



## BERKELEY BUTTRESS

AUGUST 2017

FRIENDS OF BERKELEY CASTLE NEWSLETTER

### From our President



*Charles and Daisy  
Berkeley*

I hope all our Friends are having a good year and have enjoyed some of our events: I did not go on the tour of Cirencester Park, but have been before and know that Lady Bathurst is an enthusiastic and wonderful host and will have given a good tour.

I would like to mention the 400th Anniversary of the first Thanksgiving in Virginia which is taking place on November 3rd 2019. I have been asked to go out there and speak about the Berkeley connections including Sir Richard Berkeley and John Smyth and of course governor William Berkeley. If anyone would like to be out there for this I am sure it will be a fascinating few days

and I know there is much to see in Colonial Williamsburg and along the James River. [See page 9 for an item about a proposed FoBC tour.]

I have always been fascinated by Sir Richard Berkeley of Stoke Gifford and those who bravely sailed out to Virginia and founded the Berkeley Hundred on the bank of the James River. This settlement was sacked and burned in 1621. All the residents were killed except a couple of children who escaped. It was rebuilt in 1622. Benjamin Harrison purchased Berkeley Hundred and it is now a tourist destination. John Smyth who wrote about the family was one of the other adventurers and I am looking forward to learning more about this man.

In my introduction to the Spring edition of The Buttre, I wrote about the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl. I forgot to mention that some of the information came from a recent book about him by Tony Scotland, for which I apologise.

I hope to see many of you at the Castle or at the forthcoming Friends' events in the next few months.

*Charles Berkeley*

## Chairman's Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Buttress, I hope you enjoy the articles, reports and other content.

I have always felt privileged to live near Berkeley Castle and it is always a pleasure to take visiting friends and family for a visit. Recently I was approached by Simon Trapnell, Director of 'Nature in Art', the Museum at Twigworth, which is dedicated to art inspired by nature. The museum was hosting an exhibition and a long weekend gathering of the Society of Animal Artists based in the USA with an international membership. Simon asked if I would organise a trip for Monday, where better than Berkeley Castle. Some 16 members arrived and were given an excellent tour by Eleanor. They were totally mesmerised by their visit. They then went on to Slimbridge for a Peter Scott tour.

We are already half way through our programme of events. Thanks to Roly Brown, Estate Director, who gave a fascinating talk, following the AGM in April, on his work running the Berkeley and Spetchley estates. In May we saw the return of the popular Professor Mark Horton who gave an interesting account of the Berkeley Company and the colonisation of America. The dig tour was, as always, well attended; one member outlined to me that this tour each year was a yearly highlight. The picnic at the estate yard and kennels was an informal gathering in July, the weather was kind and we wish to thank Michael Stokes, Huntsman, who gave us a behind the scenes tour of the kennels; members were especially pleased to see the puppies. We record our thanks to Henry Berkeley and Joint Masters for this opportunity.

The rest of the year's calendar of events and details are on page 4 of this newsletter. Please support if able. The Committee and I look forward to catching up with friends over the coming months. Thank you all for your continued support.

*Paul Walkden*

## A VISIT TO THE BERKELEY HUNT KENNELS



*Friendly Beagles at the Kennels*

A most enjoyable family event was held in July, when the Friends of Berkeley Castle visited the Hunt Kennels. Michael, the Huntsman, met us with a couple of hounds who lapped up the attentions they were given. He then gave us a brief history of the Hunt and a lot of information about the hounds. Then we went on a tour of the kennels and were enthusiastically greeted by the hounds, all eager to meet us. We were also

privileged to meet four litters of adorable puppies, ranging from a few days to a few weeks old. This was when we heard about puppy walking, when puppies are sent to families to rear until old enough to return to the kennels.



*Michael Stokes & puppies*

We were also shown around the tack room, where saddles and bridles are kept, the latter with the distinctive mustard livery very much on show.

After thanking Michael for hosting a great visit, we all went over to the lawn, where we proceeded to enjoy our picnics. A nice relaxing evening, with perfect summer weather.

*Diana Merrett*



The Berkeley Hunt stables and kennels



## FoBC EVENTS, AUTUMN 2017

A Booking Form is enclosed with this edition of The Buttress

(Prices for non-members in brackets)

### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September - Talk by David Smith

**2.30pm for 3pm in the Great Hall, Berkeley Castle.**

David needs no introduction, and his talks are always extremely interesting. This year the topic will be The Peerage Cases: Fitzhardinge versus Berkeley. Documents will be displayed from 2.30pm and David's talk will commence at 3pm.

Following the talk, Afternoon Tea will be served in the Long Drawing Room

**Tickets: £12 (£15) including Afternoon Tea.**

### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October - Beetle Drive in the Great Hall

**7pm for 7.30pm in the Great Hall, Berkeley Castle.**

Following the success of last year's Beetle Drive, by popular request we are holding another one. Come along and enjoy yourselves.

Gates open 6.45pm. Cash bar from 7.00pm.

**Tickets: £8 (£10) including light refreshments**

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November - Talk by Henry Phythian-Adams

**7pm for 7.30pm in the Great Hall, Berkeley Castle.**

Henry will give us an illustrated talk about the Beauchamp Chapel in St Mary's Church, Warwick. This glorious chapel is full of reminders of the longstanding Great Dispute over the ownership of Berkeley Castle and its estates, being the burial place of many of them, including Richard Beauchamp and his wife Elizabeth (nee Berkeley), with whom the dispute began.

**Gates open 6.45. Cash bar from 7pm.**

**Tickets: £9 (£12)**

### Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December - 'Mulled Wine & Music

**6pm to 8pm in the Great Hall, Berkeley Castle.**

This will be a social event for members and their friends in the glorious setting of the Great Hall of the Castle, which will be decorated with a traditional Christmas Tree. Come and meet your friends and enjoy the music by the group Shepherd's Crook. Prices include a glass of mulled wine and light refreshments.

**Tickets £12 (£15)**

## FoBC SUMMER OUTING TO CIRENCESTER PARK

This year's summer outing was to Cirencester Park, the house behind the hedge in the centre of Cirencester and the home of Earl Bathurst's family since 1695. Lady Bathurst was our charming and knowledgeable guide around the house and under-gardener Danny Abbot was our guide in the grounds.



*The entrance to  
Cirencester Park,  
through the gates and  
the 40-foot yew hedge*

Many visitors to Cirencester have wondered what lies behind the stone wall and impressive 40-foot yew hedge and this FoBC Members-only visit was a chance to find out. Once through the impressive wooden gates, the hedge was revealed as being almost a complete circle, with the mansion house immediately ahead. The hedge is over 300 years old and is cut once a year, with the clippings going to make drugs used in the treatment of cancer. Although the house immediately in front of us looked Georgian, its core is an Elizabethan U-shaped house built around the 1580s for Sir John Danvers, who hosted a visit here by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592. The house was bought in 1695 by Sir Benjamin Bathurst and was reduced in size and remodelled by his son Allen, later the first Baron

Bathurst, finally achieving its present appearance after Robert Smirke added the single-storey extension to the east front in 1830.

The glazed panels of the front door allow an uninterrupted view through the house to Queen Anne's Monument, a statue on a column on the distant hill, erected to the first Lord Bathurst's patron in 1741. Danny took our group (accompanied by two of the family's dogs) around the pleasure grounds and as far as the artificial lake, pointing out features of interest in the grounds, such as the Horse Temple and the rusticated Ice House, the latter being built inside a mound believed to be the location of a Roman beacon.

After we had enjoyed tea and delicious cakes, and purchased home-made jams and marmalade, we were given a brief family history and taken on a tour by Lady Bathurst. Like the Berkeleys, the Bathursts (pronounced with a short 'a') are descended from Saxon forbears and were settled at Bathurst (confusingly





*The Horse Temple*

pronounced Batterst after Batters, the original family home in the Duchy of Luneberg), near Battle, in Sussex.

The first Earl was a gardener rather than an architect and he concentrated on laying out his park with trees and formal avenues and rides, punctuated by temples and follies such as the Horse Temple and Alfred's Hall, with the help of Alexander Pope. The axis of the main avenue

starts at the tower of the parish church, passes through the centre of the house (the Great Hall of the Tudor house) and continues in a straight line to Sapperton, five miles distant. The second son of the first Earl was created Baron Apsley. He built Apsley House in London, later sold to the Duke of Wellington, a friend of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl. Many generations of the family took an active part in national life.



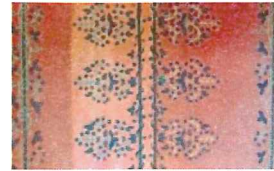
*The East (entrance) front of Cirencester Park*

Cirencester Park has the largest collection of portraits by the 17<sup>th</sup> century Restoration Court painter, Sir Peter Lely, in private family hands, and we were introduced in rapid succession to Col. William Ashburnham, the Earl of St Albans and the Duke of Bedford. Some of the furniture, including two large mirrors designed by Robert Adam, was brought from Apsley House.

Like Berkeley Castle, Cirencester Park is a much loved family home, which was obvious everywhere from books, family photographs, and Lady Bathurst's collection of owls. Our tour finished, on the bedroom floor, with a painting of a nineteenth century Bathurst and her two children, which had recently been cleaned and restored thanks to groups like the Friends of Berkeley Castle who visit or hire the house.

*David Bowd-Exworth*

## GRAND STAIRS WOOLLEN CLOTH



The walls of the landing of the Grand Stairs are hung with a remarkable material and a precious survival - a heavy scarlet wool cloth, appliquéd with black velvet and embroidered in yellow silk in a trailing vine pattern. It is extremely similar to two hangings, now in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, and both associated with Mary, Queen of Scots. One is believed to have come from the Palace of Linlithgow, where she was born, the other from Lochleven Castle where she was imprisoned during the 1560s. Both are worked with black velvet appliqué and yellow silk embroidery on red woollen cloth. The Berkeley hangings once formed the curtains, tester, valances and wall hangings of a room in the Castle.

In 1904, Percy Macquoid described them as "belonging to a small bed" when the entire room was hung with similar material, but frustratingly he does not tell us which room this was. Inventories help track their history back to 1663 when they were in "My Lord's Chamber", the principal bedchamber. They formed part of a suite of furnishings to the bed, walls, stools and table and were described as:

*10 peeces of embroidered hangings with blacke velvet on red cloth  
4 elbow chaired & 8 stooles with covers of the same  
1 Spanish table & carpet of the same  
1 large bedsted, 6 curtens, double valance, tester & bedpeece the same with the hangings.*

They were mentioned again in the inventories of 1687, 1698 and 1701, but a century later had been relegated to the room in which King Edward II had been murdered.

Just prior to the visit of the correspondent to 'La Belle Assemblée' they had been removed but, "At my request I saw them; and found the bedsted in the same style as the state beds, but smaller and not so magnificent; the curtains short and scanty; of scarlet cloth as thick as a blanket, but much heavier and firmer; with a narrow raised embroidery of white silk. The counterpane, on which the moths had begun their ravages, was the same."

The hangings were re-instated in King Edward's room and are mentioned as being there in guidebooks up to 1910. They were set in their new position on the landing of the Grand Stairs in 1926 by Keeble & Co. and for which there is documentation on the difficulties of ensuring a fit to the rather irregular walls. Woollen materials are particularly susceptible to damage by moth and other insects so these are rare survivals and in remarkably good condition.



## THE BERKELEY COMPANY AND THE COLONISATION OF AMERICA

### A talk by Professor Mark Horton of Bristol University

If anyone in the audience for Mark Horton's talk on 17<sup>th</sup> May was under the illusion that the American celebration of Thanksgiving was in any way to do with the Pilgrim Fathers and their arrival in New England, they were soon divested of those beliefs!



The Berkeley Company, comprising William Throckmorton, Richard Berkeley, George Thorpe of Wanswell Court, and John Smyth of Nibley, was set up in 1618 and they were granted 8,000 acres of land on the James River in Virginia, a few miles from the original British settlement of Jamestown (1607). The Company sponsored the good ship Margaret, under the captaincy and leadership of John Woodlief, and she set sail

from Bristol in September 1619. The aim of the expedition was profit and conversion of the native population to Christianity.

The earlier settlement at Jamestown had suffered badly from drought and disease and by 1610 only 60 of the original 490 settlers had survived. Woodlief had spent time in Jamestown and he learned from some of their mistakes, taking with him on the Margaret a range of skills and craftsmen useful to the establishment of a new colony in a hostile land.

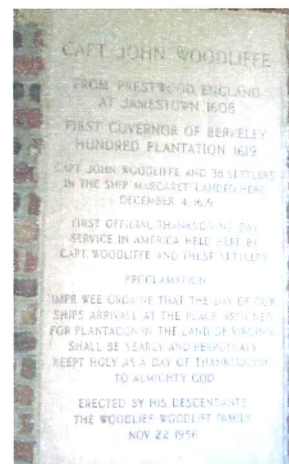
One of the instructions from the Berkeley Company was that, on arrival, Woodlief and his crew should fall to their knees and give thanks to God for their safe arrival in the New World. This they did, and it is this first act of worship that formed the basis for today's annual Thanksgiving celebrations across the United States. In just 2 years' time they will be celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Margaret on what was to become the Berkeley Plantation in Virginia.

George Thorpe joined the Berkeley settlers early in 1620 and set about planning schools and conversion of the natives, who were by and large friendly. Thorpe is also cited as the first man to distil corn liquor, known today as Bourbon Whiskey! But the success of the early Berkeley settlement was short-lived – in March 1622 a party of Indians came into the camp and snatched up the settlers' muskets and knives and proceeded to massacre most of the colonists, including George Thorpe.

Some 100 years later a brick Georgian house was built on the site of the 1619 landing, known as Berkeley Plantation and this still stands today, open to the public a bit like its distant ancestor Berkeley Castle. The house was built by the Harrison family, two of whose members became Presidents of the United States. The grounds were requisitioned during the Civil War by Union soldiers and it was here that the bugle call 'Taps' was composed in 1862.

## FoBC VISIT TO 'COMMEMORATION 2019' VIRGINIA, USA

Professor Mark Horton gave a talk to FoBC in May 2107, outlining his archaeological work in Jamestown, VA, connected with the early settlement of Europeans in that area. He mentioned that 2019 would be the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first American Thanksgiving, celebrated by the newly arrived settlers from the Berkeley and North Nibley area, and that there would be celebrations to mark the occasion.



The actual day of the celebratory Festival in Jamestown is Sunday 3 November 2019. It seemed to one of our members, Althea Hamlyn, that this could be a good excuse for a visit by members of FoBC, based around this date. (Althea has previous experience of organising foreign travel for other groups, such as the Bristol Bach Choir.)

How many other members might be interested? If it is a large number, we could get a group together to organise the trip. If just a few, there could be individual arrangements. Either way, plans need to be started soon, since it is likely to be a popular time.

If you are interested in this possible visit, please contact David Bowd-Exworth by email at [shewqjie@icloud.com](mailto:shewqjie@icloud.com) or by post at Virginia 2019, Berkeley Castle, Berkeley, GL13 9BQ by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017. Please note, this is only an expression of interest, not a commitment to join the tour, should one take place.



## A.G.M. TALK by ROLAND BROWN, ESTATE DIRECTOR



*Roland Brown, Estate Director of Berkeley and Spetchley Estates*

I was delighted to be asked to speak at the recent Friends of Berkeley Castle AGM and have been asked to write a short note on what I talked about on the evening.

I tried to give my perspective on managing a traditional rural estate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is always a temptation, especially somewhere with the history of Berkeley and Spetchley, to look into the past for clues about how to manage the Estates successfully. Whilst the individual opportunities and challenges that we face today can be very different, the overall objectives of the Berkeley family remain largely the same as they have for centuries; that being the retention of the Berkeley and Spetchley Estates.

I gave a brief insight into my family's connection with the Estates. I was born in North Nibley and my family still live on a former Berkeley Estate farm. My great grandfather was a Berkeley Estate Tenant farmer and I have a chalk drawing made of him when he attended a rent day at The Berkeley Arms Hotel. Our farm was part of a large area of the Estate which was sold in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and my grandfather eventually bought the farm as sitting tenant from the then owners, a pension fund management company. I am lucky enough to have been given a book my grandfather wrote before he died recording his fascinating life. He was heavily involved in the War Agriculture Committee work during the Second World War. I sometimes reflect on the fact that he ploughed both the New Grounds at Slimbridge and the Whitcliff Deer Park in that aggressive drive for food production at the time and compare that to the management that we apply in those parts of the Estate today.

Looking at the progress of the wider Estates business today, I set out how those businesses have developed over the last decade and how we see them progressing in the next decade. I shared illustrations of how the rent roll income in the three main property portfolios (Agricultural, Residential and Commercial) have changed in that period and what opportunities and risks we might tackle in the coming years. How will changes in the farm subsidy regime affect the agricultural rent roll? Will the exponential growth in residential rents ever be subject (once again) to Government control?

The Castle business has been transformed in recent years and is no longer producing a perennial loss. This has required a step change in how the business

is operated and the wedding business in particular has played a large part in that. Greater focus is now being placed on ensuring that the Visitor Business is robust and, of course, filming income has been very useful in recent years, although not something that we can rely on going forwards. A lot has been done but there is a lot still to do to ensure that the Charity can continue to meet its obligations.

What has been particularly pleasing has been rolling out an annual maintenance programme which is essential on a building like the Castle. This expenditure still relies on income coming from the wider Estate but the performance of the Castle business ensures that this can indeed go towards repairs rather than plugging a trading loss.

Equally satisfying has been the recent decision by the Trustees to make a modest amount of money available for the repair of chattels in the Castle. The support the Friends of Berkeley Castle has given to the Castle, particularly towards chattel repairs, has been a huge success and is greatly appreciated by the family and the Trustees. The tapestry project is such a significant statement about the success of the Friends initiative, the hard work of the committee and the support of the membership. It is hoped that this initiative can be advanced further with some additional funding coming from the Castle charity in support.

Challenges, of course, remain. Spetchley Gardens has undergone a transformation from the visitor's perspective with the infrastructure developments made possible by Heritage Lottery Funding but the task now is to ensure that the business is as profitable as possible.

The in-hand farming business at Spetchley (Berkeley Farms Limited) is, like any farm business, exposed to the vagaries of weather, exchange rates and commodity prices so more has to be done to make this resilient.

Irrespective of which of the last ten centuries one looks at, I am sure that there were some similarities in the view of the Estate Manager at the time. The job will never be finished. It is about continuity. I think that applies to everyone involved with the Estates, at whatever level. From the Berkeley family through to every member of staff, every volunteer and every supporter of the Friends of Berkeley Castle - it is about passing on the part of the Estates that you are involved with in a better state than which you found it. That, after all, is progress.

*Rowley Brown*

## THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL'S BERKELEY DIG 2017

Professor Mark Horton hosted our visit this year and was his usual ebullient self. It's very rare for us to understand what it really means to dig and interpret what is under our feet, learn which bit belongs to what and why. Over the years we have had the privilege to visit the site and be guided around and this year we were blessed with fine weather and sunshine.

Mark explained that this year there were more students which meant that it was possible to make better progress. The students managed to get the trench clean in record time and started excavating new features quite early. They had been able to shift a lot of soil at the bottom of the trench and revealed the remnants of a building.

Originally geophysical surveys didn't pick up anything because of inter-cutting features and clay soil. So it was interesting when Mark could point out how digging had revealed more history. At the east side of the dig there were three inter-cutting ditches, one deep, one shallow, one middling which they were able to 'bottom out'. An interesting find was the architectural fragment found in the wall which was a fragment from a church cross indicating that churches weren't immune to being robbed.

At the bottom of one trench a metre thick wall indicated that a feature could be a building which suddenly stops while a 30cm thick wall had been exposed running at a right angle to it. It intersected with a large circular stone feature, which Mark explained could be a rubble filled pit.

In the north-west corner of the trench they had finished removing the remains of the C14th/C15th building and revealed more of the building that might be below, it seemed to be connected to the wall cleaned the previous week. The other main feature Mark described was a potential Anglo-Saxon wall which was robbed during the Norman period judging by the fragments of pottery in the fill around the surviving stones. There was a lot of degraded mortar in this fill which would be sampled.

Mark hoped the remains of the building in the north-west corner would be revealed and they might understand the function of the stone deposit at the top. At the bottom end of the trench they had uncovered and recorded new buildings, and unhelpfully small sections of walls that made little sense but must be related to buildings. Two days were spent cleaning a well-constructed wall that was sealed below a 14th century building. They had been removing the later building to reveal as much of this new wall and any other associated walls as possible.

The party ended with Mark reminding us of the suggestion, at his talk, that we might visit Jamestown in 2019 and he asked again for a show of hands. This indicated that perhaps 10 or 12 people might consider a visit to Virginia for the celebrations and perhaps see what Mark has been 'digging' there.

You'll be pleased to learn that Stuart Prior visited the dig twice this year, looking frail but determined. He has been very ill and now seems well on the way to recovery although it will take a long time. We wish him well.

*Eleanor Garratt-Taylor*

### **BENEFITS OF FOBC MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Friends of Berkeley Castle enjoy**

free admission to the Castle (except for special events),

two newsletters a year and frequent e-mail updates,

reduced charges for FoBC events

10% discount on most items in the Shop (not books)

10% off many food and drink items in the Yurt.



## THE GREAT HALL TAPESTRIES AT BERKELEY CASTLE

Over the last few years the Friends have contributed more than £23,000 towards the restoration and conservation of tapestries in the Great Hall, the Tapestry Larder and the Small Drawing Room.



The five late 16th century Flemish tapestries in the Great Hall, attributed to Oudenaarde, are woven mainly in shades of blue and yellow within four sided borders of urns, birds, fruit and foliage, and tell the story of Esther who married King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) of Persia.

The king holds a lavish banquet; after seven days he demands that his wife Vashti display her beauty by wearing only her crown. She refuses. Furious, the king has her removed and chooses a new queen from a selection of beautiful young women in his empire. Esther becomes queen. She is a Jew and helps save her people who are about to be destroyed. She pleads with the king, who changes his decision, therefore changing their destiny. The story suggests that the power of God is at work behind human events and it forms the core of the Jewish festival Purim.

These tapestries were in need of cleaning, as they had faded to a steel blue grey colour. In October last year they were professionally taken down by Alison Lister and her team from Bristol, packed up and then driven to Belgium to the De Wit Royal Manufacturers. The company in Belgium have developed a modern process of cleaning tapestries where the tapestries are held in place by continuous suction and flow of cleansing micro bubbles of water vapour. The dirt is loosened from the fibres and drawn away avoiding re-deposition. There is no shrinkage or damage to the tapestries with this new method.



The tapestries were returned and re-hung in November and the difference is remarkable; you can now see the original colours, beautiful deep yellows and

golds, and the outlines are much clearer. This project is the largest and most costly that the Friends of Berkeley Castle have funded to date.



Following the completion of the work on the tapestries in the Great Hall, Robert Bernays, the Chairman of Berkeley Castle Charitable Trust wrote: "At a meeting of the Trustees of the Berkeley Castle Charitable Trust on Monday we discussed the wonderful work on the tapestries, which has resulted from the effort and generosity of the Friends. The Trustees asked me to write to the Friends to express our admiration and gratitude for what has been achieved. The tapestries look fantastic and the work on their hanging will ensure that they remain in good order for many years."

The Friends also received recognition from Roly Brown, Estate Director, who said: "While writing, I should add how grateful the Trustees are for the support which the Friends have provided to the Charity once again. The tapestry project, in particular, has been a huge boon and is such a visual example of the work which the Friends do."

*Linda Lewis*

### FoBC at Frampton Country Fair

**Sunday 10th September 2017**

If you are going to the Fair, do come and visit the FoBC stand and meet our volunteers and visitors.

Eleanor Garratt-Taylor is co-ordinating a rota of members to staff our stand.

If you have an hour or so to spare, please contact Eleanor at:

friends@berkeley-castle.com



### **EVENTS AT BERKELEY CASTLE THIS AUTUMN**

Take the opportunity to use your membership card to visit the Castle before it closes to visitors at the end of October.

There are some great events taking place in and around this autumn:

Come and enjoy the riches of the countryside, including local food producers and artisan crafts

Witches & wizards in the dungeon; Owls in the Great Hall; Bat Hunts and moth traps

See the Castle website for further information: [www.berkeley-castle.com](http://www.berkeley-castle.com)

#### **Friends of Berkeley Castle**

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T: 01453 810303 E: [friends@berkeley-castle.com](mailto:friends@berkeley-castle.com)

[www.berkeley-castle.com/friends.html](http://www.berkeley-castle.com/friends.html)

#### **FoBC Officers for 2017 - 2018**

Chairman - Paul Walkden

Deputy Chairman - Diana Merrett

Secretary - Jane Handoll

Treasurer - Sally Morgan