



Friends of the Windsor & Royal Borough Museum

Charity No. 1115540

NEWSLETTER 98

Spring 2021



Ten years ago the doors of the Museum were opened and the public were allowed in.

Chair's Report

At last there seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel! With the rapid development of vaccines and the remarkably efficient inoculation programme we may be on the brink of returning to a more normal existence. Best of all, if things go to plan the council has approved the re-opening of the museum in early May.

The past year has been a life-changing experience for everyone.

Tragically too many have had to cope with the loss of loved ones and, as you will see in this issue, the museum and Friends have not escaped, including myself, although not only due to Covid. Jean, my partner for some 20 years and our treasurer for the last two, passed away just before Christmas. Chrissie Regale-Day has kindly agreed to become acting treasurer until the AGM. Thanks Chrissie.

The museum staff have been doing sterling work with their on-line activities and all credit to them particularly as they have been heavily involved in the 'Track and Trace' system.

Did you see the episode of 'Architecture That The Railways Built' featuring Windsor and particularly our Becky? If not, it's well worth searching for.

Hope to see you all soon.

Len

Sixty-Three Years with the Colours

In Clewer churchyard is the grave of General Lord Rokeby, a soldier with a long and distinguished military career.

Henry Robinson Montagu was born in 1789 and enlisted as an ensign in the 3rd Regiment of Foot (Scots Guards) in 1814, just in time to serve at Quatre Bras and Waterloo the following year, a baptism of fire for any aspiring army officer, especially one still in his teens.

In 1847 he became 6th Lord Rokeby in succession to his brother and by 1855 was a Major-General serving in the Crimea (where he sponsored Mary Seacole), commanding the Guards Brigade. For his services he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath and also received the French Legion d'Honneur and the Turkish Order of the Medjidie. He later became a patron of the London Homeopathic Hospital as he had benefited from that kind of treatment during his time in the Crimea. By 1867 he had attained the rank of General and the Grand Cross of the Bath, retiring ten years later as Regimental Colonel of the Scots Guards. He died in 1883 and at his funeral one Marquis, two Barons, two Major Generals and four Colonels acted as pallbearers. A history of the Scots Guards states that he was 'the last of those before whose name the Waterloo W was affixed in the Army List.'

He married Magdalen Huxley by whom he had one son (who died at the age of sixteen) and four daughters, the third of whom married Gerald Wellesley, Dean of Windsor and through whom he struck up a friendship with Queen Victoria and it may be on the strength of this that he was buried at Clewer. This was the only apparent Windsor connection, he had a house in London (where he died) and an estate in Hertfordshire. The family originated from Yorkshire.

Lord Rokeby was the last holder of the title. The first was Archbishop of Armagh and Prelate of the Order of St. Patrick, while the second was a noted eccentric who lived mainly on beef tea and had a large bath constructed, the waters of which were warmed by the rays of the sun and in which he passed most of his time.

Flash - continued from the last Newsletter

Flash and I also shared a passion for old American cars. In fact his daily transport was a 1939 Hudson coupe. He and a small group of like-minded enthusiasts founded the Pre '50 American Auto Club and needless to say, I was soon involved. Very soon the club blossomed with members from all over the country. Our first Sunday pub meet was held at The Coach and Horses,(now The Shire Horse), on Maidenhead Thicket with about a dozen cars attending. Flash decided to organise an annual national rally to be known as 'The Rally of the Giants' at Smewins Farm at Shottesbrooke. The first one had an entry of over a hundred vehicles and to publicise the Sunday event we held a parade through Maidenhead on the Saturday afternoon. This is something that the steam fair still does.

The success of the rallies inspired Flash to organise more including the first national rally for vintage military vehicles which later included a small airshow, vintage tractors and Ford products among them. I became a member of a regular team of helpers and at about this time became the proud owner of a 1935 Hudson Terraplane Sedan bought from Flash for £35! One memorable outing with the car was when a number of local owners were invited to attend the opening night of the film 'Bonnie and Clyde' at the ABC cinema in Maidenhead. We received free entry and dinner at a local steak house afterwards.

The club still exists and their annual rally retains the same name.

By now Flash had become a self-employed debt collector, an ideal job for someone of his stature! He became infamous locally due to the minivan he drove which had 'Debt Collector' in large letters painted on the roof. The idea was to let the neighbours know and to shame people into paying up! He also became a doorman at local dances particularly at Maidenhead's Pearce Hall when it became one of the Riki Tik club venues. I was called in to help on odd occasions and through this had the great pleasure in meeting Sonny Boy Williamson, one of America's top blues musicians.

Having a life-long interest in the history of fairs and fairgrounds it wasn't a surprise when Flash organised two very successful steam fair festivals at Blackbushe airfield. Not long afterwards he told me that he had bought a set of original steam-driven gallopers (the large roundabout with horses that rise and fall), and that he needed "A few blokes to help collect it". So we commenced it's retrieval. It took several trips due to it's size and many components. Although in sound condition it needed plenty of 'TLC'.

A few months later I had a phone call to come and see the gallopers. They were magnificent. Fully assembled and painted in traditional style by Flash and his wife Anna. They had both been art students and had made a study of traditional fairground styles. Their son, Jeb, carries on the work and is considered the leading light in this art-form.

This was the start of Carters Steam Fair. He toured the set around various fairs and steam rallies and, as usual, I was roped in to help. At the time I think it was one of only two steam-driven sets in the country. Quite quickly other rides were acquired and they began touring in their own right and, of course, the fair has grown into what it is today.

I lost touch with Flash for some time except for bumping into him when the fair was playing locally and so it came as a huge shock when, in 2000, I read of his passing due to cancer.

He was a genuine local character whom I, and many others, still greatly miss.

Len Nash

Photographs from opening day



Opening Speeches:

Deputy Mayor, Asghar Mahmood Majeed, Brigitte Mitchell,
who was chair of the Friends and Cllr. Simon Dudley



Caroline McCutcheon showing some of the Soldiers
round the Museum



Local residents could visit the museum free if they showed their Advantage Card



Members of the Friends taking tea upstairs in the Council Chamber.

Since the last Newsletter we have lost a number of distinguished members, all of whom will be sadly missed:

Dr. John Long CVO. Aged 96, John was Director of ICI Europa and later Director of Studies and Warden of St George's House, Windsor. He was sometime Chairman of the Windsor & Eton Society and a member of many other local societies. He was a regular attender at our meetings.

John Handcock CVO,DL was the Chairman or President of many Windsor Societies and was Clerk to the Trustees of the Royal Albert Institute Trust when it closed and they gave many very important artefacts to the Council in 2002 .These are now in the museum or hanging on the walls in the Chamber upstairs. He was Secretary of the Prince Philip Trust Fund for the Royal Borough and, as such, had tea with the Queen and Prince Philip. He was captain of the Lay Stewards at St Georges Chapel, and was also president of Windsor & Eton Opera. There is an extensive obituary in the Daily Telegraph.

John Fido was a councillor for the West Windsor Residents Association on the Royal Borough Council representing Dedworth. His wife Daphne, and daughter Debbie Hodkin, were on the committee of the Friends at the beginning .

We also send our condolences to Margaret Kirby who managed the museum for many years and ran the 'For King and Country' project. Her husband Lyn passed away recently. She would like donations to be sent to Pancreatic Cancer UK

Jean Pumphrey 1939-2020

My lovely partner Jean, better known to all as Jeannie, (or even 'Pumpers' at the West London Aero Club), passed away on December 14th.

I knew Jeannie for over 30 years and she was my partner for the last 20 of them and I can honestly say that she made them the happiest and most fulfilling of my life.

She was known for her happy attitude and big smile whatever she was doing and 'doing' was her forte. She loved to get involved with a zeal and a passion that was truly remarkable. Anyone who has heard her talk about her flying adventures will know that she had a determination to give her best in whatever she undertook. It was Jeannie who suggested that I should volunteer at the museum after I retired and although she never did 'front of house' she was always there helping behind the scenes however she could. From knitting Harry Potter and woolly fruit for the pillory, (she was a champion knitter), giving talks, baking cakes and manning the tea stall at events, supplying copious amounts of materials for our activity to critiquing my efforts for this Newsletter Jeannie was always there with a smile.

Joining the Friends gave her even more involvement and became one of her abiding interests especially when she became Treasurer. She also organized the distribution, sale and collection of our Christmas cards including numerous shifts for 'Cards for Good Causes' at Maidenhead library. She also organized the booking and preparation of our meeting room at Dedworth.

She certainly had a stubborn streak and she did things her way – no arguing! But always without rancour or temper.

She will be very much missed by all the staff, volunteers and Friends

In the time that we were together her health wasn't always the best. She suffered breast cancer twice, a triple heart by-pass and became diabetic. Latterly arthritis slowed her down somewhat but through it all she showed her typical attitude of resilience and carrying on regardless.

To my five grandchildren and great granddaughter she will always be 'Nanny Jean' the demon knitter!

I have a hole in my heart that will never be filled. Jeannie was my partner, soulmate and rock. God Bless.

Len

Don't Forget the Royal Borough Memory Box

The Museum is collecting memories and artefacts that will help future generations to understand the Covid-19 pandemic and how it has affected us.

Please send your memories and any photographs or artefacts to museum@rbwm.gov.uk.

There are also opportunities for volunteers to help with this project



Friends meetings are usually held at the Community Room in Dedworth Library, Smiths Lane, Dedworth at 7.30 pm on selected Thursday evenings.

The library is in the grounds of the Dedworth Schools and there is ample free parking for those attending.

Speakers have been booked, but we do not know when we will be allowed to hold meetings.

Camel Trekking in
Northern Kenya
by Richard Snailham

Tracing Family Trees
By Brigitte Mitchell

The History of Cumberland Lodge
by Darren Bowyer

This Newsletter is published by

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