

The speaker used slides of some of the exhibition portraits to illustrate the way in which painters have provided insights into character and produced works of art that show how appearances altered in response to the varying pressures arising from conflict between the royalists and parliamentarians.

This highly original way of looking at the Civil War was set in the striking context of puritanical Buckinghamshire. At once the relevance to Banbury was evident and the approach more than justified the attempt to examine who supported whom.

Julian Hunt mainly concentrated on the leading figures such as Charles himself, Queen Henrietta Maria, his ministers the Duke of Buckingham and Archbishop Laud, and on the puritan side John Hampden, Oliver Cromwell and Thomas Fairfax. Minor figures with Buckinghamshire connections also featured in the talk and included Arthur Goodwin, a friend of Hampden's, though only a fraction of those whose portraits were included in the exhibition.

Throughout an absorbing lecture the speaker's aim was to explain personality traits by reference to varying portrayals by artists such as Van Dyck. The stubbornness of Charles I contrasted with the independent Puritanism of Cromwell. Fairfax, although also a noted Puritan, had numerous disagreements on policy matters with Oliver Cromwell. Prince Rupert, Charles' very able adviser on military matters, emerged as a potential war winner if only he had been allowed to follow his innate sense.

One remarkable bonus for those members who turned out for the talk, and there were more than forty of them, was the chance to enjoy the images made from the portraits without having to track down the originals in a myriad of scattered global locations.

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2006**

***Telling the History of Houses* – Nat Alcock**

Your editor wasn't present at this talk, although he had suggested the speaker to Nick Allen. I'm sure that Brian Little provided a write-up, but at the moment I can't find it. Sorry.

**J.G.**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

***The Lost World of the Beales and Blinkhorn Families* – Brian Little**

Your editor, despite expected prior commitments, was in fact able to be present for this fascinating talk. As Deborah Hayter so rightly said at the start, the speaker could not possibly need to be 'introduced' to his audience.

Understandably, Brian felt it inappropriate to do his usual 'write-up', and, belatedly, asked your editor to do this. All I can say is that I am sure nobody in the audience enjoyed it more than myself – and if his recently published book, *BANBURY: A Century of Change*, doesn't say it all, it does say most of it. Pending an independent review, see my biased remarks on page 268.

**J.G.**