

Newsletter

Autumn 2009



TM pending

The Discovery of the 15th century Seal of Henley-in-Arden And its history

A personal account by Councillor George Matheou

The Parish Council has now adopted the image of the 15th century seal of Henley-in-Arden as its crest. The search for the seal began in June 2008 with the book 'Henley-in-Arden an Ancient Market Town' by William Cooper where there was a reference to the catalogue of seals in the British Museum which contained a description of a 15th century seal belonging to Henley-in-Arden:

'The Trinity in a niche with trefoiled canopy, pinnacled and crocketed: on each side in a smaller niche a saint; left St. John Baptist with Agnus Dei; right St. John the Evangelist with book and eagle on the right hand, and in the left hand a palm branch. In the field on each side, a branch of foliage, SIGILLUM BURGEM [SIUM?] DE HENLEYE'.

This promising beginning led me to the British Museum. .

British Museum

The Curator of Medieval Collections found no examples corresponding to the description that I gave him. However, he went on to say that the likelihood was that the 'Seal' was with the British Library. Apparently the collection of seals was catalogued as being in the British Museum before the two institutions become separate in the 1970s. The key word to me was the word 'Seal'. He was talking about an actual seal not an entry in a catalogue. Up to that moment I had no idea that such a seal actually existed. Now there was real excitement in the air and a new goal – to find that Seal. Next stop was the British Library at St. Pancras, London.

The British Library

The British Library is a wonderful institution. My first objective was to find the catalogue of seals. After some search and advice I began with the Rare-Books Reference Service. Alas, they did not have such a catalogue. However, I was told that the British Museum's collection of seals was now held by the Department of Manuscripts. My hopes rose again. The Curator of Medieval Manuscripts was very helpful. He confirmed that the Seal of Henley-in-Arden was indeed held by the British Library and gave me the full reference to use and he went on to say 'your description is accurate, and is taken ultimately from W. De G. Birch, Catalogue of Seals (1892) that was originally held in the British Museum, Department of Manuscripts, volume II number 4991'.

Seeing the Seal of Henley-in-Arden for the first time

On 31 July 2008 I entered the Manuscripts Reading room after I had obtained a Reader Pass. The Library has strict reproduction rights. Taking photographs or even having a biro or a pen on you is forbidden. In the Readers Room a man approached me with a brown tray and a small white box in the middle. He placed the tray on my desk. I was staring at the box for a few seconds then I opened it.

There it was, the 15th Century Seal of Henley-in-Arden in front of me. I suppose I was hoping to see something grand like a crest of a knight in King Arthur's Court. It was not like that. I was looking at a medieval seal, very Henley-in-Arden, resembling something similar to what was on top of the Market Cross. The seal was green in colour and the image was as described by W. De G. Birch. I do not know who was the last person to have seen the seal; I felt privileged looking at it.

I was looking at the history of our Town. It was an artefact contemporary to the Market Cross, St John the Baptist Church, the Charter granted by Henry VI on 16 May 1449 to the then lord, Sir Ralph Boteler and the original Gildhall (Guildhall).

I did not take the seal out of the box and I did not touch it. Simply I was looking at it for more than an hour, examining every detail and trying to memorise it. Strangely, the more I looked at it the more I became emotionally attached to it.

The seal is almost 600 years old. Like the majority of medieval seals its condition is not perfect.

The history of the Seal

According to William Cooper the device appears to have been originally the seal of the Gild. The date for this possibly was early 15th century. Later, the original seal was either modified or another one made which was used as the Town Seal, probably mid 15th century. Around this seal the words 'SIGILLUM BURGENSEIUM DE HENLEYE' are inscribed i.e. The 'SEAL OF THE BOROUGH OF HENLEY'. This is the version of the Seal held in the British library. Who took the 15th century Seal from Henley and When and Why? We do not have the answers to these questions. The British Library and British Museum have no such records. We can only speculate on possibilities.

In 1643 during the conflict between Charles I and Parliament, Prince Rupert's detachment of about 2,000 men reached Henley '*about which they hovered for four days, pillaging the countrie extremely as their manner is*'. Did Prince Rupert's men take the Seal of Henley-in-Arden? There was an even earlier incident where Henry VIII sent some of his men to look into the affairs of the Chapel and the Guild. Did they take the Seal?

If any of these scenarios is true then the Seal must have been held somewhere for a very long time because the British Museum was established much later in 1753 in the reign of George II. Did a local person take the seal to the British Museum because of its historic significance and for safekeeping? Perhaps we shall never know what actually happened.

The future of the Seal

We now know that the Seal of our Town is held in the British Library, at 96 Euston Road, London. But what now? Should our Seal come back home and be held at our Heritage Centre where it historically belongs? Or should it stay at the British Library? I do not know what the British Library's view is on this matter. My view is that the Seal belongs to the Heritage Centre provided Ray and Ann Holding are prepared to look after it. What do you think? Please send your views to Jenny Walsh the Clerk of the Parish Council by telephone 01564 795499 or email bhjpc@btinternet.com or by letter at 150 High Street Henley in Arden. For the acknowledgments and more information refer to www.henley-in-arden-pc.gov.co.uk >> Parish Council >> The Seal of Henley-in-Arden



Residents Raise money for medical Equipment

Residents will no longer have to travel to Warwick to have skins conditions assessed thanks to the efforts of Henley Residents Association who have raised the funds to pay for a dermatoscopy machine for the Health Centre. Our photograph shows Dr Catherine Taylor and supporters of the scheme whose efforts resulted in the funds to purchase the equipment



Senior Citizens Action Network (SCAN) A meeting was held recently at the Baptist Church Hall to hear Cllr. Mike Perry outline proposals to resurrect the group for Henley.

Attendants heard from the County Councillor that numerous previous attempts had been made to re-establish a Henley group but to no avail. However, SCAN – which aims to give a ‘better deal for older people by making life easier and promoting/supporting independent living’ was felt to be a very important mechanism for raising issues in a collective forum which could benefit the elderly community of the town. Meetings will now be held quarterly following one of the coffee mornings held at the Baptist church Hall. Anyone interested in further information should contact Annette Walker on 792837.

Local Service Committee for Henley in Arden and District Branch



**THE
REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY CHURCH PARADE**

Will take place on

SUNDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2009

The parade will leave the Memorial Hall at 10.25am

All Ex-Service personnel are welcome

THE SILENT TRIBUTE

Will be held outside St John's church

On

WEDNESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER at 11.00am

Enter our FREE competition!



Our telephone box on Warwick/Stratford Rd, now belongs to the town having been de-commissioned by BT.

The Council is offering a prize for the best idea for a new community use for the box. Suggestions have included an information resource centre, gallery for local art or tourist information centre. Please submit your applications to the Clerk at the address on this newsletter by

7th December 2009

Good luck!

Flood Relief Work at Jubilee Play Area

Owners of properties in Castle Close have for many years suffered from flooding to their gardens. These properties back onto the play area whose ground rises gradually at its boundary to join a steep hill. During prolonged periods of rain, water runs off this hill across the play area and into the gardens.

During the torrential rain of 2007, these homes only escaped serious damage due to the prompt action of friends and neighbours. It is because of these problems that the Parish Council is using a flood relief grant from Stratford District Council to commence flood prevention work which should greatly reduce the risk of damage to these properties.

BEAUDESERT AND HENLEY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING PARTY

The Switch on for 2009 will be on Saturday 5th December

The carol service will start at 5pm led by Alcester Silver Band

**The Switch On by the Chairman of the Parish Council
together with
Carol Sheet design winners at 5.30pm.**

Mulled wine and mince pies will be available (supplied by Henley in Arden & District Ex Services Social Fund).

We look forward to seeing you there!



Market Cross

The Parish Council's coffee morning at the Guildhall on Saturday 3 October for the benefit of the Market Cross was a resounding success. Thanks to you all, £450 was raised including a donation of £50 from a resident. Les Goodman the Chairman of the Parish Council was delighted with the result and said that the people of Henley-in-Arden once again have shown their generosity. Also Roger Sutton the High Bailiff, presented a cheque for £300 to the Council for the benefit of the conservation of the Market Cross and the Beaudesert and Henley Society is having a Cheese and Wine evening at the Guildhall on Saturday 14 November at 7.30 pm in support of the Market Cross project (tickets at £5.50 are available from Dukes Stationers and Lesley Eastwood tel. 793647)



Henley in Bloom



Another season is coming to a close and judging by the many compliments we have received this year – a successful one! We give a big thank you to the Joint Parish Council, businesses and others who have donated money to enable us to continue – a notice of names has been displayed throughout Henley.

We are also grateful to all who watered containers outside their premises, continuing even in rainy weather as pots and troughs do not always benefit from downpours despite popular belief! A particular thank you also goes to those who look after Arden Road, Warwick Road and Brook End Drive which gives pleasure to residents and those passing through the town.

Well done to all who have taken part this year and after an 8 year gap, it was delightful to see that our two primary schools took part in a special competition.

Dont forget... [Henley in Bloom](#) are always looking for volunteers. If you are interested in helping out please <tel:794308>.

[Promoting our Town for Tourism](#)

Interviewing and taking pictures for a podcast which promotes our town for tourism took place on Wednesday 14th October. Local businesses, the Parish Council, our District Councillors and members of the Court Leet and other residents participated in this exercise which has only one purpose – ie to support our local retail shops, hotels, restaurants and pubs. The podcast will be made available to all major tourist organisations including Shakespeare Country, Warwickshire County Council and the Heritage Centre and will be published on social websites such as You Tube etc.

Community News

BEWARE bogus callers! Callers who do not have an appointment with you may be fraudsters - asking to carry out garden work, roof or garage repairs, tarmac and/or fencing. If in doubt, **KEEP THEM OUT!**

Electric blanket testing for FREE! If you are over 60 years old, Trading Standards will test your electric blanket free of charge. For further information telephone 01926 736477

Forthcoming MEETINGS:

Henley Community Surgery

7pm, 5th November - Baptist Church Hall

Community Forum

7pm, 12th November - Memorial Hall

Warwickshire Fire Service Review Consultation meeting

7pm, 18th November - Henley High School

DIRECTORY OF CONTACTS

Useful Contact Details

Age Concern Warwickshire	01926	458100
British Gas	0800	393499
Gas—emergencies	0800	111999
Eon—Electricity	0800	363363
Fire Safety Helpline	01926	466282
NHS Direct	0845	4647
Severn Trent Water (Emergencies)	0800	7834444
Stratford District Council	01789	267575
Victim Support	0845	1309551
Warwickshire C. Council	01926	410410
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue	01926	423231
Warwickshire Police (Non Emergency)	01926	415000
Warwickshire Trading Std. County Councillor:	08454	040506
Mike Perry	01564	829214
District Councillors:		
Stephen Thirlwell	01564	794594
Laurence Marshall	01564	794703

Joint Parish Council Members and Contact Details

Chairman		
Les Goodman	01564	793439
Sheila Dalman	01564	795024
Carsina Goodman	01564	793439
David Hadley	01564	793087
Nick Haycock	01564	793400
Roger Hubbocks	01564	792235
William Leech	01564	794898
John Love	01564	795463
George Matheou	01564	794308
Chris Milsom	01564	793533
Kenneth Mitchell	01564	793811
Sheila Roy	01564	793964

**PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW
EMAIL ADDRESS BELOW**