



Friends of the Windsor & Royal Borough Museum

Registered Charity No: 1115540

NEWSLETTER 94

Spring 2020



The Friends Refreshment Stall at the
Switch-on of the Christmas lights

Chair's Report

I hope everyone had a happy Christmas and looking forward to the New Year. Hopefully it will be a little calmer than the last one although we may be entering a new era in our history. We shall see!

Our last meeting featured an excellent talk by Peter Storer on the history of the Household Cavalry and was pleasingly well attended.

Following the talk there were some suggestions regarding a possible group visit to tour Peter's museum and the barracks. If you are interested please let a Committee member know and I'll talk to Peter about likely dates. We will need a minimum group number of five with a maximum of twenty. Anyone who has already been on a visit will vouch for it's quality and interest. Don't forget the carrots!

Our cake stall at the switch-on of the Christmas lights was very successful. We made about £85. Jeannie and Gerald manned the stall for the duration and, thanks to a good shout by Town Crier Chris, we had a great response. So a huge thank you to all who made cakes. They were well appreciated!

Sadly Janice has had to stand down from the committee due to family health reasons and we will certainly miss her input and enthusiasm, but in her place we welcome Chrissie Regale-Day and Sue Richardson to join our happy band. Many of you will already know these two ladies from their work with the museum and the Drama Guild and I'm confident that they will make a major contribution to the Friends.

So enjoy the newsletter and do let us know if you would like to join the barracks tour.

Len Nash



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Living Advent 2019 – Victorian Parlour Games

Our Windsor & Eton Living Advent Calendar window at the end of 2019 was once again a great success. The Town Crier took 43 visitors back in time to the Victoria era where they participated in some traditional parlour games in the splendour of Windsor Guildhall. More photos from the event can be found on Facebook at the following link:

www.facebook.com/Windsor.Eton.Living.Advent.Calendar/

LAST 'OPE PART 2.

Having had several encouraging comments about my article in the last issue I thought that you may like to read some further adventures of our unsung heroes.

In my thirteenth year the family decided to move to the wilds of Maidenhead although I carried on being “educated” at the Boys School. I soon found new friends and discovered that Jim, my next door neighbour, was a member of the local squadron of the Air Training Corps. so, being an aviation nut, I also joined. Now I had two uniforms to look after!

We had an old sweat of a Flight Sergeant who was a kindly old boy who looked after us lads, (and a few girls), very well. However he was a stickler for correctness and discipline. One day I happened to refer to a 'plane and he looked at me rather dolefully and said, “Laddie, a plane iz wot yew smooov wood wiv! Wot yew fly iz a haircraft or a haeroplane! Got it?”

“Yes Flight!”

We seemed to spend many weekends marshalling car parking at various local events but there were parades from time to time where, I'm glad to say, we kept up the long-established tradition of a squadron never marching in step; a tradition that still persists today. Well done all!

However, the highlight of the year was the summer camp. Each A.T.C. squadron was dispatched to an active R.A.F. station, (we had plenty then), to spend a week in their tender care. The best one that we attended was at West Mallory airfield with 111 squadron. We were made most welcome and allowed to participate in the various regular activities of the station all week.

“Treble One” had become famous as the Black Arrows formation aerobatic team flying gloss black Hawker Hunters, (a Camm design). We were promised a flight in the two seater version if we successfully completed a certain task.

The task was to break out of a 'P.O.W.' camp and make our way about 15 miles to a rendezvous point with 'the resistance' within 24 hours without being caught by the 'Germans'. How to achieve this was down to us. The only thing allowed was a crudely drawn map apparently smuggled in via a Red Cross parcel.

So we were herded into at the 'camp' which was a large enclosure which was surrounded by a high wire fence with a guard tower on each corner and sentries patrolling all around. Jim and I decided to go as a pair assuming that we could escape. The only way we could see was to burrow under the wire. We waited until dark , and together with several other escapees headed for a thickly wooded area a few yards away. This was, of course, expected and a several of our fellows were captured. The two of us made off quickly as we were aware of dogs barking behind us which was a bit worrying as these were proper R.A.F. police dogs but, luckily, they weren't let off their leashes! We hurried through the forest trying to reach a road indicated on the map. Behind us we could hear the sounds of pursuit including gunshots!

By now we were no longer a couple of lads on a jolly; we really were two escaped P.O.W.s being chased by the Germans and in fear of our lives! We finally reached the road which turned out to be a country lane and along it was the enemy; an R.A.F. Regiment sentry every few yards! Luckily there was a deep ditch on our side in which we took cover. Unfortunately it was also very muddy and then it began to rain. Oh my, how it rained! We were soaked through in no time. Happily so were the sentries who very soon gave up the game to have a brew and a smoke. We managed to sneak off in the general direction of the map. After about two miles we were totally soaked, cold and hungry and decided to surrender to the next bloke in a blue uniform.

Just then we heard an engine and saw headlights approaching. Relief! We waved the vehicle down. It was a civvy car. "Blimey!" said the driver, "What the hell have you two been up to?" So we explained. "You'd better get in and I'll take you to my place, it's not far." In those days that didn't have the connotations it has now so we jumped in. Oh joy of joys! We learnt that our rescuer was a pub landlord!

We were made most welcome by his wife who took the unexpected arrival of two drowned rats as if it was quite normal! She led us to their living area where she promptly issued warm, dry clothing, (of course they didn't fit but who cared?), whilst she dried ours. Later two huge plates of beef stew and two glasses of brandy became our supper. By now the pub had closed so we were bedded down on comfy sofas in

the bar and slept! Next morning we woke to a Full English and our dry, (and pressed), uniforms.

“Where are you two heading?” asked Jack, our host. We showed him the remnants of our map, The rendezvous was a crossroads in the centre of a small village. “Oh I know where that is. I’ll run you up there.”

He dropped us off just short of the village so that we could walk in “All innocent like”. Waiting was ‘the Resistance’, our Flight Sergeant. “Well done lads, you’re the first.” He eyed us suspiciously, “Yew look very spritely after bein’ in the woods all night. Where yew bin ‘idin’?”

“Nowhere. Just staying out of trouble and keeping our heads down.” we lied. He didn’t look convinced! Later one other lucky chap joined us and that was it, 3 from 28 starters.

Sure enough on our last day at camp, we were awarded our prize. A flight with the Squadron CO. I went first and the trip was incredible and also terrifying. Screaming across the field at about 30 feet and 650m.p.h. certainly concentrates the mind! We did all kinds of aerobatics before landing. I climbed down gingerly but put on a confident smile as I swaggered off. Unfortunately after a few steps I stopped and threw up. But what an experience! (the flight, not the throwing up!).

Looking back on those uncertain and potentially deadly times I guess that we could indeed have been Britain’s Last ‘ope; just like the lads who set off in 1914 and again in 1939. Bless them all!

Len

A Wire-haired Dog Story

From Charles II to our present Queen, monarchs have had a love of dogs and the last one owned by Edward VII, and who achieved a certain amount of fame, was bred locally.

Kathleen, Duchess of Newcastle 1872-1955 widow of the 7th Duke (who is buried at Eton) lived at Forest Farm between Windsor and Ascot and was a breeder of wire-haired fox terriers. Indeed there was for many years a statue of a dog by the main gate.

Lord Dudley purchased a dog from the duchess's kennels which he named Caesar and presented to Edward in 1898 to replace a dog which had recently died.

Caesar was devoted to his master and followed him everywhere, often getting everybody's way. When the King visited a country estate Caesar would run off to explore and get lost, so he wore a collar inscribed 'I am Caesar: I belong to the King'. This did not stop him running off but at least when found he could easily be returned to his rightful owner.

When Edward died, Caesar kept wandering round Buckingham Palace in search of his master and would eventually be found whining outside the King's bedroom.

It was on 20th May 1910, the day of the King's funeral that Caesar captured the public's imagination as he trotted behind the King's charger following the coffin. Less than a month later a book of his 'memoirs' came out entitled 'Where's Master?' and by the beginning of August was in its seventh edition.

Caesar spent his last years with Queen Alexandra at Marlborough House where he died in 1914 aged sixteen (a good age for a dog) and was buried in the garden. His headstone bears a photograph of him with an epitaph by Queen Alexandra.

He was reproduced as a soft toy by such companies as Chad Valley and Steiff. The Royal Collection has a small chalcedony model of him by Faberge, while in St. George's Chapel he can be seen lying at his master's feet.

Leslie Grout

*My apologies to Leslie for a typing error I made in the last Newsletter .
Leone was born in 1884, not 1844.— Pam*

The little GREAT Exhibition at Windsor Yards

Busy Buttons Core recently hosted a free exhibition at Windsor Yards, celebrating the bicentenary of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with all things little and great from the Victorian era.

Six interactive presentations by heritage organisations took place, including a talk by Louisa Knight about Victoria & Albert's life in Windsor.

Busy Buttons would like to run a similar project again next year and the museum is looking forward to working with them again.

www.busybuttons.org



A Request for Memories

Two issues ago we included a piece from bus historian Paul Lacey requesting information regarding local companies Blue Bus, Imperial and Windsorian for a book to be published later this year. He has been in contact again asking if any Friends had memories or photos of trips or working with these three firms. Any photos will be scanned and promptly returned. He can be contacted at 17 Sparrows Close, Woosehill, Wokingham RG41 3HT. Paul's histories are renowned for their detail and accuracy and your help would be gratefully appreciated in what is a very worthwhile project.



Arts & Heritage Network Event

Our third Arts & Heritage Network Event took place on 15 January 2020. Sixteen arts and heritage organisations in the area were represented at the meeting, who were given an opportunity to share and promote forthcoming projects. Members of the Maidenhead Astronomical Society brought along telescopes and equipment to explain their offer to the local community. Follow their work at www.maidenhead-astro.net/public/Home/index

The next meeting is scheduled for 25 June 2020. Please email arts@rbwm.gov.uk if you know of any arts or heritage organisations who may be interested in attending these bi-annual events.



WWW.WINDSORCARRIAGES.CO.UK

Dates to Remember

Thursday 27th February 2020
The Windsor Carriages
Friends Talk by Rebecca Seear
Dedworth Library 7.30pm

Monday March 2nd
Museum Event
Shots fired at Windsor Station
40a Windsor Station
Outside All Bar One 2.00pm-5.00pm

138 years ago one man walked 57 miles to take revenge upon the 'bloated aristocrats' by shooting at Queen Victoria in her carriage. This shocking event changed the course of history for generations to come. Go back in time and meet Queen Victoria and learn how this day unfolded.

Thursday 23rd April 2020 Friends Talk
by Richard Snailham
"Camel Trekking in North Kenya",
Dedworth Library at 7.30

Saturday, 16th May 2020
Windsor Local History Group,
Open Day at Windsor Baptist Church, Victoria Street,
10am—3pm

18th June 2020 Friends AGM and Talk to be arranged
at Dedworth Library

17th September 2020 Talk to be arranged
19th November 2020 Talk to be arranged

Friends meetings are held at the Community Room in Dedworth Library, Smiths Lane, Dedworth at 7.30pm on selected Thursday evenings. The Library is in the grounds of the Dedworth Schools and there is ample free parking for those attending.

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