



# Friends of the Windsor & Royal Borough Museum

Registered Charity No. 1115540

[www.friendsofwindsormuseum.org.uk](http://www.friendsofwindsormuseum.org.uk)

## Summer 2018 Newsletter Issue 88



**Cover photo:**

*The Red Arrows flying over Windsor Castle, 10<sup>th</sup> July.*

*Photo courtesy of Mohsina.*

**EDITORIAL**

What a Summer it's been and I'm not just talking about the weather! First The Wedding and what a great day that was! Then, a few days ago as I write this, the magnificent flypast from the R.A.F. The Red Arrows over the Castle in perfect weather conditions – it just doesn't get any better! Now we even have a brief visit from a well-known American clown! As well as all of this we have, of course, all the regular summer events of Horse show, Dog shows, Rose show, Triathlon, etc.

This is one reason I love living in Windsor. It seems that there is always something happening.

Of course, it doesn't stop with the summer. Soon there will be the commemoration of the end of World War 1. Windsor, like many towns, will be holding a number of events some of which will involve the Museum and any Friends who wish to become involved would be very welcome.

If any members have ideas or suggestions for other future events or activities then please let the Committee know.

Finally, you may be glad to know that the newsletter is now in full colour – permanently!

Len.

## **FRIENDS CHAIR REPORT**

Dear Friends,

Thank you for vowing to support us for yet another year. Our AGM went past without any hitches, although I was unwell and was unable to do much talking. Many thanks to those of you who were able to make an appearance.

Welcome to our new committee members, Gerald and Jeannie. It'll be great to have you on board for the following year.

I have been in talks with Susie at the museum and have some exciting plans lined up for the coming committee year. Further information about that will be posted at a later date.

James has been showing me the work he's been doing on our new website and it's looking really nice. Just needs a bit more polish and it'll be perfect ready for its launch later this year.

Finally, many thanks to Kerrstyn Laiss, who unfortunately had to step down from our committee this year due to other commitments, for all the hard work she put in on our social media accounts. Wishing her all the best for the future.

Courtney

## **Membership Subscriptions**

Please note that unless you have already paid, subscriptions are now due at the usual rates.

## **WOODCOTE HOUSE, ASCOT**

Child evacuees from Belsen and other Nazi extermination camps rehoused in Ascot immediately after the end of the Second World War? That came as a bit of a surprise. I'd lived nearby for 30 years and had no idea!

Whilst volunteering at the Museum in early April I took a call from Rosie Whitehouse – a researcher looking for information about Woodcote School in Ascot, where about 30 children had been housed by the Habonim Jewish Youth organisation in autumn 1945. They then lived locally for some years afterwards. Rosie was particularly interested in any first-hand accounts. I told her that I lived in Sunninghill and had never heard of the school but undertook to check with Barbara Story (our local studies officer). Might Facebook prove useful? I suggested that I'd be happy to post her request on a couple of Ascot FB groups that I belonged to.

Barbara confirmed that a school had existed but was now a private house. We had no other information. I posted on 2 local groups – 'Ascot People' (9000 members) and 'Historical Sunninghill, Sunningdale and Ascot' (1900 members). Within hours there were useful replies from people who remembered the school. One resident replied 'I remember these boys. They mixed with us local Ascot kids and proudly showed us their tattooed number on their wrists. They wore their blue striped "uniform" from their time in Belsen, their concentration camp'. (She later clarified that the 'uniforms' were worn mainly in football matches).

Another member mentioned that there was an oral account in the Imperial War Museum archives from a man who worked at the School - first with evacuees from London, and later with children who had come to Britain from camps in Germany and elsewhere.

Another response was from an author of a local history book who knew of evacuees from Poplar and other areas of London with large Jewish populations.....but not of the post-war children. Ascot had been a popular place for wealthier families to move to during the war, with large houses for rent, and a group (including a Rothschild and some Austrian nobility) taking rooms at the Berystede Hotel.

The response on Facebook was overwhelming one of surprise. Had this taken place in our area? It seemed as if the events had almost entirely disappeared from local memory. I passed on the information that had been posted and thought about it no more.

Rosie emailed me a few days ago. Her article was the main story on the 'Stories' section of the BBC website. When she phoned the museum, I'd asked her the purpose of her research.

She told me that she was an independent researcher and would see where she could get it published when complete. Seeing this little bit of history fleshed out and reaching such a large audience was a real surprise!

Rosie's article is a fascinating read. She's discovered others who knew something of Woodcote House and spoken to an 86-year-old survivor who lived there. Surprisingly, whilst the Home Office agreed to allow 732 orphans into Britain for two years' rehabilitation – it was only on the condition that they would not cost the taxpayer a penny. The money to care for the children was raised by the Jewish community.

Rosie hopes to arrange a commemorative event at some stage in the future - a lovely idea. Facebook has been rightly criticised on privacy issues recently but I think this shows its value when seeking local information like this, and in raising awareness. What's the phrase.....a 'Call Out'? a 'Shout Out'.....!!

You can read the full account, 'The 'Belsen boys' who moved to Ascot', by searching for "BBC Belsen Boys" on Google.

Gerald Hyder

## **REMEMBERING THOSE LOST IN THE GREAT WAR**

It was a fantastic achievement to be awarded HLF funding for our RBWM project, For King and Country, which ran between 2014 and 2016.

Although Kate and Hannah who worked on it have long gone, a few of us, Rebecca Pointeau, Lindsey Jennings and Alan Davies and myself, have continued to add information and stories to the web pages.

November 2018 will commemorate 100 years since the end of the Great War, and the Museum and Outreach teams are working on plans to mark the centenary with author events, talks, walks and activities.

There will be events across the Borough in Eton, Madenhead, Windsor and Cookham.

We plan to reuse and create new exhibition panels and promote some of the stories we have uncovered about those who lived or studied locally.

We are also looking to create some activities and a creative project at the Guildhall in the Corn Market area.

We may well need help for some of these events, so please watch for information and let the museum know if you can assist. If you are interested in helping, please email [museum@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:museum@rbwm.gov.uk).

Margaret Kirby  
Project and Development Officer  
Museum and Arts Team

## **LESLIE'S PIECE**

Before the advent of the modern fire brigade many parishes had their own fire engines, though these were not much more than a pump on wheels with a lead-lined tank to hold the water.

Some parishes had a building to house the engine, while in some places the engine was actually kept in the church. There is one at Hook Norton in Oxfordshire while Aldbourne in Wiltshire has two.

Windsor's engine was housed in a tunnel-like building adjoining the Parish churchyard. Commonly known as the Engine House it was built in 1803. A plaque displays the names of the churchwardens who kept the keys.

In the event of a fire someone would get the keys from the churchwarden and round up a band of helpers. They were needed to form a bucket chain to the nearest water source in order to keep the tank on the engine constantly full. Quite often however, by the time the bucket chain was assembled and the nearest water source located the fire would be well alight and the engine ineffective.

Insurance companies had their own engines and policy holders would display the company logo on their houses. (In theory a company could send its engine to a fire, but if it found that the property was not insured with them could go away again.) Firemarks, as these logos were known, can be seen on a number of buildings in Windsor and a house in Park Street has the marks of both the Sun and Globe insurance companies. Clearly the owner was taking no chances!

Leslie Grout

## PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION

Thanks to those who took the time to enter our competition.

Here are the entries:

**From Reg. Baggs:**

"I feel more into break-dancing than playing music."

**From Janice Carter:**

Move over Ed Sheran!

**From me:**

"Whose this Sheran bloke then?"



Thanks again, the next one can be found below:



Send your answers to Len ([lnash2@sky.com](mailto:lnash2@sky.com)) by the end of September. I'll publish the best in the next newsletter!



## UPDATE FROM THE MUSEUM JULY 2018

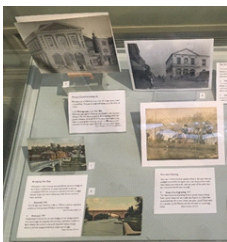
### Royal Wedding

May 2018 was a busy but successful month at the Museum...

- 15 Community members donated objects for our exhibition: Husbands, wives, grooms and brides and 13 new objects went on display from the collection.
- A private view on the exhibition was arranged for the lenders.
- Leslie Grout gave a talk on St Georges Chapel.
- 25 Congratulation cards were made for the happy couple.
- Free entry on the day of the wedding resulted in 836 visitors to the museum on 19<sup>th</sup> May.
- 572 participants to Royal Weddings in Windsor in partnership with the History Festival.



### New Display – Terrific Thames (July to September)



Our thanks go to Len for selecting 2D objects and writing the captions for our summer display all about the river Thames. The display links objects to our summer holiday activities.

Younger visitors have been invited to explore the river Thames and its importance to life and culture in the Royal borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

## Staffing News

Becky Tabnar joined our team as Museum, Arts & Local Studies Officer at the end of June. Becky works Saturdays and Sundays. Here is a message from Becky:



*My name is Becky! I'm very excited to be working at the Museum and look forward to meeting you all. I completed a Master of Arts degree last year in Public History at Royal Holloway, University of London, and previously worked at Brunel University Library. I have always wanted to work in a museum and am thrilled to finally have the opportunity to do so.*

*I briefly volunteered at the Museum in 2015 and was really impressed with how the Museum embraces the everyday stories of individuals who grew up in, lived and worked in Windsor, and has created a space for them to be*

*heard. I think it is a welcome surprise for visitors who might otherwise expect to learn only about Royalty in a museum so close to Windsor Castle.*

*I think the Museum is a wonderful example of how a smaller space can be used to share local history and feel very privileged to be working here. I am particularly excited to help with the planning of the upcoming summer activities, including working with Stephanie on 'Terrific Towns on the Thames', and to be working with you all on future projects.*

Museum, Arts & Local Studies Team  
[museum@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:museum@rbwm.gov.uk)

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

All events below are held in the Community Room at Dedworth Library at 7:30PM on the days given, unless otherwise specified.

### **Doris Mellor and the Battle for Bachelors Acre**

A talk by Sue Ashley.

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Please note that the next meeting, including Sue Ashley's talk is on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> September at the Community Room, Dedworth Library, 7.30 p.m. and NOT as stated in the last issue. Ooops!

### **The Pirate of the Caribbean**

A talk by Gordon Marshal.

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

### **Talk TBC**

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

### **Talk TBC and Annual General Meeting**

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Further meeting dates and talks will be detailed in the next issue.

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## **EVENTS COMMEMORATING WORLD WAR I**

### **Letters from the Front**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018. 7pm at the Guildhall.

### **The Great War Through Advertisements**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018. 7pm at Maidenhead Library.

## THE FRIENDS ARE NOW ON TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM!

As an effort to widen our audience and increase membership we will now be promoting events and fundraising efforts on these platforms alongside our well-established Facebook page and Website.

We will aim to offer an artefact of the month feature and showcase activities of the committee and museum as they arise.

Follow us on Twitter: **@FriendsOfWRBM**

Follow us on Instagram: **friendsofthewrbm**

Kerrstyn

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