

**Friends of the  
Windsor & Royal Borough  
Museum  
Newsletter 105  
Autumn 2023**



Our new greetings card - 'Silent Night at the House of Windsor' - by local artist Matthew Burley.

# Chairs' Report

Len Nash

Hello everyone. Thanks to those who attended the AGM at our new venue. The Committee was elected 'en bloc' with Gerald as our new editor.

Our new greetings cards have been printed and will be on sale at the museum in the near future. They are not specifically Christmas cards so we can sell them all year. We are also looking at the website to make it more relevant and up to date.

We have been invited to share a stand with the Windsor Local History Group at the forthcoming Eton Action Fare on September 16th., so any help would be much appreciated.

To help cut our printing and postage costs I again ask anyone who would like their newsletter sent as an email rather than a hard copy to let myself or Gerald know and we will be happy to oblige.

Finally, to those who have not paid their subs., please note that this will be your last newsletter.

**Editor's Note** - As a result of a generous donation, matched by funding from the Friends, we are delighted to have obtained exclusive permission to use 'Silent Night at the House of Windsor' - by well-known local artist and portrait painter Matthew Burley. Matthew uses original photographs to create unique and highly realistic art work. His website is well-worth looking at. The paintings are beautiful, and hard to distinguish from the photographs they were based upon. A skill indeed!

His website is at <https://www.matthewburley.com/>

**The cards will shortly be available at the Visitor Information Centre within the Guildhall . They are priced at £3.50 for 5 cards. We also have our traditional Christmas Card - 'Castle and Corgis' - for sale at the same price.**

\* Corgis originate from Wales. Did you know that the etymologically correct Welsh plural for 'corgi' is 'corgwn'. No, I didn't either!

# 'It's a year since the Queen died'

Brigitte Mitchell

The first time I saw Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was back in 1962. My late husband was serving with the Grenadier Guards, and Her Majesty was going to inspect Queen's Company in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. The wives were invited to watch, and on my invitation it said: 'All ladies must wear hats, gloves and stockings'. What nothing else?

I have seen the Queen many times over the years, on her way to Ascot Races, at the Horse Show, at the Garter Service, at her garden parties, at the Guildhall on her 90th birthday, where she spoke to each one of the invited guests who shared her birth year, but my big day was on 9 December 2011.

As chair of the Friends of the Museum, I had the great honour of escorting Her Majesty when she came to open the museum in the Guildhall. We were told beforehand to wear what we were comfortable in (how times have changed). As we examined the military display, the Queen was informed that I was an expert on the British army. She looked at me quizzically, but I said 'Ma'am, you know more about your army than I ever will.'

After unveiling a plaque and promising that this museum will not be closed again, the Queen left through the museum door, the mayor, councillors and I stood in the doorway to the Guildhall to wave her good bye. The Queen walked past us towards the royal car, but suddenly turned back, came towards us, and shook my hand, saying 'thank you very much'. I of course was lost for words.



## Editor's Note

Queen Elizabeth II died on 8th Sept 2022.

Picture taken by myself outside the Guildhall on the Queen's 90th birthday - 26th April 2016.

## **Book Review**

**Len Nash**

**'A Selection of Windsor Independents'** is the latest volume from noted local bus historian **Paul Lacey**. It details the history of Moores (Imperial), Borough Bus, Blue Bus Services and some earlier 'minor players'.

Within its 112 pages can be found nearly 350 photos, location maps and fleet listings as well as minutely researched histories of each company. But as with all Paul's books this is not a 'dry-as-dust' record as it's full of anecdotes and stories from owners, drivers and passengers of the time giving an excellent insight into local social history. The images also add to this. Studying the backgrounds shows just how much Windsor has changed since WW2.

This book makes a delightful and insightful read whether you're into buses or not and comes highly recommended. However I must take Paul to task on one point:- Sir Christopher Wren did NOT build the Guildhall!

Copies can be obtained from Waterstones or direct from Paul at 17, Sparrow Close, Woosehill, Wokingham RG41 3HT at £20 post free. His next book, currently in preparation, will cover Windsorian coaches.

## **Leslie's Piece**

### **Hundreds of Hundreds.**

Ripplesmere Close is the newest road in Old Windsor, but it has a name going back over a thousand years.

In the reign of Alfred the Great counties and shires were divided into smaller areas called hundreds, each with its own court. The exact meaning of hundred is uncertain: it may have been an area of a hundred hides - a hide is 120 acres - an area capable of supporting a hundred families or an area that could supply a hundred able-bodied fighting men.

Berkshire is divided into twenty hundreds with names such as Horner, Beynhurst and Ock. Old Windsor is in the hundred of Ripplesmere, together with Clewer and Dedworth, Winkfield and Ascot and Easthampstead. As a Royal Borough, Windsor has not been part of any hundred.



Just how the boundaries of these hundreds were arrived at is a puzzle. Physically Sunninghill is in the hundred of Ripplesmere yet it is actually part of the hundred of Cookham.

Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire are divided into wapentakes rather than hundreds. Wapentake is an old Norse word, so is probably a relic of the times when this part of England was under Danish rule. Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland are divided into wards. Kent is divided into five lathes, each lathe containing a number of hundreds. In Sussex the hundreds are grouped into six rapes.

When an M.P. wishes to resign his seat, he applies for the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds; these consist of Desborough (containing Marlow), Burnham (containing Beaconsfield) and Stoke (containing Datchet).

Leslie Grout



**Editor's Note** - Part of the wonderful and recently-restored Sheldon Map of Oxfordshire (c 1590) on display at the Bodleian Library in Oxford when I visited in 2019. One of 4 tapestries that cover much of the area from Gloucestershire to London <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-48599051>

# Museum Update August 2023

Stephanie Lewis

## Museum Accreditation

The team have worked extremely hard writing the policy documents required by the Arts Council for renewal of our professional standard – Accreditation. We submitted the documents and completed the questions by the deadline of 19 June which was a huge relief. The submission was over 1200 pages long which demonstrates the sheer volume of work we have all done. The work is ongoing as there are still quite a few plans to finish off. These need to be completed by the end of September, and be available for the Arts Council to view on request.



Stephanie and Louisa have met with Cllr Joshua Reynolds, the new Cabinet member for Communities and Leisure. We are delighted to say that he was happy with our approach and has signed the documents off.

We await the Arts Council response. Fingers crossed that we are able to maintain our status! Accreditation also means that we can again apply for Arts Council and National Lottery Heritage Funding, as well as for other public funding .It also sets minimum standards for the following areas:

- **Organisational health** – including security, emergency planning, volunteer management.
- **Care, management, development and conservation of collections.**
- **Providing accessible services** – physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural, emotional/attitudinal, financial.
- **Understanding and developing audiences.**
- **Providing stimulating learning and discovery activities** including exhibitions and programmes based on our collection.
- **Marketing.**



The Accreditation process has also given us the opportunity to revisit our Mission and aims as well as our core priorities.

## Mission statement

Windsor & Royal Borough Museum is the jewel in the Royal Borough's crown.

We collect and care for objects related to the borough and share stories of the area's rich history.

We aim to enable everyone to access our shared past to help better understand the present and inspire all our futures.

## Priorities for 2023-2025

1. **Caring for the collection** to the national recognised standards and striving to be an accessible and inclusive museum service, both physically and online, reflective of the diverse local community.
2. Providing **opportunities to engage and inspire** existing and new audiences with the borough's local history.
3. Contributing to the economic development of the borough and providing **opportunities for individuals to achieve their ambitions and fulfil their potential.**



## Volunteering

Alex is working hard to get some new volunteers who have applied on board. If you see some new faces in the museum, please say hello and give them a warm welcome. Alex has also been updating the volunteer handbook which will be a useful resource for all volunteers, both existing and new. This will be circulated as soon as it has been finalised.

We are hoping to reopen the museum store to our curatorial volunteers next month. We appreciate your patience whilst we have been stretched with other priorities and look forward to welcoming volunteers back into the space to assist with important curatorial work. If you would like to find out more about how to volunteer in the museum store, please do get in touch.



Stephanie Lewis  
Museum Manager

Louisa, Alex, Becky  
Museum, Arts & Local  
Studies Officers

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## The Shoe Box from Eton

Gerald Hyder

I had the pleasure of chatting to Reg Baggs after the recent AGM. He told me the story of the large black box that was carried into the Museum Store in 1992. It originated from 'Paine and Sons', a shoemaker's shop at 136 Eton High St, and had been used to collect and return 'soled and heeled' shoes to the boys at Eton College. The box was followed in 1997 by a wonderful set of shoemaker's tools. It is believed the shop closed in the 1960's, by which time synthetics had replaced leather, making 'repair-only' shops redundant.

The black box and tools belonged to Alfred Edward Holmes. Alfred was born in 1905 and had left an orphanage at the age of 14 to be apprenticed at the Eton shoemakers. Alfred was clearly too young to serve in WW1. He remained at the shop through the 1920's and 1930's, becoming a skilled craftsman. Documents found after Alfred's death suggest that in WW2 he was exempt from conscription as he was an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) warden in Arthur Rd and occasionally a 'stand-in' at Eton.

After the war Alfred set up his own workshop in a shed in his garden at Arthur Road. Patterns or shoe moulds were sent to him by John Lobb, the famous London shoemaker (they'll currently craft a pair of bespoke shoes for you for the princely sum of £5,000 or so!)



By 1952, Alfred was driving buses - a finger injury had denied him the full use of both hands. Alfred continued to live in Arthur Road until 1997, when he was 91 years old. After his death, his nephew Ron Holmes arranged for his tools and other artefacts (other than one boot and a large shoe-stitching machine that remained in the house) to be donated to the Museum.

The picture below (c1920) shows 3 apprentices at work. Alfred is on the right.

With thanks to Reg Baggs for the information, and to Louisa for the photo.



(Museum Ref - WNDRB:1997:31.1)

**\*Dear Friends, Museum Team and Volunteers\***

I hope that you are enjoying the Newsletter. Would you like to contribute - an article perhaps, or an interesting old photo? Perhaps there's an encounter in the Museum that you'd like to share? I've got one for the next edition that's hard to believe! Please contact Len ([lnash2@sky.com](mailto:lnash2@sky.com)) or myself ([geraldhyder@outlook.com](mailto:geraldhyder@outlook.com)).

# Sir Nicholas Winton - 'One Life' - A Film starring Sir Anthony Hopkins

## Gerald Hyder



Statue commemorating Sir Nicholas Winton - Maidenhead train station (courtesy of RBWM)

You may have heard ! The story of Sir Nicholas Winton - the wonderful Maidenhead resident who died in 2016 aged 106 - has been made into a film. It stars Sir Anthony Hopkins as Nicholas, and Helena Bonham Carter as his mother. The film also stars another Welsh actor - Jonathan Pryce. The screenplay is based on 'If It's Not Impossible...The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton', written by his daughter Barbara Winton.

The film was shot last year in Prague, from where the 669 Jewish children that he saved were transported by rail away from the Nazi threat and almost certain death. A statue of Sir Nicholas was unveiled there in 2009. The statue at Maidenhead (above) was unveiled by Theresa May in 2010.

His work was hardly known about until 1988 when his wife uncovered a scrapbook in their attic detailing everything her husband had done. It included the details of each of the children that he'd saved. He was then invited to be an audience member on the Esther Rantzen 'That's Life' show. If you're too young to have seen the wonderful surprise that unfolded then head to 'You Tube' - or ask a young friend to find it for you!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKkg006bAZk>

The film will premiere in the UK in October or thereabouts. I've no doubt that there will be a LOT of interest from museum visitors around his life story.



## Windsor Castle - How Busy Is It ?

The Royal Collection Trust (RCT) recently published their Annual Report. Here are the admission figures for the Castle.

### Admissions numbers - Windsor Castle (inc Frogmore House)

2018-19	1,751,000
2019-20	1,592,000
2020-21	104,000
2021-22	426,000
2022-23	1,092,000

The Castle is slowly returning to normal! I'm pretty sure that pre-pandemic it was open 6 (or 7) days a week?

<https://www.rct.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Annual%20Report%202022-23.pdf>

## The Saddest Exhibit in the Museum ?

I sometimes speak with visitors who are looking at the military history display and suggest that they may be viewing the saddest item in the Museum.

**1919 Medallion' - more commonly known as a 'Dead Man's Penny'.**



Over 1.3 million were produced at the end of WW1 and given to the wives and mothers of those who died serving with the British and Empire forces.

**What do YOU think is the saddest exhibit?**

**Let me know your thoughts.  
geraldhyder@outlook.com**

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