

OLHA STUDY DAY, 16 MAY 2026, THAME: AFTERNOON GUIDED WALKS AND VISITS

Study day attendees will be asked to sign up for their preferred option on arrival.

A. From civic pride to mass housing – Victorian and Edwardian Thame

Starting at the Victorian Town Hall, the walk will progress east along the High Street, looking at banks and non-conformist places of worship. Taking in the hospital in East Street, and Kings Road and Croft Road with good examples of better-class Edwardian houses, it returns along Park Street passing the police station, Royal British School etc, before returning to the High Street, with the opportunity to visit the former magistrates court, now the museum. Rows of terraced houses from the period can be seen along the route.

This walk will be led by Jill Hind, a professional archaeologist and Secretary of the Oxfordshire Architectural & Historical Society (OAHs), who has a particular interest in the buildings of Thame and has recently undertaken research on the history of some of the town's notable Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

B. The changing faces of Thame's High Street

The walk will explore buildings in the centre of Thame, focusing on the High Street, the most striking feature of this historic town, with its origins in the early 13th century. Today the High Street boasts a variety of hotels, pubs, shops and houses in buildings displaying all periods of architecture from the 15th century (or possibly earlier) to the present day, although the earlier history of these buildings is often hidden behind newer frontages.

This walk will be led by Chris Bowler, Chair of Thame Historical Society and an experienced restoration builder who has worked on many of the town's historic properties. Chris is an expert in timber-framing and the restoration of wychert/witchert or Buckinghamshire cobb.

C. St Mary's Church, Thame

A Saxon foundation, work began on the present church in the 13th century. Although substantially rebuilt in the late 19th century by John Oldrid Scott, major elements of the medieval church survive. The south transept houses two table tombs belonging to the Quartermain family. Other monuments include those of notable local families such as that of Lord William. Today many visitors come to view the grave of Bee Gees singer-songwriter Robin Gibb.

Rosalie Gibson, experienced guide and member of the Thame Historical Society, will lead a tour of the church.

D. Thame Museum

Thame Museum, housed in the former Magistrates Court House, built in 1861, was opened in 2007. Exhibits tell the story of Thame from the prehistoric period to the present and are complimented by a programme of changing exhibitions.

Maurice Kirtland, President of the Thame Historical Society, will welcome the group and explain how the museum came into being. Kathryn Davies will join the group to share her in-depth knowledge of the 15th-century wall paintings discovered at 34 Upper High Street, Thame, now on display in the museum.