

OBITUARIES

PETER ALEXANDER RUPERT CARRINGTON,
6th Baron Carrington KG KCMG CH MC PC DL (1919–2018)



Society members were saddened to learn of the death of Lord Carrington KCMG of Bledlow Manor in July 2018. Lord Carrington was an important support to the Society and to the development of the Museum in the early 1990s. At that time, the Society's Church Street buildings were in a perilous state. Collections and staff were crammed into every available space – into attics and the coach house, now the Roald Dahl Children's Gallery – with a full repairing lease to the County Council due for renewal in 1995.

Colin Dawes, then Curator, with Sir Timothy Raison, Elliot Viney and Lord Carrington for the Society, came up with an ambitious scheme which went far beyond the repair of the buildings by the County Council. Staff, stored collections, the Environmental Records Centre, the Historic Environment Record, the Archaeology Service and the BAS Library moved out to Halton for 5 years, while every square inch of the buildings was repaired.

Funds were needed to add a top-notch new Art Gallery infilling the central yard of the former Grammar School buildings. Lord Carrington, as President of the Art Gallery Appeal, headed up the £500,000 appeal with great and unassuming charm. The target was achieved in time to re-open the whole complex in 1995. The warren of historic spaces was transformed by the now familiar Gallery linking all together to form the best in the region.

All this was done before the coming of Lottery funds for arts and heritage and of the Museum's

charitable supporters, the Friends and Patrons. The Art Gallery Appeal funds were banked through the Society's charitable accounts, a notable partnership to great effect.

On the establishment of the Friends and Patrons in 1996, Lord Carrington became a founding Patron. He opened his lovely sculpture garden at Bledlow to raise funds and he and Lady Carrington attended most Museum private views well into this century. He was also one of the Society's four holding trustees. Holding trustees are those named in the Land Registry as the owners of the Society's premises in Church Street and were, for instance, signatories to an agreement with the County Council that permitted the under-leasing of the premises by the council to the Buckinghamshire County Museum Trust.

Lord Carrington was a distinguished member and respected adviser to the Society for many years. His assistance and advice extended to many other arts and heritage bodies in the County, including the Bucks Gardens Trust. Within the last year Lord Carrington welcomed researchers and recorders into his fine 20th-century sculpture gardens at Bledlow Manor. He was also (as the writers found out whilst being fed coffee and biscuits at the Manor) a charming, humorous and unassuming man. A fascinating autobiographical account of his remarkable career can be found in *Reflect on Things Past*, published in 1988.

Sarah Gray, Michael Farley and others

MAUREEN ELLEN ANN BROWN (1943–2018)



Maureen was born on 12 August 1943, in – appropriately for an historian – the Bishop’s Palace at St Albans, which had been turned into a maternity hospital for the duration of the Blitz. She was brought up among bombed sites in Kennington, next to the Oval Cricket ground, then a fairly rough part of south London.

She attended the Aylwin Grammar School for Girls, Southwark Park Road and as an accomplished artist her first choice would have been to go to Art College after taking ‘A’ levels. However, this was not possible financially and she turned to journalism instead. She worked on a number of titles including the *Streatham News* and *Balham and Tooting Gazette* before moving to the *East Grinstead Observer* where she met her future husband Paul, who was working on the *East Grinstead Courier*.

After marriage they lived in Boston in Lincolnshire, Leicester and Birmingham before moving to Linslade in 1975. In 1976, Maureen became ill with a lung disease from which she suffered for the rest of her life. She had to retire from work but turned her attention to her great love of history. Having been told by local people that ‘there is not much history in Leighton’ she set out to prove them wrong by diligent research in archives and libraries. She attended classes in medieval Latin and English in order to read early documents. She was an early believer that archaeological finds and documentary evidence needed to be considered together to get the full history of any site or building. She recruited friends to join her in projects, and started the Leighton Linslade Local History Research Group in the 1980s. This produced a number of books including *The*

Bassetts, Leighton Buzzard’s First Family, in 1989, *The Old Pubs of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade* in 1994 and *Around Leighton Buzzard & Linslade* in 1998. She was particularly interested in the village of Old Linslade and wrote a detailed guidebook to St Mary’s Church. Together with Paul, she was responsible for setting up the Friends of St Mary’s and helping to save it from redundancy. She was also interested in the now-lost holy well at Old Linslade and encouraged a recent excavation by the local archaeology group on a possible site of the well which had been identified by a Lidar survey.

Maureen was politically active throughout life and during the 1980s she organized classes for the Workers Education Association and supported the local branch of the Labour Party, acting as Press Officer and sometimes agent. She was also involved in the Leighton Buzzard Peace Campaign.

She was a member of various local history societies, including the Bucks. Record Society, for whom she prepared a transcription of the Wing Churchwardens’ Accounts 1627–1660, to be published later in 2019. She was also a member of the Bucks. Branch of the Historical Association and, of course, BAS. One of the organisations she was a member of at a national level was the Richard III Society, for which she wrote several articles for their journal. Great was her excitement when Richards’ remains were found and identified.

Maureen had a vast collection of books which were her pride and joy. Housed in their converted double garage, her impressive library was where she retreated when her disability became difficult to manage. Her knowledge of history was prodigious and locally she was affectionately known as ‘Mrs History’!

It was at BAS in 2002 that I first met Maureen, when she offered to help in the Library. It was appropriate for her skills that she undertook to sort and totally reorganise the documentation of the Society. Sorting through piles of correspondence and documents, dating back to our foundation in 1848, she created order out of disorder, filling archive boxes and making lists until everything was catalogued and retrievable. Within a few months she also took on the role of Hon. Secretary but continued to help me run stands at the Bucks. Family History Fairs and Bucks. Local History Network, also to help with sales at our lectures. It was her idea to clear some of our back stock of offprints from *Records of Bucks* by selling batches grouped by subject and offering them at £1 each. In 2006, she volunteered to help with the Mill Check project prior to the publication of *The Watermills of Buckinghamshire: a 1930s account by Stanley Freese*. She was one of nineteen volunteers who visited mill sites, listed by Freese, to record their state of preservation and current ownership. An abiding memory is of Maureen and Paul at the launch of the book at Ford End Mill trying, unsuccessfully, to erect a gazebo over the refreshments in torrential rain! Always cheerful and optimistic, in spite of her breathing problems, Maureen remained calm and in control throughout the proceedings.

Maureen was a very efficient Hon. Secretary with a keen interest and support for all aspects of

the work of BAS. Her time in office was a particularly busy one for the Society, which created a heavy workload for her. Lengthy council meetings were spent discussing planning applications for the many large developments in the County, with much concern for the preservation of the historic landscape and underlying archaeology. In addition, there was the fate of the scheduled ancient monument at Quarrendon. The Society took on the task of bringing its importance into the public domain, which finally led to the formation of the Bucks. Conservation Trust to look after not only Quarrendon but other historic sites in the county.

Maureen stood down from the role of Hon. Secretary in 2009 to spend more time on the Leighton Buzzard & District Archaeological and Historical Society (LBDAHS), which she had helped to found in 2006. In 2018 her book *Leighton Buzzard's Tudor House, the story of 17 to 21a Hockcliffe Street* was published, in which she took the history of what is probably Leighton's oldest house and its residents back to the English Civil War. Originally with a membership of six, LBDAHS has now grown to nearly 200 members, some of whom hope to continue Maureen's projects.

Maureen died on Christmas Day 2018, leaving husband Paul and daughter Clara.

Diana Gulland