



FRIENDS OF THE WINDSOR & ROYAL BOROUGH MUSEUM

Registered Charity No 1115540

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2016

No 80

The Cabinets in Windsor Library Reference Room

There are two display cases in the Reference Room upstairs in Windsor Library. One has a new exhibition from the Combermere Barracks and the other has the Maidenhead Operatic Society exhibition which will shortly be replaced with one about the Friends first 25 years. This will probably be installed on 1st June. Do come in and see it.

*Right: The Combermere
Barracks Exhibition*



Chair's Newsletter

Dear Friends

As this is the last time I will be writing to you as Chair, I thought it would be appropriate to consider what had been achieved in the past four years, what might have been done, and what the future may hold.

Since the museum opened in 2011 the Friends has made a number of contributions towards its smooth running. With agreement from the membership, the appeal fund, originally intended to raise money for a suitable building, was used to pay for items within the museum itself. We helped to pay for the Saxon gold, a new 'Click Netherfield' case and provided financial assistance for several other projects. These include the renovation of the four dioramas which are on rotational display in the museum and even paid for the cake to mark the opening of the Sydney Camm exhibition in March. We are also holding a substantial sum to pay for a new donations and comments module currently being designed by PLB, the company responsible for the initial museum installation. There have been a number of delays with this but we hope to see it installed during 2016.

As a registered charity it has been possible for us to apply for grants from various bodies which were not available to the RBWM and we were successful in helping with the funding of the Magna Carta celebrations. At the same time we have had a very successful run of talks with the move to Dedworth being popular. The issuing of a programme card helped to advertise the events, even if we did have to change a few around! Also well received were the Denis Blandford Christmas cards.

Other projects include Windsor Footsteps, our mobile phone based walking tour around the centre of town, now superseded by the Queen's Walkway, as well as the writing of the Amberley Books *Windsor Through Time*. Members have also been persuaded to write copy for the *Newsletter* which has greatly

helped Pam in making it an interesting and relevant little journal.

My own personal triumph was the erection of the plaque to Sir Daniel Gooch at the Central station following a great deal of negotiation with the Royal Borough, Network Rail and Windsor Royal Shopping. The great man now has a permanent memorial in his adopted town and we are planning a Gooch exhibition in August to mark the bicentenary of his birth. I hope many of you will visit.

On a less positive note, I have not had much success in attracting new members or drawing together all those now assisting with the running of the museum, namely the volunteers, the Working Group and the Friends themselves. We all have our own reasons for getting involved and it has proved difficult to link the groups together and for us to see ourselves as a cohesive whole.

You will all have received a letter recently explaining the problems which are facing your ever-diminishing committee. Many groups like ours have difficulty in attracting members, especially those prepared to serve on a committee, with the result that they are folding at the very time that government cuts are leading to widespread closure of libraries and museums. With no-one to stand up in defence of these invaluable institutions, it is even easier for councils to dispense with them. I am not suggesting that RBWM has plans to do any such thing at present but who knows what might happen in years to come.

I would therefore urge you to come along to our AGM and offer support to those committee members who are prepared to continue in post and to join them. For a variety of reasons Gloria and I feel unable to carry on in our present roles but rest assured we will continue to offer help from the sidelines if the Friends future is assured.

With all best wishes

Malcolm

Stephanie's Newsletter

Museum Development Advisory Panel

I recently attended a Museum Development Advisory Panel meeting in Oxford as a representative museum in the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire (BOB) sub-region of the South-East. The group exists to tackle barriers to museum development in a changing environment and supports the Museum Development Officer and associated activities in the BOB region. It asks what Museum Development can do to maximise resources so everyone benefits and keeps benefiting from expertise and available funding. Museums represented on the group include Chilton Open Air Museum, Milton Keynes Museum, Oxford University Museums, The Bate Collection in Oxford and Reading University Museums. We are privileged to be represented in this group as it will ensure we remain relevant and are kept up to date with current thinking. The next meeting will be in September.

New Display at Windsor Library

A new display by the Household Cavalry Museum and Archive in Windsor has recently been installed at Windsor Library. It features a wonderful miniature mounted band, two helmets and some historic photographs from the Broom collection. It will be on display until the end of the year, so please do go and see it and bring your children and grandchildren.

The Household Cavalry Museum and Archive is also running a family activity for us on 31st May. Children and adults will be able to try on genuine jackboots, breastplates and helmets from the Household Cavalry ceremonial uniform.

Forthcoming Displays

The Queen at 90 – Windsor & Royal Borough Museum, June 2016

25 Years of the Friends – Windsor Library, June 2016

Peter Osgood – Coming soon to Dedworth Library. If you have any Osgood memorabilia please do get in touch with us.

Shakespeare – Coming soon to Maidenhead Library

Sir Daniel Gooch – Windsor Museum August 2016.

We are always open to suggestions from the Friends of the Museum, so please do get in touch if you have any ideas or objects relevant to the forthcoming displays that you would be willing to lend us.

Stephanie Lewis

Museum Resources Officer

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What's on at the Museum?

May Half-Term

Be a Soldier for the Day! – Tuesday 31st May 2016

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to dress up as a Household Cavalry soldier? March up to the Windsor & Royal Borough Museum on Tuesday 31st May and wear the Household Cavalry kit worn on ceremonial duties since Victorian times. Try on the jackboots, breastplates and helmets and stand to attention whilst hearing stories from ex-soldiers on what it's like being a soldier escorting the Queen.

Digging Up the Past! - Thursday 2nd June 2016

If you've ever hoped to unearth buried treasure or prehistoric fossils whilst digging in the garden, make haste to the Museum on Thursday 2nd June. Here you'll have the opportunity to become an archaeologist for an hour or two and dig up long-lost artefacts. You'll have to dig carefully though, because you might just come across a very sharp tooth from a very ancient creature.

Both events: £2.00 entry per child or £1.00 with an Advantage Card. Sessions will run from 10:30-12:30 and 13:30-15:30. Tel 01628 685686 for more information.

Instagram and the Windsor & Royal Borough Museum

You can now follow the Museum on Instagram.

Please do add us:

<https://www.instagram.com/windsorroyalboroughmuseum/>

Karen Hunter

We are sad to report the death of Karen Hunter in March following a long battle with cancer. For many years Karen was the treasurer of the Friends and after relinquishing the post to Gloria, continued to perform the annual audit of the accounts. She was always supportive and helpful in financial matters.

As the daughter of Judith and Rip Hunter she had a close connection with the museum and we extend our sincerest sympathy to Rip and the rest of her family.

At a committee meeting on 9th May it was agreed that a donation of £100 be made to Windsor Hospice in her memory.

She will be missed.

Malcolm Lock

13 High Street Windsor

I was pleased to meet a visitor to the store last week. She wanted to see some photos that we have of members of her family. One of them had married Horace Nicholls who was one of the photographers who had worked at 13 High Street. We found quite a lot of pictures but none of them had names on the back so she was not able to trace those that were her relatives.

Please write names on the back of pictures—lightly in pencil. It would be so helpful. We did find Horace though because he moved to South Africa and one of the pictures was taken there.

Both of us are worried about the state of 13 High Street. It is empty and beginning to decay. It first became a photographic studio early in 1852 which was the first year that anyone could take photographs without paying huge patent licence fees. It may very well be one of the first photographic studios in the country. The windows are quite plain and later ones were very ornate.

Pamela Marson

Len's Wildlife (2)

I have always been fascinated by ducks. In particular I have never ceased to be amazed by the variety of inappropriate, dangerous and just plain weird locations that mother ducks choose to make their nests. This is often followed by a long and hazardous trek by her and her offspring to the nearest water. For example:-

One Saturday my partner and I were at the Farmers' Market in St. Leonards Road when we spotted a mother duck and fourteen ducklings making their way through the stalls. Obviously this attracted a crowd which in turn scared the ducks who turned tail and disappeared into Grove Road. We thought little more about it and carried on shopping finally making our way to Peascod Street. As we reached William Street we were astounded to see the duck family approaching from that direction. They crossed the road and disappeared into Moss Bros., although they were quickly ushered back out. I noticed that one duckling looked particularly dishevelled. Apparently it had fallen down the gap in a drain cover but luckily someone had managed to lift the cover and rescue the errant offspring.

By now the family were heading up the slope into King Edward Court. We continued on up Peascod Street. Having reached the top we turned left and as we did so, noticed a small crowd gathered at the top of Station Approach. Yes, there were the ducks about to set off down the hill. We decided to follow as I was concerned that some well-meaning person might scare the duck into abandoning her family, which is something that they can quite easily do. A group of us slowly shepherded them down the hill. One duckling seemed to have suicidal tendencies which required me to rescue it from the road on several occasions. Finally we steered them into River Street although I think that the mother knew exactly where she was going. Upon reaching the crossing we pushed the button to allow our charges to cross safely. They took a little longer than the time allowed so we had to stand in the road to stop the traffic. Once across they all rushed down the slipway and into the river. It truly was a marathon for these fourteen ducklings, probably no more than about two days old. As they swam away there was a loud quacking from the mother. Maybe she was thanking us; but probably not!

Len Nash

Dates for your Diary

Friends AGM

Wednesday 8th June 2016 at 7.30pm

At the Community Room, Dedworth Library.

Free

Followed by reminiscences of the
25 years of the Friends.

If you would like to give a very short talk about a
Friends event, please let us know as soon
as possible.

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