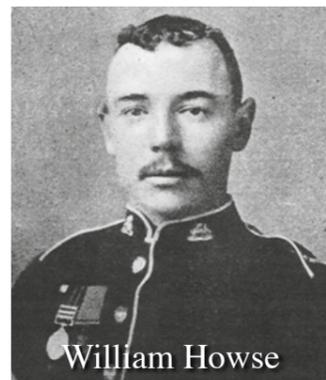


**BECOME A FRIEND OF OBS**



**AND HELP PRESERVE THIS  
MAGNIFICENT HISTORIC  
GRADE 1 LISTED BUILDING  
FOR ANOTHER 700 YEARS**

Popularly known as the Old Bluecoat School, OBS was built in 1307 as a Chapel. It later fell into disuse but was revived in the C18th by Lady Winchcombe of Bucklebury, who opened a charity school. The scholars were clothed at the Charity's expense in blue coats and the name has stuck. The most famous of the Old Boys of OBS was William Howse, (1879-1912) who joined the Royal Berkshire Regt and won the VC in 1900 during the Anglo-Boer War.



William Howse

The charity school closed in 1914 but the building remained in educational usage until the 1960's. There are still Thatchamites around who can recall being taught cookery or woodworking at OBS.

Until 1998 the building was leased to an antiques dealer. It then became empty and by the turn of this century was in a sorry state, both inside and out. There was no heating, no seating and a bare concrete floor, with the result that the building was only capable of occasional use during summer months. Outside the Stone work was crumbling away; the brick work needed attention; glass in the windows had been replaced by Perspex and the roof, although not yet leaking, needed attention.

West Berkshire Council proposed selling the building but Thatchamites objected as they were of the view that the building should remain in public ownership and be made available for community use. A campaign, led by Mrs Bobbie Wootton, now the Trust's Patron, was successful and the freehold of the site was transferred in 2004 to the Thatcham Town Council and then leased for 99 years to the newly formed Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity.

It has taken 12 years hard work by the Charity to bring the building back to life and to the point where community groups hire it every day of the week, every week of the year. During that period £180K has been raised, largely from charitable trusts, to refurbish the exterior and make the interior habitable. The Greenham Common Trust and Veolia Environmental Foundation have been particularly generous.

More work is planned for the interior of the building but for now the exterior of the building is secure. But that position will not last. Old buildings constantly need tender love, care and attention and OBS is no different. At some stage more maintenance or refurbishment work will be required and the Trust want to make sure now that when that position arises they will have the necessary funds.

A building such as OBS also needs a dedicated band of Trustees and volunteers to make sure it is used efficiently and to capacity. The Trust are therefore inviting anyone interested in the future of OBS to become a Friend of OBS. Your subscription will be put in the Trust's maintenance sinking fund and if you can offer some of your time to assist the Trust you will be most welcome. See the contact details below.

In return for becoming a friend of OBS, the Trust will keep you abreast of life at OBS. You will be invited to the annual get-together around Xmas time, when refreshments will be available and you can hear about the Trust's past work and future plans. If you wish to hire the building there will be a special discounted 'Friends' price and you will also be given advance notification of any events open to the public and a discounted price for admission to the Sunday concerts.

For more information on becoming a Trustee or a volunteer, contact Mrs Angela Bates on 07914321681 or e-mail enquiries.bluecoatschool@gmail.com

## THE THATCHAM (OLD BLUECOAT SCHOOL) CHARITY

### THE FRIENDS OF OBS SCHEME

**Which category of membership are you applying for?**

Individual £20pa ( ) or Life £200 ( )

#### Personal Details

**Title** ..... **First Name (or initials)** .....

**Surname** .....

**Address** .....

.....

..... **Post code** .....

**E-Mail address** .....

**Telephone** .....

**Signed** ..... **Dated** .....

**Please complete the Standing Order below and send the SO form (and if you wish the Gift Aid form) together with your cheque made payable to the Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity to The Trust Treasurer, who is Simon Witcomb FCA, of Witcombs Chartered Accountants, Turnfields, Thatcham RG19 4PT**

#### GIFT AID

If you complete the gift aid form below it will enable the Trust to claim back 25p tax for every £1 donated. To make the declaration you must be a UK taxpayer paying enough income tax and/or capital gains tax each tax year to be at least equal to the amount of tax that all charities to which you donate will reclaim that year.

#### GIFT AID DECLARATION

Please treat all subscriptions and donations paid by me to the Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations, until I notify the Trust to the contrary. I confirm that I will be paying an amount of income and/or capital gains tax equal to, or more than, the tax that the Trust will reclaim on my payments.

**Title, forenames and surname** .....

**Home address (including postcode)** .....

.....

**Signature** .....

#### STANDING ORDER INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK

**To (Your bank's name and address, including post code)**

.....

.....

On 1st January each year, from 20... please pay the sum of £..... to The Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity at HSBC Bank Account Number 41428241 ; Sort Code 40 44 52

**Name of account to be debited** ..... **Yr Ref:** .....

**Your account number** ..... **Yr Sort Code** .....

**Signed** ..... **Dated** .....

**NB Please send the Gift Aid Declaration ( if applicable) and SO form together with your cheque made payable to the Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity, to the Trust Treasurer at Witcombs Chartered Accountants, Turnfields, Thatcham RG19 4PT**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**