



OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION (OLHA)

HEALTH AND WEALTH

AUTUMN STUDY DAY

Saturday 14 November 2026

St Helen's Parish Centre, St Helen's Court, Abingdon OX14 5BS

9:30am Registration and refreshments

10:00am Welcome and introduction by Christopher Fance, Chairman of OLHA.

10:05am 'A Good Man for his Age': Dr WTG Woodforde, Abingdon Medical Officer of Health, 1873-1908

Abingdon and its surrounding villages presented different challenges regarding disease prevention and access to clean water and modern sanitation. Drawing on a variety of local and national sources, **Peter Steere** will discuss Dr Woodforde's involvement with both the urban and rural sanitary authorities, and his contribution to the gradual improvement in the public health of the town and its environs.

10:55am Tapping into better health for Abingdon's inhabitants

In the late 19th century water safety in Abingdon was much improved by the borough surveyor George Winship, who often worked in conjunction with Dr Woodforde. **Ruth Weinberg** will explore Winship's work and its contribution to improving the health of the town's residents.

11:15am Coffee break

11:35am The Warneford Hospital, Oxford: bringing two hundred years of history to life

Jane Freebody and **John Hall** will reflect on the history of the Warneford psychiatric hospital in Headington, and on this year's programme of events marking its 200th anniversary. These have engaged the public in the local history of mental health services, and encouraged discussion of current issues in mental health.

12:35pm Oxfordshire Health Archives: context, origins, and collections

Maria Morris introduces the collections of the Oxfordshire Health Archives and provides a glimpse into their potential for research into local history, family history, and the history of medicine.

1:00pm Lunch. Abingdon has a wide selection of cafés. Packed lunches can be eaten at the venue.

2:00pm Guided walks and visits to explore 'Britain's oldest town', to include visits to the [Little Basement Museum](#) (usually only open on Thursdays) and, weather permitting, the roof of [Abingdon County Hall Museum](#). Tours will finish by around 3:45pm.

Turn over for more information...



If possible, please book and pay on-line at <http://www.olha.org.uk/events/study-days>. Otherwise, send this form with a cheque for £18.40 per person made payable to 'OLHA' to: Liz Woolley, 138 Marlborough Road, Oxford OX1 4LS, (01865 242760, membership@olha.org.uk). Thank you.

Name(s)

Local society if applicable

Number of places at £18.40 per person

Would you like place(s) on the afternoon guided tours/visits? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you would like an acknowledgement by e-mail, please tick this box ☐ and write your e-mail address below:

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SPEAKERS

Peter Steere

After a forty-year career in IT, Peter was able to focus on the pursuit of his lifelong interest in history, taking an MSc in English Local History. He has recently completed a DPhil, researching public health in Berkshire in the nineteenth century.

Ruth Weinberg

Ruth Weinberg has a passion for the history of Abingdon and has researched and written about it, led walks and given talks on a variety of topics. She has a particular interest in the development of the town's water supply and especially the original 1907 pair of Crossley gas engines and the water pump now housed in the basement of Abingdon Museum.

Jane Freebody and John Hall

Jane Freebody is a historian of medicine, specialising in the history of psychiatry, formerly an Associate Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University. John Hall was the head clinical psychologist at the Warneford Hospital for 22 years and is Visiting Professor of Mental Health at Oxford Brookes University. Jane is the leader of the [Warneford 200 history project](#), and John is a member of the core project group, currently preparing a book on the history of the hospital.

Maria Morris

An experienced archivist, Maria Morris is responsible for the [Oxfordshire Health Archives](#) which are based at the Oxfordshire History Centre at St Luke's Church in Cowley, Oxford.

TRANSPORT AND PARKING

Abingdon is well served by public transport and we encourage participants to use local bus services. The town has a number of paid for car parks, including 'long stay' options. <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/vale-of-white-horse-district-council/parking-roads-and-streets/parking/car-parks/abingdon-car-parks/>

ACCESS

St Helen's Parish Centre is wheelchair accessible.