committee Members

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THE BADSEY SOCIETY

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Yes, this really is who you think it is! Alistair McGowan paid a visit to Badsey on 9th October to do some filming for *The One Show*. Our very own Dallimore brothers will be featured on it! See inside for more details.

Round-Up of Events July to September 2013

Saturday 27th July, Badsey Flower Show – Another excellent Flower Show. Yet again, Badsey Society members were prominent amongst the cup-winners, the youngest being 10-year-old Georgia Granger, who travelled from Cheshire (Dad, Jonathan, grew up in Badsey) to scoop the children's cup. Other winners were Lynn Gibson, John Dallimore, Terry Sparrow, Jane Thompson and Liz Cudd.



Monday 30th September, Visit to The Hive – 18 members of the Society were given a tour by Su Vale and Deborah Overton of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WHEAS) at The Hive in Worcester. The Hive is the exciting new library, archive and history centre for use by students and the public. WHEAS is on Level 2 of The Hive and is responsible for the collection and preservation of original archives and for the care of thousands of archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes. The tour was meant to last 1½ hours but members were so enthused that it was more like 2¼ hours long, and even then it was difficult to tear people away. Of particular interest was the Touch Table, developed by Birmingham University, on which digital images can be accessed; it's essentially like an enormous ipad. We also saw maps showing where archaeological finds have been found in Badsey, Aldington and Wickhamford. Deborah has promised to provide a printed report of the archaeology of the area; we hope this will be available by the time of the Workshop on 29th November.



Su Vale demonstrates use of the Touch Table.



We hear about archaeological sites in Badsey, Aldington and Wickhamford.



Deborah Overton shows us the archive store room.

Events in 2013

Friday 1st November 2013
“Vicars, Virginia and Wickhamford”
The Wheatsheaf, 7.30 pm

Ian Gibson will give a talk about his ancestors and links with the Washington family of Wickhamford and America.
A book on the Sandys family history will also be available to view.

Friday 29th November 2013
Family History Evening
The Wheatsheaf, 7.30 pm

Are you interested in family history? Do you want help in your researches?
If the answer is yes, then why not come along to our special workshop when a panel of experts will be on hand to give guidance and advice. As well as our own Badsey websites, there will also be the opportunity to view subscription websites such as Find My Past, Ancestry and the British Newspaper Archive. The war-time National Farm Survey, which transcribers worked on earlier in the year, will also be available to view. If you have items of interest relating to your own family, then why not bring them along. This is an informal evening, giving members the opportunity to chat and drink whilst learning more about family history. If you have a specific genealogical query for the panel, it would help us enormously if you contact us prior to the event by emailing maureen.spinks@btopenworld.com.

Events in 2014

- Friday 14th February 2014 – Annual General Meeting followed by talk/film, St James' Church, 7.30 pm
- March 2014 – Henry Sandon of *Antiques Roadshow* fame has agreed to come and talk to us; exact date to be agreed
- June 2014 – Whit Walk
- Saturday 26th July 2014 – Badsey Flower Show
- August 2014 – Centenary exhibition to commemorate the outbreak World War I

Alistair McGowan visits Badsey - and Doug Deep Flies Again



Asum Grammar is a dialect used by the older inhabitants of the Vale and is named after the colloquial name for Evesham, “Asum”. It is the subject of a film being made for BBC1's *The One Show* with brothers Will and John Dallimore being interviewed by impressionist, Alistair McGowan, and linguist, Clive Upton. The brothers were filmed while painting Badsey Manor House. By a happy coincidence, four days later, the Dallimores' film, *Doug Deep 2: Harvest Special*, received its first public screening at the Badsey Harvest Supper. This, and the earlier film, follow Doug Deep who roams the Vale of Evesham on a two-tine fork in his quest to educate the villagers in the art of Asum Grammar. The films are available on a DVD which will be on sale at Society events, or by mail order from www.badsey.net/bsp.

A Fringe Player in Badsey's History

At the beginning of the 20th century, parachutists, along with hot air balloonists and early aviators, often entertained the crowds by performing at aerial circuses and exhibitions. One such person was Gladys, aka “Elsa Spencer”, who spent a brief time in Badsey. Through the detective work of Peter Stewart, Maureen Spinks and Tony Merrett, we were able to piece together “Elsa's” Badsey connection and her true identity.



First, a little bit of information about Elsa's aerial pursuits. She is thought to have made her first descent at Leeds Hospital Gala in Roundhay Park in August 1901. At some stage early on in her career, Gladys adopted the pseudonym, Elsa Spencer (after the famous Spencer family of balloonists); the 1908 photo on the left is captioned “Parachutist Capt & Miss Spencer”. Elsa parachuted with Edith Maud Cook (aka Viola Spencer) and they were billed as the Spencer sisters. (Viola, the first woman to fly a plane in England, died in a parachuting accident at Coventry in 1910.) Elsa regularly parachuted at fairs and exhibitions up to 1926 and did nearly 400 descents. She was a founding member of the British Gliding Association and campaigned to start the first club in Wales and the West of England.

But what has this got to do with Badsey you might ask? Last year, David Dell contacted us because he is writing a book on Elsa Spencer, whom he knew as Gladys Gooding and who had been his next-door neighbour at his childhood home in Cardiff. He knew that Elsa had a niece called Doris living at 28 Bretforton Road whom she stayed with for a time. In a letter written by Gladys on 18th October 1963 to her neighbour, Mrs Dell, in Cardiff, she writes: “Another lovely day here. I must try and walk in the grounds. Very pleasant around here. Yes, Evesham is a nice place.” She had been diagnosed with osteomyelitis and had gone to Badsey to convalesce. She signed herself, “Auntie Gooding”. David had tried numerous lines of enquiry to try and track down “Doris” but to no avail and was now seeking information from the Badsey website.

At first there were some false leads. Peter Stewart's wife's grandmother, Doris Stewart, had lived at 28 Bretforton Road for some 40 years, so of course we assumed it must be her, but Peter was mystified because she had never mentioned a famous parachutist. He discovered that Doris Stewart had left No 28 in 1962, a year too early. Another clue was in a letter to David Dell's mother in May 1964 concerning Gladys's death, in which Doris mentioned her husband, Tom. Doris' identity was eventually revealed through the help of Tony Merrett who lived opposite No 28 as a child. He recalled that Tom Richards, headmaster of the Littletons School, lived there with his wife, Doris. So, armed with this information, it was then relatively easy through the Ancestry website to establish that Doris (née Roblin) was the niece of Gladys' late husband, George Gooding. Gladys, who had been born Gladys Robinson in 1882, had married George in 1909.

So the Badsey detectives could rest easy, another case solved, having established the identity of “Elsa Spencer” and “Doris”. It now remains to await the publication of David's book to find out more about the daring parachutist with Badsey connections.